

STUDY ON THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WOMEN'S IMAGE IN NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

¹Manjeet Mor and ²Dr. Manoj Kumar

¹Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, SunRise University, Alwar, Rajasthan (India)

²Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, SunRise University, Alwar, Rajasthan (India)

Corresponding author Email: manjeet.morhr@gmail.com

Abstract: Media, identity and gender are being discussed all over today. They have become integral to the discipline of media studies. The reason is the popularity and diversity of media as a source of mass consumption and its influence on constructing ideas and generating debate. The media scene in India has expanded in the recent times as there is a plethora of media choices available to the audiences. Media structures and systems have also undergone a sea change with privatization and globalization. Huge corporations with their own profit motives own media houses. Media has been able to transcend borders and look at issues more holistically rather than in the context of nationalism. Hence, these developments are bound to affect the manner in which media scrutinizes and covers any issue – gender being an important one. Women are also major consumers of mass media and thus the way they are represented in media coverage is a major concern for the discipline. Several international forums have recognized the ramifications of such a transformed media environment on women's access to media, their role in the media structure and the presentation of their perspective in media coverage.

[Mor, M. and Kumar, M. **STUDY ON THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WOMEN'S IMAGE IN NATIONAL FILM AWARDS**. *The International Journal of Interpretation, Observation and Analysis*, 2023; Volume 3, Issue 1:5-8 (July-September). ISSN 2349-0713, Peer-reviewed (online/offline), Refereed, Indexed and International Journal (Since 2013), Global Impact Factor: 5.776

Keywords: Bollywood, India, Roles, Films, Women

Introduction: Cinema and Film are most common form of mass communication which plays a key role in moulding opinions, constructing images and reinforcing dominant cultural values. Cinema is believed to entertain to the viewer from all over a world and create a different world that is different from the real one, a world which provides escape from the daily grind of life. Cinema changes the mindset of the person and shape new cultural, social and political values.

In India, cinema has always been popular. Movies influences society in different ways and affects individuals' personal lives. Be it the clothes they wear, the way in which they speak, their social behaviour all affected by movies directly or indirectly. Indian cinema has changed from classic mythological blockbusters to "Bollywoodised" remakes of Hollywood's successful films. In the 1970s, Indian Cinema developed a more socially aware and more politically orientated form of cinema.

Women's image, status and role in society are reflected in cinema and have been present in even in popular Indian cinema almost right from the start. Films have been inspired to a large extent from religion and mythology whereby women characters

were seen as the epitome of virtue and values, those who could do no wrong, ideas of loyalty and obedience to the husband, Hindi cinema successfully institutionalized patriarchal values. Films like *Dahej* (1950), *Devi* (1970), *Pati Parmeshwar* (1988), *Gauri* (1968) depicted women as passive, submissive wives and martyrs for their families. The study has shown images of women in cinema were a central concern during 1960s and 1970s, criticizing women's image in film and their roles in the film industry.

In films, they were being patronized in a manner that the victim wife refuses to leave her husband's house despite severe physical and emotional violence and rationale of leaving the marital house only at the time of her death. Over the time roles however have changed, from being dependent on their male counterparts to very independently carrying the storyline forward.

Sometime films are made for entertainment but it is often affecting women's intelligence and dignity. The interest in films taken by feminists raised from the under-representation and misrepresentation of women in cinema.

There is a fundamental transformation in role of women in modern India with the gradual change in

the perception of women in society and made great progresses towards equality in role in movies in recent decades. Way of portrait of women in cinema has been a major issue of debate in India. The complex and fascinating relationship between women and cinema has a substantial literature represent different aspects of women in Indian films.

Now modern India asks a few questions like how women are represented on screen, how women's issues are treated in cinema, what does feminism mean to film-makers, what is the role of women film-makers and women writers in depicting women's issues through cinema. Also how are the women portrayed and feminist critique of cinema has helped to view the reality presented by cinema in a different way and thus has contributed significantly to the position of women

Men in most societies were seen as breadwinners while role of women was restricted to being a good homemaker and a good mother. This applies to women in a highly patriarchal society of India. As societies entered the world of modernization, the role of women changed dramatically. Media played an important role in the modernization of societies and greatly affected the image of women in today's modern world. A number of researches have been done on the role of women in different societies. However little has been said about the importance of films in portraying women in shifting roles over different decades and the impact it has on societies in general. Over past decades, Indian cinema has witnessed a significant transformation in the way women are portrayed through films. Contemporary films portray women as more independent, confident, and career oriented. This article deals with these fast changing role of women portrayed in Indian cinema and its influence on the patriarchal Indian society with a focus on some representative Bollywood films. The aim is to link the changing character played by women in films with the emerging status of women in India, as films are a reflection of changes in the social structure.

The Indian film market gets 90% of its revenue from non-English language films, mostly in Hindi followed by South Indian and other regional language films. The CRISIL Research (2010) projects that the industry is expected to grow from US\$3.2 Billion to 2010 to US\$ 5 Billion by 2014. Since this industry contributes a lot to the business and the society, it is interesting to see the changing trends in Bollywood from the past to the present time. The paper will start with a focus on the reasons Mumbai was chosen as an important city for film production. The next

section provides a brief history of Bollywood and the rise of well-known Bollywood stars. The later section will analyze the changes taken place since 1940s followed by a focus on women and their changing role in the Hindi cinema with reference to some specific films.

