

Do changes in the way women are portrayed in Indian films
since the 1950s until present day lead or follow changes in
social attitudes towards Indian women and their role in
society?

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Abstract

Ever since its inception, the media of film has captured the attention and excitement of humans all around the world. Apart from the aesthetics or the pleasure of following the narrative, films can reveal a lot about the societies and the people who create them, it is often stated that ‘films are a reflection of society’. The way certain characters are portrayed often tells us about the director’s or the societal attitudes towards those characters. However, this isn’t always completely true. Although the characters seen in movies are never created in social vacuums, they are complex processes and do not simply reveal sets of societal beliefs and attitudes about the pertinent contents of the films. The degree to which films reflect society varies on a case by case basis.

This thesis grapples with exactly that, it attempts to determine whether the changes in the portrayal of women in Indian cinema, from the 1950’s until the present day, lead or follow changes in social attitudes towards women and the roles of women in Indian society. To answer this, the study employs films from various decades in chronological order and analyses the ways in which the female characters in those films are portrayed, and whether they reflect the social attitudes towards and the role of women at the time. A variety of perspectives such as feminism, structuralism, gender theory, and political anthropology are all drawn upon to aid in understanding and analysing the portrayal of women in Indian films. Some participant observation has also been carried out as part of this thesis to provide a range of perspectives when analysing the films.

The analysis demonstrates that there has been a complex and reciprocal relationship between the depiction of women in Indian films over the last half century and the evolving roles played by women in Indian society. Films have been a powerful means of influencing social attitudes, but patriarchal customs and traditions remain strong in many respects, and this continues to leave its imprint upon the way women are portrayed.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This study will examine the portrayal of women in Indian Cinema since the 1950's until the present day and will consider whether the depiction of female characters in films leads or reflects changes in attitudes towards Indian women and their role in society. I have categorized my findings with the strict perception of viewing the report politically from a feminist point of view, encompassing the representation of women in Bollywood from the 1950's to the present day. The structure of the following discussion will follow watching a series of films ranging from the years given, *Umrao Jaan*, *Pakeezah*, *Salaam Namaste*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, *Baabul*, *Mother India*, *Kal Ho Na Ho*, *Paadmavat*, *Firebrand*, *Mom*, *Kabhi Alveda Na Kehna*, *Kya Kehna*, *Prem Rog*, *Zanjeer*, *Queen*, *Mom* and *Khoon Bhari Mang*. Only a few of the films will be referenced that will examine the creativity in the production of them and how they each have changed and progressed during the display of films being watched. By looking at it from a political anthropological way, it enables me to assess the theme from Butler's perspective on gender performance and Foucault's discourse analysis. The analysis also makes links with different aspects of women, such as women characters in these films being portrayed as traditionalists, as submissive and exploring docile bodies in reference to Foucault (1991). I am analysing the representation of women and if it follows or leads social attitudes towards women and their role in society through film and politically in a timeline which will reference Hayward's feminist film theory section of her book 'Key concepts in Cinema Studies'. During this period, social change was prominent and significant, and the relationship between this and the public audience will be explored in terms of the effect these films had on public perceptions. It was not until the decade of the 80s that there was, in the film industry, a great shift in women characters, demonstrating a breaking out of their shell, being independent and having the chance to play the part of the protagonist in the plot, thereby rising above the traditionalist perception of Indian films. The 'woman' has had to study her own individuality and has come to terms with the form of 'self-actualization'.

By exploring the political anthropological perspective of gender using Foucault (1991) and incorporating it in Bollywood films, it creates the impression that gender issues are undervalued by the masses. With this, I will be combining Foucault's ideas to Butler's concept of gender performativity which will be highlighted in the discussion below. According to Butler, "Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance" (Butler, 2007). She is arguing that gender roles are constructed by norms of

society. This will be embedded throughout the discussion of female characters in Bollywood films.

Layout

The individual chapters of this report are laid out in a chronological order, in accordance with each decade that I reference. Each section concerning film analysis contains a combination of film analysis and a comparison with the social climate of the time.

Methodology chapter discusses the fieldwork I carried out and the methods I used, as well as some relevant personal background information about the author to provide some context.

The 50's chapter talks about the film *Mother India* (1957) which was heavily reliant on representing the united nation of India especially as it was the decade of post independent India and Indian film cinema ensured, it also created a close link between the female and the nation of India.

The 70's and 80's chapter examines the shift in portrayal of female characters in Bollywood cinema and explores its ill-effects of living within a strict patriarchal society.

The 90's and 00's chapter primarily explores the globalisation of media and film and considers the diaspora of Indian society.

The 'Theory' chapter discusses Foucault's political theory about Biopower which I efficiently utilise alongside discussing Butler's theory and discussions on gender performance which is implied throughout the discussion of female characters and how gender roles are constructed by societal norms.

The Conclusion chapter is my conclusion and final insights into my dissertation report.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

I am the sole researcher for the following purpose of the dissertation document. The reason that steered me into the feministic perspective of key concepts in Indian Cinema was partly due to my upbringing in India. I am an Indian female who was born and raised in the town of Shillong, Meghalaya located in the North-eastern region of India. I come from a tribe, speaking the ‘mon-khmer’ as my mother tongue, family of Austroasiatic language ‘Khasi’ (Riccio et al. 2011, p. 405). I grew up in an Indian household, watching Bollywood films and serials, even though it was sometimes difficult to understand the Hindi language; however, I thoroughly enjoyed the vibrancy of the drama the film production portrayed through the films. My interest in looking specifically at the portrayal of women (in film and amongst the Indian public), however, was propelled by my exploration of feminism in Western society when my family and I moved to England seven years ago. This included the strong feminine culture and the portrayal of strong empowering women that I encountered through experiencing the freedom of expressing oneself; it was also through the opportunity of studying and reading books about feminist culture by exploring the works of scholars such as Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir, Sarah Ahmed and more. Having experienced first-hand what growing up as an Indian woman involves, and watching how females are treated in India, had a huge impact on how I view the world today. With the background of going through typical ‘male gaze’ experiences, I am more informed in relation to Bollywood films which, historically, have had a high tendency to create a ‘weak female’, contributing to the concept that the films are a reflection of the society that creates them.

As a researcher I would be disingenuous if I did not mention the difference between the society in which I grew up, compared to most of the society of other regions in India. The North-Eastern region of India, with which I am most familiar through growing up there most of my life, is distinctive in many ways compared with the rest of India. In particular, the role of women in the North- East is very different from that in most of India, the main reason being the matrilineal system which is found amongst the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya.

