

INFLUENCE OF CINEMA AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMES ON THE ATTITUDES AND PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN IN RURAL SOCIETY

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Abstract: Rural areas have turned into multifunctional areas. They satisfy different economic and social requirements; among these, they are consolidating their position as film production locations. Becoming a film location ensures visibility and provides new forms to access sustainable economic trajectories to promoting rural areas and rural vitality. In some cases, filmic discourses present unequal gender treatment that may be associated with their locations

The media through its reach to people at large has been instrumental though not to the extent desired in supporting the movement for women emancipation by focusing neglect and marginalization of the position of the women in society.

The Indian cinematic industry has been among the nation's most popular source of entertainment, spanning decades of performances since its inception in the 1930s. Despite the masses flocking to the theatres and blockbusters making it big, a majority of the films released have something in common—men are portrayed with characters that meet the society's definition of masculinity while female roles are reduced to misogynistic ideals. Creative media are common communicational tools conveying social and cultural messages; their content is diverse and affects the perceptions of their targets, contributing to the production of gendered cultural identities. For rural communities, becoming a film location can be a method of reinterpreting their vitality; due to the positive impacts of this growing creative industry, these locations may plan new sustainable economic trajectories by participating in an innovative and collaborative development model.

Key Words: Economic and social requirements, Film production, filmic discourses, Entertainment, Rural communities, Development model, Innovative.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Cinema and television often perceived as a metropolitan medium – an entertainment product of and for the big city. Yet the importance of cinemas in rural areas where supply of cultural offerings is sparse, cinemas often take the lead in providing a wide spread quality programme connecting audiences beyond social and cultural differences and age, furthermore enhancing communities by dialogue and networking. One of the most crucial problem communal cinemas definitely face is the fleeting population in rural areas. Especially young and talented people seeking education, work and a social life elsewhere.

But once the cinema closes, connection to culture mainly disappears from these areas and the population does not only miss out on moving images from all across the world but often lose an important meeting point in their town, where neighbours, friends and strangers exchange about everyday life or political and social issues.

2. Review of Literature :

The literature for the study was collected from books, journals, periodicals and from interrelated web sources. Literature reviewing is very commanding that the researcher reviews the literature not only to associate the results with the previous findings and also to present new and perhaps with unique measurements.

Samia Melhem and Nidhi Tandon Edited and contributions by Claudia Morrell (2009) Information and communication technologies for women's socio-economic empowerment, "World Bank group working paper" explores on Peace is a necessary condition for economic development. Understanding this, Patricia Smith Melton founded Peace to Peace, an international women's peace organization that uses the power of leading-edge technology tools to connect women across all cultures for mutual support and concerted action through "women's circle relationships" and "sister to sister relationships" that together help to shatter barriers, including language, culture, intolerance, and conflict.

Srinivas R. Melkote (2006) in their paper “Everett M. Rogers and His Contributions to the Field of Communication and Social Change in Developing countries” published in “Journal of Creative Communications” state that Empowerment, it is usefully futile and may be even unethical for communications and human service professional to help solve minor and immediate problems while ignoring the systemic barriers erected by societies that permit or perpetuate inequalities among citizens. Certainly sustainable change is not possible unless we deal with the crucial problem of lack of economic and social power among individuals at the grassroots.

Mr. Justice G.N. Ray, Chairman, “Media's Role in empowerment of women in India” Press Council of India at the inauguration session of National Press Day on November 16, 2008 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Said that Communication is extremely important for women’s development and mass media play a significant role. It is to be noted that growth of women’s Education and their entry into employment has contributed to the growth of media. In all spheres of life whether for controlling population growth, spread of literacy or improving quality of life for vast masses, women have crucial role to play.

Gupta Anmol Rai, Zafar Shahila (2013) in his paper Rural India: “The Next Frontier for Social Media Networks” published in reputed “International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology” stated that it won't be a hyperbole to say that All India Radio has served as the ocean of knowledge for rural people in India. AIR also has programs for the empowerment of rural women which educate them on family planning, dowry, female feticide, child care etc.

