

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN'S IMAGE IN INDIAN CINEMA

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Abstract: Indian cinema is an integral part and popular medium of Indian social structure. It is a powerful medium that portray and propagate the Indian culture, tradition, and values. It depicts the status and role of Indian women through the films on diverse subjects that helps in developing understanding about the role and status of women in Indian society. The depiction of women's congeniality, vigor, docile, and vibrancy ranges from the era of freedom struggle to its objectification in modern era. Hence this paper critically analyzes the role and status of Indian women by referring different films of an ideal Indian wife to the modern era where she learns to priorities her needs and interests. The paper also suggest about the attitude of male domination in depicting the women as a matter of beauty, lust, and glamorous thing that entertains the male chauvinism. The paper through the films try to depict social change in understanding women as a human, a subject, and an important thread of Indian social fabric.

Introduction: Media has become an integral part of human life. It is not only a source of entertainment but a source of propagation of cultural values. Media is of various types print media, film media, television media, social media, electronic media and internet. All these types of media deals information, awareness, entertainment, interpersonal relations, news, knowledge, faiths, and values. Every individual use one or other type of media. Therefore it affects our lives in innumerable ways. But as a cause of concern in relation with gender it is require to critically analyzing the image of women in Indian cinema or films because Indian cinema is an oldest and popular medium of entertainment and depiction of various gender roles with the advent of celluloid world. In its initial time period the film media faces dejection and rejection as an immoral and uncultured practice. But with time film media gain confidence of masses in constructing ideas and generating debates on the issues of public concern, high moral values, conduct, and social stigmas. During its development it passes from privatization to globalization. However, the growth of film media narrates the status and roles of Indian women in society because films are considered to be the mirror of Indian society and the place of women in family and society at large [1]. In this article I would like to analyze the depiction, presentation, and coverage of women and her womanhood in Indian cinema which is also popularly known as Bollywood. The Indian cinema exercise widespread cultural derive to influence and appeal Indian masses. Hence feminists try to analyze the image of women in Hindi films by raising certain contesting questions how women represented on screen and how the women character are positioned in comparison with male character and what is the role of film maker and writer's in depicting women issues in Indian cinema.

In exploring the answers of above mentioned questions, this paper is an effort to critically analyze the depiction of women in Hindi films. The reference of different Hindi films helps in carving out an understanding about social condition of women on silver screen. The paper would also be an attempt to analyze the status and role of women with feminist argument and attitude to enrich our understanding in regard with the place of women in society through Hindi films.

Stereotype Image of Women: The woman of Hindi movies has pretty much assumed characterized parts which fit in with the qualities maintained by Indian culture. The role of women in Hindi cinema are generally follow stereotype image of homely, faithful and loving wife, caretaker of family, sacrificial attitude, and believes in sacramental values. Movies have likewise been roused to a substantial degree from religion and folklore whereby ladies characters were viewed as the embodiment of excellence and qualities. With the thoughts of faithfulness and acquiescence to the spouse, Hindi silver screen effectively organized man centric esteems.

Movies like *Devi* (1970), *Biwi Ho To Aisi* (1988), *Pati Parmeshwar* (1988), *Gharwali Baharwali* (1998), *Biwi no.1* (1999) delineated ladies as aloof, docile spouses as immaculate figures and saints for their own families. In these movies, however the acts of man centric society were scrutinized, they were certainly being disparaged as in the casualty spouse declines to go out notwithstanding serious physical and passionate brutality by a basis of going out just at the season of her demise.

This is a comment about on the grounds that esteems, standards, ethics have ruled the edge work in which these movies are made. In this way, ladies instead of being portrayed as expected individuals are lifted to a

higher position of being perfect who can confer no off-base. Their grievances, wants, aspirations, sentiments, points of view are totally absent from the scene. They are extremely depicted as the second sex in light of the fact that they are appeared as not having a place with this genuine and common life. In film *Abhiman* (1973) a popular singer convinces his new wife to enter show business, but his pride is wounded when she outshines him to a customary conclusion that requests adherence to conventional estimations of marriage and parenthood. *Khandan* (1965) movie song lyrics 'Tum hi Mere Mandir, Tum hi Mere Pooja, Tum hi mere Devta ho' clearly depicts man as an equivalent to God means women has faith in him as God that undermines her own existence or identity as an individual.