“In matrilineal systems, individuals belong to the family group of their mother. Women retain membership in their own groups after marriage, and generally continue to live among their matrikin, practicing matrilocality.” (Peters-Golden, 2002, p.155).

This puts women at a slightly higher advantage in this society. Some of the main elements of this system consist of the youngest daughter inheriting the ancestral property; the youngest daughter looks after her elderly parents; if she marries, the husband lives in her home; the children take the surname of the mother not the father, which does not follow the norm of

the rest of the country. Lastly the maternal uncle plays an important role in their nieces' and nephews' lives, sometimes regarded as more important than the fathers' role.

This is entirely different from what tends to be portrayed in Bollywood films. The female is subjugated by the domination of male power over films and undeniably the patriarchal society is actively embedded within the cinematic experience. In the Bollywood films, as discussed the role of the woman is highlighted as an enigma in most storylines in film production and eventually the female character is used as a pawn, or an object of desire which makes the man the hero of the story and many more scenes of which encompasses the serenity of the female body as it is sometimes regarded as sacred and used to represent a united nation. However, because of the blatant active male discourse the role of the female character becomes nullified due to the male protagonist in a patriarchal society. This could arguably be discussed as an unsuccessful evaluation of the representation of women because Indian society has been and will always be concentrated around its class of societal patriarchal norms.

Constructing feminists theories parades around interchangeably similar ideologies which will introduce a "feminist canon" (Richardson and Robinson, 1994) therefore, instead of precise theories; the following discussion will incorporate discussions from both cinema studies and sections on feminist film theory, that are relevant for the chosen study from Hayward (1996).

Finally, when the time came to discuss topics of interest for my dissertation, I found myself immersing back into my childhood, experiencing Indian culture with my family contributed to finalising the two prominent memories of both worlds into one. Firstly, to try and incorporate Indian cinema and feminism which led me to construct an amalgamation that would interest me and simultaneously expand on more feminist research and theories; to finally guiding me to my dissertation title "Do changes in the way women are portrayed in Indian films since the 1950s until present day lead or follow/reflect changes in social attitudes towards Indian women and their role in society?" Formulating such a question allows participants, viewers and Bollywood film fanatics such as myself to offer a more global outlook onto the films. This has been achievable by gaining a western insight into the fieldwork I carried out by some participatory observation as part of the process in the fieldwork.

The fieldwork I carried out was not immersive as it was circulated around watching films. I followed a semi structured process of a gathering of 15 participants ranging from ages 20-25 which involved them coming together, twice a week, to watch films at my flat. According

to Robben and Sluka (2012), carrying out fieldwork today could be anywhere where human beings are present. This is the approach I have taken as my fieldwork, which required participants to make their way to my room which transformed into 'the field' every film session we had. The field can be illustrated as a spatial-temporal phenomenon by observing a living reality of how my room kept on transforming throughout the process of my fieldwork and how it is not just defined by its spatial quality, but it is also found to be defined through its temporal quality; the field is not just a place, but also the place at certain and specific times.

It is necessary to take the right steps to conducting research as discussed extensively in the methodology section but to reiterate my point, by participating and immersing yourself, in a way "the ethnographer learns what is required to become a member of that world" (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995).

The reason behind the decision of 'semi-structured' interviews was because it was crucial for me and for the participants to immerse ourselves into the culture of each film and comprehend the connotations being illustrated. I initiated this process by asking a couple of students around campus if they would be willing to participate in my project and we would all watch the films in my flat. The process was long as Bollywood films are much longer than Hollywood based films but nonetheless there was a successful level of attendance at every gathering. It involved watching 20 films in total which proved too many towards the end; however, this did lead to a very informed and well-rounded discussion during and after each film. Therefore, this provided me with some qualitative data towards my dissertation. The reason behind the above semi structured process contributed to the informal factor through the course of film watching as it permitted participants to feel comfortable and not to place limits on their thoughts and feelings following the films.

In addition, on the one hand, I successfully carried out a participatory observatory process on my fieldwork. Undertaking the process of participatory observation is important for Anthropology and especially for an undergraduate level anthropology dissertation. The purpose and importance of participant observation is highlighted to be a 'rite of passage' as part of fieldwork and without it, one really cannot be considered an anthropologist. (Davies, 2002).

It was necessary to carry out fieldwork for my chosen discipline, Anthropology; contributing to the participation-observation factor of the process which allowed me to design a flexible group size of varying participants. Having a variety of numbers of participants, for example a large group of participants, contributed different perspectives of the films alongside

creating richer understandings from each participant for the overall informal discussion. Within discussing women's issues surrounding the films, as a group we continued building this interpretation together, combining our views. (Davies, 2002). This helped the group to arrive at conclusions, alongside gaining a richer understanding of the films and the issues they revealed.

In relation to the different methods and approaches used to conduct this research, it is invaluable for fieldwork to incorporate the foundation and basis of participation-observation. Ingold, (2018) emphasises the importance of learning with other people instead of analysing them and emphasises the concept of working together and listening to what the participants' insights are. This reinforces the notion of gaining richer insights and understandings for the reason of implementing the aspect of interacting with people. This is further highlighted by maintaining the perception that "... the world is not the object of study but its milieu" (Ingold, 2018, p.6). A collected inference on gathering different notions of information is necessary to build or add "scholarly work that could be shared with wide varieties of people" (Pink and Abram, 2015).

Moreover, Ingold enables the concept of becoming one with your surroundings whilst learning about subjects and objects that can be observed as almost being tangible. It is critical "to pay attention to things – to watch for their movements and listen to their sounds – is to catch the world in the act, like riding the cusp of a wave ever on the point of breaking" (Ingold, 2018, p. 22). This is also highlighted as "Ethnographic research is based in and depends upon social interaction" (Davies, 2002, p. 78), thereby indicating that interaction in the field is a necessity for qualitative data.

However, on the other hand a large quantity of information was secondary analysis from previous research around the subject area; the techniques used for this approach involved reading around sources and collecting references along the way. This contributed to a richer understanding of the representation of women in India whilst linking them to the films watched alongside discussing the social political aspects of India at the different timelines.