Review of Literature

Holtzhausen, Jordaan & North (2011) discuss the portrayal of women in South African television commercials. The purpose of the study on which the article is based was to identify current role portrayals of women in advertising on selected South African television channels. A sample of 245 commercials was content analyzed to determine how women are portrayed in advertising. The findings indicate that women are most often portrayed as product users, and least often as sex objects. In terms of product categories, women featured most often in advertising for personal care items and least often in sport-related commercials. Rational advertising appeals were most commonly used in commercials featuring women. HajiMohammadi (2011) analyzed television commercials with an emphasis on gender roles to decode the main elements of a dominant discourse (preferred readings) and representation mechanisms; and the elements' relationships with ideology, hegemony and power relations in reproducing a dominant discourse. Grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework of cultural studies and critical studies perspectives, the two-layer analysis is used in this paper – a semiotic and critical discourse analysis of television commercials with an emphasize on gender roles and ideology. The results demonstrate that the TV advertisements selected in this paper represent dominant gender relations and reproduce traditional values. Furthermore, these representations illustrate a contradiction between society and media in gender roles. In fact, dominant discourses of these advertisements indirectly raise values that reinforce traditional system of gender roles. The advertisements mainly represent gender roles of women in a traditional fashion. Therefore, there are contradictions between television advertisements and society. Consequently, the media, and television in particular, should present the real status and role of women along with an evolution of gender roles in the society.

Holtzhausen (2010) presents a content analysis of role portrayed by women in advertisements in selected South African media and found out various roles portrayed by women. The most prevalent role portrayal in magazine advertisements was that of physically decorative woman (27%), typified as woman that symbolizes the physical ideal. The less prevalent portrayal included career woman, home maker, mother, mannequin, romantic, sex object and

social being. The results also revealed that women are used as visual attention-attracting focus points in advertisements across a range of different products or service categories. The product category that most often featured women in both media was personal care products (41% for magazine advertisements and 26% for TV advertisements). Zimmerman (2008) discusses the sexual objectification of women in advertising. The study measures attitudes of young women to sexually objectified advertising. A survey combining elements of two previous studies (Ford, LaTour, and Lundstrom, 1991; Mittal and Lassar, 2000) was administered to 94 female undergraduates. Results show significant ($p < 0.001$) changes in attitudes of young, educated women. Respondents agreed females were portrayed as sex objects in advertisements, but were less offended by these portrayals than female respondents in 1991. Results also show females' attitudes toward the advertisement have little effect on purchase intention, a highly significant change from attitudes of women in 1991. Pillay (2008) discusses the portrayal of women in TV advertisements with to explore the ways that female characters are portrayed in South African advertising content and to compare this with how male characters are portrayed. This has been undertaken through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the advertisements in order to identify themes and patterns in the representation of women and men. The premise of this study is that female characters are stereotyped resulting in a limited view of women in advertising content. Upon examination of the advertisements it was found that female characters are still stereotyped and portrayed in line with traditional roles associated with women, while a more significant change was found in how male characters are portrayed. In conducting this analysis, this study highlights the importance of continued research in the field of gender studies as a means of measuring the media's representation of women against social change and development. Premchander, Smita and Vanguri, Pramila. (2007) presents a programme and policy review of micro-finance and women's empowerment. The Indian Government has paid special attention to women's empowerment, and both the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (NPEW) 2001, as well as the 10th Five Year Plan, illustrate its commitment to women's empowerment and welfare. Given a lack of employment opportunities for women, support for self-employment and women's enterprises came to be recognized as essential for releasing women's economic potential. Many NGOs have subsequently taken on the task of women's empowerment through micro-enterprises in recognition of the impact it can have on women, their families and poverty

alleviation. The Tenth Plan document defines different aspects of women's empowerment. Social empowerment aims to provide women easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services to enable them to realize their full potential. Economic empowerment aims to make all women economically independent through training, employment and income generation activities, allow women to enjoy not only the de-jure but also the de-facto rights and fundamental freedom at par with men in all spheres. Cultural parameters are not mentioned in the Tenth Plan but refer to the concept of empowerment in relation to respect of rights of indigenous people and inclusion of their knowledge and practices. The dimensions of power are not specifically considered but are important in the context of women's empowerment in India. These include women's collectivization and greater participation in the political processes.

Routray (2011), in her study, examines how the film plays a vital role in constructing social beliefs and circulating certain views and opinions in the minds of the people and society. Rural or urban, film's influence in portraying certain issues and things is inevitable. Films ability in dealing with gender equality and its analysis on gender dimension is also certain. But various studies related to gender studies and gender equality suggests that films fail to portray gender equality and uniformity in the films. The film remains partial in some status quo. And film needs to be responsible for providing a platform for the suppressed groups, then only they can maintain an equilibrium of social and gender fairness. Kunsey (2018), opines that roles for women and women characters are far below proportionality. He found that portrayals of women are much more positive in movies directed by women and that female directors frame female characters much more positively. These positive portrayals are largely affected by the presence of a critical factor behind the scenes. Female directors tend to hire more women in key roles and depict women in a more positive light than men. Pillai (2010), in her study, explains, even as a large number of women from the middle and working classes step out of their homes to make a livelihood, there is a visible hurry to get back and reemphasize their roles as mothers, wives and daughters-in-law as though to gain sanction and sanctimony for their further forays into the outer world. In this context, one can perceive an imperative need in Kerala's society today to look at and integrate representations of women, especially in the wake of knowledge of the problematic nature of representation itself, which can only be incomplete and partial interpretations rather than 'objective' description of 'reality'.

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