3. OBJECTIVES :

- The Understand the impact of cinema and its perspectives on the rural women
- To analyses the effects of television programmes on the thoughts and behaviors of rural women
- To know the level of influence created upon by the roles and performance in the cinema and television on the rural ideology and values

4. METHODOLOGY :

The present study has used both the method of observation and secondary source of data. The secondary source of data has been collected from several Reports and documents. The literature has also been gathered from published articles, books and Govt. reports.

4.1 Characterization of Women’s role in Indian cinema leaves an impact on mind set of Indian rural women

The Socio-cultural framework, and power structures in operation in society, including religion, the Hindu religious beliefs, and the influence of Hindu epics and myths on popular culture, govern the tastes and preferences of the audience. Both these factors determine the directors’ preference. Directors and producers have to make films that address audience preference and also meet their profit margins. Audience is quite satisfied to see films that uphold their value system and conform to it, because they live in that social value system.

At a time when women seem to have broken free from the Indian home and family set-up into the world, and are ready to challenge stereotypes, is this happening in the Indian film industry and the industry’s portrayal of women in films. Bollywood cinema is a powerful mass medium of communication in India, and cinematic portrayals definitely are highly impressionistic. the paper will trace the role of women in Indian cinema using photographic images from various films mentioned, in order to argue the point of view of the camera and how this point of view is governed and dictated by the patriarchal framework of Indian society.

In the case of Indian society, the patriarchal view of women has been so convenient over the years for division of labor and accountability of tasks that these categories became a way of life, so much so, that now, it is the foundational power structure of society and cannot be easily broken. In traditional Indian society, there were definite and consensual norms of behavior – that regulated the conduct of women...Sita immortalized in the Ramayana is the ideal woman, the ideal wife; she is steadfastly loyal to her husband and obeys his wishes unquestioningly... In traditional Indian society... women’s roles were essentially as daughter, wife and mother.

4.2 The influence of television adds and TV serial shows on young women of rural communities

Though physical appearance is important for both males and females, and models in advertisements affects both the genders Striegel-Moore and Smolak (2000) note that beauty is the core feature of femininity as portrayed by the media. The present study mainly discusses the impact of advertisements on females. Sunsilk’s shampoo ad campaign in India features former Miss World and Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra, representing the dream of Indian women and girls: to have gorgeous shining hair. The main idea of the advertisements is to make your hair happen, since life can't wait.

There are hundreds of others which are responsible for fostering upward social comparison, generating comparative and cumulative effects, misleading women regarding ideal body image and beauty, sensitizing them to body related media messages and images. Psychologists have suggested that people can be made resistant to the negative effects of media imagery by changing their ways of interpreting social information. If social comparison theory is accepted as a valid explanation of the mechanism through which unfavorable comparisons are made, media literacy techniques are required to assist women's capacity to reject media images as appropriate targets for self-comparison. Societal and institutional changes are necessary to de-emphasize unrealistic physical standards of beauty established by the advertisement world.

Educational campaigns can help girls and women believe that they deserve an improved place in the world. Government should take the initiative to introduce the media literacy programmes at the ground level i.e. at school and college level to help the young girls to analyze the media and the message critically before accepting them. The young girls and women should be given assurance that even each of them can be transformed into the media ideal by using the beauty tricks.

4.2 Influence created upon by the roles and performance in the cinema and television on the rural ideology and values

Films that have a more distinctive characterization of characters and institutions might foster a greater influence on viewers. Put differently, if the "good guys" and "bad guys" are easier to determine, films might be able to influence their audiences. The role of the female lead ends up lacking substance and her character becomes sheer eye candy. In recent times, specifically in the 80s and 90s, the images of heroine and the vamp seem to be blurring with the heroine being the sex symbol before her marriage and then the chaste wife after her marriage, making the portrayals even more stereotyped and one-dimensional.