Undertaking this method meant I would not have to be solely dependent on the data from the 'interviews'. It was necessary to watch the chosen films as they produced a variety of different representations of women varying from playing the character of a 'vamp' to that of a traditionalist. Somehow, the films always ended by portraying the men as the protagonist and concluded by depicting them as the hero (Ayob, 2008). It is important to note that the participants I chose were non-Indian and offered a range of 'western' concepts, this was significant as I was able to deduct what the selected participants felt about the films and

offered interesting perspectives on the representation of women in Bollywood. From that, I managed to pick up themes of the docile bodies from reading Foucault's theory on Biopower (1998), which led me to the decision to unfold the subject of women, in exploring representations of female characters in film. This study was then decided to be examined from a political anthropological view, and as mentioned, the rest of my research will be based on secondary analysis of previous research.

In a patriarchal country such as India, pivotal moments such as a woman being given the part to play the main character in a show or film are starkly significant as they represent change, equality and unity as a nation. This is necessary to note as during the production of the films according to their timeline, the social aspect of the nation is sometimes created as an illusion for the camera. Foucault (1991 and 1998) will be frequently used for reference to the power that is signified via the Bollywood films and explore the significance of his theories on such things as docile bodies, power dimensions, male discourse – in particular, the male gaze aspect of it. Therefore, I will be looking at this from a Foucault feminist theory aspect. Other than Michel Foucault, I will be using the works of Judith Butler on her discussions and theories about feminism and gender performance.

Through the basis of a social political point of view, the use of Foucault is starkly referred to frequently in discussing power and docile bodies which will be formulated naturally with the feministic and film studies theory to the following anthropological discussion of the representation of women in Bollywood and whether the actions reflect or lead changes socially in Indian society. These theories link to anthropology by contributing an analytical discussion of Feminist theory within cultures and how it relates to society as a whole, alongside demonstrating cultural discussions underlying gender class issues in different timelines. Therefore, these theories from Hayward are utilised here to link anthropology as an interdisciplinary approach to my ensuing research. (Hayward, 1996). For feminism to prevail, it is necessary to implement the "boundaries of sisterhood" (Richardson and Robinson, 1994)

A brief comment should be made about the problems between media representation of Bollywood films and what people actually think. In other words, art is a reflection of society, but it reflects certain viewpoints in that particular society (Hayward, 1996). Bollywood films are arguably made by wealthy people with healthier upbringings than most, which will in turn have as much impact on representations as what the rest of society thinks as the norm. This is reflected in the interpretation and depiction of the "idealization of femininity in India" which is "derived from upper-caste Hindu norms" (Khan and Taylor, 2018).

Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) describe three distinctive bodies, which are three ways we can analyse the body. They are the individual, social, and body politic. I will draw on the social body and the body politic because they are especially relevant for this study. I will, therefore, make use of these approaches to consider as part of comprehending the analysis of researching the representations of Indian women in Bollywood films found the discussion of the social body and body politic.

Douglas (1973 and 2003) explores the 'social body' which concerns the structure of body and society, and the body as a metaphor of society. Consequently, the body is a metaphor of social structure, hence the existence of rituals concerned with consuming food and the meticulous prescriptions concerned with excreta; these are related to the boundaries of society. In such a model, different body parts are likened to different castes in Indian society. For example, Brahmins, the highest caste, would represent the head whereas the lowest caste, also known as the untouchables, would be represented by feet.

The body politic relates to the way bodies are managed, organised and controlled which is the exact thing that Foucault discusses about bodies; exercising power itself on bodies and how it invests and controls the bodies through institutions. The following discussion will briefly explore the social body and I will explore to more extent, the third body – the body politic.

Literature Review

The most useful books, journals and articles that I have used for this study include:

Angela Ram, *'Consuming Bollywood: Gender, Globalisation, and Media in the Indian Diaspora'* (2014) talks about the Indian culture outside India and how this type of globalisation has peaked within the Indian diaspora in foreign lands. This was useful for my discussion as it talks about Indian audiences and how they generate the representations of women in films. It also has statements from interviews that helped me grasp a better understanding of how the 'western' themes that have been incorporated in some Indian films affected the audience members. The book demonstrates an amalgamation of different perspectives, showing how audiences from the Indian diaspora navigate identity and gender, and find a sense of belonging through Bollywood cinema.

Mary Douglas, *'Purity and Danger'* (2002) is mainly used to interpret the symbolism behind a woman's body. In this case, the discussion infers the representation of the body whilst deducing its language, presence and meaning in society. I use Douglas' theory on polluting and dirt to incorporate on an Indian women's sacred body

Michel Foucault, '*History of Sexuality 1: The Will to Knowledge*' (1998) helped inform me about the uses of biopower and how I could exploit the notion of power superbly with the belief of docile, weak and controlled bodies that are personified through women in Indian society.

Shakuntala Rao, '*The Globalisation of Bollywood: An Ethnography of Non-Elite Audiences in India*' (2007), talks about how Bollywood has become more globalised and how it is alienating some people in certain parts (especially the rural) of India today and favouring others, creating an elitism.

Judith Butler, '*Gender Trouble*' (2007), reveals that the construction of society is what makes gender roles in society. She discusses that having feminine or masculine features are not inherent in people, but the norms of society suggest otherwise because we are confined into a gender from the moment of birth, becoming and having to act either female or male. Butler furthers this ideology by demonstrating the performance that is rooted females and males, the cultural meaning of identity that comes with defining our gender is not necessarily true. There is an emphasises on society coercing gender roles to conduct specific gender acts or performances, which in this case will be examined by the actions of females in Indian society and through Bollywood films.

Chapter 3 – the 50's

Context

Roles of women in the 1950's

The 50's were a decade where the focus for Indian society was the new introduction to independence, a complete brand-new age for India. The nation needed a sense of national unity and the cinema very much provided a framework to express post-colonial Indianness; "therefore, from its very inception, cinema was engaged in defining a cultural identity that was Indian in its allegory, shape and form" (Rao, 2007, p.58). This highlights the argument that cinema is viewed as paving the way forward for society and is portrayed via the films that show great change as they progress through the decades.

Through analysing political anthropological perspectives on gender in Bollywood films, the emphasised and highlighted themes pertain to the apparent aspects that are portrayed in Indian films, especially during the 50's. It was at this time that the representation of women was initially highlighted as consisting largely of docility and weakness, but such roles for women were increasingly foreseen to be universally challenged by Indian society.

