Women in Changing Time and Social Roles in Indian Cinema of the Present Scenario

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ABSTRACT

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

KEYWORDS: women, roles, cinema, hindi, present, scenario

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian society is very much obsessed with cinema. It is the most appealing and far reaching medium. It can cut across the class and caste boundaries and is accessible to all sections of society. As an art form it embraces both elite and mass. It has a much wider catchment area than literature. There is no exaggeration in saying that the Indian Cinema has a deep impact on the changing scenario of our society in such a way as no other medium could ever achieve. Literature and cinema, the two art forms, one verbal in form and the other visual, are not merely parallel but interactive, resiprocative and interdependent. A number of literary classics have been made popular by the medium of cinema. During its awesome journey of 100 years, the Indian Cinema has been a witness to a sea-change in the presentation of the female protagonists. The picture of woman presented by the Hindi Cinema is changing in more than one sense. Women still play the same role as wife, mother, beloved or vamp, but the presentation has changed a lot. With the change of time, women of Hindi Cinema too face new challenges. Directors like Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair

and Meghna Gulzar are bold enough to depict 'taboo topics' like lesbianism, polygamy and even surrogate motherhood. The Hindi movies have essentially been male-centric, leaving little space for the women to evolve as an independent character. Traditionally women have been reduced to a mere spectacle in the movies, pretty faces objectified for their beauty. The change is undoubtedly slow. The mainstream cinema show women as glam-dolls whose sole ambition in life is to attract the attention of accomplished males. The examples are not difficult to find- Singham, Dabaang, Gajini, Agneepath etc. The male-centric movies fully exploit women's physical beauty and sensuality. Most of the talented actresses have to work within tighter limits, in smaller and more repetitive roles. The history of Hindi Cinema presents a woeful picture of discrimination and marginalization of women. However, filmmakers like Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan, Satyajit Ray, Rituparno Ghosh, Basu Bhattacharya, Hrishikesh Mukerjee, Hritwik Ghatak, Madhur Bhandarkar and many others have marked an exception with their brilliant presentation of women excelling beyond their roles as wives, mothers or beloveds. Issues-based films with convincing and often having central female characters are in fact a proud part of the Indian cinema. Iconic directors such as Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal and Hrishikesh Mukherjee exclusively made such films through the 1960s and 1970s, a genre widely hailed as the Indian New Wave or parallel cinema. Today many of the directors making parallel films are women such as Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair, Meghna Gulzar, Nandita Sen and Aparna Sen. Box office success and the associated money continue to elude these directors. Yet their films (Mehta's Fire, Earth, Water, Nair's Monsoon Wedding and Kam-Sutra, Meghna Gulzar's Filhaal, Nandita Sen's Firaq, Aparna Sen's Paroma and Mr. and Mrs. Iyer) are no less than the revered classics of Ray or Benegal. Women have played a number of roles in Hindi movies: the mythical, the Sati-Savitri, the rebel, the victim and victimizer, the avant-garde and the contemporary. The new woman was always portrayed as a rebel. There are some positive portrayals of rebels in the Hindi movies like Mirch Masala, Damini, Pratighat, Zakhm, Zubeida, Mritudand and several others. The definition of an ideal Indian woman is changing in Hindi Cinema, and it has to change in order to suit into a changing society. It has been a long hundred years since Dadasaheb Phalke had

