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Vol. XVII

Eds.
Amitava Roy, Bryan Reynolds, Sheila T. Cavanagh, Subir Dhar, Papia Mitra

A
Special Publication of
The Shakespeare Society of Eastern India

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(Special Issue on Film & Cinema)

Eds.

Amitava Roy
Bryan Reynolds
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Subir Kumar Dhar
Papia Mitra

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Phone: (033) 2466 2688 / 98304 05624 / 9748726895.
E.mail: profroy@gmail.com,tapu_biswas@yahoo.com

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Contents

From the Editors' Desk

This edition of **Theatre International** Vol. XVII is striking in the way the collection demonstrates how the taste of readers and critics alike have shifted. On the medium front more people are focusing on films than physical theatrical performances. Most of the articles can be divided into three sections. One deals with feminist issues. Another deals with gender issues but is about the slow normalizing of transgenders who had been marginalized hitherto. The third section is on a fascinating transformation in media delivery we are undergoing right now, viz. The OTT platform and how it impacts traditional filmmaking and audience. The final touch to this collection takes us back to the ancinet past with emphasis on harmony with nature.

This volume begins with **Dr. Tapu Biswas's** paper titled "Shakespeare on the Screen and Banquo's Fourth Assassins" which is an exploration into the fundamental difference between the stage vision and the film vision of the plays of Shakespeare, a professional writer for the theatrical stage who was gradually elevated to a classic status. Dr Biswas argues that the inherent logic of a theatrical scene needs a theatrical rather than a filmic understanding. These points are illustated through an analysis of one of the shortest and most problematic scenes in the Shakespeare corpus: *Macbeth* III.iii (the murder of Banquo). The identity of the Third murderer has so preoccupied the film-makers (via the literary critics) that they have completely neglected the purpose of the presence of this character. The paper concludes with a demonstration that multiple problems can be solved by tying them together in a single thread of action: that one only needs to think in the theatrical rather than in the filmic manner.

Anirban Banerjee speaks about how in the Harry Potter film series, color is used symbolically to reflect Harry's emotional journey and the evolving tone of the narrative. Early scenes depicting Harry's life before Hogwarts are less vibrant, mirroring his initial lack of love, purpose, and identity. Upon entering the magical world, the introduction of warmth from friendships and newfound purpose brightens the scenes, indicating

a positive shift in Harry's life. Directors Chris Columbus and David Yates use color to contrast different phases of Harry's journey. Columbus emphasizes warmer tones to depict Harry's awe and the warmth of newfound relationships, while Yates opts for gloomier, darker hues to reflect the series' growing darkness and Harry's maturation, particularly with the rise of Voldemort. The colors of the Hogwarts houses are also significant. Red symbolizes courage and righteousness, typically associated with Gryffindor, while green, used for Slytherin, represents fear and malevolence. Banerjee argues, successfully, that this symbolism extends to the magic, with Harry's charms colored red for goodness and Voldemort's green for evil, emphasizing the moral dichotomy of the characters.

Dr. Rituparna Chakraborty compares and contrasts the how literary texts of Tagore are presented in audio-visual medium. One example is his story "Nashtoneer" as compared with with Ray's Film "Charulata". He discusses also Tagore's ideas about such transformations. Chakrabporty concludes that the cinematic presentation of Tagore's works, in spite of slight changes demonstrates his relevance even today.

Pritha Misra explores how Rituporno Ghosh has depicted loneliness in his films. The films explore loneliness and isolation found in various human relationships be it due to societal pressures, family estrangement, unrequited love, or personal yearning which are brought out by the emotional complexity of the characters. Misra points out how Rituporno's cinematic techniques have helped in this regard. His legacy will continue to influence and inspire future generations.

Shyamal Mondal and **Dr. Shubham Bhattacharjee** delve into the world of Bengali detective cinema to disseminate the role of women. Their article is an in-depth analysis of the popular Bengali movies 'Shubho Mahurat' and 'Mitin Mashi'. The authors discuss is detail about the portrayal of women in the role of a sleuth, which is a rarity in traditional mediums of popular culture, and highlight the ripples created as a consequence of this depiction.

Shreyoshi Dhar analyzes how Hindi films maintain patriarchy. Women has always been regarded as Other and the male scriptwriters reflect this in Bollywood films and television series. There women cannot survive without male support and they compete with each other for that. Her study of popular serials make it clear that Indian audience like suffering

females but not those who try to improe their lives by rejecting traditional roles. Dhar however concludes that this is somewhat a misleading portrayal of modern Indian women and serials should focus on women winning their rights and leading successful lives without depending on males.

Farha Khatun and **Dr. Moupikta Mukherjee** studies two Hindi films to show how feminism has influenced the presentation of gender and identity. The film 'Pink' is about a woman's right to give and withhold consent and is also about female solidarity. 'Rashmi Rocket' criticises stereotypes of feminine behaviour. Khatun and Mukherjee found that the films are governed by the themes of independence, desire, traditional Indian values, and identity with the women fighting back against a patriarchal social system.

Sonakshi Mukherjee focuses on empowered heroines in various young-adult Dystopian novels and films. The novels provide in-depth character analysis while the films provide visual mode. The interesting point about them is that they all provide us with strong female characters. Mukherjee concludes that this is what younger generations desire to watch and these stories dealing with self-empowerment and gender dynamics influence young people and promote the cause of female empowerment.

Namitha Merin Thomas examines the film 'Barbie' as a quest for identity. The conflict is between the perfect plastic Barbieland and the flawed masculine dominated organic world. The latter infects the former with patriarchy but finally the Barbies and Kens are indoctrinated, with the understanding that neither can exist without the other. Thomas shows how the film deals with identity conflict, demand for a place that is neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, and how the doll finally evolve into a human being of value.

Shiwangi Ojha, speaks of how transgender people are treated in Hindi films. She focuses on the film "Laxmi" which is about the spirit of a murdered transgender who possesses the hero and takes revenge on the evil businessman who had murdered him/her to take over the land Laxmi had bought to house people of her community. The film is empowering in how it depicts the transgender community as just another part of society. Yet it is also centred round superstition and the resolution of the film comes in a magnificent song and dance offering to Siva. "Haddi" is another film that has a transgender as a protagonist. The film sensitively shows the rituals and ways of the community. Their religion

and reliance on God Rama is also stressed. Finally the protagonist manages to take revenge on murderers of her family. Both films tell the audience that transgender are human beings and empower them.

Natasha Chatterjee analyzes the content of Hindi films to trace out its representations of gender fluidity. Hindi films have never been able to portray respectfully LGBTQA+characters. Though some films have treated this issue sensitively, it is only from 2000 onwards that we see sensitized treatment of such themes and depiction of gay and lesbian couples. Chatterjee points out that as societal attitude change, directors also become more sensitive about such topics and through their films masses become more accepting of such people.

Dr. Tirna Sadhu and **Sourav Paul** reviews how films show trauma endured by transgendered people. Gender dysphoria is disorienting for people and so the transgender suffer, not only socially but also psychologically. The film 'Nagarkirtan' traces the negative self-identity generated by the protagonist due to this. He embraces her identity as a woman which is rejected by society; when she falls in love even her beloved only wants him as a woman and does not accept the duality of her nature. Finding only rejection everywhere ultimately she accepts death. 'Samantaral' also shos the oprotagonistalientated from his family and even considerd insane for refusing to accept his assigned identity. He also finds release only in suicide. However Sadhu and Paul argues that it is through such sympathetic films that ordinary people can understand transgenders and hopefully one day would allow them to lead authentic lives.

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Jena analyzes how LGBTQA+ characters are portrayed in Indian cinema. Most films show them negatively. But in the last three-four years they are presented psoitively and realistically. From minimal characters, they have become central. This shift reflects the evolving societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ issues. Jena advocates for more responsible and respectful representations of LGBTQ+ characters in cinema to enhance understanding and acceptance.

Sayani Das researches how LGBTQ+ is becoming mainstream in Indian films. Much work has been done before in this regard. At first they weren't visible, but now with the advent of web-creations and OTT streaming such character are coming to the forefront. If we look at the

web series "Taali" and the tweets that commented on it we can see some clear trends emerging. In the series such characters are shown fighting for their identity and respect and they are portrayed sympathetically. Das finds evidence that positive feelings regarding such characters are greater than negative ones which carries a hopeful message for society.

Debarshi Arathdar takes up *Jibaro*, a single episode from Netflix's series *Love, Death and Robots* which is fascinating because it is not verbal throughout. The cry of a mythological creature, the Siren, destroys all humans; only a deaf soldier is saved. But when he starts hearing again he too must die because he can no longer escape the fatal call. The whole episode is presented graphically in an animated format in a way that can only be described as hyper-realism. Arathdar suggests that *Jibaro* prompts viewers to reconsider the nature and impact of adult content when presented in an animated form, highlighting the potential of animation to transform and challenge conventional narratives and themes.

Dr. Shantanu Siuli studies how the introduction of OTT platforms have impacted traditional media. The former are fierce competitors not only with the latter but also among themselves. They are a source of steady stream of original content. Covid-19 pandemic which led to lockdowns decimated cinema and theatre halls where you have to go physically, but OTTs supplied entertainment from the safety of home. Thus they proliferated in India. Now, cheaper susbcription and localised content has led to OTT entertainment being consumed by nearly every Indian. Siluli nevertheless finds that people still watch movies in halls and on TV, so that traditional media would not disappear entirely.

Ms. Samarpita De and **Dr. Pramiti Roy** discuss how OTT platforms are a creator of original content. This is a research paper of considerable importance since it surveys the users and content creators both. Overall their findings indicate that OTT media allows the development of new opportunities for independent and original media creation.

Dr. Moumita Chakraborty is interested in how OTT platforms are becoming a threat traditional paid TV channels. It is a research survey of the audience who consumes digital media. It demontrates that due to convenience and content. People have started poreferring OTT over television channels. Chakraborty offers some suggestions by which TV

channels can better compete with OTT, otherwise they will become insignificant.

Dr. Arnab Chatterjee in his paper titled "Redefining Motherhood: A Study of Rituparno Ghosh's Unishe April" addresses how the film dismantles the politics of a normative gender system associated with the traditional notion of Motherhood that reinforces patriarchal gender roles and stereotypes. Adopting a feminist lens, Dr. Chatterjee underlines how the film projects an alternative idea of motherhood that counters patriarchal mindset often reiterated by mainstream media texts.

Shelly Sen takes up the theme of how OTT platforms provide not just challenge to old media but also new opportunities. Though they were first a luxury in India, a growing base of consumers is utilizing them to customize media for their gratification. Her research leads to the inescapable conclusion that traditional media must adapt to digital tools; they should diversify content, change advertisement model and produce a vibrant multi-model system if they are to survive.

Suvojit Das is interested in researching how OTT platforms influence gender equality. He found that though there is a large reservoir of woman-centric content, yet romantic content with male leads get stronger support from audience and advertisers. On the other hand content with female empowerment as the main theme often bash males. Das concludes that evidence doesnot point that OTT is influential in promoting gender equality.

Agnideepto Datta speaks of pre-Socratic philosophy and their concept of an unbounded cosmos with time and space being fundamentally interconnected. Such philosophies are relevant still. Datta takes up select films whose themes echo the ideas of these philosophers. Such films are significant tools for promoting environmental awareness, similar to the philosophical explorations of ancient times. They urge viewers to reflect on their impact on the environment and to recognize their ethical responsibility to protect and sustain the natural world. Datta argues that his call to action emphasizes the importance of stewardship and living in harmony with nature, echoing the ancient philosophical principles.

Happy Reading

Amitava Roy & Papia Mitra

Shakespeare on the Screen and Banquo's Fourth Assassin

Tapu Biswas

Abstract: The present paper is an exploration into the fundamental difference between stage vision and film versions of the plays of Shakespeare, a professional writer for the theatrical stage who was gradually elevated to classic status and was subsequently subsumed by the film industry. Questions are raised herein about whether the products of a camera–driven medium which disregarded the 'body'— that is, the language of Shakespeare's plays should at all be called 'Shakespeare'; the fundamental differences between the information that a stage play-script provides the theatre director with, and the film-maker makes of it; as also the differing foci of these disparate media. It argues that the inherent logic of a theatrical scene needs a theatrical rather than a filmic understanding. These points are illustrated through an analysis of one of the shortest and most problematic scenes in the Shakespeare corpus: *Macbeth* III.iii (the murder of Banquo). The identity of the Third murderer has so preoccupied the film-makers (via literary critics) that they have completely neglected the purpose of the presence of this character. In consequence, absurdities have cropped up in the representation of this scene. The failure of film directors to understand the logic of the stage action has driven them to concentrate on the 'gimmicky' aspects of their craft, such as transposing of time and place to a modern political milieu, or trying to reproduce the stage ambience as an on-screen stage replica. The paper asserts that indulgence in their personal inclinations have often led directors to lose an objective understanding of Shakespeare's script, and it concludes that representational problems can be solved by tying them together in a single thread of action, and that one only needs to think in a theatrical rather than in a filmic manner.

Keywords: Language, Film, film director, film maker, script, text

Since the early days of the film making, industrious film-makers have routinely drawn on Shakespeare as food for an open feast. The twentieth century began with two silent film versions of *King John* and *Hamlet,*[1] followed by a longer series of some of the other more popular plays of Shakespeare. In 1908 alone, at least three Shakespeare films[2] were produced, and this was a trend that continued to flourish throughout the century. In the process, the Shakespearean play texts were often cut, rearranged, transplanted, and treated in various ways to present him to audiences that were much larger than theatre–going ones. Consequently practices arose of compressing the plots and story–outlines in order to afford viewers an element of visual pleasure tailored to their leisure hour demands while at the same time circumscribing to a certain extent the power of their imagination. Sixteen–minute Shakespeares were not uncommon then, and film directors were little concerned with the playwright's intentions, probably secure in the knowledge that authorial intention can never be fathomed. But there was another intention in appropriating Shakespeare in celluloid, and this was that the film industry at this time had garnered a bad reputation for the production of salacious films and for corrupting the youth. Shakespeare with his acknowledged status as a cultural classic was intentionally drawn into the folds of the film industry in order to counteract the moral condemnation raining upon it.[3]

The present paper does not aspire to present an overview of the film versions of Shakespeare's plays, since this is not possible given that there are so many filmic adaptations which were done, and that there are too many languages involved. Moreover, even a modest survey would demand a voluminous space, and even then it would have to omit discussions of a considerable number of lost films of which only written records or mentions survive.

The fact that Shakespeare wrote for the stage and not for the cinema (nor for the bench and the school, for that matter) should have alerted the early film-makers — and subsequently their followers — to the comparative intransigence of their filmic medium itself. This emerged in a curious manner in the 1916 silent film of *Macbeth* starring Sir Beerbohm Tree, an accomplished Shakespearean actor. To avoid wasting costly

celluloid, the director John Emerson had to remove the film rolls repeatedly from the camera and run it empty because Tree as a veteran Shakespearean actor could not portray the situations without speaking out the full dialogues — uselessly and unprofitably for the industry — in a *silent* film.[4] These film-makers were, in the words of Jack Jorgens, "struggling to render great poetic drama in dumb–show. Mercifully, most of them are lost."[5]

Nevertheless, silent versions of *Macbeth* appeared on film some nine times. After this, the play graduated to the next level, spawning nineteen talkies, and still later, eighteen TV shows. Yet, a major directorial trend was initiated in the era of the silent films, when directors wiped the slate clean of the dialogues, nonchalantly dismissing Shakespeare's language as useless dramatic dross. This beggaring of the Shakespearean experience by the viewers came to remain as a dominant feature present in many subsequent productions. A dissociation of sensibility certainly took place historically when the viewers had to see a character dumb–acting his role, and to read what he was saying in the subtitles or intertitles. It was much later that the Royal Shakespeare Company and the BBC took up the task of restoring the full text of Shakespeare to the cinema and the TV screen, but this too gave birth to its own problems.

