Male Representation in Female Oriented Movies a Study Focused on Parched and Lipstick under My Burkha

P.P. Amrutha, R. Priyamvada and S. Dineh Babu

1Dept of Visual Media & Communication, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Kochi, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.

amruthasreekumar33@gmail.com

2Dept of Visual Media & Communication, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Kochi, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.
priyamvadararur@gmail.com

3Dept of Visual Media & Communication, Amrita School of Arts & Sciences, Kochi, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.
dineshbabuasas@gmail.com

Abstract

Film is a medium that consciously communicates to a mass with or without direct intervention. From story to cast, every single attribute of a film can influence, inspire or educate the audience. Along with popular and parallel cinema, there is an implicit existence of female centric cinema or feministic cinema which is a marginalized genre in Bollywood. These special kind of movies are well treated by its directors for characterization and storytelling. This imaging was well portrayed by the female directors when focus on masculine issues in their movie.

This study will give a scope towards discussing out the portrayal of culture, tradition among masculine and feminine traits in contemporary society through cinema. This study states out the problem to identify with two famous movies named 'Parched' and 'Lipstick Under my Burkha' with a qualitative approach. Negative and positive traits on masculine characters are also seen through these movies, which give an enormous
input to the area of research on masculine and feminine studies. This research is mainly focus on screening out the need of study on masculine influence on female oriented movies and the impact created in those movies by their representation. This Paper also focuses on the identification of male representation pattern and the negative impact of it on the society due to the incomplete of non-restoring storyline in these movies.

Though Bollywood is not the only industry in Indian cinema, it is still the most popular one with more than thousand releases per year. When female oriented films mix up with offbeat cinema, a box office hit expectation will be substituted with critical appreciation. Masculinity is considering as the quality of manliness, habits and traits that the society considers to be appropriate for a man. Masculinity in feministic movies is not a much discussed in recent research by the researchers in the area of film studies.

Key Words: masculinity, feminism.
1. Introduction

Film is considering as one of the powerful medium to communicate things with others. Indian Cinema is the mixture of different language films and it always tries to describe varieties of themes. Female oriented movies are one among them. Usually it portrays the situations of women in a patriarchal society. Male representation in female oriented movies is not a much-discussed topic in our society as well as in the genre of film studies. Women oriented movies always portrays male characters negatively and creates a kind of bad impression on people. This less discussed issue of male representation on female centric movies is analysed in this study. The female oriented movies are one of the sub genres of Cinema. Female centric movies, which designed appeal to female audience, are usually categorised in this section. Films by female directors, which mainly focusses the story of strong independent women or the story of suppressed women, is another area of this genre. Some female oriented movies describe the desire a dream of women and some will have women- centred narratives and female protagonists. The narrative patterns depend on sacrifice, diseases, choice competition and so on. Apart from the male dominated films, a section addresses how there is nothing shameful about a women’s need for sex or ownership of her own body. These films portray women's concerns such as problems revolving around domestic life, the family, motherhood, self-sacrifice, romance, etc. Most of these movies will have female protagonists.

Male characters always considered as negative in almost all female oriented movies. They always treated as ‘villian’ (antagonist). Male characters use women to fulfil their physical and mental desires. Why creators of film follow this? This study is going to discuss why male characters treated always as negative.

This study selected two famous movies, which has made so many controversies because of their powerful structure. They are,

1. Parched (2015, directed by LeenaYadav)

2. Lipstick Under My Burkha (2017, directed by AlankritaShrivastava)

The film ‘Parched’ (2015) tells the tale of four women from four different stratus of life who resides in the desert village of Rajasthan, infected by social evils like superstitions and practices of patriarchy. ‘Lipstick Under My Burkha’(2017) is about the story of four women and their dreams which remains hidden from the society. It makes their desires seems like an adventurous trip. Here the ‘lipstick’is the symbol of their dreams and desires and the patriarchal society is the ‘burkha’.

The similarity of both of these films areabout not only the bold female protagonists but also the spineless sexually obsessed male characters. They represent the existing Indian patriarchal society. Abusing a woman verbally,
physically, mentally and sexually considered as their privilege of being a man. This trend of male representation shows a terrifying trend, which may result in unintentional imitation by the mass.

2. Literature Review

Film is one of the powerful medium to communicate with the all dimensions of society. It is an art form, that accepted by any kind of people in society. Indian cinema is the mixture of different language film and themes. Female oriented movies are one among them. Usually it portrays the situations of women in a patriarchal society. Women oriented movies always represents woman as a symbol of emotional power. The characters are emotionally strong enough to prevent the issues in life.