to settle for a man to play the heroine in India's first feature film Raja Harishchandra (1913)[1,2,3] and women in Hindi cinema have come a long way since then. Gradually the women have been getting their due. The neglect of women in Hindi movies during the 1960s and 1970s hurt them and they made a back entry through the art cinema in the 70s and the parallel cinema in the 80s. Shabana Azmi was the pioneer of the new woman during these decades who denied to suffer silently and who wanted to be heard. She would not tolerate an unfaithful husband and wouldn't hesitate to leave him, as Shabana Azmi did in Arth. Today's woman is not making a martyrdom of virtues. She wants to be heard, wants to express herself. Zoya (a character played by Parineeti Chopra) in Ishqzaade does not sit and cry when she is betrayed. She cries foul. That has come a long way from the heroine wanting to commit suicide if the man she loved has ditched her. The picture of woman presented by the Hindi Cinema is changing in more than one sense. The women play the same role as wife, mother or beloved, but the way of presentation has changed a lot. The modern woman of Indian Cinema would no more tolerate an unfaithful husband (Arth) and wouldn't hesitate to leave him.[4,5,6] In 1997 Rani Mukherjee made her debut in the film Raja ki Ayegi Barat where her character was raped by Shadab Khan. The court sentenced the rapist to marry the victim. After marriage, the husband makes several attempts to murder her. By the end of the movie the man discovers the goodness of the woman he had raped and tortured and marries her again. Fourteen year later, Mukherjee played Meera, a character in No One Killed Jessica who asks her lover to 'fly solo' in the mid of their love-making when her job demands to leave immediately. Shona Mishra of Luck by Chance dares to reject her ex-boyfriend who has come to make amends with her after realizing his mistake in dumping her. Shona rather chooses to live alone in her tiny studio acting in TV soap opera. Silently the image of the woman is changing in popular cinema. They are being projected as real and contemporary women. They are not projected as an ideal sati savitri wife, or an ideal, all sacrificing daughter-in-law. In number of films we find strong women characters trying to establish an identity of their own, be it as a single mother (Paa), a foul-mouthed journalist (No One Killed Jessica), lady vengeance (Kahaani, Ishqiya), a murderess (Saat Khoon Maaf), a

career woman (Fashion, Corporate), a lovesick manipulator (Tanu Weds Manu) or a rebel survivor (That Girl in Yellow Boots). These are the new vamps, the anti-heroines—protagonists whose life does not depend on the presence of a 'hero'.[7,8,9] Unwedded mothers are not thrown out of the house and humiliated but were accepted by their families and friends like in Kya Kehna (2000), Salam Namaste (2005), Paa (2009), etc. The change of images has not been a sudden one. It has been happening slowly. The original vamp was clearly what a good, pious wife or sweetheart would not be; the anti heroine. Right from her birth in silent films through her journey to the talkies, the vamp was the seductress, the Shurpanakha of Hindu mythology trying to seduce the maryada purushottam hero away from his righteous path. In some cases the heroine had what was essentially the vamp's career-a club dancer- but was invariably pure at heart, such as Madhubala as Edna in Howrah Bridge (1958). Slowly the heroine too got sexy and was allowed to smoke a cigarette and to wear a bikini, though ranking high on the morality meter. The heroine of Hindi Cinema has stepped out of her good image and is experimenting with grey. Earlier, the vamp mostly filled up the forbidden space of pleasure, sex, seduction and desire. There was nothing virginal about her, and the same can be said about the heroines of today. Premarital sex, extra-marital relationship, seducing the hero, cheating her man, playing an independent single mother – she does it all. The heroine is no longer playing the conscience of the hero; she is now vying to be the muse of the audience. She is there in the movie not for the hero but for the entertainment of the audience. The woman is stronger, almost equal to man in some films such as Dhoom, Dhoom-II, Shaurya, Aitaraaz, Saat Khoon Maaf etc. where there is almost no difference between the heroine and the vamp because all the female stars are willing to step into negative roles if they are strong and can make a lasting impression on the audience. The boundaries between the bad girl and the good girl have been removed or become blurred over the years. Nishigandha Dasgupta (a character played by Bipasha Basu) in Madhur Bhandarkar's Corporate has a shade of negativity in her character. She is a go-getter. She wants to be successful at any cost to wipe out her past bad experience and doesn't mind a bit of industrial snooping on a rival company. She gets caught, of course. But the audience is not left unsympathetic to her predicament.