By the 1950's the Indian Cinema had already become very well established, especially as part of the social fabric. The discussion to follow will explore the representation of women characters in the films and its authenticity, and will explore how women in Indian society are treated through a political anthropological lens. Throughout the decade of the 50's, India celebrated post-independence which meant that the nation was no longer under British rule but an independent nation. Arguably, this meant that members of Indian society were filled with gratitude and the minority of upper-class women were trying to show the rest of the world a nation and country of which they were proud, and were taking pride in that. This will be later discussed further as part of the ideology of 'nation building' (Ganti, 2004).

It is undoubtedly palpable to state that the role of the female character is "governed by social norms" (Habib, 2017, p.69). This entails playing roles such as the quiet daughter, being in the kitchen helping cook food, having to go through an arranged marriage by her father and agreeing to marry a strange man he chooses for her. Abina Habib (2017) continues to discuss how the representation of Bollywood women is "based on Manichean dualism", where the characters are "presented as one-dimensional", meaning the characters they play are portrayed as either 'good' and righteous, or 'bad' and morally deprived, with no space in between to add nuance to the characters.

The film chosen to watch from this decade was the 1957 classic '*Mother India*'. This is an iconic and very popular movie in the history of Indian cinema and is laden with rich nationalistic symbolism which permeated not only Indian cinema but also many other aspects of society (Ram, 2014). The film is centred around Radha who plays a peasant woman; she presents herself as a strong symbol of honour, light and purity of post-colonial India. The story follows Radha's nuptials, which have put her and her husband in instant debt, and the lender demands high sums of interest and in turn they agree to sell off their land and cattle to pay off their debt. An unfortunate farming accident involved her husband losing both his arms; he soon afterwards leaves his family and village because he is ashamed and feels hopeless. This therefore leaves Radha to fend for herself and her two sons by working endless hours on the farm. The evil character of the moneylender invites the struggling Radha to become his wife, but she refuses in order to keep her chastity and honour. At this point, Radha has lost two sons already and raises her remaining two, one of whom grows up to be very vengeful of their family's suffering from the moneylender and devotes his life to seeking revenge. Radha promises the lender that her resentful son would not hurt him or his family but shortly afterwards her son finally kills the moneylender and kidnaps his daughter. Radha then shoots her own son, who dies in her arms. The story follows a strong independent woman which was unlikely during the 1950's but the character prevailed in every opportunity. Despite the losses of three children, she was honourable and sacrificial for her village and country towards the end.

The story of Radha's character supersedes the ethos of the typical Bollywood film, which, in keeping with society's norms outside the film industry was very different from the story portrayed in this film. Indian patriarchal society during the 1950s was centred around men, from politics and finance to playing the protagonist roles in films. It was a time when dowry acts were still actively practised, women had no voice in the matters of healthcare, careers, education or anything that was relevant to their well-being. However, in matters of the social context in Indian society, the passing of the Sharda Act was highlighted, in reference to women's issues in India. The act was intended to raise the age limit to eighteen years old concerning child marriage for girls, nonetheless, this did not stop child marriage in many other Indian states, especially in the Northern region of India.

Ram (2014) argues that there is a strong link, especially in this early post-colonial era, between the female body and the body of India as a nation; the purity and sanctity of the female body is intertwined with the purity and sanctity of the nation of India. The advertisement for the film '*Mother India*' on a pamphlet for international media stated that the Indian woman is "an altar in India" (Ram, 2014).

“Indians measure the virtue of their race by the chastity of their women, and the Indian mother is the nucleus around which revolves the tradition and the culture of age” (Ram, 2014, p. 116).

The character Radha plays the role of ‘Mother India’, which is in alignment with the nation’s new political status of independence. The film is a “strong political statement on a woman who can do anything to establish that justice has been done even while remaining within the framework of marriage and motherhood” (Chatterji, 2010, p. 1). The given nature of the film sets boundaries that have not been met by society; it signifies the strength and sanctity of a nation which is reflected starkly on the role of the woman in Indian society. The divine nature of Mother India as a nation is mirrored by the woman’s actions. The character Radha pushes society’s limitations by physically embodying being the ‘mother’ by shooting her son after his disobedience in order to stabilise the “honour of a woman of the village” (ibid).

As demonstrated by Ram’s (2014) interpretation of the symbolism of the film, it is evident that there is a relationship between the woman and sacredness of the nation. The structuralist perspective of Douglas (1973) enriches our understanding of this symbolic relationship, by arguing that there are certain structural relationships between the body and society; the boundaries and relationships in and of the body are a metaphor for the relations and boundaries of society. Thus, the structure of the body is intimately linked to the structure of society (Douglas, 1973). What follows is that a woman’s body is observed metaphorically as the body of India, and so the boundaries of the female body symbolically correspond to the boundaries of India as a nation. This link between the female body and the nation helps us to understand the tremendous pressure that Indian women in this period underwent, as the post-colonial sanctity and purity of the nation depended on the sanctity and purity of the female body (Douglas, 1973) and (Ram, 2014).

In her book, *Purity and Danger*, Douglas (2002) argues that we cannot understand purity without understanding rituals concerning orifices and other bodily boundaries, as they are the key to understanding the notions of purity and pollution. Douglas (2002) argues that humans understand the world by classifying and structuring it, both physically, but more importantly mentally. Society, the body, and personal and cultural conceptions of the world are closed systems of structured categories that have boundaries, thus necessarily implying that there are things that are inside of those boundaries (those that adhere to the system), things that are outside of the boundaries (those that do not adhere), and things that are on the margins; those that are ambiguous (Douglas, 2002). The core argument is that the idea that ‘dirt’ is essentially “matter out of place”, in other words, it is a mixing of categories that are

culturally or personally deemed not suitable to be mixed; for example, putting shoes on a table might be considered 'dirty' because it is mixing two categories that shouldn't be mixed, whereas putting them in a designated spot on the floor wouldn't be considered 'dirty' (Douglas, 2002). Pollution is therefore an act of introducing something into a context which compromises and problematizes the structural integrity of the system (Ibid).