Women oriented movies always portray male characters negatively and vice versa. Female representations. Female representation in male oriented movies is a much discussed topic but male representation in female oriented movies is not that much discussed topic.

So many scholars were discussed how film represents male and female. Previous research papers, articles, journals regarding this topic have been critically viewed.

Men’s superiority to women is a tenet of the world’s main monotheisms, although the major religions also include countervailing tendencies that value women’s spiritual capacities and delimit male power and authority. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle portrayed women as naturally men’s inferiors in terms of reason. In the long educational and philosophical tradition that venerated his authority, masculinity was thus rendered both invisible and normative: Feminist theories have been shaped by women’s changing place in contemporary societies, and these theories have sometimes proved effective in changing both men’s and women’s consciousness and conditions (Judith Kegan Gardiner, men, masculinity, and feminist theory).

Inequality between the genders is a phenomenon that goes back at least 4,000 years (Lerner 1986). Although the forms and ways in which it has been practiced differ between cultures and change significantly through history, its persistence has led to the formulation of the concept of patriarchy. Key to patriarchy is what might be called the dominant gender ideology toward sexual differences. These differences are used to justify a gendered division of social roles and inequality in access to rewards, positions of power, and privilege. (Reading: Feminist Theory)

Through her studies Jonetta Lauren Lagamba stated that, women have been portrayed with the typical identities of emotionally and physically weak characters, this portrayal led to their subsequent dependence on man. Not only films advertisements, billboards and other media also promoting film often
Though women’s identities in film are continually changing, it leads to unstable conclusions about women’s personalities. In contemporary cinematic production and research, the viewer is often concerned with scholarly investigation of the extensive work that produces a film, this include determining how the character’s identities are formed (Jonette Lauren Lagamba, Shaping Identity: Male and Female Interactions in Cinemas).

This study looked at a total of 72 of the top Hollywood films from 2012 for the larger film study. From selected 67 films from 72, 55 of the lead characters were male and only 12 were female. From this the study suggested that, the number of females includes the film in which we considered the gender role to be equal. This is a huge representation of women in the world, and especially in the media. This further proves that men still dominate the cinema and gender is continually misrepresented.

In addition to the instances where women are portrayed with positive characteristics, there were films that also allowed men to step outside the limited boundaries of normative male behaviour (Jeff Smith (GRD), Normalizing Male Dominance: Gender Representation in 2012 Film).

It took top 75 highest grossing films in the year 2015 as their sample. Through this study they identified that statistically, there were some minor improvement in the number of lead female character. In the 2015 film compared to the 2012 film study, there are several films with lead female characters that do not challenge dominant gender narratives and also there were some films with lead female characters that challenge the male dominant narrative. (Jeff Smith and Chloe Beingy, Normalizing Male Dominance: A Study in Gender Representation in 2015 Films)

Gender representation in media influences how people perceive gender issues since some specific gender roles uplift and strengthen the images of men. Movies clearly show the gender power structure where men are depicted as the stronger sex. Although some women in movies are portrayed as being strong and independent, they cannot dispute the evident gender power structure. It is interesting to note that there is less gender equality when it comes to gender representation in movies (FahadAlzahrani, The Portrayal of Women and Gender Roles in Films).

**Scope and Significance of the study**

This study discusses the positive and negative aspects of creating masculine characters and its domination over female characters in female oriented movies. It will open a platform of study to be added with real time contemporary society and changes among thoughts and masculinity and feminism. Women harassments in the society and in movies are also analysed to get a better solution for this problem faced by the women in the society. This study brings...
out the new scope on studying out the real problems in countries like India on portraying masculinity and the treatment in movies and society.

**Objectives**

The main objectives of this study includes

- To explore the masculine characters shown in Bollywood cinema
- To understand the nature of creation of male characters in female oriented movies
- To identify specific factors or elements involved in representing male characters in female oriented movies
- To bring out the cause and nature of masculine behaviour and effect on female in real life as like in movies.

**Research Questions**

1. What factors influence in creating those characters in the movies?
2. What kind of parameters is followed while showcasing the masculine characters in female oriented movies?
3. Whether this kind of masculine character developments affects the real life structure of women in the society?
4. What kind of influences or harassments is faced by women in those movies?
5. Whether this harassment is happening in real life because of portrayed on movies?