Women on screen have become bold enough to talk about their sexuality and they can use their sex appeal to get work done. It has become difficult to debate about the exploitation and subordination of women when they have started using bodies for their own advantage. Mujhe jo chahiye, uska mazaa sirf raat ko hi aata hai. Jawani taste karne ke liye hoti hai… waste karne ke liye nahin. It is hard to believe that the dialogue implying sexual meaning is spoken by a woman, by Vidya Balan in the movie The Dirty Picture. There has been a shift in women's sexuality from being objects to subjects.[10,11,12] Take for example, Poonam Pandey, a model who shot to limelight when she made the statement to strip for the Indian cricket team if they won the 2011 World Cup. Recently she posted her nude pictures on her twitter account to celebrate Sachin Tendulkar's 100 centuries and Kolkata Knight Rider's victory in IPL. From an unknown struggling model she has become famous overnight with the use of her body and sexuality. Such women might be considered as femme fatale in many cases. Movies like Jism (2003), Aitraaz (2004), Ishqiya (2010), Pyaar Ka Punchnama (2011) and the recent The Dirty Picture (2011), all showed how women not only understood their gender and sexuality but also used it to get favors. With changing times, traditional values and beliefs regarding all aspects of our life have changed, and cinema being a cultural variable reflects on these changes too. On closer scrutiny, however, these modern looking women in Hindi movies are not devoid of traditional Indian values. A female-centric film and a film that is progressive in its portrayal of women are two different things. For example, Priyanka Chopra's character in Madhur Bhandarkar's film Fashion portrays a woman exercising her sexual freedom who invariably comes to an unhappy end. Vidya Balan played the role of Silk in The Dirty Picture who is an independent and spirited woman. Despite these qualities in her, she commits suicide, marriage being her ultimate ambition. Thus many female figures in Hindi movies are presented as superficial symbols of free spiritedness. Alcohol has become the symbol of modernity in films. Today we can see a trend of half Sati Savitri and half modern hybrid women in Hindi Cinema. Ethical values in Indian society have changed to a large extent and they are reflected in Hindi Cinema where premarital sex, adultery, sexual overtures where the woman takes the initiative are quite

common and have also got audience acceptance. Otherwise films like Astitva, Gangster, Jism, Tanu Weds Manu etc. would never have clicked the way they have. The character of mother has got complete makeover in the recent Hindi movies. The Bollywood maa was never allowed any joy. She was a joyless creature, forever weeping, wailing and all-giving and all-forgiving. She was a miserable soul, a seamstress with rheumy eyes, a peasant resisting a lusty landlord, and if she was rich, a devoted wife who couldn't defy her husband. From Leela Chitnis and Sulochana to Nimupa Roy and Rakhee, they couldn't be happy people. The image they provoke in our mind is that of a furrowed forehead, worn sari and drooping shoulders. From Mother India (1957) to Vicky Donor (1912), the portrayal of on-screen mothers have undergone a sea change. Watch a sprightly Ratna Pathak Shah play a wonderful, everyday mother in Jane Tu Ya Jane Na. She teaches is a college, reads Naomi Wolf with her feet up, wears Indo-Western clothes and admits that she doesn't feel like cooking on an off day. So would the son make some omelets please? She is not a sacrificing mother, nor a superefficient housekeeper. Before her, there was Kirron Kher, probably the first mother to be allowed humour, whims and laughter. The mother she played in Hum Tum is that of an ambitious Punjabi matron speaking broken English. Her role really introduced a refreshing change. In Vicky Donor, the scene between Dolly and her mother-inlaw sharing a drink has become the most talked about act of the film.[13,14,15] Dolly is an everyday mother, not a very radical character. It was a family without a father, where the mother is everything. She is progressive. She works and relaxes herself over a drink with her mother-in-law. Shoojit Sircar, the director of the film confesses to have drawn the character of Dolly from his mother who was suffering from insomnia. Sircar suggested her to share a small drink with him that relaxed her and hade her sleep soundly. Sircar says the Punjabi ladies on his Face book have sent him thank you messages for liberating them from the Bollywood imposed moral template. "If you hadn't shown women drinking, they would have continued to offer us soft drinks!" That the audience loved the two women in Vicky Donor was a sure indication that the audiences have been ready for a real mother for a long time. In a small ways Bollywood has been experimenting with the mother figure for some time now. Reema Lagoo