What women need to portray on screen, how their sexuality needs to come across, what sort of decisions these characters make are all determined by a certain value system in society which ensures that the patriarchal power structure is in place at all times, and that people's fantasies, primarily male fantasies, were being catered to no matter what. It did not necessarily have much to do with the genre of the film or the need of the story but more to do with satisfying different kinds of audiences, their fantasies and how their fantasies could possibly be addressed, given the confines of society. Cinema acts as an instrument of escapism, leading people into their fantasies, which are restrained by what is or is not acceptable socially.

The issue of women and their roles, and the possibilities of having a 40-year-old woman as a central character to a film, or being innovative in the characterization of women in films are all lost in this maze of commercial cinema that has to appeal to the urban and rural masses in theatres. In summary women are either absolutely pure wives or girlfriends, or self-sacrificing mothers and sisters, or they are immoral prostitutes, cabaret dancers, strippers and vamps. These are very clear-cut categories in films. In the case of film stories, internalization of epics creates epic based ideas and fantasies in the minds of the people, which then enter the realm of popular culture, influencing character stereotypes in film. Women are so used to this system and it is so internalized in them, that even women find other modern women (who are open about this subject), "not modest enough about femininity", "immoral" or "wrong". Women have come to believe that there is a certain patriarchy in the system that is legitimized and they must behave in accordance with this power structure. It has become an internalized value system which is further reinforced by the media and its portrayal of women.

5. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Indian films have shown variety in terms of plot and characterizations. This doesn't mean that the quality of cinema has improved no- but the position of women in these films certainly has elevated from what it used to be. Predictably these films do well only in big cities. People living in this part of India are well educated, well read, have seen the world and so naturally have wider perspectives in life. An emancipated woman on screen neither shocks them nor shakes their egos. Not so in rural sectors and as a result, some of these multiplex films are not even understood by the rural population. The cultures and thought processes in cities and villages of India is very different and so what works in the cities doesn't or may not work in small towns.

Mainly because films always reflect the ever changing social, cultural and political scenarios. Not that the thought process among people in small town India is still the same. No. They're evolving too but this evolution has been slow and steady and it's even slower where women are concerned. When this is the situation at hand, films will naturally be reflecting the same and it's actually a tough job for film makers to find a middle path...we don't have a massive change in the scenario for women actresses.

People inhabiting these small towns and villages are generally traditional as well as conventional. The society in which they live has very set ideas about women and unless these ideas are replicated on screen, people, including the female audience can't relate to the heroines in films. For these people, a woman's world is restricted to her parents before marriage and after that it's her husband and her children, sometimes even her in-laws which rule her life. A woman's role in a man's life is romanticized and she's seen as faithful, god fearing and utterly devoted to her family. There is no end to the sacrifices a woman will make for the sake of her husband and her children. This idea is so in-built and idolized by people that this is what a girl is conditioned to do while she's growing up.

The fact that more cinema should focus on women in a variety of interesting and more challenging roles, apart from women being pure eye candy is a statement that cannot be disputed too much. A society builds categories for itself and starts to view and perceive these categories in specific ways, so much so, that one is never aware when resorting to stereotyping - implicit stereotyping. It is a process that simply happens and no one is really even thinking that it is happening because the dominant ideology prevails without society even realizing that it prevails. Also, other media, television and advertising, continue to have stereotypical models, which further strengthen the existing patterns allowing to sustain.

Despite a large number of women working both in urban and rural areas, the films more often ignored this reality. It was a challenge to find a strong foothold by women in a male-dominated and patriarchal society. But women in Indian cinema have achieved this feat. At a time when women are breaking free of taboos and stereotypes, filmhood doesn't seem to reflect this changing social trend. In terms of women entering films, the number has gone up manifold, but in terms of screen space, their roles have shrunk drastically. From storyline to end credits, most of the time the male counterparts get undue preference over females. Fortunately, many directors have gained popularity as harbingers of change, among film viewers who aspired a change from the typical story lines. This has afforded opportunity to heroines who want to take a different path away from the typical stereotypes. Indian film industry exhibits history of giving due respect and credit to strong women characters. Women in movie business are found potent contributors to change the face of Indian cinema in a silent, steady, and non-confrontative way.

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