Quite symptomatically, in a collection of articles by some twenty critics devoted specifically to *Macbeth* on the screen,[6] issues involving the visual rendering of this stage–play text into a film–script has not been addressed even once. Instead, we find the critics concerned with 'rural second–wave feminism', or with *Maqbool*, a film in which Shakespeare appears only in the film reviews,[7]— once again, to exploit the dignity attached to his name. The probable reason behind this is that no one perhaps has really thought about how to interpret Shakespeare's texts through stage activities. If they had done that, the translation of the play-text into filmic visuals may not have been the disaster that it consistently has been, and various problems may never have arisen. One can demonstrate this by considering one of the most anomalous scenes in the Shakespearean tragic corpus: the murder of Banquo in *Macbeth*, III.iii.[8]

For the literary student, the scene is, quintessentially, a mere puzzle: '***who*** is the third murderer?' It is never enough for him that the character in question is in fact a third murderer, because, with his term–end examination approaching, the abstraction called 'Character' would be more important to him than the function of the character and the immediate purpose of his presence on the stage: both of which, incidentally, define his theatrical relevance. Such things happen, as we all know too well, because *Macbeth* has become a 'text' to be studied in a classroom instead of being regarded as a performance or a theatrical show to be seen inside a crowded public auditorium. But, as our idea of 'entertainment' has evolved through ages, so too has the presentational medium of the play changed from theatre to film. In the process, we have dismissed theatre and disregarded the text too by asserting that 'film has its own language', and have created an alternative, diminished, Shakespeare on the silver screen. The new audience is comprised of 'viewers,' and not of 'spectators' who watch the films in hermetically sealed cinema halls, enclosed, anonymous and safe and comfortable in their personal darkness.

Overall, we have now on hand three groups of Shakespeare appreciators: the theatre director (with his spectators), the textual editor (with his readers), and the film–maker (with his viewers). All three, viz. the editor, the theatre director and the film maker, know that Macbeth had met only two assassins in his palace to arrange for Banquo's murder. But since the time of Bradley, the standard way of understanding drama has been to assume that the theatre audience (including the cinema goers) has had, like an attentive reader, the leisure to swing back and forth through the whole play in detail, playing off words against words, and to unravel the intricacies of the plot, discovering (if necessary, inventing) motivations in defiance of the play–text[9] and, sleuth–like, digging out identities concealed in the dialogues. In the present instance, we have had a more than a century-long critics' heyday, each commentator trying to figure out whether the Third Murderer in Act III Sc. iii was Ross, Seyton, or Macbeth himself in disguise:[10] an erudite whodunit pursuit that has resulted in James Thurber's suggestion that it was actually Macduff — or more likely Lady Macbeth's father —

who killed King Duncan.[11] Significantly, nobody except Dover Wilson paid much attention to Dr. Johnson's practical and stageworthy solution that this mysterious person was the previously mentioned 'perfect spy o'the time' in Macbeth's employ.[12] This spy's presence in this scene would be quite the natural thing, except for the fact that he was not supposed to accompany the other two and operate from the murder spot itself: an action that the First murderer challenges.

In a film version, the focus of interest is not on these minor — which we may simply call functionaly — characters. In the cinema, this scene should normally open with the camera surveying the details of a park (perhaps a royal hunting ground) close to the palace and woody enough to conceal an ambush; and this surrounding becomes the focus of our attention, not the three stealthy men whose allotted dialogues by themselves have little influence over the play's action. The more the sinister ambience of the park impresses us, the less significant becomes the opening query of the first murderer. Therefore, the film maker is not worried about the words that the assassins utter. He may have the opening exchange spoken as casually as possible, and misdirect us, so to speak, from the 'vital' question that confounds the literary critic, or alternately melodramatize the initial exchange to his heart's content.[13] In fact, the question of who asked whom to meet whom, when and where, becomes almost academic in view of the threatening wilderness of the park foreshadowing the immediate doom of Banquo and his son.

However, when an overly ambitious film director like Joel Coen decides in his *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (2021) that there should be a vast wasteland adjacent to the royal palace where the murderers wait, and Banquo should come in with Fleance on *horseback* (in a direct directorial disregard of 'His horses go about/ Almost a mile' in Shakespeare's text which established the proximity of the park as a mere 'something from the palace,'[14] and the third murderer becomes Ross in disguise,[15] the focus is all on the characters, and the question hangs heavy in the air: 'Who did bid thee?' because of the melodramatic cloak-and-dagger opening of the scene. Here we see the first murderer pointing a dagger at the Third (who doesn't even notice it) to challenge his presence, and the Second murderer revealing the next moment that

the three have already conferred and discussed the projected murder, apparently to their satisfaction: so now the First murderer can safely indulge in poetry for a change. Further, Banquo's loud call for a light has been deleted perforce; else the director would have to explain how Banquo came by it. Indeed, we wonder, how *did* he come by it? It wasn't a match–box to be carried in his pocket (if his costume possessed one)!

This was necessitated by the simple fact that in a film (but not on the stage) it is possible to show horsemen unhorsed by assassins, and the director was simply wanting to include a bit of action in his film (as, incidentally, Polanski did in his 1971 *Macbeth*). Thus, Banquo and Fleance were obliged to enter the woods on horseback, and Shakespeare had to be truncated in order to accommodate these filmic demands. But as the scene stands now in the film, we have to imagine that Banquo and Fleance went out riding carrying a torch. Here C.E. Montague's caustic comment: "it takes a master–joiner to make such a mess of a play, without making more"[16] seems to be the only appropriate response to such versions of Shakespeare.

But writing for the Globe theatre, Shakespeare could not have visualized (except in post–modernist verbiage) any such immersive view of the park to distract our attention. Of course our focus here is wholly on the characters again, but in a different mode. Here we understand a character by what he does rather than by who he is. And the first question that arises in our mind is: '*why* is this person being thus challenged by the other?' and, '*why* is this previously unseen person present here at all?' rather than '*who* is he?'

The theatre director can solve the first problem, as I have suggested elsewhere,[17] by simply shifting the focus of the query from 'But ***who*** did bid thee join with us?' to: 'But who did bid thee ***join*** with ***us***?'—implying by his gesture that the third murderer was supposed to operate from a different spot, and not *join* the other two here. As the next dialogue reveals, the two murderers have already accepted the third as an accomplice; but apparently this slight deviation from the fixed schedule rouses the first murderer's suspicion, and he probably suspects that the

third one is there to spy on them (or by a stretch of imagination, kill them after the deed, which actually happens in at least two film versions of *Macbeth* discussed here). However, the Second murderer allays his suspicion.

His doubts allayed, the first murderer poetizes on the approach of the evening; and the literary reader is of course charmed by his words. Not so the film maker: in his realistic medium a common ruffian speaking such poetry would be an anomaly and an unconvincing backslide into theatricality. Coen therefore simply exorcizes the lines altogether in a gesture signalling an admission of defeat by the filmic medium itself. It may be noted in this context that in some film versions, the murderers have been given styled costumes denoting a superior social rank to make the poetry fit their mouths. Also, to give substance to the short scene and to incorporate a bit of 'action' in his film by unhorsing a rider, further cuts have been needed, like the lines: 'His horses go about almost a mile'; as also the Third murderer's explanation of this departure of the horses offstage. Thus it is that Fleance appears on horseback in this film. Polanski, in 1971, had chosen a similar path to escape from Shakespeare's text. This shows that neither director could easily handle Shakespeare.

However, even in a less ambitious project than Coen's, problems would still remain, though perhaps in a different guise. A realist director's camera might pan the sky to show us the dimming sky while the first murderer speaks his poetry, thus distracting our attention from the social status of the speaker. But then the lines would become a redundant verbal illustration of what we are already seeing. The problems lie in the medium itself — rough–hew them how you may.

In the theatre, the director understands that the lines 'His horses go about' etc. are unavoidable, for otherwise he would have to bring in two horse riders on the stage, which is not only a luxury few can afford, but also sonically improvident in as much as their hooves would make so much noise on the wooden stage as to render all spoken dialogue inaudible. Further, although a film director can unhorse a horseman with the support of stuntmen and aptly edited shots, this cannot be done on

a theatre stage without risk. Moreover, there would remain the question of what the theatre director would do with the two horses stranded on the stage after the murder is over. Banquo and Fleance's entry on foot therefore must remain and must be explained in the theatre, since Banquo has already committed himself to go riding with Fleance in III.i.19. Otherwise the director would have to consider changing that line to something like: "My Lord, I, with my son shall be taking a stroll in your park nearby."

In Jack Gold's BBC *Macbeth* (1983) we find Fleance walking in with an enormous torch in his hand.[18] We may legitimately wonder where he got it from, and whether he had gone out riding with it. If not, we wonder who handed it to him. Such doubts notwithstanding, Fleance ambles in with his torch and his father and escapes while the latter is being killed. The First and the Third murderers kill Banquo while the First murderer goes after Fleance, and, after a cursory peep at whatever there is beyond the camera's range,[19] returns to ask the Third murderer's allotted question: 'Who did strike out the light?' The Third murderer in Gold's film is Ross, who (being Macbeth's agent and in his confidence about the double treachery involved here) responds with fatuous naiveté: 'Wasn't that the way?'— and then he kills off the other two assassins. We may feel a sense of deprivation that with so many additional killings, the director did not see fit to kill off Fleance too. The rest of the play he may have then easily readjusted to his heart's content.

Naturally, in this film, it is Ross and not the First Murderer who reports the murder to Macbeth, without mentioning that he has eliminated the other two satisfactorily, (a detail that Macbeth is not even bothered about), and he feels quite honoured when the King compliments him by calling him a 'nobleman of Scotland' and 'the best of cut-throats.' As audience members, are we really expected to make anything out of all this?

The problem of Banquo's 'Give us a light ho,' and the Second murderer's 'A light, A light!' in this scene probably demands an extensive analysis. In Trevor Nunn's wonderful black and white RSC *Macbeth* (1979), the atmosphere is created masterfully by the First and Third

murderers through a sharp urgent exchange carried out in undertone. Both the secretiveness and the risk of such an undertaking as killing a lord is completely in tune with both the text as we find it, and as the general image of the scene that exists in our imagination. Unlike some of the later films, Shakespeare's explanation for the appearance of two aristocrats on foot is not deleted here. But there is no call for a light from the yet invisible Banquo; and yet a light appears in the distance in the approved, expected, and perhaps cinematically convincing, manner. But as Banquo appears, we notice that he is holding a nineteenth century hurricane lantern in his hand. And apart from the obvious anachronism, the question again arises as to where he got it, and how. Such lack of internal logic has percolated to later generation film directors through films like these.

The desire to re-create Shakespeare on the screen has reached an extreme form in Rupert Goold's 2010 *Macbeth* where he transposes the action from Macbeth's Scotland to Ceausescu's Romania, with the three Witches famously becoming three hospital nurses. For the Banquo business, Goold ingeniously interprets Banquo's 'ride' as a ride on the train, and the 'light' as a light from a cigarette lighter. The three Murderers appear here in a crowded train compartment as three railway assistants in disguise, and the third one is, naturally, no one but Ross again. Goold conveniently disposes of such minor issues as 'Masking the business from the common eye' (III.i.124), as well as the first Murderer's poetic dialogue about the onset of the evening. Banquo is killed in this version, the two murderers gunned down by Ross, and Fleance escapes. But it is not explained in this otherwise realistically designed film where and how Fleance escapes from a speeding train and gun-wielding officials. And the other question that remains unanswered is why Goold could not search out another story on Ceausescu's regime to exercise his ingenuity upon. Why did Shakespeare have to be used?

One clever way out of the dilemmas concerning the scene being discussed was taken by Kurzel in his 2015 *Macbeth,* where, inspired by his 'silent age' predecessors, he simply wiped the murderers' dialogues off his script. His utter inability to comprehend the logic of the scene becomes apparent when we see Banquo and Fleance coming into sight

riding on *two* horses, and then quite inexplicably leaving the bewildered creatures to their darkling fates, walking on foot unerringly towards their own. The surroundings provide no clue as to why they had to discard their horses exactly at this spot, or why they were moving in this specific direction. Banquo here is shot from a distance. But since it is a long–established convention in action films that there should be a long chase sequence, Fleance is not simply shot down but is chased through the woods for a considerable length of time until he too inexplicably disappears. If there ever was a modern film director so devastatingly defeated by a Shakespearean text, Kurzel is exemplary.

The RSC 2018 *Macbeth* (aka *RSC Live: Macbeth*) directed by Robin Lough is an ambitious attempt to present the play on the screen as a theatrical performance — an idea which had been already exploited by Sohrab Modi in his nearly century–old *Macbeth* adaptation titled *Khoonka Khoon* (1935).This idea works well until it strikes the spectator her/his view from the extreme right end of the auditorium can be no different from a friend's view from the extreme left — which is to say that the director does not know the limitations of his chosen medium. All the actions on the screen here take place on a platform like a billiards–board representing the theatrical space.[20] But that apart, the director's fidelity to the printed text overwhelms us when we find the two murderers seated Down Right and Down Left on two chairs with their backs to us and challenging the third murderer who stands extreme UC facing them and us, leisurely chewing popcorn from a noisy plastic packet. What follows thereafter is Lough's parodic take on the murder of Banquo, with the third murderer putting Mr Bean almost to shame by his adept clowning.

Lough is not at all original in this either, for in *The Real Thing at Last* (1916, scripted by J.M. Barrie and directed jointly by MacBean and Barrie) the parody of *Macbeth* was already accomplished — with the added merit that it was a double–edged satire juxtaposing English and American ideas about filming Shakespeare. Still, one has to admit that after the tiresome Porter Scene in Lough's *Macbeth*, Banquo's murder comes as the first real comic relief in the film.The greatest virtue of the *RSC Live: Macbeth* lies in the fact that if one shuts one's eyes, one can at least hear Shakespeare without inept cuts. But then, perhaps it is

better to read the scene aloud to oneself from a printed page; because then one can at least imagine the action of the scene in the mind's eye. The action on the stage/screen has hardly any connection with the text worth anyone's attention.

The reason why all these film–makers have danced the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire in the Shakespearean context seems to be that they were frequently more impressed by their own ingenuity than by Shakespeare's genius. In fact, one gets the impression that they used Shakespeare as a golden peg on which to hang their often tattered coats. The fundamental problem with all these film–makers is that none of them has tried to reconstruct *why* a playwright should have written such an anomalous scene as this. They have all been concerned with the identity — rather than with the dramatic purpose — of the Third murderer. Several issues may be considered here.