Because post-colonial Indian society is based on strict categories such as heterosexual marriage and sex restricted to married couples, and the female body is seen a symbol of the nation, the strict nature of the way Indian women are socially pressured to act becomes obvious (Strubel and Josiam, 2016). Because of the intimate link between the body of the female and the nation, women who transgressed socially prescribed gender roles or conducted themselves in a more openly sexual manner would be seen as problematising the hegemonic categories that the Indian nation is based on, and would also be seen as weakening the boundaries of the nation of India, potentially allowing polluting influences to enter their bodies, and thus symbolically polluting the Indian nation itself; from the perspective of a society with strict categories, the liberalization of the female body is symbolically linked with the idea of a nation with open borders. The body of the female has to be modestly dressed and chaste, thus being very controlled since the Indian society and culture believe that when a woman is being more liberal in the way she conducts herself; she is henceforth potentially opening herself up to things that can be seen as polluting and dangerous. For example, sex before marriage - the symbolic nature of the act of physical penetration would not only be breaking physical boundaries between humans but can also be denoted as also breaking the symbolic boundaries between heterosexual marriage and rules concerning sex. In this instance, it would concern the actions of sexual relations outside the confinement of marriage as everything has to be contained.

"...the portrayal of Indian women in Hindi films creates, produces, and reinforces women's roles in a strictly heterosexual and rigid fashion" (Habib, 2017, p.69)

To further discuss this issue, a relevant theme to mention is the gang rape incident that occurred in Delhi, India in the year 2012. This involved several men raping a student on the bus on her return from the cinema, which sparked protests after high-ranking lawyers defended the rapists. With such men working for the government in legal matters, the existing issues surrounding the nature of Indian women came into even sharper focus. The lawyers' attitudes were evident in that there were those who stated that "a woman is a flower" and is someone "who should stay indoors at night". If a girl leaves the house or is seen outside after the hours of 10 pm, it was said that this is an invitation to physically abuse and

assault her. The extent of the incident was not horrifying enough for AP Singh, a lawyer who displayed no emotion and stated that if his daughter or wife engaged in pre-marital activities and disgracing the family, he would pour petrol and set them on fire. This delusionality of gender-inequality is still actively embedded in the patriarchal system of India.

In relation to the social context at the time in Indian society when the country was trying to unify itself as a nation, observations are evident of a post-colonial/independent nation trying to establish itself as an independent and sovereign entity. Therefore, the production and portraying of films embrace the powerful stance of state media where the demonstration of women in Bollywood at the time were characters with purity; as shown in the embodiment of Mother India. The nation used media to portray a sense of sophistication by their representation of women characters with slightly more upper-class standards. For some, the trend of a sense of 'purity and morality' is integral to female roles and to Indian women. (Ram, 2014). However, it is vital to re-emphasise the lack of importance the female characters still embody as they are never chosen to play the protagonist and are always 'eye candy' and never the heroine of the story but constantly the insignificant role where "the camera focussed more on the face of the leading lady than on the body" (Chatterji, 2010, p.1).

The constant need to represent such features across could be argued as the state trying to show the world that Indian women are very sophisticated and pure but simultaneously reminding the viewers and audience members that it is still a male dominated discourse by continuously keeping them (women) in their place. The requirement to represent and accentuate their post-independent nation by the actions of their female characters embodying such purity and sacredness therefore contributes to the idea of following the same traits as Hollywood, since Hollywood also portrayed similar idealistic concepts of female characters. This was through glamorous women with high complexity therefore accordingly it is seen as almost reflecting this political discourse that is going on.

The discussion above suggests that the portrayal of women in Indian films during this period was neither reflecting nor leading changes in social attitudes towards Indian women and their role in society. There were very few upper-class women in the 1950s as the majority of Indian women were poor. Strictly speaking, Indian films were therefore not reflecting or leading changes in social attitudes, as it was unlikely that women in India would ever be able to be that woman on screen. There was a lack of relatedness between the woman on screen and the woman in Indian society, this can be supported by the film '*Mother India*' (1957) where Indian cinema used this film as a platform to try and portray a sense of nation-

building. In other words, they were trying to create a cohesive Indian society, it was an attempt to display unity and togetherness. However, by doing this, they were not really describing the real Indian woman in society. The whole aim of cinema back then was to nation build, it was to portray India as united after the freedom from colonial powers. It was a representation of a nation living in harmony with Indian beliefs and traditions through the depiction of women which is a very nationalistic movement. Hence, it is not necessarily reflecting the lives of everyday people in Indian society, nevertheless however, it is somehow reflecting the desires of women in society and of the nation.

For the women in society, seeing posters advertised or going to the cinema sparked no sense to evoke change in the women but just alluded to the notion that this was how their lives were meant to be. Therefore, the films created the sense of distance of an impossible dream or ambition to achieve. Consequently, to reemphasise it is not reflecting change neither is it leading – it is nation building (Ganti, 2004). The intricacy of 'nation building' reflected primarily on the post-colonial effort of India to reject colonial British rule and values, and the reinstating and emphasising of Indian values, such as modesty, chastity, sanctity and purity.

Chapter 4 – 70's/ 80's

(i) Roles of women in the 70's

Indian cinema in this era of the 70's to the 80's primarily reflected the country's 'homogenising mission', (Rao, 2007, p.59). This related to the particular interest, at that time, in classification within Indian society. This period saw new changes in the male protagonist's role which reflected events in politics and the economy at the time; this will be further discussed below.

“The new cinema movement of the 70's and 80's made attempts to explore women's subjectivity, her familial and civic role” (Dutta, 2000). Indian cinema during the 70s was referred to as the golden age because of the fashion, culture and the apparent amalgamation of Indian sensibilities together with western influences. Within Hindi cinema, the context and showmanship of female characters had not significantly changed. By this time women had, however, become more sophisticated, by portraying more perceived 'western' characteristics such as having a child out of wedlock, having affairs and more. This illustrates the performance of women's roles as transgressive; therefore, the post-colonial and nationalistic effort to represent Indian women and thus the nation as pure and sacred seemed to be disappearing. However, during this period women as portrayed in films were still punished for non-traditional behaviour, in that they did not tend to experience a happy ending when they played such roles. For example, women transgressed in films of this period from how they should behave in the instance of finding someone else and running away, in a typical romantic comedy, but instead it is more dramatic – the female roles would then be shunned by the community and their family. In hindsight, the male discourse is still expressively ongoing throughout the timeline discussed, still putting women in their place.

Furthermore, women in Bollywood during this period still only played two main roles, either the vamp or the sexual mistress or the traditionalist woman. The evidence suggests that the 70s were not leading changes in social attitudes towards Indian women and their role in society. It is imperative to mention that during this decade there was a female Prime Minister which arguably would help women in society, however, the issues remained stagnant and unresolved.