in Vaastav, a fond mother shoots her gangster son at his request, when he realizes that there was no hope for him. That storyline of course reminds us the memorable lead character played by Nargis in Memboob Khan's Mother India. Apart from Ratna Pathak Shah and Kirron Kher, Hema Malini, Dimple Kapadia, Lilette Dubey and many others have completely redefined the character of maa in Hindi Cinema. However, all the changes in the roles played by women in Hindi Cinema cannot be counted for good. Hindi Cinema began initially with the myth of the ideal Indian woman and this image was thrust upon audience. In the 1950s and 60s the vamp died and some of her qualities came to the heroine. Any heroine, who went down the wrong path, came to a bad end. The woman underwent a further change and could now expose on screen. This was not an expression of freedom or liberation but to draw audiences. Commercialization of movies plays an important role in the portrayal of women. Very few directors regard movie as an art form. For most of them it is a means to collect money and they would go to any extent. Every filmmaker wants his movie to be a part of 100 Crore Club. For that matter they would not mind catering porn in their movies. The directors are not only to blame. The heroines too are eager to earn money and fame in their short career and therefore, are ready to do whatever can be done. The item number has become an important tool for the directors to drag the audience to the theatres. It is not a new thing in Hindi Cinema, but it has never been given this much of importance before. The word item in street lingo refers to a woman as a sexual object. In an item number the heroine is portrayed employing all her sex appeal. In the original format the item number was performed for the villain or to seduce hero. Today they have become an extra attraction for the audiences to watch movies. The costumes are used more to expose than to cover; the lyrics are becoming more lusty. The icing on the cake is that they are now played by the leading ladies of the industry. With the changing roles the dressing of women on screen has also changed a lot. The simple sari has come a long way. From Meenakumari dressing up in a sari that covers her entire body, we now have the modern, navel-showing sari worn by Priyanka Chopra where she has a bikini top as a choli in Dostana. Earlier the heroine would dress up for the hero, now she dresses up for the audience. Hindi movies often implied that girls in western clothes neglect

home and do not work hard. The traditional girl was more of a homebody and often not interested in a career. Girls who dress western are often shown to be spoilt. They drive cars rashly, are arrogant and it requires a decent Indian man to come and teach them a lesson.[16,17] Soon this spoilt brat is tamed by the hero and she becomes obedient. Asha Parekh in Ziddi, Saira Bano in Poorab aur Pashchim are some examples of it. Bollywood movies started to improve in the last decade or so in this regard. They don't always show girls in western dress as sluts, but the sluts invariably wear western clothes. Even if a heroine wears mini skirt, she often has to prove her Indianness. In Kuch Kuch Hota Hai Rani Mukherjee, a Londonreturned girl in a micro-mini proves her Indianness by singing a devotional Hindi song. We have moved on since then. For example, in Dhoom (2004) Abhishek's wife (the character played by Rimi Sen) is shown sexy, dressed in skimpy western attire but is hardworking and loving and fortunately for her, she does not have to prove her Indianness by conducting poojas and dressing herself in sari. That was like a fresh air and broke the stereotype.

2. DISCUSSION

Changing Portrayal of Cinema & Socio-Cultural image of Women In the context of an evolution in the roles of women in Indian films, Laxmi (1991), writes, "From the passive wife of Dadasaheb Phalke"s "Raja Harishchandra" to the long-suffering but heroic mother-figure of "Mother India" to the liberated single-parent of "Mother `98," it has been a rather long and challenging journey for women in Hindi cinema". In a single sentence, Laxmi traces the history of Indian films, all the way back to the silent film, Raja Harishchandra in 1913, moving on to Mother India 1957 and Mother 98 1999, during which time women"s roles in Indian cinema have changed in many ways. A Canadian-Indian film maker Deepa Mehta and two of her controversial films, Fire 1996 and Water 2005 created a public outrage upon release, because the earlier film portrayed women in roles completely non-conforming to existing patriarchal social norms (as Lesbians) and the latter film portrayed the ills of the Hindu religion and the atrocities committed on Hindu widows in the 1940s, making a politically incorrect point. Both films stirred the anger of religious groups and resulted in riots across North India. Fire 1996 is the story of two women who by