First of all, while shortening the script for production, Shakespeare could easily have appended expressions as 'He'll accompany thee' or something like this at III.i.130 or thereabouts to allay our doubts as to the identity of the Third murderer. However, he did not do so. Instead, he has drawn our special attention to this character's inexplicable presence in the murder scene. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that there must have been some unspoken but quite clear visible explanation on the stage, considering that (unlike these film-makers) Shakespeare was neither a dabbler, nor a dilettante in the show business, but a fully professional and completely successful playwright.

Secondly, Shakespeare has provided the Third murderer with no special task in the scene which would justify his late intrusion into the scene. This man simply does what the other two do on the stage. As a theatrical scene with only two murderers, the seasoned warrior Banquo engaging them in the darkness and sacrificing his life to help his son escape would have been much more moving and convincing.

Thirdly, he left the matter of the sudden appearance of 'a torch' with Banquo and Fleance in the lurch. The strange, and to the Elizabethan audience unimaginable, appearance of a lord carrying his own torch [21] on a leisurely evening ride must somehow have been averted on the stage.

The immediate solution to these problems is that the first problem (the Third murderer) must have had something to do with the second one (the torch); that the Third murderer might be instrumental in luring the victims to this specific spot; and that his purpose on the stage was explained by an unlit torch in his hand as he first appears, has not struck these film-makers because they simply did not think in terms of the stage, but went wherever their fancies roamed: be it Romania or a billiards board. There is no need here to go into all the details of the dialogue-action correlation as I have already dealt with the task of dovetailing this interpretation with the Folio text elsewhere.[22]

It may be pointed out that these problematics arose firstly out of the film makers' failure to realize the nature of a theatrical script and from their inability to comprehend how it creates its own *raison d'etre* on the stage; and secondly, from their failure to appreciate that viewers seek at least some internal coherence in the content which they are viewing. The directors' blatant disregard of Shakespeare's text on the one hand, and their indifference about their viewers' intelligence on the other, turned their films into private directorial games accomplished to satisfy their ego at the expense of artistic seriousness. They have been more concerned with how the characters look on the screen rather than with why they exist there at all. Instead of solving the mystery of the identity of the Third murderer, they appear, apropos of Shakespeare, the Fourth murderer in the scene.

(Endnotes)

1. *Hamlet* (French: *Le Duel d'Hamlet*) (1900) directed by Clément Maurice. Beerbohm Tree's *King John* preceded it by a year (1899). See Elsie Walker, 'Getting Back to Shakespeare: Whose Film is it Anyway?', *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen,* ed. Diana E. Henderson (Blackwell, 2006) p. 9.
2. *Macbeth* by J. Stuart Blackton, *The Taming of the Shrew* by D. W. Griffith, *Antony and Cleopatra* by J. Stuart Blackton and Charles Kent.
3. Jackson, Russell,'Shakespeare, films and the marketplace', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film* ed. Russell Jackson p. 2: 'it has been estimated that during the 'silent' era – before synchronised dialogue

complicated the business of adapting poetic drama for the screen – there were more than 400 films on Shakespearean subjects.

4. See Buchanan, Judith R. *Shakespeare on Film*. (Inside Film, Routledge 2014, p. 184)

5. Jack Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1977) p.1.

6. *Shakespeare on Screen: Macbeth* (eds.) Sarah Hatchuel, Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin and Victoria Bladen (Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2014)

7. *Ibid*. Drouin, Jennifer,'"Get a Look at Your Wife's Beautiful Cones": Lady Macbeth's Stone Butch Blues and Rural Second-Wave Feminismin *Scotland, PA'*, pp. 333-366; and Fleck, Andrew, "A Barren Sceptre" (3.1.63): Generation, Generations, and Destiny in *Maqbool* and Global Adaptations of *Macbeth*, pp. 281-300.

8. I have given my version of a possible stage action that solves the problem of the Third murderer in my article 'The Case of the Murder in the Park' in the journal "Tripura Theatre" Vol -18 Issue 1 eds. Bibhu Bhattacharjee, pp. 159-162.

9. Thus Dr. Ketaki Datta argues that Lady Macbeth was actually barren, but in a private conversation with her husband was misguiding her audience (and even her husband) by claiming that she had suck led her infant. It is a wonder Dr Datta did not suggest further that the Lady was actually a suckling nurse to some other woman's child: "She gives the audience a false notion that she 'had given a suck' [sic]." Dr. Ketaki Datta, 'Lady Macbeth: A portrayal of a neurotic she-devil,' *Macbeth Re-Explored*, ed Pradip Ranjan Sengupta (Avenel Press, 2011, p. 65).

10. Dover Wilson's suggestion in the Cambridge New Shakespeare *Macbeth*. He probably supposed that Macbeth the warrior was also a quick-change artiste, appearing unruffled in the Banquet after Banquo's murder and Fleance's escape; that he had forgotten that in his disguised self he had seen Fleance escape; that he had already seen Banquo dead in ditch; and that he was certain that his disguise had fooled Banquo's ghost too: "Thou canst not say I did it."

11. Thurber, James, 'The Macbeth Murder Mystery' *The Thurber Carnival* (Harper and Brothers 1943) pp. 60-63.

12. Samuel Johnson, *Shakespeare*, 'Miscellaneous Observations on the *Tragedy of Macbeth*', Note XXVII. Scene IV: The "perfect spy", mentioned by Macbeth in the foregoing scene has, before they enter upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement; and therefore one of the murderers observes, that, since "he has given them such exact information, he needs not doubt of their performance."

13. As in *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (2021) by Joel Coen.

14. *Macbeth*, III.i.130

15. This idea of Ross as the Third murderer (originally suggested by Liby) has been rather popular with the film-makers. In a couple of modern film version this 'Ross' even kills off the other two murderers, possibly taking the hint from Dover Wilson that 'Macb., tyrant-like, feels he must spy even upon his own chosen instruments.' (Cambridge New Shakespeare *Macbeth*, p. 137) But Macbeth was unlikely to place himself in danger by having further witnesses to his crimes: one (Banquo) was enough. However, Ross's other activities in the play include his visit to other Scottish Thanes to sound them regarding their attitude towards Macbeth, and his journey to England to seek ways to unseat the tyrant.

16. Montague, C. E. 'The Well Made Play,' *Dramatic Values*, (Methuen 1925) p. 68.

17. See above, note 8.

18. The Arden Shakespeare *Macbeth* (2015) categorically insists here: 'It must be Fleance here who carries the torch, since *no one else enters*' (emphases mine).

19. This apparent shortcoming has been thoroughly compensated by the long chase through the woods in Kurzel's *Macbeth* discussed shortly hereafter.

20. Charles R. Forker in his 'Symbolic and Thematic Impoverishment in Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*' criticizes this approach: 'In any case, it is a cliché of academic criticism that film cannot, and should not, be expected to produce the equivalent of a live stage performance.'

Shakespeare on screen: Macbeth, eds. Hatchuel *et al* (Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2014) p. 147. However, he has overlooked the fact that the film-makers' actual problem arises out of their unwillingness to visualize the play's *action* on the stage and thus get at the meaning of the text.

21. Cp. The opening Stage Direction at II.i.: 'Enter Banquo, and Fleance, with a torch before him'. In the present scene, Shakespeare makes Banquo's social status quite clear through his call for a light. Who brought it to them? And certainly their horses did not go about almost a mile all by themselves without being led by anyone! Jackson, Russel. Editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. Jorgens, Jack. *Shakespeare on Film*. Indiana University Press, 1977. Kurosawa, Akira. *Throne of Blood*. Brandon Films, 1957. Shakespeare, William. Macbeth, edited by Kenneth Muir. Metheun, 1951. Thurber, James. *The Thurber Carnival* Harper and Brothers, 1943. Montague, C.E. Dramatic Values. Methuen, 1925.

22. See above, note 8.

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Message through Colour: A Study of the use of Colour in Harry Potter Series

Anirban Banerjee

Abstract

"Harry Potter series", based on the novel series with the same name by J.K. Rowling has made a great impact upon the post millennial generation. The original novels were more effectively popularised by the movies. This magical adventure series takes one to an alternative world full of magical fantasy. But bringing this fantasy and imagination to the screens is not an easy task. And in all cases the novels find a new interpretation through the director's point of view, thereby making a completely new version of the novel. Director employs numerous methods to present his imagination on screen. One of the methods is the use of colour. Colour has been used in performative arts to convey various messages. This paper will try to understand how different directions and their respective colour tones have impacted the interpretations of the story.

Keywords: *colour, cinematography, bildungsroman, fantasy, imagination*

"Harry Potter" series, a film adaptation of J.K. Rowling's novel series with the same name, is a very popular magic realism based series, that encompasses the life of the fictional character Harry James Potter.. The series consists of eight movies which are based upon the seven novels by J.K. Rowling. Those movies encompass each years of the fictional character Harry J. Potter. The First movie of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was released in 2001 based upon the novel by the same name, which was published in 1997. After that, *Harry*

Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of the Azkaban* (2004), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005), *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix* (2007), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* (2010), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* (2011) were released one after another creating a legacy. They were highly successful, but did they do justice to the novels, because if someone goes through the novels one will find that novels give a better and detailed description of the facts, whereas, movies fail to justify the description. But it is a generally accepted fact that movies may try to give an exact representation of a reader's imagination, but it can never match the power of the brain.

Human brain can comprehend and imagine such things that are impossible to match for graphics and animation. But our matter of discussion is not the level of accuracy of the movies, rather we shall try to see what the director's version bring out. The entire series was not directed by the same person, and that is why we shall also try to see what changes have been done with the changing direction. The first two movies were directed by Chris Columbus, a renowned director, who has also directed movies like *Home Alone* (1990) and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2010). Now these movies are mostly for children and deal with supernatural fantasy topics. Therefore, it is evident that Columbus is the right choice for the direction of the first two movies as they deal with the life of eleven and twelve years old Harry, similarly it also targets the audience belonging to the same age group. The scenes are vibrant with colour and has a warm tone, except those scenes dealing with Harry before reaching Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This signifies that before reaching the magical school, Harry was lacking the warmth of love and was depressed due to the lack of purpose as well as the identity crisis. But once he comes in contact with the magical world, he comes to know about his parents, he feels the warmth of love from Hagrid, Dumbledore and even the warmth of friendship from Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger; he also comes to know his purpose and knows his ability. So the depression, lack of confidence, purposelessness are all removed with the advent of magic in his life. And as a result Columbus also adds vibrant colours to

the scenes. He even presents the dark corners of Hogwarts and even the poor home of the Weasleys in warm tone, which are later presented in much cooler tone and in less saturated colours. The reason may be that Harry was not still habituated with the fantastic world of Hogwarts and therefore was looking at everything with a sense of wonder and dreamy mood. The poor home of the Weasley family gave Harry the feeling of family for the first time and that is why it had the warmth of colour exemplifying the mood of Harry. In this regard Chris Columbus says in an interview:

> "It's always about the search for a family or the redefining of who your family is,"

Columbus said. "I guess it's the fact that sometimes you play on your biggest fear. My biggest fear in my life would be to lose my family. So I've always been drawn to that theme. I mean, it's odd. I never really talked or thought about it much, but if you look at the films I've done, particularly the films I'm really most happy with, and even the films that weren't that successful, I think there is a thematic link. Most of them are about someone potentially losing their family." (Elrick, 2003)

However in the movies directed by David Yates, we find a different approach. David Yates has directed the movies, namely, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix* (2007), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* (2010), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* (2011), which deals with the adolescent ages of Harry. Naturally, the approach has to be a little bit confusing to represent the confusing age of every human being, when everybody remains unsure of the changes happening to one's body and psyche. Thereby, Yates uses a gloomy environment in the movies. The tint of colour is somewhere greenish and somewhere dark blue. This change of colour is presented in plot as a result of the advent of Dark Lord Voldemort. Even in the novels also the change of weather is mentioned. It is said in *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix* that with the advent of Dark Lord in full potential brought about a gloomy weather where light was a rarity. As an effect the 'muggle' world or the

world of non-magic folk and even Hogwarts is represented in the movies as a dark and gloomy scenery with an overcast weather. David Yates was very influenced by Steven Spielberg and he is more inclined towards political and realism based stories.

So it is evident that the change of colour in the movies is a result of the change of directorial style and the gowing up of the protagonist. Harry Potter is a character that grown up throughout the series, meaning as the series moves towards the end, Harry also grew up in age with it, and so did the audience along with it. So naturally all the movies kept their audience connected with because the ambience along with the story appealed to them, with their growing maturity and growing complexity. David Yates in an interview talks about this portrayal of the growing complexity:

> "Look, I'd put everything in if I had the time and the money, but I don't. I have to serve the form I'm working in—a two or two-and-a-half-hour film. You have to serve that shape, that rhythm, that pace. You want to retain the tonality of what's in the book; that's incredibly important because that's why these stories are so popular. But at the end of the day, you can't second-guess what everyone else wants. You'd drive yourself mad. So I find things that I respond to in the material and pursue that. In *Order of the Phoenix* it was Harry's isolation and anger. I stripped out all those lovely subplots down to a clear through line; you could follow his story and feel for him. In Half-Blood I adored the sexual and emotional politics. But it's obviously a job where you're going to get kicked. I can deal with that."

And in spite of the size of the endeavour, Yates feels he's still able to a put a genuine directorial stamp on the films. "Every day I make a decision that affects the tenor or tone of a scene. I think I've been most interested in bringing an emotional reality to the stories, pulling it slightly away from fantasy. I love fantasy, by the way, and the final film in particular has a lot. But the reason why I think the fifth Potter film was so successful, and they pulled me in for the sixth, was because I

wanted to believe in these characters, to have them get complicated, and grow older. My stamp is to make the stories rawer and realer, because then the magic feels more extraordinary." (Pulver, 2010)

However, there is one other feature about the use of colour in the movies, that is the colour of the sigils of the school houses. The houses are where students are put based on their characteristics and aim in the books and the movies. Throughout their academic career these houses become the extended families of the students. Now the houses are, namely, Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff. All these house sigils are represented in different colours, such as, Gryffindor in red and golden, Slytherin in green and silver, Ravenclaw in blue and Hufflepuff in yellow. However, throughout the movie the red and green colour is very prominent. It seems that the colour red signifies righteousness and courage, whereas, green represents fear, malevolence and cunning. The characteristics of the students from the two houses representing the colour is also the same, gryffindors have been shown as courageous and righteous, and the Slytherins are represented as cunning and malevolent. Even the colour of the charms from Harry's magic wand is red, whereas, the colour of the charms from Voldemort's magic wand is green. Even the "unforgivable curse", which kills people, is also green in colour. Whereas, all other magics associated with Harry is red.

Therefore, it is evident that there is a major role of colour in the books. It some times brings out the theme and mood of the plot, sometimes it identifies the characteristic feature of a character. That is why it deserves to be studied with more importance, and future researches on this path is also welcome.

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"The Broken Nest": A Comparative Study on Tagore's Short Story "Nashtoneer" and Ray's Film *Charulata*

Rituparna Chakraborty

Abstract

Tagore's short story "Nashtoneer" is a thought-provoking text. The movie Satyajit Ray made by adapting the short story is a remarkable one. Satyajit Ray names his film Charulata and thus shifts the focus to the female protagonist. This paper tries to attempt a comparative study between Tagore's short story "Nashtoneer" and Satyajit Ray's film *Charulata*. The English subtitle of the film is *Charulata : The Lonely Wife*. The second part of the subtitle calls for a gender critique of the text and also raises a number of questions which demands a psychoanalytical study.