As mentioned above, the era of filmmaking in Hindi cinema in the 70's took a new turn as a result of shifts in politics, culture and the economy. In the film *Zanjeer* (1973) the role of the 'hero' changed in such a way as to present the male protagonist as one who challenged constraints posed by the law, as an 'angry young man' (Rao, 2007) and (Ram, 2014). This was reflected in Indian society at the time which was going through major political and

economic foreign policy issues that affected the status of the government due to 'poor economic growth'. Changes were implemented in the era of the 70s with the after effects of war with Kashmir and Bangladesh on the economy. This spread through the nation and affected large parts of the population.

The disastrous events happening in India that took place in the 70s, from wars to mining calamities, were reflected in the shift through depiction of male protagonists that centred thoroughly on playing the role of an 'angry male lead' rather than anything else. This represented what was going on in India at the time through film. In relation to the roles of women in Indian society during the 70's, this was a pivotal moment as feminism in India was put into motion at this time for a small number of films. This was shown by films produced during the late 70's like *Pakeezah* (1972) which followed almost the same storyline as in *Umrao Jaan* (1981).

The 70's era of Indian cinema was a time with a "more socially aware and more politically orientated form of cinema..." (Rad, 2016, p.1320)

This message was strong and empowering as women finally felt as though they had a voice, and this initiated further changes and incentive to create and accomplish more change for domestic and sexual abuse and rape cases in India. Therefore, women were making progress at a pace that felt right to them because a large number were very much 'scared of the unknown'. This is not surprising considering women in India have always been submissive and looked down upon, for fear of what would happen if such changes in attitudes were acted upon. This brought into question the theme of control and whether it was an option to use or was it somewhat just a reflection of what was happening in society.

(ii) Roles of women in the 80's

While there was still an evident display of continued male dominated discourse, changes in the way women were represented in Bollywood films peaked during this decade, especially with the production of films such as *Umrao Jaan* (1981) which created strong female roles portrayed by the actress- Rekha. According to Ram (2014), she played female roles that crystallised the actress, Rekha into a "demi-goddess".

The discussion will centre around the film '*Umrao Jaan*' (1981), about a courtesan (played by Rekha). Though the film is set in 1840, the relevance of female discourse in a very male dominated narration where violence towards women is still very prevalent in the story. The background of Rekha's character as the courtesan, initiates the reinforcement of male power in Indian society. It is about a young girl, Amiran who is kidnapped and sold to an owner of

a brothel and is renamed 'Umrao Jaan' which clearly by the title, situates the film to revolve around her story. She is brought up to be a courtesan who is showcased through singing and dancing as one of her courtesan duties. As in many other Indian films, Umrao falls in love, but she is not accepted into his family and he marries another woman. Ayob (2008) emphasises the long-standing issue of "strong traditions that govern Indian life" which meant the repeated instance of sacrificing true love in accord of appeasing the family's wishes. To seek comfort from this, she goes back home but her brother rejects her completely knowing fully well that she was kidnapped and forced to become a prostitute.

Furthermore, the narration of her story then follows her being completely deserted by her family leaving her alone. Although Umrao goes through repeated hardships, she is mainly depicted as lover of poetry, a strong self-governing woman which is a recurrent theme in the 80's as portrayed in many films produced then. This reveals a female protagonist, Rekha who blurs the boundaries and manages to "project herself simultaneously as a desired object, a desiring subject and a principle protagonist in films..." (Ram, 2014, p. 114).

The production of the film is significant to note for this decade because of the promising female discourse that is prominent in Rekha's role as her character is portrayed as yearning for a different and better life that will change her life for the better. The plot's narrative changes as Umrao flees with a wanted bandit, leaving her world of prostitution behind in the hopes of marrying him. There is a different perspective then to focus on the crucial decisions of her character that she faces between freedom and "breaking out of her shell" to keeping within traditional values. It is of importance to note that even though there is evidence of apparent female discourse, it is however still confined within the larger framework of patriarchy (Ayob, 2008). The unlikelihood of the characters of the mother and brothel owner illustrate opposing innate naturalistic qualities as, the owner of the brothel is depicted more as a mother figure and simultaneously shown as the bad powerful woman who subjugates her 'daughters' to wealthy men whilst still consuming the power to make decisions involving the men who work for her (ibid).

Additionally, by deconstructing the character it is signified that the character Umrao is desperate to break free and live a life of happiness where she is not confined within walls of objectification, male domination, thereby representing docile controlled bodies that abide by society's rules. The discussion throughout conducting my fieldwork, surprisingly orbited among the statements of "why are Indian men so important in India?" to very faintly discussing "why females don't stand up for themselves?" A key point to emphasise is the 'western' concepts and ideologies that are offered from the chosen participants during the

process of fieldwork are reflected by their nationalities and by the element of never having watched a Bollywood film before. For the participants, therefore, a set of films which was completely new and refreshing to them was able to spark conversations during and after watching the films that involved many questions related to the idiocy of the patriarchal Indian society that is still prevalent today.

Having an actress such as Rekha, certainly blurred the limitations of female protagonists in Hindi films. She “circulated as an ambivalent figure where both patriarchal and feminist discourses mesh to produce contradictory readings of Indian womanhood” (Ram, 2014, p.114).

This is also seen in this film, ‘*Khoon Bhari Maang*’ (1988) where Rekha continues to play roles that create a brighter vision for women in Indian society. By playing important roles that send empowering messages across are what the women in Indian society need at this stage. According to Butler (2007), Rekha is an example of changing and constructing the performance of gender as she grows and changes as the Bollywood films portray.

Chapter 5 – 90's/00's

Roles of women in the 1990's and 2000's until the present day

The 2000's included many popular and commercially successful films, according to the participants who took part in helping me collect fieldwork data. According to Rao (2007), there were many famous films that very much “featured westernised themes” which included overseas locations, and an increasing use of the English language in the film dialogues. However, the films still attempt to hold onto tradition and try to satisfy a more varied audience, including Indian viewers and viewers from the Indian diaspora.

Globalisation has had a large impact on Indian society, notably through the Indian diaspora and the relationship between this and the society in India. Rao (2007) discusses the findings of her studies with Punjabi people in rural areas where she discovered a growing disconnect between them and the dreamworld of the Bollywood stars and the lives they and the characters they played were living. People apparently found it harder and harder to connect with the ‘stars’ because Bollywood was becoming more globalised and included more embedded characteristics of consumerism and fashion (ibid). This produced a clash between modernity and tradition, in conjunction with also trying to preserve customs that aimed to simultaneously appeal to a wider audience by this type of globalisation.