chance are daughters-in-law of the same household, in heterosexual marriages. However, their marriage equations with their spouses are unequal and a lack of the love, affection and space they look for in their marriages, drives them towards each other. They find the comfort and space they always lacked in their heterosexual marital relations, in the love relationship that ensues between them. The whole idea of women being portrayed as making this choice angered political parties, religious groups and religious fanatics, who went about threatening to kill the director, smashing and destroying the theaters and cinema houses that dared to screen the film. The film was banned from screening in the city of Mumbai, the center of the Bollywood film industry, and the entire state of Maharashtra where Mumbai is located. Water 2006, made by the same director, was thrown out of India even before it could be shot on location in Varanasi, a small town in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Deepa Mehta"s set was destroyed and the film"s cast and crew were driven out of the shooting locations by state religious factions. Water is a period film set in the 1940"s in the pre-independence era when Gandhi"s Satyagraha movement was the biggest social phenomenon in British colonial India. During this period widow remarriage was not common. Widows were considered unlucky and a curse on society. They were sent from the homes of their in-laws and parents to special widow homes. The treatment of one such child widow who is sent to a widow house in the small town of Varanasi on the banks of the River Ganges is the essence of the story. This child widow learns the hardships of widowhood as she observes another widow in her early twenties who is also confined here. Using the "holy" aspects of religion like the town of Varanasi and the River Ganges, to bring out the negative aspects of the religion was unacceptable to society, especially the religious groups who are politically supported by different parties were able to mobilize the masses against this film. Do these changes eliminate the typicality of roles of women in cinema? First, while many films have been made on social themes in the realm of women"s issues including dowry, widowhood, rape, etc. it is not necessary that any of these films have been blockbusters, neither have they been viewed popularly. Secondly, such films only take a superficial interest in women and their issues. This means that although they deal with social issues pertaining to women, the films do not focus on the

women‟s points of view but rather, on how the man plays the hero in these situations and fixes them In this male centric society the role of women in hindi cinema started in 1920 although the first women acted in Indian films is of mixed British, European and Indian origins referred to as the "AngloIndians".[18,19] Since they had hybrid origins, they were deemed separate from the women of pure Indian origin. There was a stigma associated with Indian women acting and in the context of this social stigma, when Indian women began to act, directors, in order to conform to social norms might have been pressured to portray Indian women leads as characters who live within the given boundaries of society even in the films. In Indian cinema, this is probably the beginning of the idea of having to necessarily cater to audience needs and conform to existing value systems. Actresses in Indian films typically begin their careers when they are teenagers as opposed to male actors who start in their twenties. Even if the actress has completed only a decade in the industry and is just about 30 years old, though she may not have actually aged in terms of years, the industry considers the actress an "old face" and directors begin their hunt for "fresh faces". On the contrary the male actor‟s career period is much longer lasting unto his early fifties, sometimes. It is very common to see an aged actor in his fifties playing the male lead, opposite a female lead of 19. However, if slightly older female leads are cast opposite younger male actors, the actresses are criticized by the press, industry and audiences of having lost their "youthful charm", because the audience likes to see young women in the lead, who is attractive to the male lead and performs sensuous song and dance sequences. This a imitation of our society people likes to see the beautiful and the glorious part of the female and in exposing this part the actual image of women is being missed somewhere. This indicates the male centralism and bias not only in the minds of those who make films but also the viewers who have been conditioned over years to view characters in films from this point of view. Patriarchal Indian society views young women as being sensuous and sexually appealing and older women as being less attractive. This is the male fantasy in operation which expects the female lead has to be young and in her prime, while the male lead can be in his early fifties and yet pass for a young hero/protagonist in his late twenties and early thirties. Deliberation of Women in Hindi