Keywords :-

Gender, Literary text, Adaptation, Female text, Comparative Study

Whenever a literary text is adopted as a film, it becomes an individual text. Tagore was much ahead of his time and he acknowledged cinema as a powerful art form. Tagore's literary texts during his lifetime. Among these films, *Natir Puja* is considered as Tagore's debut film which was directed by Tagore himself. On 26th November, 1929, Tagore wrote a letter to Murari Bhaduri,

"The distinctiveness of the components determines the distinction of the art form. I believe the cinema as a new mode of filmic art is yet to reveal itself. As the state claims sovereignty so does any art form. Otherwise due to lack of self – dignity its expression becomes vague.

The cinema is still in the mode that flatters printed literature – the reason being no film-maker has had the genius to rescue it from the slavery to literature. This rescue act is tough as the components of literature, painting and music are not impossibly expensive. Whereas making a film requires significant economic capital not just creative genius.

The primary feature of the cinema is the motion of images. This motion of images should be expressed in such a way that the beauty and glory of a sequence can be understood without resorting to the use of words and sentences. If an extraneous language tries to interpret the visual images and dictates the language of the cinema, then it can have a crippling effect on the cinematic language. If music can be created from tonal rhythms that are not dependent on words, then why won't the motion of images create an independent space free from words? When it doesn't happen, it is because there may be lack of such a creative film-maker – and the indolent ignorance of the public viewers – as they do not deserve *ananda* (transcendent happiness) they are submerged in the hopes of narcotic thrills.

Yours,
Rabindranath Tagore
November 26, 1929 (cited in Roy 1986 :9)

Translation from one creative medium to another, from printed narrative to the visual narrative, leads to transcreation. Edward Thompson was keenly interested in the film versions of Tagore's literary texts and in a letter emphasized the authentic Indianness in Indian films. Thompson wrote to Tagore:

"I agree with you. The shabbiest wrong that Britain has done to India is that your people's connection with us, instead of being an open door to the outer world has generally been a shut door. As a result, the outside door's opinion about India is a chaos-baroque art and gigantic monstrous images, rajas, elephants, tigers, Brahmins and untouchables. And when India is filmed it is 'Clive of India' or 'Lives of a Bengali Lancer'…what lovely films could be made of your *Chitrangada*, *Kacha and Devyani*, your *Hungry Stones*, your *Karna and Kunti*. I do not see how people can fail to see the deep beauty behind the conception of

such stories…If they could produce the best and love-liest of India, I believe we could force a hearing over here…Please do not give up hope. You have fought a magnificent battle and this will be understood someday. After all, you have educated a lot of John bulls like myself." (Thompson to Tagore, 16 April 1935; cited in Dasgupta 2003: 187-88).

In 1932, when Tagore was requested to name a new movie hall in North Calcutta, he named it "Roopbani" which can be pronounced as "Roopobani" that means audio-visual. In that year, he wrote a poem titled "ChiraruperBani" documenting the evolution of the art of cinema from the silent mode to the talkies which came out in his volume of poems entitled *Punashcho*. This poem speaks of Tagore's association with the burgeoning cinematic art and craft in colonized Bengal.

"...Image was re-created in the disembodied picture, the conch-shells were blown

The lovers of images rushed from all sides
Again days pass, years pass. The heart weeps on
What else do you need
The heart implores with folded palms
The Earth's messenger arrives and cruelly locks the vocal cords
He says, 'I own the voice'
Hearing this, I say, the flute may be yours
But the voice is not yours
He laughs with derision
Listen to my tears, Voice of the universe
Will the pride of immobile clay be victorious?
The blind, the dumb will your voice be silenced by perennial dumbness
The voice, which is the emissary of the divine oracle, will its heart
Have to carry the triumphant tower of immobility
One heard from the sky
Fear not
In the ether whirled around the unheard sounds in the circles of waves

Nothing is lost

My blessings are with you, your wish will be granted:

The tired voice will mingle with the earth, sound will carry forth a perennial voice…"

It is the films adopted from Tagore's fictional narratives that prove Tagore's relevance in post-colonial era. In these films, Tagore's vision of universal philanthropy and inclusive spirit are depicted. From Tagore's letter to Mohit Bhaduri, the word "Ananda" (transcendent happiness) marks the difference in expectation from the temptation of thrills that common audience expects from a film. In this regard, we may quote Satyajit Ray's observation about the expectations of audience from a commercial film :

"What may be the viewer's understanding, expectation, satisfaction – these questions cannot be easily ignored by any film-maker. Viewers desire a seamless plot in the film narrative - whether it's a comedy or a tragedy, a contemporary story or a classical one - viewers desire dramatic conflict, they desire attractive heroes and heroines (which initiated the star system), they desire enchanting outdoor surroundings and neat and good-looking interiors, and they also desire a variety of emotions that can come together to provide a sense of great emotional satisfaction." (Ray 16).

Tagore's short story "Nashtoneer" was given a completely new title in the film adaptation by Satyajit Ray. The film was named after the female protagonist Charulata and thus transforming it into a female text. The English sub-title states – *Charulata: The Lonely Wife*.

Satyajit Ray's film centres on Charulata's life, as a consequence the focus on Bhupati or Amal's life, that is primary in Tagore's short story "Nashtoneer" becomes secondary in Ray's *Charulata*. When Amol realises that Charu is desperately in love with him, he was in a dilemma because he couldn't reciprocate her love as it would break his brother's trust in him. To escape from this situation, he decides to leave. After Amol's departure, the filmmaker depicts Charu and Bhupati's visit to the seaside, moment of mutual caring. Amol's letter from Madras, urging Bhupati to

fix his marriage with the girl chosen by his family, whose father would bear the cost of his education in abroad made Charu devastated. She broke in tears. When Bhupati heard Charu lamenting for Amal, he understood that she has some feelings for her. But he tried to console his mind by thinking that Charu might have found a companion in Amal as he couldn't give her sufficient time. In order to compensate it, he began to spend more time with his wife, tried writing poems and gave it to his wife for her observations. He thought Charu wanted a companionate marriage. So, he tried to make their marriage a companionate one. But when he discovered that Charu desperately sent a telegram to Amal, he understood that his wife loves Amol alone and he could not take his place. The short story ends with a pessimistic note that the gap between Bhupati and Charu could not be bridged but in the movie, there is a ray of hope. According to Cooper, "Ray's ending is different from Tagore's pessimistic conclusion, wherein Charu and Bhupati are unable to reconcile…In Ray's film, however, it is the wife who finally shows the way by which their "broken nest" can be made whole again." (Cooper 89).

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Depiction of Loneliness in Rituparno Ghosh: An Analysis of Selected Films

Pritha Misra

Abstract:

This study explores the nuanced portrayals of loneliness in the cinematic works of the acclaimed Indian filmmaker, Rituparno Ghosh. Through a detailed analysis of key films, such as 'Chokher Bali' (2003) and 'Raincoat' (2004), this research delves into the multifaceted facets of isolation and solitude as experienced by the characters in Ghosh's narratives.

In 'Chokher Bali,' the central character Binodini grapples with the profound loneliness of her widowhood within the intricate dynamics of a traditional Bengali household. Similarly, 'Raincoat' explores the theme through the poignant reunion of two protagonists, reflecting on their choices and missed opportunities, ultimately revealing the isolating consequences of their past decisions.

This study employs cinematic techniques, character development, and narrative structure to unveil the profound emotional depth and human vulnerability depicted in Ghosh's films. The analysis highlights loneliness as a central thematic thread running through his works, underscoring its significance in understanding the intricacies of human relationships, desires, and regrets.

Keywords: Loneliness, Rituparno Ghosh, Chokher Bali, Raincoat, Emotional Depth.

Introduction

Rituparno Ghosh, a prolific Indian filmmaker known for his remarkable storytelling and poignant narratives, often explored the theme of loneliness

in his films. His works are a testament to the subtleties and complexities of human emotions, and loneliness is a recurring motif that he handles with exceptional sensitivity. This paper aims to analyze the depiction of loneliness in the films of Rituparno Ghosh, focusing on selected films like "Chokher Bali," "Unishe April," and "Raincoat."

The complicated and ubiquitous human emotion of loneliness has frequently appeared in film. Because it is a universal sensation that cuts across national and cultural boundaries, filmmakers frequently use this theme to illuminate the complex and frequently unsettling facets of human existence. One of India's most well-known directors, Rituparno Ghosh, is renowned for his delicate and subtle descriptions of human emotions; loneliness is a common theme in his works. In order to explore the complex ways that Ghosh depicts loneliness in his films, this essay explores a few of his best-known works. He used a few of Tagore's works on screen, making use of the literature-based context to match the cinematic style while preserving the original sensibility. As Shibal Chatterjee put it, Ghosh's filmmaking "transcended the confines of the region" (Chatterjee, 2013).

Loneliness in the Films of Rituparno Ghosh

Rituparno Ghosh's films are characterized by their intricate portrayal of human relationships, emotions, and the myriad aspects of loneliness. The characters in his films often grapple with a sense of isolation, whether it is the solitude of an unhappy marriage, the loneliness of unexpressed emotions, or the alienation within a family. Ghosh's skill at capturing the nuances of interpersonal relationships—particularly the complex web of emotions that characterize the human experience—was highly praised. The themes of identity, gender, and social conventions have frequently been present in Ghosh's works, and his protagonists frequently struggle with feelings of loneliness and longing for connection. His films' examination of loneliness offers insightful perspectives into the human condition and a fascinating look into his body of work.

Ghosh's handling of loneliness goes beyond simple aesthetics or narrative devices; it also explores the social and cultural factors that his characters face as a result of their loneliness. Both the outside influences on their lives and their own internal issues are challenges that his characters

must overcome. During a period when the film industry was shamefully struggling to escape the mediocrity of commercial filmmaking, mainly adorned with rural family drama, Ghosh's contributions to the medium have been remarkable for several reasons. According to Ghosh (2013), "He stood for what he believed in," he was the pioneer of bold Bengali cinema that spoke about the middle class with unmatched sophistication and no inhibition. His emotional approach, strong foundation in film grammar, unique treatment of female characters, and unapologetic tone of support for liberal sexuality all contributed to this.

"Chokher Bali" (2003)

"Chokher Bali" is a film adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's novel of the same name. It delves into the life of a widow, Binodini, who finds herself entangled in the complexities of love and loneliness. Rituparno Ghosh's direction and Aishwarya Rai's stellar performance make the character of Binodini a profound exploration of loneliness. Binodini's solitude is a result of societal norms and the limitations placed on widows in Indian society. Her emotional isolation is palpable as she yearns for the love that remains beyond her reach. Ghosh's use of close-up shots and expressive cinematography intensify the loneliness that surrounds Binodini, making it a central element of the film's narrative.

"Unishe April" (1994)

"Unishe April" is a poignant exploration of the loneliness that comes with a strained mother-daughter relationship. The film revolves around a classical dancer, the mother, and her daughter, who is a doctor. The mother's loneliness stems from her failed marriage and her inability to connect with her daughter. Rituparno Ghosh effectively captures the emotional distance between the two through subtle nuances in their interactions. His films regularly questioned societal construction and psychology, which is a significant aspect of their ideology. Regarding Unishe April, Aditi, the main character, treated every formal interaction as a "passive-aggressive way to deal with unspoken grudge," in keeping with Bariwali's portrayal of middle-aged loneliness. Aditi was emotionally distant from her mother, as evidenced by her deliberate use of words like "Thank you" for everything. (Biswas, 2013)

"Raincoat" (2004)

"Raincoat" is a tale of unfulfilled love and longing. The film's protagonists, played by Aishwarya Rai and Ajay Devgn, meet after several years and spend a rainy day reminiscing about their past. The film beautifully portrays the emotional and physical isolation of the characters as they confront the choices they made in their lives. The rain becomes a symbol of their loneliness, mirroring their internal turmoil. Ghosh's direction and the film's minimalist setting contribute to a sense of quiet solitude that permeates the narrative.

Loneliness as a Narrative trope

Rituparno Ghosh's cinema is distinguished by its masterful depiction of loneliness as a central narrative theme. The loneliness experienced by his characters is not a mere plot device but a deeply woven thread in the fabric of their lives and stories. Ghosh's films navigate the intricate paths of human solitude, offering audiences a unique perspective on the various dimensions of this profound emotion.

Exploring the Isolation within Relationships:

One of the striking aspects of Ghosh's approach to loneliness is his portrayal of the isolation that can exist within relationships. In "Chokher Bali" (2003), he skillfully explores the loneliness of the central character, Binodini, who, despite being in a marriage, grapples with emotional and social isolation. Ghosh brings forth the idea that even in the context of intimate relationships, individuals can feel profoundly alone due to societal norms, unspoken expectations, and personal secrets.

The Impact of Unfulfilled Desires:

Ghosh's films often delve into the unfulfilled desires and dreams of his characters, which become a source of loneliness. In "Raincoat" (2004), two estranged lovers, played by Aishwarya Rai and Ajay Devgn, meet again after years, and their shared sense of unfulfilled love is palpable. The rain-soaked reunion serves as a poignant backdrop to the loneliness that has plagued them. Ghosh's storytelling underlines the idea that longing and the inability to realize one's desires can be profoundly isolating.

Interplay of Gender and Loneliness:

Gender dynamics and societal expectations are recurrent themes in Ghosh's films. In "Antarmahal" (2005), he explores the isolation of women in a patriarchal society. The film examines the confinement and emotional solitude of the female characters in a historical context. This narrative underscores how societal norms and gender roles can be instrumental in creating a pervasive sense of loneliness.

Complex Characters and Emotional Depth:

Ghosh's films are marked by complex characters who grapple with their inner demons and personal conflicts. His characters are not one-dimensional; they are multifaceted, mirroring the complexity of real-life individuals. This complexity adds layers to the depiction of loneliness, making it more relatable and emotionally resonant. In "Dosar" (2006), Ghosh explores the loneliness of a widowed woman who grapples with guilt and the emotional void left by her husband's death.

Cultural and Social Context:

Ghosh's films often provide a rich portrayal of the cultural and social contexts in which his characters exist. These contexts play a significant role in shaping the experience of loneliness. "The Last Lear" (2007) explores the loneliness of a legendary Shakespearean actor, portrayed by Amitabh Bachchan, who finds himself isolated in the world of cinema. The clash between theatrical tradition and modernity underscores the theme of cultural isolation.

Rituparno Ghosh's films are a testament to his ability to authentically capture the essence of loneliness in its multifaceted forms. He does not simply depict loneliness; he invites the audience to immerse themselves in the emotional landscapes of his characters, making their isolation tangible and deeply moving. Through his nuanced storytelling, character development, and exploration of societal and cultural contexts, Ghosh's cinema offers a profound insight into the human experience of loneliness. His films serve as a mirror reflecting the myriad ways in which individuals navigate their solitude, making them enduring classics in the world of cinema.

Socio-Cultural Context Rituparno Ghosh's exploration of loneliness in his films is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural context of India. His works reflect the constraints imposed by tradition, societal norms, and gender roles. The loneliness experienced by his characters often arises from the expectations and restrictions placed on them by society. This socio-cultural context adds layers of complexity to the portrayal of loneliness in his films, making them more resonant with Indian audiences.