**3. Methodology**

This study selected two famous movies, which has made so many controversies because of their powerful structure. They are,

1. Parched (2015, directed by Leena Yadav)
2. Lipstick Under My Burkha (2017, directed by Alankrita Shrivastava)

This study discusses the negative representation of male characters and its domination over female characters in ‘female oriented movies. In addition, it focusses on the identification of male representation pattern in female oriented movies. This study analyses the mental and physical torturing, sexual and domestic violence which a woman faces in most of the rural areas of our country. In addition, it mainly focusses the arrogant and dominated nature of the males in the patriarchal society.
For this study, researcher used qualitative analysis to analyse their data. The analysis of selected movies is based on some variables. Each of the variables has some subfolders too. The study analyses the mental and physical torturing, sexual and domestic violence which a woman faces in a patriarchal society. And also do textual analysis of the movies to identify how male represents in the female oriented movies and how effectively present it to the audience. Qualitative analysis has used for the study.

**Main Variables**

1. Violent nature
2. Aggressive
3. Power holders
4. Treats women without respect
5. High sexual desires

It classified the characteristics of the main male characters of the two films. The classification is based on the plot and theme of the movies. There are 5 selected variables and each variable has number of sub variables.

**Hypothesis**

There is a specific way or representing male in female oriented movies with respect to the mental, physical and sexual abuse and domestic violence.

### 4. Findings

**Analysis of Lipstick Under My Burkha**

Within the period 00:21:00 to 00:30:00 character number 8Jaspal started the *physical violence* in the film by ‘mocking them’. After that this period shown the character of *high sexual desire* of men. The character number 4 Rahim Aslam seems sexually very active in face over active. From this period, we can identify that ‘he was always interested in sex’ because every night he had sexual intercourse with his wife without knowing her interest and desires. It may be because he has the thought that ‘sex is the symbol of masculinity’ somewhere in his mind. He only ‘experiences sex for just a physical need’.

The above mentioned high *sexual desire* variables are present in the period of 00:31:00 to 00:40:00 too. Number of violent natures are also there within this period. There are number of *violent nature* too in this period. The character number 6 Arshad has used ‘angry expressions or gestures’ and ‘blamed women in front of others’ to demotivate them in the public both mentally and physically. He ‘wasn’t ready to give support to his women’ because he has a dare that by giving her support, maybe she has a tendency to disobey his rules and all. The same character and the character number 4 Rahim Aslam ‘never gives respect to women’s feelings and rights’. The character number 5 Abidi shows *aggressive nature* in this period. He always dominated his wife and daughter by ‘being the boss’ and with his ‘commanding nature’. He has shown the *power holding nature* too. Just because he and the character number 4
Rahim Aslam has the ‘financial power’ they always dominate their women and disrespect all their rights and ‘actively seek superior and dominate position’.

The only character abuses women economically within the time period of 00:41:00 to 00:50:00 in the movie is character number 4 Rahim Aslam has ‘restricted his wife’s attempts to work’ when she was in the high level of her career. He was ‘not ready to give attention to her and her talks’. He has shown the aggressive nature too by ‘being the boss’ of the entire family with ‘commanding nature’.

The mental torturing of men in the film started within the time period of 01:01:00 to 01:10:00. Character number 7 has ‘lied’ to his girlfriend and cheated her for another girl. And had ‘sex and affair with another girl’ when he was in a relationship with his girlfriend. Another variable in this time period is high sexual desire. The character number 8 Jaspal seems ‘always interested in sex’ from his behavior towards an unknown woman whom he knows from telephone calls.

The time period of 01:21:00 to 01:30:00 starts with the violent nature of the character Abidi by ‘using angry expression and gesture’ towards his daughter to disrespect her feelings and rights to wear jeans pants instead of burkha. The character number 7 Dhruv has showed this nature by ‘having affair with another girl’ when he already has girlfriend. The character number 5 Abidi has showed the aggressive nature by ‘being the boss of the family’ and also showed the power holding nature by dominating the family with ‘financial power’.

Analysis of “Parched”

Within the time period of 00:21:00 to 00:30:00 the second character of the film Manoj has shown some violent nature towards his wife. He has ‘mocked’ his wife, ‘restricted her attempts to work’, ‘disrespected her feelings and rights’ ‘slapped’ her so many times to obey his demands and kicked her.

In the period of 00:31:00 to 00:40:00 the youngest character that means the character number 1 Gulab has shown the aggressive nature of a man. He always dominated his child wife by ‘being the boss’ because he was the only men in his family. Even though the family is run by his mother he always thought that a woman can’t be the head or boss of the family. The same character has shown high sexual desire too in this period. He always used his sexual fantasies to prove his masculinity. He has considered sex as the symbol of masculinity. He ‘wasn’t ready to gives importance to the sexual desires of his wife’. In this period, he ‘experiences sex as just a physical need’ and was ‘always conscious about his self-satisfaction’.

