

DEPICTION OF WOMEN IN POST MODERN BOLLYWOOD MOVIES

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Abstract

This paper first defines the Origin of Hindi Cinema in India, and then analyzes the image of women portrayed in Hindi cinema between 1980's to 2000. The movies undertaken for this study include Rama RaoTatineni'sNasibApnaApna (1986), RajkumarSantoshi'sDamini (1993), Tanuja Chandra's Dushman (1998), and Kundan Shah's KyaKehna (2000). After this analysis conclusion will try to sort out the factors responsible behind these varieties of images of women constructed in Hindi cinema.

Key-words:*Depiction of women; postmodern Bollywood movies; origin; varieties; factors.*

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Origin of Hindi Cinema: Silent Era to Talkies/Theatres

When we heard lights, camera, sound, and action one word comes in front of our eyes is Cinema or film. Cinema is the powerful medium which touches millions of hearts in all over the World .Generally films are considered as the mode of expression and resistance but with the advent of globalization, changing lifestyles film industry has changed a lot. Indian cinema consists of films produced across India, which includes the cinematic cultures of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It was Lumiere Brothers who first introduced the art of cinema to the Indians. Inspired by *Life of Christ* an English film DadasahebPhalke got obsessed with the idea of making a film all by him on Indian soil. DadasahebPhalke is known as the Father of Indian cinema He made the first full length silent Indian cinema *Raja Harishchandra* based on a mythological character released in1913. In the formative years of cinema filmmakers showed the mythological and historical World to the viewers. In 1931 B.N.Sircar an Indian filmmaker founded the New Theatre's in Calcutta. P.C. Barua's*Devdas*based on Saratchandrachatterjee's novel*Devdas* was released under the banner of New Theatres in 1935. HimanshuRai one of the pioneers of Indian cinema, he is best known as the co-founder of the Bombay Talkies in 1934. 1934 was the year of Prabhat, New Theatres, and Bombay Talkies Film Company. Prabhat Film Company popularly known as Prabhat Films was an Indian film production company and film studios formed in Kolhapur, Maharashtra India in 1929 towards the end of silent films era by the noted film director V. Shantaram and others. This company produced fourty five films in both Marathi and Hindi language. V.Shantaram, Devki Bose, HimanshuRai, P.C. Barua, Nitin Bose, Master Vinayak ,SouharabModi,KhajaAhamad Abbas, Bimal Roy, RishikeshMukherjee,RajKapoor,Mrunal Sen. Etc. contributed a great to Indian cinema. V.Shantaram had strong belief that film carries the strength to change the minds of people in positive direction. He was the one of early filmmakers to realize the efficacy of the film medium as an instrument of social change and he used it effectively. V.Shantaram discussed women freedom issue through 1936 release *Amarjyoti* in which DurgaKhote played the role of dashing and courageous Queen Saudamini. His other films include *Kunku* (in Hindi as *Duniya Na Mane* 1937). In *Manoos* (Aadmi) he depicted the heroic struggle of a prostitute named Kesar who breaks the evil environment within which she is condemned to live. During this transition of Indian film industry from silent films to talkies Chimanlal Desai established Sagar Film and SagarMovietone Company.1938 was a landmark year in the history of Indian Hindi cinema as the industry celebrated its silver

Jubilee. This same year saw the outburst of Second World War. The political instability, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's influence on the youth all these came out as hot topics of discussion through films. Bombay Talkies released *Vachan*, *Bhabhi* and *Nirmala*. Many other filmmakers were also active like the Ranjit, Sagar, Minerva, etc. Noorjehan ruled the industry as one of the most popular singer during 1942-48. Her three films *Zinat*, *Gaon Ki Gori* and *Badi Ma* are well-known for Noorjehan's singing and acting talent. Director Bimal Roy discussed the contemporary issue Bengal famine through his short film *Bengal Famine* released in 1944. 1940-1950 this era was the era of great changes on the map of World and for India as well. India witnessed social, political, economic crisis. With newly formed National Studios Mehboob Khan released his three films *Aurat* (1940), *Bahen* (1941), and *Roti* (1942). After seventeen years Mehboob Khan remade *Aurat* as *Mother India* with Nargis in the lead role. In 1940 New Theatre was devastated by a major fire and suffered heavy loss. *Zindagi* was the last film of P. Barua for New Theatres. The world of Journalism was shown in Bombay Talkies 1941 release *Naya Sansaar*. Ardeshir Irani and J.F. Madan were the first to introduce the talkie era in Indian Cinema. After making 130 silent films Irani mastered the technology of sound and brought forth his masterpiece *Alam Ara* on 14 March 1931. He made nearly 120 talkies. In the quest to do something new in formative years filmmakers brought the genre of historical cinemas. Most of their creations were based on popular historical tales or semi historical situations. Sohrab Modi was an Indian Parsi stage and film actor, director and producer. Sohrab Modi introduced William Shakespeare's plays in India in a big way through Urdu adaptations his film version of *Khoon Ka Khoon* appeared in 1935 followed by *Pukar* (1939), *Sikandar* (1941), *Prithvi Vallabh* (1943) and *Jhansi ki Rani* (1953). His creations were invariably message oriented often taking up the cause of the oppressed people struggling to safeguard their sovereignty and freedom. His films centered on an overpowering theme in which all events including the love affair of the lead pair were subordinated to serve the main thrust of the film. His *Sikandar* was based on Second World War. After Marathi movie *Shejari* V. Shantaram left Prabhat in 1941. In this same year singer actor Mukesh entered in film industry in *Nirdosh* film. Kishor Sahu's *Sindoor* was released in 1947 it was about traditional Indian values and remarriage issue. Devika Rani left Bombay Talkies. Bombay talkies suffered through financial crisis. Ashok Kumar helped Bombay Talkies to come out of this crisis. In the history of Indian Hindi cinema 1950-60's is called as the Golden Era of Hindi Cinema. Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand are the superstars of this era. Chetan Anand and Dev Anand brothers launched Navketan Films Company in 1949 and the first movie of Navketan was *Afsar* released in 1950. This era is also known for the talented music directors like C. Ramachandra, Vishwas, Naushad, Sachin Dev Burman, Shankar Jaikishan, Madan Mohan, Hemant Kumar etc. In post independent era the themes of films shifted from mythological to issues like Indian freedom struggle, corruption, loss of values, humanity etc. Ashok Kumar launched Ashok Kumar Production Company in 1953. In this same year *Footpath* released which thrown light on the problems like black money and loss of values. Gurudatt famous actor and director established his own film Company. *Aar Paar* was the first release film of Gurudatt's film company. Bimal Roy's *Naukr* talked about unemployment. 1955 was the year of *Aazad*, *Devdas*, *Mr. and Mrs. 55*, *Shri 420*, *Seema*, *Zanak Zanak Payal*, *Baaje* movies. Amiya Chakravarti's *Seema* is memorable film which deals with a young girl's shattered life. 1950-60's era is called as the Age of innocence.