Cinematic Techniques

Rituparno Ghosh's mastery of cinematic techniques plays a crucial role in the depiction of loneliness in his films. His use of close-ups, evocative cinematography, and subdued lighting enhances the emotional depth of his characters. The visual aesthetics in his films create an atmosphere of solitude that complements the narrative. Ghosh's choice of music and soundscapes also contributes to the overall ambiance, intensifying the viewer's engagement with the characters' loneliness.

Ghosh's films have left an indelible mark on Indian cinema. His nuanced exploration of loneliness has influenced subsequent filmmakers, inspiring them to delve deeper into the emotional lives of their characters. Ghosh's works have demonstrated that loneliness is not a mere state of being alone; it is a complex emotional terrain that is rich with human experiences and the potential for personal growth and transformation.

Conclusion

Rituparno Ghosh's films are a testament to his skill in portraying the intricacies of human emotions, with loneliness as a recurring theme. Through selected films like "Chokher Bali," "Unishe April," and "Raincoat," Ghosh has shown the various facets of loneliness – from societal constraints and familial estrangement to unfulfilled love and personal longing. These movies highlight Ghosh's skill in capturing the complex aspects of loneliness, elevating his work above mere aesthetic significance to a provocative meditation on the state of humanity. Generations to come will surely be influenced and inspired by Ghosh's legacy as a director who was able to move his audience's hearts and minds with his depictions of loneliness. His cinematic techniques and

storytelling prowess have created a lasting impact on Indian cinema, inspiring subsequent filmmakers to explore the theme of loneliness with depth and sensitivity. Ghosh's films continue to be cherished for their profound and heartfelt exploration of the human condition, making him one of the most revered figures in Indian cinema.

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Female Sleuths of the 21st Century Bengali Screen: Depiction of Women Detectives in *Shubho Mahurat* and *Mitin Mashi*

Shyamal Mondal and Shubham Bhattacharjee

Abstract: Feminist is a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes. Albeit feminism is definitely a part of human rights in general, men and women are reluctant to talk about gender and the problems of gender because the idea of changing status quo is not always welcome. In this patriarchal society it is difficult for women to pursue professions that are considered traditionally male preserves. The profession of detective obviously indicates that all the established detectives of the world literature and films like Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, Tintin, Philip Marlowe, C. Auguste Dupin and in Indian Bengali screen Feluda, Byomkesh, Kiriti and Kaka Babu are basically male created by mostly male writers with conventional ideology. To challenge these hegemonic norms of male detectives, a host of Female Detectives appear to make a space and create their identity with the intelligence, creativity and performance in the world of male supremacy. My objective is to reflect the subordination and inequality faced by female sleuths of the 21st Century Bengali Screen in *Shubho Mahurat* and *Mitin Mashi*. Ranga Pishi and Mitin Mashi, the two distinguished female detectives of Indian Bengali cinema resist the narrow binary gender system of stereotypical society and prove that intelligence has no gender.

Keywords: Status quo, Hegemony, Patriarchy, Ideology, Subordination and Gender.

Literature and film stand out as the two most influential, creative and imaginative platforms for portraying a hybrid of the local and global

realities as well as fiction. Interestingly, literature was a popular form of expression during the 18th and 19th century but Cinema and it's adaptations have appeared as a meaningful audio-visual mode of representation in the 20th and 21st century. There have been several filmmakers who with fidelity and infidelity have adapted different forms of literature like novels, dramas and short stories into films. It tempts me to mention Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Devdas*, Tagore's *Noshtoneer* and so on.In film studies, the theory of adaptation explores the creative and interpretive ideas made during the adaptation process and how they impact the resulting cinematic work. Indeed, it is an interdisciplinary field to analyze how stories of fictions and non-fictions are transformed from one medium to another. The filmmakers with elision and interpolation often reflect the cultural and social scenarios to satisfy the expectations of the target audience. The reinterpretations of the source material reproduce multi-dimensional ideology. In her book, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon employs the concept of 'transcultural adaptation' to illustrate diverse contexts in which literary and other cultural texts are adapted. Hutcheon further implies that 'transcultural adaptation'can transform the text in unpredictable direction. She writes – "…the politics of transcultural adaptation can shift in unpredictable dimension too." (Hutcheon 148) Another eminent critic, John Caughie encapsulates auteurism by asserting that "a film is more than likely to be expression of his [director's] individual personality; and that this personality can be traced in a thematic and/or stylistic consistency over all (or almost all) the director's films." (Caughie 9)

A filmmaker with his/her camera often manifests the survival of the marginalized individuals, delving into the specific historical juncture. In this juncture of critical interpretation, Staiger asserts that authorship is a type of care of the self. According to Staiger, it is "technique of the Self." (Staiger 49) These ideas of adaptation are eventually evident in the creation of different detective cinemas of the world literature. Surprisingly the detective movies are in the category of male dominated genre. In the 20th century, the European detective fictions and films reached its zenith

with the emergence of Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle. If we go down the historical lane of detective narratives, it is quite obvious that all established detectives are basically male created by mostly male authors with conventional ideology. Female authors generally display and foreground the strengths of their female characters over weakness and challenges stereotypes of gender roles. In 1980s a host of female detectives in the West appeared to challenge the hegemonic norms of the male detectives. Even Agatha Christie, P.D. James and Dona Leon each with their male detective heroes come from different generations. By 1990s issues of power, gender, and subjectivity dominated the humanities. The rise of female detectives interrogates the established power structure of gender binary system.

The roots of Indian detective fictions can be traced back in the works of reputed writers like Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay and Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay who pioneered some noteworthy detective narratives featuring the characters like Byomkesh Bakshi. Interestingly it is not wrong to say that in Bengali a lot of detective fictions are transformed in films that are significantly embedded with the romantic images of the strong, brave and independent male characters. To challenge these macho values of male, detective women need to change the myth of masculine supremacy. In this context it is noteworthy to quote few words from a 1985 review of Lawrence Block, author of *The Matthew Scudder* Private Eye novels set in New York:

> "Women don't fit well into a trench coat and a slouch hat…the hard-boiled private eye is a special figure in American mythology. It's a staple of the myth that he should be a cynical loner, a man at odds with society and its values. That's not something women normally relate to. Women aren't cynical loners-that's not how they like to work. it seems to me that if they want to go into the profession seriously, women writers will have to change the myth itself, instead of trying to fit themselves into it." (Stasio 38)

In this patriarchal society it is difficult for women to pursue professions that are considered traditionally male preserves. The

profession of detective obviously indicates that all the established detectives of the world literature and films like Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, Tintin, Philip Marlowe, C. Auguste Dupin and in Indian Bengali screen Feluda, Byomkesh, Kiriti and Kaka Babu are basically male created by mostly male writers with conventional ideology. To challenge these hegemonic norms of male detectives, a host of Female Detectives appear to make a space and create their identity with the intelligence, creativity and performance in the world of male supremacy. My objective is to reflect the subordination and inequality faced by female sleuths of the 21st Century Bengali Screen in *Shubho Mahurat* and *Mitin Mashi*. Ranga Pishi and Mitin Mashi, the two distinguished female detectives of Indian Bengali cinema resist the narrow binary gender system of stereotypical society and prove that intelligence has no gender.

The portrayal of women and gender roles in the Indian cinemas is quite interesting because they depict women as housekeeper for cooking and cleaning as if they are born with a cooking gene or they have been socialized over the years to see cooking as their role though majority of cooks in the world are men with a fancy title 'chef'. Briefly speaking, gender politics plays a vital role in depicting male and female characterization in literature and films. In accordance with those roles women are supposed to be weaker sex while men are strong sex. In this perspective, woman cannot solve crimes and unable to do any adventurous deeds and hard work.The 21st century Bengali screen has been celebrating this notion of female sleuths through the television serials and films. Prior to his (Rituparno Ghosh) emergence Budhadev Dasgupta, Goutam Ghose and Aparna Sen et al were considered to be torch bearers of the New Bengali Cinema. The eminent filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh (1961-2013) creates a masterpiece *Shubho Mahurat* inspired by Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*. Like Miss Marple, Ghosh represents an aged widow, Ranga Pishi, as a female sleuth who resides in a small house with her pet Haridashi in Kolkata and solves crime mysteries. The storyline of the film, *Shubho Mahurat*, unfolds that a renowned NRI Bengali actress Padmini Chowdhury (Sharmila Tagore) arrives in Kolkata with the intention of producing a movie directed by her second husband Sambit Roy (Sumantra

Mukharjee). She insists on casting her close friend and fellow actress, Kakoli (Kalyani Mondal) in the leading role. Tragically, Kakoli meets her demise on the first day of shooting under mysterious circumstances while being interviewed by the film journalist Mallika (Nandita Das). Shortly thereafter, a female makeup artist also dies under perplexing circumstances. This series of unexpected deaths prompts an investigation led by a police inspector (Tota Roy Chowdhury), with assistance from Mallika and her aunt, Ranga Pishi (Rakhi Gulzar).

As the investigation deepens, it becomes clear that Padmini had come to take revenge on Kakoli who had unknowingly caused harm to Padmini during her pregnancy, resulting in the birth of a spastic child who passed away at an early age. Padmini eventually confesses her crime to Ranga Pishi, a long-time fan of hers, before taking her own life. In Western and Bengali literary tradition, as well as in cinematic portrayals, detectives and criminals have typically been assumed to be men, making this film a departure from this norm. As noted by film journalist Shantanu Chakraborty, *Shubho Mahurat* stands out for its uniqueness as a crime film where all the key characters, including the victims, the murderer and the investigator, are women. Moreover the motive is also distinctly feminine in nature. The film thus complicates the detective film genre itself.

Here, Ranga Pishi throughout the film wears a traditional white saree which a widow is supposed to wear in Bengal. At the end, she confesses to Padmini that she can cook and do some stitching; when no one is around, she can sing a couple of lines; and, she knows that she can use her brain to connect things to know the truth. Accepting the social norm, she discovers that she can identify a murderer with her knowledge, intuition and deduction. The film reveals that from an ordinary middle class Bengali woman, she appears as a female sleuth challenging the stereotypes of male detectives like Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's *Byomkesh*, Nihar Ranjan Gupta's *Kiriti* and Sunil Gangopadadhyay's *Kaka Babu*. Srimati Mukherjee comments that "Rituparno Ghosh mobilizes cinema to show women's agency and meaningful exchange, not just for women, but between women, in a refreshingly novel way." (Mukherjee 6). Even the audience cannot avoid appreciating Ranga Pishi's presence of mind

when she told Mallika about Shubhankar's phone number and corrected her spelling mistakes in her journal *Mahanagar*.

In case of male detectives not only in Bengali screen but also in international screen, smoking cigarettes adds as if extra intelligence to solve their crime mystery. In *Shubho Mahurat*, Ranga Pishi subverts this notion of smoking cigarettes very sarcastically when she rebukes Mallika, "Smoking cigarettes doesn't make you a detective." So, the macho values of contemporary society have to be reconsidered because women sleuths are going to question the propaganda of male –dominated institutions.Rituparno Ghosh here creates a contact zone where a western female sleuth metamorphoses a female Bengali sleuth. Just as Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* and *Maqbool* are the transcultural adaptations of Shakespearean tragedies, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* respectively, Ghosh's *Shubho Mahurat* is also a transcultural adaptation of Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*. Ghosh's creation of Ranga Pishi is a perfect example of transcultural adaptation as female Bengali sleuth in 21st century Bengali screen to subvert patriarchal norms and values.

A film review may be the best methodological tool to provide answers to a number of research questions. Do the women have substantially more freedom in society or do they remain subservient to forms of patriarchal power and familiar gendered representations? Do representation of female detectives sustain unequal gender differences or after the means to challenge them? Here we can think about issues such as female agency, the articulation of women's voices and the relationship between feminist critics and the subject matters as well as recognize uprising of female detectives.Therefore, specifically we shall reconsider identity, representation and gendered expressions of female detectives in Indian cinema of 21st century with the theoretical perspectives of Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray.

The famous American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler in her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* rightly says – "There is no gender identity behind the expression of gender that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results." (Butler 25) According to her, the concept

of performativity chiefly focuses on exposing the hegemonic notion of gender and fiction. She claims that woman should be a central character as heroes not just a member of other sex. They should not be a wives, mothers, sisters and daughter of men only; they should reveal economic, social, political and psychological problems women face as a part of patriarchal social structure. In the Indian Bengali Cinema of 21st century Ranga Pishi through her Performative acts undeniably confirmed that woman can also solves various crimes adventurously like male counterpart and subvert the mechanism of phallogocentric power.

The famous French feminist and social theorist Simone de Beauvoir in her brilliant work *The Second Sex,* articulates the difference between the social and historical construction of gender and biological sex. She exclaims –"One is not born woman but rather becomes one." (Beauvoir 283) According to her, woman is a process, a becoming rather than a fixed identity. So, the social construction of gender generally creates a room in which they are permanently pinned down. Mitin Mashi, an idealized middle class Bengali sleuth in Dhakuria, breaks it, challenges it, questions it and shows the inequality of male and female detectives. Arindam Sil's Mitin Mashi aka Pragyaparamita Mukherjee attempts to explore woman's identity, subjectivity and Transgression and demands equal rights, position and space in the 21st century Indian cinema.

However, the gender inequality of female detective is also candidly portrayed in the media in general and in the Indian cinema industry in particular. The Indian film industry is actually full of patriarchal byproducts where women have been marginalized. The emancipation of this marginalized woman detective is quite evident in a Bengali movie *Mitin Mashi* directed by Arindam Sil in Tollywood. Actually, this cinema is based on a story named "Hate Matro Tinte Din" from the *Mitin Mashi* series written by renowned Bengali novelist Suchitra Bhattacharya. In the contemporary feminist films about woman uprising in the 21st century, Mitin Mashi is another jewel who solves different crime problems with sharp intelligence in modern Bengal.

Mitin Mashi (Koyel Mallick) is originally called by the name of Pragyaparamita who lives in Dhakuria, Kolkata with her husband Partha,

son Bumbum and relative Tupur. She loves to work as a private detective as well. Mitin Mashi, a typical middle class house wife solves a wide range of murders and assorted killings, kidnapping and restore stolen ancient manuscript etc. In the film, Pragyaparamita of Third Eye agency is hired by a rich Paris business Mr. Jariwalla (Vinay Pathak) to rescue his eight-year-old son from the clutches of kidnappers. At the entrance of Paris apartment, she is belittled by the housekeeper when he says, "meyechele detective" (a female detective). However, with the different clues from the school, gateman, home guard, his personal secretary and shop of optical, she comes to an end that the secretary with the help of driver kidnapped the boy. To the great astonishment, she chases and fights with the culprits to get the truth and becomes the she-hero of the whole incident.