Cinema: The narratives of Hindi cinema have undoubtedly been male dominated and male centric. Themes have been explored from the male audience‟s point of view. The heroine is always secondary to the hero. Her role is charted out in context of any male character which is central to the script. It may be the hero, the villain, the father, the boss, an elderly male figure etc. She is devoid of any independent existence and her journey throughout the film is explored in relation to the male character. This kind of straightjacketing limits the women‟s role to providing glamour, relief, respite and entertainment. For eg: Priyanka Chopra's character in Agneepath (2012) is not of any significance to the story as such. It is only to give the audience a break from the tedious scenes of violence and drama. She is there only as a romantic partner to Hrithik Roshan who is busy in avenging his father‟s brutal murder. Chronicling the male‟s experiences, dreams, stories, revenge, angst, ambitions etc has been the essence of Hindi films. In the action genre of films popularized by the likes of Akshay Kumar, Sunny Deol and Sunil Shetty; the heroine is abruptly placed in the romantic track as a distraction for the viewer from monotonous bouts of violence. In hindi cinema portrayals, the women who can lead her life independently and take decisions without relying on any male. In such a scenario, women are seen to be not just physically inferior to men but also intellectually inferior. Film-makers don‟t take the effort to associate qualities like intellect and decision-making with female characters. On the positive side, there are a chunk of film-makers who have reacted against the stereotypes set by mainstream cinema and have dared to explore subjects from the women‟s perspective. Contemporary films like No One Killed Jessica (2011), Cheeni Kum (2007), Chameli (2003), Ishqiya (2010), Paa (2009), Dirty Picture (2011), Kahaani (2012) and Gulaab Gang(2014) have pictured extraordinary themes and portrayed women as central to the story line. These films have forced creators to take a fresh look at the different roles played by women and introspect into the kind of type cast that was being perpetuated earlier. It is also to the credit of the current crop of actresses who have not been hesitant to accept bold roles. Actress like Vidya Balan (Paa, Dirty Picture, Kahaani, Ishqiya) In Kahaani Vidya Balan takes on her role with power and pride and Madhuri Dixit (Mrityudand, Lajja, Aaja Nachle, Gulaab

Gang). First-time director Soumik Sen, who has also written the story and screenplay besides composing the music, taps into time-honoured conventions of commercial Hindi cinema to spin a good-versus-evil yarn where both the „hero‟ and the „baddie‟ happen to be fire-spewing women. Another actress Konkona Sen Sharma (Page 3, Wake Up Sid, Life in a Metro, Mr. and Mrs. Iyer) have led this change of direction. Other actresses like Jaya Bachchan, Smita Patil, Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das have also appeared in strong and independent roles which for the time being shifted the camera‟s focus from the women‟s body to her identity as an individual. Such actresses have challenged the norm. Film scholar and author Shoma Chatterji (Subject: Cinema, Object: Women, 1998) says, "Women in Hindi cinema have been decorative objects with rarely any sense of agency being imparted to them. Each phase of Hindi cinema had its own representation of women, but they were confined largely to the traditional, patriarchal frame-work of the Indian society. The ordinary woman has hardly been visible in Hindi cinema." To understand this portrayal in much more depth, we need to have a look at some crucial glimpses which defined the role of women in Hindi films. These images kept alive the notions of women as upholders of traditions, family bonding, thus depriving them of any sense of power and agency. It is difficult to come to a uniform conclusion on the portrayal of celluloid women. Considering the fact that women in India are not a homogenous group – they belong to different religions, castes, class, and socio-economic status and have different kinds of ambitions and desires as a result of which they lead different lives, it is improper to conclude that women on Indian silver screen have been portrayed in an identical manner. Films have to be responsive towards the context in which they locate women characters. Women characters should possess agency to dismantle the existing power structures as well as be able to negotiate their own position within this structure. It is time that cinema seeks a redefinition of women as objects of male gaze.[19,20] Women‟s experiences and dilemma as points of narration are the need of the hour. Going beyond the stereotypes will do a great help to the cause of women in Indian society. Cinema has to create a separate and independent space for Indian women to help them realize their dreams. Cinema is a highly impressionistic medium and it is important for this medium to be an instrument that enables people to think differently and empathize with alternative perceptions of reality. Cinema‟s only end is not to entertain. It must begin a quest for social change through entertainment. As a media product, identified to accelerate the process of modernity, cinema should not stick to the "formula film" it should come up with more progressive representations of women. Such portrayals would do justice to women and their role in the society.