There were a ‘rape’ attempt too in the period of 01:01:00 to 01:10:00. The character number 1 has raped his own wife just to dominate her sexually without knowing her needs or satisfaction. And in this same period he has tried to ‘prevent his mother from talking to her friends’. The second character had
slapped his wife many times in this period whenever he is angry to her and whenever he has drunk.

There are countless number of violent nature in the film Parched with in the time period of 01:31:00 - 01:40:00. The male characters used the muscle power to dominate the women with in this period. They have used ‘slapping’, ‘grabbing’, ‘kicking’, ‘choking’, ‘throwing things’ and all to show their power. The youngest character Gulab and the second character Manoj has done these activities within these time period.

5. Discussion

Why male is always considered as negative in female oriented movies? This research paper is about the male representation in female centric movies. After watching and analysing the two movies which selected as samples for this research, we have reached in the conclusion that both the movies are portraying the male characters negatively.

In the analysis of parched we can see that the 3 major male characters are cruel in nature. Physical violence like punch, slap and all are mainly used by the male characters to dominate women. The youngest male character, Gulab seems very dangerous in the movie. His age and behaviour are not linking each other. He is just 17 years old with high sexual desires. He has got married to a 15-year-old girl and abuses her for his sexual satisfactions. And also he approaches prostitutes for his sexual needs by cheating his wife. Another character, Manoj who plays the character of the husband of RadhikaApteis also portrayed negatively. He hides the fact that he is a barren and always blames his wife for this. This is a common courtesy in our society... Men always blames women even for their faults also.

Lipstick under My Burkha has more male characters. We can identify almost all male characters are dangerous in this film. Characters from this film have included under almost every variable. The character number 5Abidi dominates his daughter and she puts a burkha on her dreams and desires. He seems a traditional Muslim man who always wants his daughter to be an obedient girl. He suppresses her right wear whatever she wants and he slaps her for every mistakes. Character number 4 Rahim Aslam is also dominating his wife for his needs and deeds. His sexual desires are very high. Apart from others Rahim Aslam seems more dominated in the movie. But the section of 'high sexual desires' have most of the characters from the film. So we can say that the film portrays or shows the men with high sexual desires. And the same character Rahim Aslameems very aggressive in nature. Both the movies highly picturizing the brutal side of male characters.

From one extend this is the real face of oursociety. The mind set of our society is influence the creation of these kind of characters in the films. Even our society and culture is changed, but people’s mind set will never change. “Since
the outset of film, women have been portrayed typically as physically and mentally weak. (JoNette Lauren LaGamba, Shaping Identity: Male and Female Interactions in Cinema). The system of Patriarchy is always leading in the structure of society. To some extend these kind of masculine character or the patriarchy system is effects the life of women badly. Because of the influence of films, sometimes physical and mental harassment that shows in film is happening in the real life. “This diminutive concept may suggest emotional problems for women viewing film, as it promotes a situation that may cause some viewers to identify with these insipid characters” (JoNette Lauren LaGamba, Shaping Identity: Male and Female Interactions in Cinema). We can see so many incidents in real life that effect the security of women with in the family or society. These type films help women to be strong. “Going beyond the stereotypes will do a great support to the cause of women in Indian society. It must begin a quest for social change through entertainment” (NidhiShendurnikarTere, Gender Reflection in Mainstream Hindi Cinema). But sometimes these kind of films may cause bad impression on people. “Moreover, due to their great impact on youth’s attitudes, they can depict certain social groups in negative and unrealistic manner. As a result, the reflection of a real world is incomplete and distorted”. (WolskaMalgorzata) Our next generation may generalize men with these bad characteristics or behaviour, because new generation is very much attached with film.

6. Conclusion

Through this paper, it analysed that male is always portrayed as negative in female oriented movies. From the selected movies we can understand that woman is always treated merely as an object to satisfy their needs. Physically, mentally economically, sexually men abuse women. In female oriented movies women tries to protect themselves from the struggle but men didn’t support her. Because of that men are considered as antagonist in female oriented movies. It becomes a stereotype in film making. It gives a negative image to the society. In this era all arts forms, literature even government are supporting and considering women as major. But some films are continuing the same tradition of film making. Our next generation may generalize men with these bad characteristics or behaviour. These characteristics of film may cause so many issues in society, like rapes, violence, family problems etc… men believe that these are the symbols of masculinity… Women should be under control of them and all. But give respect to women is the real symbol of masculinity. When it analysed the results we can see that the objectives of this research is matching with the result. Aim of the study is successful when it compared with the results. So we can say that “male characters are always portrayed as negative in female oriented movies”.

2820
References


[7] TakurTanul, "Lipstick Under My Burkha is About Desires, Mostly Unfulfilled"