Generally speaking, all the male Bengali detectives like Byomkesh, Feluda, Kaka Babuetc. are performing traditional detective roles while women remain marginalized. Mitin Mashi, who is intelligent and capable of independent action, appears as a resistance to the patriarchal norms reflecting on the narrow binary gender system that privileges male values. In Modern Bengal, Suchitra Bhattacharya is one the most prominent Indian novelists focusing on the contemporary social issues which are predominantly represented in the adaptation, *Mitin Mashi*. In her article, "Koel to Play Mitin Mashi in Detective Flick", Ruman Ganguly, a principal correspondent at Calcutta Times, celebrates the female sleuth Mitin Mashi, expressing empowered representation of woman in detective and investigative roles. Arindam Sil embarks on his third detective franchise, Mitin Mashi, following the successes of the Byomkesh and Shabor series. Expressing his thoughts, he remarked – "Both Byomkesh and Shabor are hard–hitting. Mitin Mashi, however, is the right mix of docile and edgy." Koel, who has never taken on a detective role in her iconic on-screen career, eagerly anticipates the opportunity to portray this iconic character. She shared her excitement, saying, "I grew up reading Mitin Mashi stories and it feels great to be able to play the character. The film will be a celebration of womanhood."

This hypothesis of female sleuth's subordination and marginalization is tested by applying the theoretical perspectives of Simone de Beauvoir

and performative theory of Judith Butler through a close reading of Suchitra Bhattacharya's detective novel, *Mitin Mashi*. Mitin Mashi as a housewife is supposed to be fit in the domestic household of patriarchy but she breaks this stereotype and moves forward to solves various crimes, which indicates that gender is a social and historical construct. Another French feminist, philosopher, linguist and cultural theorist, Luce Irigaray in her landmark work *This Sex which is Not One* rightly says that "be what you are becoming without clinging to what you might have been, what you might yet be." (Irigaray 214)

She challenges conventional notions of gender and develops the idea of 'becoming'. Here she tries to uproot the phallocentric concept of society. The status of women like Ranga Pishi and Mitin Mashi has been reduced to an object or commodity. She posits that culture, language and social rituals supported by institutional power, create gender as a social performance. They both have created transgressive selves to be recognized as female detectives with equality to the male detective in the social process of a distinctive individual identity.

In conclusion,it would be appropriate to mention Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who in her seminal work *We should All Be Feminists* rightly says:

> "We say to girls, ' You can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful but not too successful; otherwise, you will threaten the man. If you are the breadwinner in your relationship with a man, pretend that you are not, especially in public, otherwise you will emasculate him" (Adichie 27-28)

So, the ambitions of Ranga Pishi and Pragyaparamita should have reasonable limits, otherwise they will emasculate the male detectives of the present generation. Drawing extensively on their experiences and deep understanding of the masked realities of gender politics, they make an exploration of what it means to be woman detective in modern cinema of 21st century.

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Depiction of Women in Tollywood: A Story of the Patriarchal Hegemony Well Maintained

Shreyoshi Dhar

Abstract: The Indian entertainment industry being one of the most popular industries in the world contributes to the changing mind set of the common masses in the time of globalisation. In the last few decades, Indian soap operas have impacted the culture in a huge manner, adding new and progressive dimensions, which almost has brought about a revolution in the value system of our society. In this framework, portrayal of women in the daily shows has been a very sensitive issue. It has been generally observed that women characters have been the main focus area in almost all television serials. Most of the story lines mainly revolve around a female protagonist, thereby defining and redefining the current status of women in the society. This paper thus aims to disseminate how select Bengali television shows project women, thereby directly attracting the commoners of not only Bengal but also gaining nation-wide attention.

Keywords: Globalisation, Indian entertainment industry, Indian soap operas, Television serials

Media has always been argued to be a mirror of the society, but it is debatable as to how much it reflects the society in reality and to what extent it is a hyper-real version of it. Nevertheless, it can be consensually agreed upon that media platforms play an important role in bringing about a socio-cultural transformation in the society. In the era of globalisation, it is only for the media platforms and their contents that it has been possible to turn the whole world into a global village. Media has mostly been the chief contributor in bringing about the revolution of information along with its rapid promotion and dissemination, which

has in turn helped to bring about overall social and economic development at individual level. Often it has been observed that the impact of media has instigated common man to challenge the conventional societal norms and again it has also created stereotypes, which made lives of individuals quite difficult. James Rosenau in this regard opined that "Media is a label that is presently in vogue to account for peoples, activities, norms ideas, goods, services, and currencies that are decreasingly confined to a particular geographic space and its local and established practices." (Rosenau 360) Women being considered to be the weaker sex for ages have always taken the centre stage and have been the main focus of discussion. It is always difficult for them to escape the spotlight, be it in the real society or in the media presentations. They are always monitored by all, being either deified or being reduced to a seductress or demonic entity. However, change is in the air. It has been a common trend of current media contents to protest against the practice of women and girls being objectified for centuries, from the daily hyper-sexualized, unidimensional images to overt violence. Nevertheless, on close observation, we can still find vivid projection of such tales in the form of daily soap operas continuing to feature the same age old traditions.

In the 1930s, the American press coined the term "soap opera", referring to the exceptionally popular domestic radio drama being serialised, which within a decade has claimed 90% of the commercially sponsored broadcast timing in a single day. Soap hints at the sponsorship offered by manufacturers of products related to household cleaning, while operas represent an ironic dissonance between the daily household tales and the most intellectually presented dramatic forms.

The 'telenovelas' were actually conceptualised in the form of a projection of everyday life events being elevated to an operatic form in both subject matter and presentation. This particular media form has been widely instrumental in portraying the tales of woman, who in the words of the feminist critic Simon de Beauvoir has always been identified as the 'Other' to man. The theme of sexuality and womanliness has been defined by Beauvoir within the boundaries of male-constructed frameworks, designating them altogether to be a domesticated subaltern class. Popular television serials even now make a constant effort to

uphold and propagate these very notions in the name of tradition, featuring characters like wronged wives, domineering mother-in-laws, sisters having relationships, etc. Women are still delineated to be objects of sympathy and pity, who need a saviour in their lives. This unfortunately results in the clogging of the path of emancipation in their lives. The Indian audiences of these soap operas owing to their social reality always have a fetish to admire sacrificial, submissive and traditional daughters, wives, and mothers and hence in the world of commercialisation, the makers cannot escape these stereotypes instead of the soap-operas being mostly woman-centric.

The daily soaps and operas have been trying their best since its advent to perpetuate the patriarchal structures of the society. The homely wives of the families are burdened with grave Indian concepts like 'izzat' (honour), 'lihaz' (chastity), 'sharam' (shame), 'paramparas' (tradition), 'anushasan' (disciplines), and patishtha (customs), while in contrast to this stereotype, another contrasting image is seen to be featuring in these shows who endorses all the qualities of being the destroyer of families, wooer of men, trouble maker, and revenge seeker.

> Simone de Beauvoir explains that the destiny society traditionally offers women is marriage. Even today, most women are, were, or plan to be married, or they suffer from not being so. Marriage is the reference by which a woman is defined, whether she is frustrated by, disgusted at, or even indifferent to this institution. Thus, the desperation to have a man is largely a desperate attempt to ascribe value to the woman herself.

Beauvoir thus opines that the scriptwriters make a sincere effort in most cases to designate woman as the 'other' of man by delineating the position of her existence as contingent to a man. History has always tried to establish the fact that man occupies the central position in the society and all theories are constructed surrounding him. Even Freudian psychology has talked about woman being castrated from birth symbolises the 'lack'. Nevertheless, Luce Irigaray has given a revolutionary alternative to this Freudian perspective, asserting that if absence of penis in women designates her as a lack then degeneration of breast must also point out the lack in

men. Thus, she strongly rebelled against the tendency of considering male to be the paradigm of all sexuality – both physical and psychological.

At the start of this media genre, women were portrayed as dependent entities who needed masculine support to complete their lives though they had every potentiality to create and maintain a family. Times however have changed. Nowadays, these series very frequently feature both heroines and anti-heroines who are financially independent and intellectually strong enough to survive alone. Nevertheless, it is quite unfortunate that even then it is noticed that almost in every plot the heroines are engaged in a fierce battle every moment with the villains in order to grab the attention of the heroes. They always compete with each other in order to gain security and safety to be safe and complete in their lives despite being educated and employed themselves. Thus, whether consciously or unconsciously, unfortunately a constant effort is being made even today to re-establish the fact that man remains at the paramount of power and thus his stature in the patriarchal society is maintained. Some of such very recent instances from the popular daily shows made in the Tollywood industry are described below, which gained both fame and attention of not only the Bengali population but also have a nation-wide acceptance.

A very popular show *Sreemoyee* was aired in Star Jalsa in 2019 which recounted the story of a homemaker, who fitted perfectly into the paradigm of a perfect wife. She has dedicated her entire life for her family but in return has earned only her husband's hatred and her mother-in-law's criticism at every turn of life. Even her two children always tried to demean her. Her husband continued an open affair with one of his colleagues; her only supports being her father-in-law and her younger son, both being males. Till this point, the serial gained high attention and admiration from the viewers, but surprisingly the rating went down when in the later part of her life, she got engaged with her old friend and started a new life. This again proved the fact that a weak and suffering woman is always cherished in our society as maybe she becomes more and more relatable to the common people. Even in this plot, tradition was maintained by portraying the narrative that the protagonist could only establish her independence and self-respect once

a male support stands by her side with whom she could see a brighter and better prospect in life. Until then she had no other option but to endure her situation in silence. Hegemony is again maintained. The show was also adapted in Hindi version and telecasted in the national channel StarPlus, which proves the nation-wide acceptance of the practice.

A very recent television show named *Meyebela* narrates the tale of a middle-aged woman, who has her own dreams and aspirations but sacrifices her entire life for her family responsibilities but she does not gain enough recognition either from her husband or her mother-in-law, which has been always the reason for her grief. She dreamt of reliving her missing bond through her future daughter-in-law. Her son has a fiancé who perfectly matches her choice but due to an untoward circumstance, her son has to marry the girl whom she hates the most and this makes her feel all the more miserable. We again find here two women constantly competing to win the attention of the hero though unlike most other shows here the competitors are both positive characters and so the devilish revenges are somewhat missing. Nevertheless, here again we confront a number of female characters who are trapped in their own web of misery, yet they act very little to fish themselves out and wait for their fates to play their parts.

In Zee Bangla, a daily soap is aired in the name of *Kar Kache Koi Moner Kotha*, we see a mother-in-law who has spent most of the part of her life being harassed and ill-treated by her in-laws. She has a very different reaction. She wishes to satisfy her ego by passing on the same fate to her daughter-in-law. She treats her daughter-in-law with all the harshness that she can gather but she herself knows that she is doing something wrong. Here again we find an image of a demonised woman who though in the course is undergoing a stark transformation. In this show also we see all the male characters subjugating their wives and other female members of the family including their own mother and sister to satisfy their male ego.

Male chauvinism being the primary theme in most of the operas, the script-writers always have a tendency of portraying the central character having no other dream apart from having a caring husband and a loyal

life partner. From the very childhood, they keep on trying to fit themselves in the roles of an obedient daughter, submissive wife, and sacrificial mother. They are dolled up with expensive attires and accessories, which tries to highlight the utmost importance of physical beauty in the society. One can evidently observe a continuous upsurge in the viewers' ratings which again and again justify their choice. However, it is high time to ponder upon the fact whether this practice actually mirrors the real scenario or it is a mere illusion of the actual values of our Indian society. In this changing world, it is high time to promote careerist women, investing time and labour behind themselves to rise up in the society instead of using marriage as a social ladder or the tale of courageous ladies fighting for their rights. By doing this, the confidence of commoners can get a boost and they can gather their courage to aim something substantial in life. This change in the content matter can actually bring about a positive transformation in the society. However, one cannot deny the fact that the process of metamorphosis has already begun. In the near future, one can be definitely hopeful of seeing a stark change in both urban as well as rural society obviously for the better thereby holding the hands of these daily shows.

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Representation of Gender and Identity in Selected Hindi Films: A Feminist Study

Farha Khatun and Moupikta Mukherjee

Abstract

The concept of "gender and identity" has been flowing down across all disciplines of our studies. It primarily focuses on the categorization of men and women based on biological structure. It then defines the socio-cultural practices of gender in the stereotypical society. Traditionally, women do not have the power, privilege, and possibilities in the community. Instead, they have been portrayed, redefined, oppressed, subjugated, and underprivileged by the male-dominated society. So, gender and identity mainly focus on the sensitization of women's empowerment through the idea of women's resistance and the struggle for women's existence. It has been critically discussed in the fields of literature, linguistics, musicology, cinema, sociology, anthropology, media, culture and communication, history, geography, political science, public health, and human development. Cinema as an electronic medium plays a crucial role in disseminating the idea of gender and identity in society. It represents women as the commodity of fetishization through their glorified beauty, symbolizing sex appeal and entertainment. Simultaneously, cinema can give messages to the audience about the prejudices of gender politics in society. Cinema stereotypically represents the characters of traditional wives, lovers, and mothers' roles to control the psychology of women and to dominate them in society. It also teaches women to resist suppression, oppression, and subjugation to establish their own identity in the community. The research paper aims to explore the themes of discrimination, oppression, subjugation of women, and their identity crises in the selected Hindi films *Pink* (2016) and *Rashmi Rocket* (2021).

Keywords:

Gender, Identity, Women, Empowerment, Subjugation, Film, Media, *Pink*, *Rashmi Rocket*

Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been a renewed interest in cinema in India and this has been reflected in several ways: experiments in filmmaking in the mainstream industry, the emergence of various filmmaking programs and schools, and an increase in institutional attempts to archive film memories and ephemera. The concept of "gender and identity" has been flowing down across all disciplines of our studies. It primarily focuses on the categorization of men and women based on biological structure. It then defines the socio-cultural practices of gender in the stereotypical society. Traditionally, women do not have the power, privilege, and possibilities in the community. Instead, they have been portrayed, redefined, oppressed, subjugated, and underprivileged by the male-dominated society. In this research paper, I want to explore some of the more recent interventions in the study of gender, identity, and cinema that have gained significance and challenged the dominant paradigms from the 1970s. It also explores the sensory and interactive network of cinema and its links to contemporary formations of gender. Gender inequality in India is a problematic issue. There are stereotypical norms that men and women follow and Bollywood cinema has enforced these norms throughout their films. This study aims to look at how representation of women is presented in Bollywood films and how their identity is shaped. To determine how women were represented in Bollywood films, two different films were selected *Pink* (2016) and *Rashmi Rocket* (2021). This study was conducted utilizing a thematic analysis. The data was coded by watching each film thoroughly several times and each female character's desires, wants, and socio-economic factors were closely looked at. The codes were then analyzed and then categorized into select themes. The film *Pink* was specially screened for the Rajasthan Police to train them to be sensitive and sensible about women's rights and dignity. The film was also specially screened at Rashtrapati Bhavan and invited for a screening at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. In the film *Rashmi Rocket,* A small-town girl overcomes

all societal barriers to become a national-level athlete, but her glory is hindered when she is asked to undergo a gender test.