The Hindi films like *Maine pyar kiya* (1989), *Hum aapke hain kaun* (1994), and *Hum saath saath hain* (1999) are the movies of ideal family life. These films depicts the role of women as a homely, well cultured, belief in customs and tradition and always work or sacrifice for the family regardless their profession or interests. In film *Maine pyar kiya* the heroine is a daughter of poor friend who shifted to rich family of father's friend and then get with hero and later parents pressurize the hero to renounce her as belong to poor family. Hero quit the family and parents due to refusal of girlfriend by parents. Later couple wins the heart of parents and get married. Similarly in film *Hum aapke hai kaun* full of life with friends, relatives and helps as a joint family regardless casting their professional commitments. Both sisters are happy, homely and elder sister is playing role of an ideal wife and bahu with scenic beauty and melodious lovely songs but later her younger sister sacrifice her love for the sake of sister's husband as her elder sister died accidentally. In *Hum saath saath hain* a joyful depiction of joint family which disintegrates on the property issue in favour of real son of mother then step son. In this three brothers and their wives were professionally acclaimed as doctor etc. but they did not shown pursuing their interest or profession in film to depict as an independent individual. There family identity dominating their personal identity. They are always wrapped with an expensive costume and jewellery comprises of dark red vermilion and *mangalsutra*. The set of house is like a dream house for middle class families which idealize the social structure.

In 70's women depicted as homely, beautiful, moral, and dependent on husband, so that women remain submissive. Women are also been considered responsible for avenging peace of family. Films like *Saudin saas ke* (1980), *Hamari bhu alka* (1982) are Hindi films depicted the clash between women to retain authority in the family means trying to seek power position in family.

Shahla Raza (2003) talks about how Hindi cinema in the seventies had women in different working roles (*Jaya Bachchan as a knife sharpener in 'Zanjeer' and a singer in 'Abhimaan', Hema Malini as a village tonga (horse carriage) driver in 'Sholay' and the general manager of a company in 'Trishul', Rakhee as corporate secretary in 'Trishul' and a doctor in 'Kala Pathar', Vidya Sinha who works in a private firm in 'Chhoti Si Baat'*). The working woman vanished from the popular blockbusters of the nineties which relegated Indian women to the boundary of the home. The concern boils down to the embodiment of women who stay next door, walk on the street, spend time working in office and return home after a tiring day. Where are these women in Hindi films? Bollywood courageous women have for the most part been unattractive, substance to remain cheerfully ever after in the foundation of marriage regardless of whether instructed and quick to cut the personality of one's own [2].

The stories of Hindi film no doubt male commanded and male driven. Subjects have been investigated from the point of view of male gathering. The role of heroine is always depicted as second sex, who's role is been carved out to suffice male dominated films [3]. Her position in society determines her role in films and films undermines the role of women by objectifying rather be as an independent existence. A film like '*Ae dil muskil mein*' (2016) Aishwarya's role is to just add presence to make film glamorous. In 90's the trend of item numbers in action films which mainly follow as a relief in storyline from violence and fights of hero as an macho men who has the power to deal with attackers single handedly. Helen (*Sholay, 1975*) *mehboba mehboba*, Vidya Balan (*Dirty picture, 2011*) *oolala song*, Kareena Kapoor (*Agent vinod 2012*) *dil mera mufta ka*, Malaika Arora (*Dabang, 2010*) *munni badnam hui*, Kareena Kapoor (*Dabang2, 2012*) *fevicol se* are examples of raunchy lyrics with skimpy clothes to suffice male dominated character with a glamorous and lusty presentation of item girls through an item song. In such films and songs women depicted mainly to entertain the male audience that enrages sexuality. Veteran actor Victor Banerjee had once said, "Bollywood is a cancer. Hindi commercial cinema has denigrated women. We owe a debt of ingratitude to Bollywood for having insidiously polluted our culture covertly"[4].

The Hindi films also depicted male character as polygamous encourages the same attitude but female character is always depicted to follow fidelity, faithfulness, trust, loving, and caring as ideal character of being an Indian woman that requires following conventions and moral order otherwise subject to face disregard, humiliation, mental and physical harassment. Dasgupta (1983) has argued that such women who dare to challenge the patriarchy have been either forced to reconcile or have been punished to an extent that they have regretted taking such steps. This study, working against this claim, considered films where women have dared to resist patriarchy, but have not regretted their decision [5]. Hence the depiction of women is always being at extremes rather than discovering her intellect, interests, and feminine character. The Hindi films gestured to justify the traditional personality over bold and modern women. In film *Biwi No.1*(1999) the wife after sacrificing career settles down with family by extending love and care with traditional looks then husband get attracted towards his colleague and enjoy love without knowing of wife the moment she come to know about the cause of aversion towards her she planes and become similar to husband's girl friend to bring back husband to herself restoring the relationship. The other women in Hindi films always portray as vamp or mistress who has no legal and social recognition. The Hindi film *Aitraaj* (2004) also portray two extreme scenarios in terms of good and bad character in cognizance of Indian social condition. The one as a true, intellectual, and loving who believes in husbands character, at the other extreme the other women who give more value to money or wealth, status and class then to trust, love, and relationship. The portrayal leads to define the meaning of 'good' and 'bad' character women in relation with stereotype depiction. The women in Hindi films always encircled to bear sympathy, love, dejection, torture, harassment, lust, subordination, object, property, honor, and sexuality.