3. RESULTS

In Hindi cinema, there is a formula for making commercially hit films which nowadays is followed by almost every filmmaker. Woman characters have to be beautiful, irrespective of roles being played by them. These days item songs are necessary to make a film successful. Nowadays, the lyrics of many songs like Tu Cheej Badi Hai Mast Mast (Mohra), Munni Badnaam Hui (Dabang), and Shila Ki Jawani (Agnipath), contain words which demean women. After discussing about various instances, we can say that Indian cinema portrays women as a sex object and endorses the objectified male gaze. Ila patel in his research "Representation of Women in Mass Media", says semiotic analysis of films shows that in cinema, women are represented as what they represent about themselves for men and not what they actually signify . Some sense of sensibility is entering Bollywood films. There are paradigm shift seen in contemporary films towards depiction of women in films. Now films are produced on women issues and their problems. In several films, they are portrayed as fighting for rights. Women characters are slowly and steadily becoming strong, independent and fighting for rights in society. Released in 2014, film Queen is one of the examples of a young and confident middle class girl in Delhi .Two days prior to her marriage; her fiancé refuses to marry her, because he wants to marry a girl who is confident and modern. He thinks that Rani is conservative and a traditional girl. She is shocked, but she moves on. She goes to Paris according to her pre booked honeymoon. There, she enjoyed her life and explored many things. After returning home, Vijay wants to get married to her but this time she dumps him. In this film, the character of Rani is depicted as having low confidence with simple background when she begins her life. But she evolves into a confident and courageous girl. Ultimately, she

developed into a character of courage and dignity. No one killed Jessica, was released in 2011. The film is based on the murder case of model Jessica Lal in Delhi. Jessica was shot dead in a pub in Delhi by Manu Sharma who is a strong political leader's son. Jessica got justice after a long battle fought in the court of law. No One Killed Jessica depicted two women characters who fought for justice for Jessica; Jessica's sister and a journalist.[18,19,20]

4. CONCLUSIONS

There are many problems and issues related to women in India. Such as honor killing, female feticide, etc. Honor killing is basically the murder of a girl who marries a person outside her caste or community. Only for the sake of a so called honor of community or the family that the girl is annihilated. Killings are prominent in the northern part of the country, especially in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. India is now facing the problem of sex ratio. Decreasing number of girl's per 1000 boys is alarming. This is happening because of female foeticide. In the pursuit of male child, people are aborting their girl child in the womb. This has led to a grave consequence of decreasing number of girl in the country. Bollywood is not silent on this serious problem. There are many films made on this issue. The future of women oriented films is very bright. Directors and film producers are getting confidence that they can make film centered on women and it would be economically viable. This is the reason behind release of so many films on women. These films are getting good responses from both the audiences and critics. A few months ago, two women centric films were released. One was Piku and another was Tanu Weds Manu Returns. Both the films got huge appreciations from audiences and critics. These are typical Bollywood commercial films in which women characters are central. It shows the maturity of both Bollywood industry and audience. Both have generated interest in making and viewing films on women. Earlier they were depicted as submissive, exploited and subservient to male characters. But in recent times, their characters are strong, confident and are fighting for their rights. These roles are defining the new and modern women of changing India. In Piku, the protagonist (Dipika Padukone) takes care of her ageing father. She works in a corporate office and takes care of him. She does not want to marry because she doesn't want to leave him alone.

Kangana Ranaut's film Tanu Weds Manu Returns, which is the sequel of Tanu Weds Manu. Tanu is the central character in the film. Tanu (Kangana Ranaut) is shown breaking the stereotype images build by society related to Indian girl. She is a dominant character in film. She loves her freedom and enjoys her life.

Earlier in typical Bollywood masala films, women were depicted as weak and marginalized. But in changed scenario, women portrayal in films has become different. Now they are portraying as women fighting for causes and rights. Films like Tanu Weds Manu and Piku have broken the image of so called stereotyped Indian girl. If we see the larger picture, it reflects the perspective of society towards women portrayed in films. In conclusion, we can say that there is a paradigm shift in the portrayal of women in films, from entertainment to empowerment. It clearly shows the approach and attitude of society and changing the reality in cinema also.[20].

Conflict of interest statement

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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