Bollywood films of the 21st century have targeted wider audiences, including urban multiplexes and the Indian diaspora, leading to a shift in the idea of the main protagonist and their social setting, from the role of the poor ‘angry man’ living in a rural setting, to a focus on the people living in luxurious settings, contributing to the modern lifestyle, who are accustomed to living in cities (Rao, 2007) and (Ram, 2014). In relation to the Indian diaspora, evidently many scenic parts of the production of Bollywood films are filmed in foreign countries. This re-emphasises the feeling of disconnect the rural people feel from watching the films since the films are growing to be more unrealistic regarding an actual Indian person's life (Rao, 2007). However, Rao (2007) stresses on the element that her participants do not feel the same disconnect to Punjabi films which are more relatable, unlike Bollywood films today.

The construction of Bollywood films today, therefore, is tending to increase features of modernity and is creating a completely unrealistic vision to aspire to for most Indians. The term ‘dreamworld’ is associated with the lives of actors and the roles they play; Rao (2007) observes that “such a dreamworld gains a supra fantastical status; it stops being a fantasy of pleasure and, instead, becomes a fantasy of alienation” (Rao, 2007, p.65).

The general argument of this article is that while globalisation tries to include an appealing vision to new audiences, such as people from large cities or the diaspora, this is simultaneously alienating masses of people from the rural areas, sometimes even poorer people who live in small towns, because it is portraying lavish lifestyles that are unrealistic to them and ones to which they cannot relate, not even because they cannot attain them, but because these lifestyles are meaningless to them and they do not desire them. Rao (2007) notes one of the participants who argued that Bollywood created “webs of desire” in which one could get stuck.

So, it alienates rural people, but it also appeals to a lot of people, i.e. feminists, because of the Bollywood film, *Queen* (2014). ‘*Queen*’ (2014) features a more globalised setting, but at same time it signifies quite the feminist message, especially for Indian cinema. The film follows a young bride-to-be celebrating her upcoming nuptials, but her fiancé changes his mind, leaving Rani (bride-to-be) distraught and confused. After some time, she decides to embark on her European honeymoon journey alone and later discovers her true self. The film is displayed to be acquiring more western characteristics as the story continues. This is portrayed by the fact that the film involved a young Indian girl to travel by herself without anyone accompanying her – which signifies a break in tradition of unmarried girls never travelling by themselves. Her character then goes back to India rejects the man, but her family still accepts her.

An important statement made by one of my participants which encompasses the whole discussion and relatedness throughout the fieldwork process was that “because in many aspects it is similar to the woman that strays from tradition but the big difference here is at the end of it all, she can still reject her ex fiancé and yet still have her family accept her whereas in the old films we watched, the female character would either be shamed or shunned or she would have a bad ending which is not prevalent in *Queen*. This is a big difference and also, I enjoyed the fact that instead of India, the film was largely based outside in the west, so it refers to this type of globalisation”. This is a flawless example of why *Queen* is relevant today and Bollywood is exploring new avenues for the role of the woman, which sparked hope whilst conducting my fieldwork.

This is also relevant to a film my participants thoroughly enjoyed, a more recent film called *Padmaavat* (2018) which was ironic as it was set in 1303 AD during the time of medieval India. The controversial film follows the story about a Queen who was known of her beauty and beauty by many especially her husband. The villain in the film, plays a sultan and the character is obsessed with wanting beautiful things and in this case, it was Queen Padmaavat.

After a long and gruelling fight between the Sultan and her righteous husband, he manages to break into the fortress and goes after the Queen. The moral of the story was highlighted in spectacular fashion by the justice of Queen Padmaavat who makes the final sacrifice by walking into a large fire with all the women present to keep their dignity after the defeat. The choice of film was due to the controversy rumours that spread and enlightened my participants to watch it.

During the fieldwork process, one of my female participants said that “the film highlights feminism in a male dominated society whilst withholding onto the sanctity of womanhood from the male villain who is driven by seeing Padmaavat” and continues to say that “the act of Jauhar is not seen as a bad thing from the female protagonist. It is seen as a righteous act to protect herself and the other women from being prisoners as well as protecting themselves from rape and other various forms of assault” This proved very helpful in my collection of data and this was a similar theme from the other participants who collectively agreed with quoted statement.

However, the 2017 thriller ‘*Mom*’ brings Indian societies issues to the big screen. In a nutshell, a doting stepmother fights to bring justice for her daughter after she had been gang raped and her rapists were not found guilty, even though she suffered major injuries. The film is centred on the mother gaining revenge for her daughter which is exemplified through her justified motherly instincts to correct the corrupted Indian law. “This form of retrogressive representation in a country where women are constantly battling against physical violation and sexual harassment, is seriously alarming as it trivialises real issues which affect women in their day to day lives” (Dutta, 2000, p.74) Though Dutta’s journal discusses this issue nearly 20 years ago, the element of physical violence and rape is still so prevalent in today’s society.

Mum (2017) is a significant film as it is an example of a film inspired by the deep desire for justice after events like the 2012 gang rape mentioned earlier. The protests that followed the case and the justice portrayed in the film both elucidate the growing appeal of feminism in India today. Therefore, whilst the materialistic and lavish lifestyles of globalized Bollywood characters may alienate some parts of the population because of their distance from reality, other aspects of current Bollywood are reflecting on important issues in today’s India such as justice when it comes to abuse of women.

Chapter 6 – Theory

Theory

Feminist theory has had a tremendous impact on cinema studies, and today it is not possible to understand cinema studies without taking the second wave feminism into account (Hayward, 1996). The second wave of feminism occurred late 1960's which extended from the initial wave and is focused more on academia and the intellectual movement which consisted of many female scholars and authors exploring and expressing issues surrounding women from different perspectives (Ibid). Exploring how women are subdued and unoppressed. This second wave proved to be more academic than the first wave which demonstrated to be more political, and like other aspects of the globalization of Bollywood cinema, appears to have started to seep into the arena of Indian cinema.