The gender bias depicts in Hindi films with the issue of 'infidelity' or 'extramarital relation'. In regard with this issue there are double standards for man and women. Hindi films like *Guide* (1965), *Life in a metro* (2007), *Arth* (1998), *Woh7din* (1983) are based on women extramarital affair. In *Woh7din* heroin get married to doctor but had an affair with a boy but forcefully married so on the night of nuptial ceremony try to commit suicide and then husband discover love affair of wife then he realized she did not remain happy with him so he told he is marrying her for his mother who is on deathbed therefore after mother died you can unite with your lover but lover refuge to follow as he thought it is against Hindu culture and disappears from their life. The story undermines the wish of women to make choice of life partner before marriage without consent of father figure and after marriage by husband to accept her desire, even discarded love of life by her lover in view of unchastely. In contrast to it there are films where man enjoyed extramarital affair and no question of chastity or fidelity occur because when women come to know about extramarital affair of man then pardon him to save relationship like film *Biwi No.1* but husband not allowed her to expose or dance before others. The film *Masti* (2004) and its sequel *Grand Masti* (2013), *Arth*, *Zeher* (2005), *Jism* (2003), *Raaz* (2002), *Silsila* (1981), where man parallel involved in extra marital affair without renouncing wife and keeping them in dark about their extra relationship. The film *Kabhi Alvida Na Kahna* (2006) is a film where both hero and heroine depicted as infidel in regard with their spouses. Hence extramarital affair of women is depicted as unpardonable the men.

Women dejection and rejection portrayed in various forms in film. Herbert Marcuse (1968) argued that popular culture reduces the experience of pains amongst women in order to bear oppression. They always are always taught to obey patriarchy, and this encourages a fatalistic nature amongst women as they are portrayed to succumb to their existing fate [6]. The Hindi films depicted in view of divorce are *Nikaah* (1982), *Arth*, *Aap ki kasam* (1974), *Chalte Chalte* (2003), *Saathiya* (2002), *Mein Meri Patni or Who* (2005), *Tanu Weds Manu Returns* (2015), and *Saadi Ke Side Effects* (2014). In these films the needs, trust, expectations, doubt get arouse about women character or relations leads to divorce. The modern social issue of surrogacy in regard with women depicted in multi dimensional form that affects the marital life and emotional trauma for surrogate mother show case in film *Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* (2001). The films like *Mehndi* (1998), *Dahej* (1950 depicting women harassment by family and husband for not giving gifts or money means 'Dahej' moreover, rape scenes in Hindi movies is seems to be necessary because it satisfies men 's ego to be strong, macho figure, and being powerful. The films like *Bandit Queen* (1994), *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), *Pink* (2016) outrage the modesty of women in public and privately. These Hindi films depicts the sick mentality of man and the society who consider women as an object of sex, lust, and desire or simply a structure of flesh without emotions and feelings. These films are reality of our sick society that did not consider women as a dignified personality in existence.

As it has been argued by the feminist critiques those films portraying women's issues made by even the most liberal and impartial male directors in India still present some proportion of patriarchal tendencies [7].

Realistic Cinema: The change occurs in Hindi cinema [8] with the advent of Hollywood movies. In relation with Hollywood films the Bollywood cinema criticized for being unrealistic and content less. The criticism led to bring change to make realistic movies based on true stories. The realistic Hindi films include *Bandit Queen*, *Zubaeida* (2001), *no one killed Jessica* (2011), *Marykom* (2014), and *Dangal* (2016) etc. the realistic cinema create feelings of sympathy and social change wherever there is gap in terms gender equality, dignity, and respect for women as an independent individual. The films *Simran* (2017), *Queen* (2013), *Pink* denotes women as an individual, strength and aware of rights rather than a second sex or subordinate to man or an object of pride and use.

Conclusively, the Hindi films lay great impact on individual understanding and thinking to develop a healthy social life. The depiction of women in Hindi films shifting from male centric films to woman centric films. This transformation will create a positive impact on society so that it revamps the image of women on screen and off screen. The stringed stereotype depiction of women in Hindi films shows patriarchal character of society that leads to develop into male centric movies. The shift from traditional pattern of women to modern profession oriented confident lady will prove the strength of being women. Hence Hindi film directors should scrutinize the role of women in such a manner so that women image should not be sacrificed for the sake of male gaze or entertainment. The proper portrayal of women lies in exhibiting their feminine character in terms of their different ambitions and desires to cherish morally in a dignified manner. Moreover women character should be given strength so as to disintegrate the power structure by making space for them. It will help in exploring sensitivity and responsiveness in restoring the torn image of women in and off screen.

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