Today Bollywood has come up with many new trends ideas; adaptation borrowed from the Hollywood or the west. The very basic aspect of any film is it talks about certain issues. And right from formative to postmodern era of Hindi films this list of issues and their presentation on screen has undergone through many changes. And the image of women is a part and parcel of this change. The films undertaken for this study belongs to 1980's to 2000 era.

Rama Rao Tatineni's *Nasib Apna Apna* (1986) is the remake of 1982 Tamil film *Gopuranga Saivathillali*. It's a story about Chandu an innocent village girl who does not look beautiful especially her hairstyle makes her look ugly. She gets married with Kishan. Kishan's father and Chandu's father are close friends. Kishan's father took this decision of marriage without his son's consent. Kishan hates Chandu for her dark and less mannered behavior. Somehow Kishan manages to escape from Chandu. Kishan lives a happy life with his beautiful second wife Radha. Chandu finds that her husband married another woman and this same woman Radha unaware about this fact keeps Chandu as a maid in her house. Here in this film woman is portrayed as a typical ideal submissive wife of a disloyal husband. The wife in the role of Chandu tolerates all this hatred of her husband and sings a song in praise of her disloyal husband as *bhalahaiburahai jaisabhihaimerapatimeradevatahai...* (Good or bad whatever but my husband is my God)

Tanuja Chandra's *Dushman* (1998) is a psychological thriller film which is a remake of Hollywood film *Eye for an Eye*. In this film we meet two women in the role of twins called as Sonia and Naina Sehgal. Unfortunately Sonia becomes the victim of Gokul's lust. Gokul is a cold blooded killer and rapist. Gokul rapes and kills Sonia. And now onwards starts the journey of a shy Naina to overcome her weaknesses and take revenge of her sister's killer Gokul. Suraj Singh Rathod a blind military veteran helps Naina. He trains her physically and mentally to stand against Gokul. Finally Naina shoots Gokul. When a girl is raped and killed her brother or husband takes revenge which is very traditional Indian framework of society and films but here a sister takes revenge. This film gives a noble message to every woman that doesn't run away from problems; be strong independent and fight against injustice.

Rajkumar Santoshi's *Damini* (1993) film is all about a woman's struggle to fight against injustice. The praiseworthy point about this film is a woman supports another woman for a noble cause 'justice'. After Damini's marriage in a wealthy family Damini's brother-in-law rapes Urmi their maid servant and Damini becomes the eyewitness of this crime. Damini takes side of maid servant and stands against her family. A drunkard ex advocate named Govind helps her to reach her aim.

Kundan Shah's *Kya Kehna* (2000) deals with a premarital pregnancy issue. This is a good lesson for young generation. *Kya Kehna* is a story of a girl named Priya who is the loved daughter in her family. In Indian culture premarital pregnancy is an act against culture and if a girl becomes pregnant before marriage her parents ties her into the bond of marriage or aborts the child. Priya defies the Indian culture as she got pregnant before marriage. She decides to give birth to her child. The way this issue handled in this movie raised lot of controversy from critics and people. Priya can be taken as a lesson by young girls. Instead of

seeking support from parents girls should follow the proverb 'prevention is better than cure'. And they should do this not for the sake of social norms, culture, and traditions but for their own welfare. This film shows that after becoming pregnant girl looks for help from family and society and defends her pregnancy. All this sounds very good but reality differs from what appears on screen.

Thus after this brief study the common factors comes into limelight are Director's vision, Indian social framework, traditional norms, viewers demands works behind these different types of construction of women in films. All these factors are linked together. Now it's our choice what we want change through entertainment or mere entertainment. Through Dushman producer Pooja Bhatt and director Tanuja Chandra has given a new vision to every viewer that it's a need of hour to prepare your child to face all kinds of situations of life.

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