The central theme of this research paper revolves around the examination of gender representations in Hindi cinema and the nuanced portrayal of gender identities therein. The analysis entails a meticulous investigation of prevalent themes and patterns in Hindi films, aiming to discern any temporal shifts in the initial portrayal of gender. The research seeks to interrogate the fundamental question of what constitutes gender, whereby individuals associate themselves with culturally defined notions of femininity and masculinity, subsequently influencing their thoughts and actions. The concept of identity, as elucidated by Simon During, is multifaceted, neither monolithic nor pluralistic. During posits that individuals harbour multiple identities, with the relative significance of these identities fluctuating across temporal and spatial contexts. Furthermore, these identities are not exclusively internally determined but are socially ascribed from external sources. It is pivotal to distinguish between given identities, inherent from birth such as gender, race, or ethnicity, and inherited identities, those consciously adopted, encompassing cultural, material, or ideological affiliations (During, 2005). This analytical framework is indispensable for discerning the intricacies of identity politics within the selected texts. Gender representation wields substantial influence across various media platforms, including but not limited to film, radio, television, advertising, social media, and video games. Initiatives and resources have emerged to advocate for gender equality and reinforce women's empowerment within the media industry and its depictions. Media's profound ability to shape public opinion, challenge discriminatory norms, and champion policy reforms underscores the importance of this endeavor. The landmark NALSA v. Union of India ruling by the Supreme Court of India in 2014 recognized the right of every individual to self-determine their gender identity. It emphasized that gender identity should transcend biological attributes and be grounded in an innate perception of one's gender. This pronouncement carries significant weight in a predominantly patriarchal society where Indian women often grapple with reconciling their own identities against traditional norms that prioritize male authority. Simon During's conceptualization of identity as neither singular nor plural, but

socially constructed from external forces, finds resonance in the complexities of identity conflict experienced by Indian women, particularly with regard to their societal status and role. The intricacies of identity determination are further compounded for Indian expatriates navigating the cultural crossroads between upholding family ties and adapting to contemporary norms. In the context of Indian society, family occupies a paramount role, and extended family involvement in child-rearing remains a deeply entrenched practice. Amidst modernization, the tension between preserving traditional values and embracing evolving cultural paradigms creates a state of "transitional identity," as articulated by Sharma (2003).

Feminism is a sociopolitical movement for the freedom and equality of women which advocates equal economic political and social rights for women and seeks to dismantle patriarchal structures. It is an interdisciplinary approach to issues of equality and equity based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality as understood through social theories and political activism. Feminist methodologies aim to produce knowledge through ethical and political perspectives, which focus on the critique and overcoming of gender-blind scientific approach, in addition to the articulation of gender equality contents, concepts, conceptions, aims, objectives, and outcomes. The qualitative method used in this study is thematic analysis. A thematic analysis is a broad area of research, that can be defined as the following, "It is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017, pg. 2). Conducting a thematic analysis constitutes within six steps as cited in Braun & Clarke (2006), first, the research must familiarize themselves with the data. After the data is collected, coding categories must be created and themes should be generated. After these are created, the researcher must review the themes, define themes, and lastly locate the exemplars in the given text. The purpose of thematic analysis is for the researcher to discover themes and concepts that revolve around a study.

Cinematic Empowerment and Subversion: Analyzing Gender and Identity Dynamics in *Pink* and *Rashmi Rocket*:

The Bollywood film "Pink," directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury and released in 2016, is a thought-provoking social drama that delves

into the theme of gender, specifically the societal attitudes and prejudices that surround women's autonomy, consent, and agency. Through its compelling narrative, "Pink" offers a critical exploration of gender roles and challenges traditional norms. One of the film's most notable strengths is its challenge to gender stereotypes. It foregrounds three independent, urban women who share an apartment and live life on their terms. These female characters defy conventional expectations, with careers and personal lives that are not defined by traditional roles or relationships. This portrayal counters the prevalent stereotypes that women's identities are primarily tied to marriage or motherhood. The central plot of "Pink" revolves around a legal case in which three women are accused of attempted murder. The heart of the matter lies in the assertion of consent. The film underscores the critical importance of a woman's unequivocal right to give or withhold consent in all aspects of her life, including her body and relationships. The courtroom drama emphasizes that consent should never be assumed but explicitly and freely given. "Pink" effectively highlights the pervasive issue of victim-blaming and double standards that women face when they dare to challenge societal norms. The film portrays the women as subjects of judgment and moral scrutiny, while the male characters who harass and exploit them often escape accountability. This theme exposes the hypocrisy inherent in societal attitudes towards gender. The film serves as a powerful commentary on both legal and moral justice. While the court case at the film's core serves as a backdrop for the narrative, it is the characters' moral journey that takes center stage. "Pink" underscores the importance of speaking truth to power, as well as the role of collective support in seeking justice. It encourages audiences to question the morality of societal norms and practices. Ultimately, "Pink" offers a message of empowerment and solidarity. The film's climax and resolution reveal the strength that can be found in unity and the importance of standing up against injustice, particularly when it comes to issues of gender. The female characters' resilience in the face of adversity becomes emblematic of women's collective strength. In "Pink," Bollywood confronts the pressing issue of gender portrayal with a critical lens. The film challenges traditional stereotypes, underscores the significance of consent and agency, and exposes the double standards and victim-blaming faced by women. Through its compelling narrative and

well-drawn characters, "Pink" contributes to the ongoing dialogue on gender and empowers viewers to question societal norms and work towards a more equitable and just society. It stands as a significant cinematic achievement in addressing these vital themes.

"Rashmi Rocket," directed by Akarsh Khurana and released in 2021, is a Bollywood sports drama that explores the intersection of gender and identity within the context of Indian society. The film centers around Rashmi, an aspiring athlete who faces numerous challenges related to her gender and identity as she strives to succeed in the world of competitive sports. The film opens with a portrayal of Rashmi as a tomboyish character, a stark departure from conventional gender norms. Her determination to challenge societal expectations by pursuing a career in athletics challenges the deeply ingrained stereotypes that dictate what is considered "feminine" behaviour. The film highlights the rigidity of these stereotypes and the consequences of defying them. As the story unfolds, "Rashmi Rocket" takes a unique approach by exploring the theme of gender dysphoria. Rashmi is subjected to suspicion and discrimination due to her appearance, which doesn't conform to traditional gender roles. This aspect of the film delves into the internal struggle that individuals who don't conform to society's binary gender expectations often face. It portrays Rashmi's journey of self-discovery and acceptance as she grapples with her identity. The film presents a sobering portrayal of the discrimination and hurdles that female athletes face in India's competitive sports landscape. Rashmi's journey highlights the challenges of unequal access to resources, a lack of opportunities, and discrimination based on gender, all of which resonate with real-world experiences of female athletes. "Rashmi Rocket" also emphasizes the importance of support and empowerment. Rashmi's family and coach play pivotal roles in her journey. Her coach's unwavering belief in her abilities, despite the odds, underscores the transformative impact of supportive allies in the fight for gender equality and identity acceptance. The film aligns with the broader conversation on gender and identity in India. It references significant legal developments, such as the decriminalization of homosexuality in the country, which reflects the evolving discourse on gender and identity in Indian society. "Rashmi Rocket" offers a compelling exploration of the

intricate relationship between gender and identity. Through Rashmi's journey, the film challenges gender stereotypes, delves into the complexities of gender dysphoria, and sheds light on the discrimination faced by female athletes. It ultimately advocates for acceptance, support, and empowerment, echoing the need for broader societal changes to create a more inclusive and equitable world. By tackling these themes within the context of sports, "Rashmi Rocket" makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing dialogue on gender and identity in India and beyond.

From the very beginning, millenium pink was associated with the feminine gender and it was very quickly presented as a feminist color that would celebrate the return of a strong femininity — asserted by a traditionally feminine color now presented as a positive value. The *pink* movie reminds the researcher of Jodi Foster's 'The Accused' in which her character is gang-raped in a bar because of the dress she carries that is, she wears a short skirt and has been drinking, She is made out to be a woman on the make. Something similar happens in the same story where all three women have to bear the brunt of the rage and in the end male entitlement comes with: 'aisi ladkiyon ke saath toh aisa hi hota hai'. Here what does the mentality of the common boy tend to be when he says "Aisi Ladkiya." Who defines the character and rules for women in society? Why does society have a different set of rules for socialization and rearing boys and girls? Here the paper examines the set of rules mentioned by Mr. Amitabh Bachhan and the arguments shown in the court hearing. The study tries to unveil some hidden and social mores that women have lived and socialized in a society that is buried under crippling patriarchy and misogyny with a sense of mistaken shame. When a girl says no, it means only one thing. It means a straight no, No grabbing, and no forcing. Why do people and society consider women as easygoing and persons of loose morals? The theme of the pink movie taken up by Bollywood is a movie that is simple and clear. It gives a direct message without beating about the bush, without prevaricating or using obfuscatory language. It tells us a great deal about the country we live in. Here the story clearly shows if a girl is pawed or victimized, the girl must have done something to provoke the molester. *Pink* highlights the real issues faced by women today. But with

that, it also tells us that woman are living, breathing beings, and their consent matters. A woman can fight for herself and say no to a man's advancements. A woman is not a man's puppet, she has her desire, identity, and right to live freely. This movie pretty well sums up the patriarchal entrenched mindset of Indian society. The movie questions on biased moral standards of Indian society vis-a-vis women. The end credits scene of the movie reveals what happened: the men systematically isolated the women and Rajveer tried to force himself on Minal, who then attacked him with a bottle to his head in self-defense. Pink does not fall within the category of art films. Thus there are melodramatic and rhetorical elements in it. But it is a film with a social message and rape is only one of the issues. The three female protagonists of the 'Pink' movie are the regular young working women of the capital city of Delhi. Minal (Taapsee Pannu) is an event manager, whose work can extend into the late hours. Falak (Kirti Kulhari) works in a corporate set-up where image is all. Andrea (Tariang) is from the 'North-East' (Meghalaya, she says, but no one is interested in the specifics: girls from the `North East' are fair game, even if they are covered from top to toe). These three girls share a flat in a 'posh' South Delhi locality, and the story starts when they are shown heading back in a cab in the early hours of the morning, appearing disturbed about something that has just happened. As the plot on one point unravels the trio was in the company of three young men, after a rock concert which was organized in Surajkund in Haryana. But unfortunately, things take an ugly turn after the dinner that follows. The women have to make a run for it, and one of the young men ends up needing stitches in a deep bloody gash above his eye. It doesn't need the genius to discover that the political might back the injured Rajveer (Angad Bedi) and his friends, Dumpy (Raashul Tandon), Vishwa (Tushar Pandey), and another fellow (Vijay Varma) who wasn't there but is happy to engineer and participate in the humiliation of the women. We can even see it in the body language of the female cop (Shankar, just so) who helps nail the wrong person for the crime. The three female characters played in the name of Pannu, Kulhari, and Tariang, the women shown in the movie are all very good, ambitious, hard-working young women who are typified by the dilemma of modern life. Simultaneously the young men who accost them are

very much a part of a certain kind of coarse North Indian ethos but are too cowardly. They seek help for their protection and also take patronage and even protection from the nexus of `netas' and police. The police fail to perform their duties which is not only to protect them but to make them realise their wrongdoing. They all tried to turn the tables to prove themselves aggressors instead of being the victims. How can we silence a courageous young woman who has the temerity to ask questions? The lady is labeled as cheap, slut, whore: the film mutes the word 'rxxx', but we can see it emblazoned on the face of the guy who says it out loud and the girls who have to hear it. For the most part in the movie, the male actor comes off as mannered, and he shouts out and abuses the women in the movie. *Rashmi Rocket* is about a female athlete who wins many medals for India but whose gender identity is then called into question as humiliating gender tests on her reveal higher testosterone levels than permissible. It explores The Unfair Practice Of 'Gender Testing' On Female Athletes! Taapsee Pannu's movie highlights 'gender testing', a hormone test to check if the female athlete (esp if she excels) is a woman & not a man! 'Rashmi Rocket' highlights 'gender testing'– a term many of us have never heard before. Even in the year 2021, patriarchy still screamed dominance in the form of institutionalized power, societal norms, politics, dictums, and glorification in popular culture. But in retrospect, though the absolute dominance of this power structure remained, there have been some promising changes in some spheres. The cinema is one such space. In 2021, we saw some strong, self-driven, motivated women on screen, making the representation of women on screen slightly better than compared to before. We saw a few diverse female characters and it is indeed a step in the right direction to have more stories of women be told on the larger pop culture canvas. Here are seven inspiring female characters we watched and loved on screen in 2021. Rashmi Rocket is the first movie in India that addresses gender testing, a test that has been prevalent since the 1950s to distinguish biological males and females. Gender testing arguably provides a level field to men and women, but the practice is still stuck in rigid binaries of gender. Rashmi (Tapsee Pannu) starts as a tough, fierce individual and athlete who rides motorcycles. The sports movie turning into a courtroom drama is sometimes exhausting, albeit, this movie does

discuss a relevant topic. A beautiful stubborn mother-daughter bond is showcased, and the understated masculinity of a husband is quite a break from the clichés of how relationships are caricatured on screen. *Rashmi Rocket* is a brave attempt and Rashmi is certainly a character we would remember from 2021.

Conclusion

I discussed the gender representation of women and how their identity is shaped in Bollywood films. The four major patterns that I talked about revolved around independence, desire, traditional Indian values, and identity. Each pattern signifies how the female lead(s) were represented in that film. It was interesting to see how each female lead was represented in a different light when it came to these four patterns. Although some themes represented the female leads similarly throughout the decades, for a majority part of the films, each female lead had a new problem to face as the times changed. *Pink* and *Rashmi Rocket* each presented the female leads with strength and confidence, but in each film, we see how the challenges they face are not easy, and most of the time, they are still suffering on their own.

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Empowering Heroines in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction: A Comparative Study

Sonakshi Mukherjee

Abstract:

With a major focus on the novels *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *The Maze Runner*, and their cinematic adaptations, this research begins an engrossing investigation into the portrayal of resilience and empowerment exemplified by female characters in young adult dystopian narratives. These stories have captured the attention of both young readers and viewers, going beyond simple enjoyment to serve as platforms for in-depth analysis. The research aims to shed light on how these three strong female protagonists—Katniss Everdeen, Tris Prior, and Teresa Agnes—evolved as characters in both literary and filmic contexts. The study delves deeply into their stories, examining how they overcame dystopian adversity with resiliency and empowerment. The comparative analysis looks at how these characters' concepts of agency and strength are transferred from written to visual form. We seek to elucidate the subtleties of storytelling in young adult dystopian fiction and movies by closely examining shifts in narrative structure and visual depiction. In addition, we investigate the societal and gendered themes woven throughout these stories and the processes of adaptation to determine how they affect the young audience's perspective of empowerment and gender roles.

By doing so, the research adds a distinctive viewpoint to the continuing discussion about female empowerment in literature and film and how it affects young readers and viewers' impressionable brains. These female heroes' resiliency and empowerment provide insights into the changing stories of strength and agency within the setting of dystopian

storytelling, connecting with modern youth and enhancing the larger feminist conversation.

Keywords: Comparative Analysis, Dystopian, Empowerment, Heroines, Resilience, Young Adult Fiction

Introduction:

> "I want to be valued, in ways that I am not; I want to be more than valuable. I repeat my former name; remind myself of what I once could do, how others saw me."

Women are vulnerable to gender stereotypes and frequently reduced to them in fiction as much as in reality, but during the past several decades, literature has featured an increasing number of female characters opposing these conventional images. I have decided to examine how they are portrayed, concentrating on dystopian literature. Since dystopias typically feature oppressive regimes with limited liberties, I thought it would be interesting to consider how women are portrayed in these types of stories.