(Foucault, 1998) demonstrates his theory of power by two definitive themes; firstly, the power of the sovereign which is birthed from Roman Law. This entails exercising power through the means of deduction. The sovereign king, therefore, used this tactic to control his subjects. It was the "right which was formulated as the power of life and death was in reality the right to take life or let live" (Foucault, 1998, p.136) This power was symbolised by the King's use of the sword, with which he either let his subjects live or die. This illustrates how power was exercised and portrays the king's literal power over his people by 'deducing' away, for example, taxes or their lives.

This changed during the classical age which "discovered the body as object and target of power" (Rabinow, 1984). During the classical times (17th and 18th Century) of early enlightenment period; the power that overtook the 'right to take life or let live' was one described by Foucault (1998) as *biopower*. Biopower is stated to be "a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Foucault, 1998, p.136). Therefore, biopower displays construction of power in a very different format than the 'sovereign power', it invests in the bodies, denoting it is a heterogenous process meaning that it works on many different levels and ways; "power is socially ubiquitous, suffused through every aspect of the social system" (Ortner, 2006, p.6). This differentiates starkly from the first power as it was solely based on the simple concept of deducing through threats of taking life or sparing it which led to a misuse of controlling the power. Whereas with biopower, it works in very subtle ways, on a grander scale as it was concerned with the population as a whole; this emphasises the element of control of power, that it 'invests' in life rather than 'taking' it.

Essentially, biopower uses the population to invest in life with the aim of creating healthier, more docile bodies, generating bodies within organised societies to be disciplined and controlled by the production of biopower. Through major institutions such as schools, barracks and universities, conveniently at the fundamental aspect of these institutes; they are linked by 'disciplined bodies' making them more apt to be controlled and easier to manipulate (Foucault, 1998). Biopower has introduced an adequate number of interests in demographics (death rates, life expectancy, things concerned with population) which are part of the process of investing in the population and making it more useful.

Foucault's discerning factor about disciplined bodies was that power used discipline to improve flaws, create a flawless controlled body and population by meticulously (precisely) analysing the body and refining it in order to 'discipline the body'. Therefore, ultimately the objective is to have a society of disciplined bodies for an easier access of control over them which is expediently already part of the norm of society today. An array of information proves useful when the objective is distinct, to support the claims made by Foucault, other scholars have had similar findings and have demonstrated similar themes found in societal norms and guidelines for proper female behaviour, especially in the male-dominated classical literature, is that men must control women and their power'' (Ghadially, 1988).

Foucault was concerned chiefly with the power dynamics in Europe and North America, however, similar processes of power can be found in India, and it is relevant to this thesis because it sheds light on the subjugation of women's bodies and the large market focus on creating women's bodies more docile, as opposed to the evident lack of interest in comments about how men should dress, look or act. This approach explains the reason for the almost universal focus on women's bodies in patriarchal systems being that the female body is the locus of power exercise; it is the object on which power is exercised. Bio-power shifts the focus from the one who exerts power (e.g. king) to the one on which power is exercised, which in this case would be the woman. Because the female body is the site on which power is exercised, it is constantly watched and prescribed very specific actions; power invests more in the female body than it does in the male body, because it aims to hold greater control over the female body. This is demonstrated in the earlier movies where the female is portrayed as either docile, or as punished for her lack of docility. This perspective also suggests that women are in a more powerful position today as the meticulous focus and prescriptions concerning female conduct are relaxing, indicating that power is loosening its grip on women, this is seen in newer movies such as *Queen* (2014) in which the female protagonist rejects some of the prescriptions laden on her, and is supported by her family in doing so.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

Evidently, there has been a shift in the way women are portrayed and their significance from the 1950s to present day. In the early post-colonial period of the 1950s, India was a newly independent state and as a result there was a huge effort in 'nation building', the act of trying to unite all the Indians in the country and prove to the world the legitimacy of India as a nation. This was done through many different mediums, and one of those was mediums was film. Films such as *Mother India* (1957) are emblematic of this effort, and they portray a perspective of the State and what the hegemonic powers thought it meant to be 'Indian'. Part of this was the perception that the woman symbolised the nation state and that it was necessary for her to remain pure and sacred, and to maintain her honour in the face of adversity. In this period, films mainly reflect the State's interest in uniting the nation, and because of this, it could be said that it reflects a State desire and not the social realities of people.

In the 1970s and 1980s, we see this homogenizing mission slowly fade. We see some glimpses of female subjectivity played by the actress Rekha in films such as *Umrao Jaan* (1981) or *Khoon Bhari Maang* (1988) However, it is all within a larger deeply patriarchal context, where the women ultimately experience unhappy endings for transgressing traditional Indian categories. Indian cinema at the time seems to be more occupied with other political and economic shifts of the time, and merely reinstates the patriarchy when it comes to women.

In the 1990s until present we see an interesting shift in the portrayal of women, this is mainly due to globalisation and the influence of 'western' ideas such as the second wave of feminism. Women now have more of their subjectivities displayed on the screen and, unlike the movies from the 70s and 80s, the women experience happy endings in spite of their transgressions, this is evident in movies like *Queen* (2014). Although the glamour and dreamworld of current Bollywood alienates some communities and doesn't reflect their lives and experiences (Rao, 2007), there is certainly a reflection of some important issues for millions such as justice for women that are certainly reflected in modern films.

Additionally, the theories of Butler (2007) and Foucault (1991 and 1998) aid us in analysing gender and the power dynamics; by drawing on these we can argue that recent feminist oriented films are inspiring slight alterations to gender performativity, and that power is loosening its grip on women because it allows for more subjectivity and puts less pressure on female bodies.

Overall, we cannot underestimate the power that some films have on the public consciousness, especially in the wake of such pernicious events as the 2012 gang rape in Delhi. Since the 1950s, Indian films have always been intertwined with the social realities of many Indians and drew on pertinent issues. It is hard to determine precisely whether films in India since the 1950's have galvanized social change or whether they have responded to it. It is most likely that both are true depending on the circumstances. What can most certainly be said, however, is that there is generally a strong link between movie depictions of women and general societal attitudes, whether it would be the films galvanizing change or being inspired by social processes. Perhaps the most accurate description would be to say that there seems to be a symbiotic relationship between the two. It is better to understand them not through simple causality but as parts of a single greater process of social change that occurs simultaneously in different areas of culture, be it the streets or the cinema. Lastly, the obvious but crucial caveat must be noted, and it is that India is a large, stratified country with many different peoples and the second greatest population in the world, therefore, there are always going to be large groups of people that are included and large groups that are left out.

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