Young adult dystopian literature has been increasingly popular, and many of these works center on strong, independent female protagonists. This study examines the character growth and empowerment journeys of three well-known female protagonists: Teresa Agnes from James Dashner's *The Maze Runner*, Tris Prior from Veronica Roth's *Divergent*, Katniss Everdeen from Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*.

The research focuses on how themes of empowerment and resiliency are presented in the original novels as well as how these themes change when they are adapted for the cinematic media (Collins, S. 2008; Roth, V. 2011; Dashner, J. 2009). This approach aims to provide a deeper understanding of these fundamental themes' significance and influence by shedding light on how they resonate and change within the context of both literature and film.

Objectives:

The main objectives of this investigation are to:

Compare how female characters are portrayed in the novels and the corresponding film adaptations for how they handle adversity and empowerment.

Examine the effects of alterations to the narrative form and visual presentation on how these topics are portrayed.

Analyze the societal and gendered elements that these narratives and the processes of their adaption contain.

Investigate how these images affect young readers and watchers, offering light on how they understand gender roles and empowerment.

Literature Review:

According to Lowry (1993) and Huxley (1932), dystopian literature has a long history of examining society concerns and empowering its protagonists. Female protagonists have become dynamic figures in young adult dystopian novels, reflecting shifting society and gender relations. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993) are two classics in the genre that provide thought-provoking analyses of authoritarian regimes and the place of the individual within them.

In order to fully understand the complexity of gender and agency in literature, feminist scholars have been instrumental. The ground-breaking book *Gender Trouble* by Judith Butler (Butler, 1990) questions conventional ideas about gender identity and raises questions about how these ideas relate to dystopian stories. Bell Hooks offers a critical viewpoint on feminism and its intersectionality with race in her seminal work *Ain't I a Woman?* (Hooks, 1981), which is pertinent to the understanding of strong female protagonists in dystopian fiction.

Understanding the rise of strong and empowered female characters in young adult dystopian literature has benefited greatly from recent research endeavors. The analysis in "Gender Bias and Stereotypes in Dystopian Young Adult Literature" provides a thorough examination of gendered readings in literature and throws light on the expanding role of female empowerment in this genre (Kimsey, C., 2011). Additionally,

"Women in dystopian literature" by Alice Pillet explores the function of heroines in modern dystopian stories, offering insightful analysis into their development and societal impact.

Research Methodology:

The study uses multi-dimensional techniques to accomplish the goals. It chooses three influential young adult dystopian novels: *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *The Maze Runner*. Using textual analysis, the study looks at the arcs of Katniss, Tris, and Teresa's empowerment over the novels. It compares these characters in their cinematic versions in our analysis of film adaptations. We look at societal and gender-related themes that are prevalent in both the books and the movies that are based on them. In order to understand how young readers and viewers perceive and react to these portrayals, it collects data through surveys and interviews.

Result Analysis/ Discussion:

The investigation indicates important nuanced differences between how the chosen characters and their film adaptations portray resiliency and empowerment (Desser, D., 2009). The films frequently depend on visual storytelling while the novels provide in-depth character development, which results in various perceptions of empowerment (Cartmell, D., & Whelehan, I., 2010). Although societal and gender-related topics are prominent in both formats, viewers may respond to them in various ways.

The analysis of how the chosen female characters, Katniss Everdeen, Tris Prior, and Teresa Agnes, are portrayed as resilient and empowered in both their original writings and movie adaptations shows intriguing nuances and themes.

Katniss Everdeen emerges in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) as a figure of empowerment and resistance. Her metamorphosis from a hunter focused on survival to a reluctance icon of resistance is explored in both the book and its film adaptation. Katniss' mental agony and her quest to survive in a dystopian society are skillfully shown in the movie. Her deeds of resistance and resiliency are given more impact by the visual representation.

Readers are introduced to Tris Prior in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (Roth, 2011), a figure of valor and self-discovery. Tris' journey as she defies social expectations and discovers her true identity can be explored thanks to the novel's adaptation for the big screen. Tris's tenacity in the face of hardship and her development into a symbol of hope are both captured in the adaptation.

Teresa Agnes is a character who first appears in James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* (Dashner, 2009), and whose role substantially changes between the novel and the movie. The movie adaption improves Teresa's representation as a person who struggles with difficult decisions and aids in the resiliency of the group. Her vital role in problem-solving and making decisions in the dystopian setting is highlighted by the adaptation, which brings her character to life.

These character evaluations are consistent with more recent academic work, such as Sarah Appleton Aguiar's investigation of protagonists in young adult dystopian literature (Aguiar, 2019). The centrality of female protagonists in modern dystopian stories, such as Katniss, Tris, and Teresa, as well as their functions as change agents, are emphasized by Aguiar's research. Additionally, as Linda Hutcheon pointed out in "A Theory of Adaptation" the visual components of film adaptations are essential in capturing the subtleties of resiliency and empowerment.

Overall, the analysis emphasizes the complexity of empowerment and resilience in young adult dystopian fiction and movies (Lee, 29). It emphasizes the influence of visual storytelling on the portrayal of these topics and the growth of characters.

Conclusion:

The representation of strong, independent female protagonists is a major influence in the field of young adult dystopian literature. The character growth and empowerment journeys of three well-known heroines—Katniss Everdeen, Tris Prior, and Teresa Agnes—in both their original books and film adaptations have been studied in this study. The findings highlight the complexity of these themes and their significant influence on young readers and watchers.

Katniss Everdeen, who transforms from a reluctant participant in a dystopian bloodsport to a symbol of resistance and empowerment in Collins' *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), is introduced. The movie adaptation heightens Katniss's impact by showing her fortitude as she transforms into a ray of hope.

Tris Prior is introduced in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (Roth, 2011), whose quest of self-discovery and disobedience against society standards connects strongly with both readers and viewers. Tris' unfailing strength and tenacity are captured in the movie adaptation, which emphasizes her function as a change agent.

In *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, Teresa Agnes is a character who makes difficult decisions and strengthens the group's fortitude. Teresa's crucial position is further highlighted by the cinematic portrayal, which shows her as a problem-solver and decision-maker.

These character evaluations are consistent with recently published scholarly work, specifically Aguiar's investigation of the protagonists of young adult dystopian literature. According to Aguiar's research, key characters in current dystopian narratives who represent empowerment and resilience include Katniss Everdeen, Tris McGraw, and Teresa.

The investigation of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation* (Hutcheon, 2006) also highlights the effectiveness of visual storytelling in communicating the nuanced ideas of resilience and empowerment.

This study sheds light on the persistent appeal of strong, independent female protagonists in young adult dystopian fiction and movies. In addition to captivating audiences, these characters encourage discussions on society conventions, gender dynamics, and personal agency. Their experiences demonstrate the power of narrative in influencing young readers and viewers' perceptions and promoting empowerment.

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A Curious Case of Identity, Gender and Hyperreality: Examining Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* as a Metanarrative

Namitha Merin Thomas

Abstract

Identity, in simpler terms, is one's sense of self that could be influenced by certain factors such as society, community, race, gender, culture, and one's experiences. As Zygmunt Bauman observes, "One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs, that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioral styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. Identity is a name given to escape sought from that uncertainty". The paper examines this search for one's identity in Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* (2023) which is set in two worlds – the inorganic Barbieland and the real world. The paper will use Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality to look at Barbieland as a hyperreality that causes the 'Stereotypical Barbie' to question her existence. The paper will also explore how the question of gender and gender roles are explicitly discussed within the movie. In a world where gender has moved beyond the binary, it is a perpetually discussed, studied, and analyzed construct that never ceases its significance. "Discursive psychologists see gender as being fluid and dynamic and gender is constructed jointly and collectively through the interaction involving the operation of power because some ways of understanding the world become culturally dominant or hegemonic" (Gramsci, 1971, cited in Xue ,2008). When the real world is a male dominated patriarchy, the made up world of Barbieland runs within a female dominated matriarchy that subverts the patriarchal system. A question of what is a more tolerable space arises amidst these extremities.

Keywords: Identity, Gender, Hyperreality, Metanarrative, Subversion, Patriarchy

Introduction

The before and after of Gerwig's directorial magic has been overwhelming in the case of both the marketing and the audience response. Barbie has always been a thing of discussion whether it be about the unrealistic beauty standards or as a toy that has stood the test of its time by being an adult cultural icon to children all around the globe. Despite all the criticisms it has faced, Barbie is still a favourite toy of many. Mattel has introduced different versions of Barbies over time and has also discontinued some for their unconventional traits. As many associate it to their childhood, the film *Barbie* (2023) has been welcomed with open hands by a majority of the audience.

In this context, it is vital to discuss the significant discourses the movie puts forth. The outward set of the perfect pink world doesn't mask the complexities the movie is talking about. The movie follows Stereotypical Barbie, the protagonist of the movie, who is living in her Barbie world when she is unexpectedly tormented with an existential angst. This is the basic premise of the movie which will be dealt with meticulously in the paper. Barbie's inner crisis is best explained within the theme song of the movie Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For?". In one of the lines, it says: "I used to know, but I'm not sure now, what was I made for. What was I made for?" Towards the ending, Barbie who has still not found herself, decides to continue on this journey of self-discovery.

The movie discusses the stereotypes around Barbie and challenges this notion where Barbie is seen as the symbol of perfection. The movie constantly reiterates that Barbie is not perfect when it shows her grappling with her identity. The movie also tries to resonate with the world, where issues such as gender roles, body image, and self-esteem are discussed to use Barbie as a medium for women empowerment. The presence of different versions of Barbies with different body types and ethnicities also conveys the inclusive nature of the movie.

The movie is set in two worlds – the inorganic Barbieland and the real world. The Barbieland is a surreal world where everything functions perfectly and harmoniously with Barbies dominating the land. It is a plastic world. This is in contrast to the real world where everything is not flawless and impeccable, there are imperfections, unfairness, and injustice. The paper will explore this surreal world portrayed in the movie by using Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality. The paper also attempts to examine *Barbie* as a metanarrative, where it is constantly been reminded that the protagonist Barbie is essentially the Barbie doll, the toy which is a cultural icon that everyone recognizes and is familiar with.

Plot Summary

The movie begins with a narration about Barbie's origins as a doll that revolutionized the way little girls played with baby dolls. Little girls all over the world wanted to play with baby dolls and Barbie was the doll they needed. The scene changes to the perfect pretty pink world of Barbie land. Barbie land has not just one, but many Barbies – Stereotypical Barbie, who is the protagonist, President Barbie, Doctor Barbie, Physicist Barbie, Weird Barbie and many more. There are also the discontinued Barbies who are nearly ousted from the land. Barbie land is a matriarchy where the Barbies rule the land. It also has Kens, Allan, and Midge (the discontinued Mattel doll), where Kens' job is just 'beach'. They are always at the beach. Ken loves Barbie and wants to spend time with her when Barbie doesn't reciprocate the same feelings towards Ken. When Ken asks if he could spend the night with her, she says its girl's night.

Things take a turn when the Stereotypical Barbie starts to have human thoughts of death. She then starts showing symptoms of being a human with imperfections like bad breath in the morning, burnt food, and more importantly flat feet and cellulite! The Barbies are shocked and says that she is malfunctioned. The Stereotypical Barbie is upset and goes to Weird Barbie, an outcast, to find a solution to the problem. She says that the only solution is to go to the real world and find the kid who is playing with her and resolve the issue. Barbie now sets out to the real world and reluctantly lets Ken join her in the journey.

Barbie and Ken reaches the Venice Beach at Los Angeles and is appalled to see the real world where she is being groped and ogled at. Ken learns about Patriarchy and realizes that men rule the world here. He was unseen and insignificant in the Barbie land but was valued in the real world. He then decides to go to Barbie land to propagate patriarchy among the Kens. Barbie finds Sasha, her owner, and is condemned for contributing to the unrealistic beauty standards among young girls. When Mattel's CEO comes to know about Barbie's presence in the real world he tries to put her in the box so she can be sold again. She escapes this and is helped by Gloria, Sasha's mom who is a Mattel employee who influenced Barbie's thoughts and 'malfunctioning', to get back to Barbieland. The Mattel CEO and his other executives follow them to Barbieland.

Upon reaching, the Stereotypical Barbie is shocked to see the state of Barbieland where all the Barbies have turned to be very compliant and submissive to the Kens and their roles have interchanged. Her attempts to persuade the Barbies and Ken to go back to the way it was when Barbies headed the world goes in vain. She is dejected and almost gives up when Gloria gives a speech of how women have always been constrained by the societal expectations. This wakens Barbie and decides to save the Barbieland from Patriarchy.

The Barbies are de-doctrinated one by one with Gloria's speech and along with Weird Barbie, Allan, Sasha, and Gloria, Barbies trick the Kens to fight against each other. This helps them to regain the power upon the land. But realizing their faults of oppressing the Kens and the outcasts, they promise to treat them better. As they confess their wrongs and apologize, Ken and Barbie engages in a conversation where Ken says that there is no Ken without Barbie and that his existence is meaningless if he is not with Barbie. Barbie then inspires Ken to find himself and says that she wants to find her identity as well. As everyone bids goodbye to her, Barbie decides to go back to the real world to find herself. There is a brief encounter with Ruth Handler, co-founder of Mattel who created Barbie and she is elated to see the evolving Barbie. The movie ends with Barbie in the real world going with the name Barbara Handler and is ready for her first appointment with the gynecologist.

Literature Review

The French philosopher Gille Deleuze opines that it is not the duty of modern cinema to represent the world, but it is the representation of our beliefs in the world. He views cinema as something that has altered the prospects of imagination and thinking and not just as another medium of presenting stories. Deleuze says that modern cinema interconnects illogical sequences to present the universe rather than connecting the logical pieces. He admires that cinema has the ability to create beyond our knowledge and beyond what is available and that it is only cinema that can show the unimaginable stories. Films therefore, are a blend of imagination and reality (Colebrook, 2002: 68). Gilles Deleuze' view on films aids in understanding the role of films and their significance in the society, particularly, Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*, where the movie extensively discusses the different issues in our society while showing an alternative universe of perfection.

According to Lyotard, metanarrative or grand narrative is a theory that gives a comprehensive narration of various social, cultural phenomena, historical events and experiences based on universal truth and values. "In this context, the narrative is a story that functions to legitimize power, authority, and social customs. A grand narrative or metanarrative is one that claims to explain various events in history, gives meaning by connecting disperse events and phenomena by appealing to some kind of universal knowledge or schema. The term grand narratives can be applied to a wide range of thoughts which includes Marxism, religious doctrines, belief in progress, universal reason, and others" (New World Encyclopedia). Metanarratives defined the postmodern condition as explained by Lyotard in his work *The Postmodern Condition.* Lyotard notes that modernity is defined by a specific mode of grouping of metanarratives and that they portray human development and postmodernism looks at these metanarratives with suspicion (Lyotard, 1979: 54) As he acknowledges the significance of narratives as a source of common knowledge, Lyotard observes that the difference between traditional metanarratives and modern metanarratives is that the modern meta narratives discusses a future where the problems in the progression of a society is solved.

Hyperreality is a concept coined by Jean Baudrillard, a French Philosopher, that the images and simulations or recreation of reality has become prevalent where the reality is being replaced by itself. "Hyperreality, in semiotics and postmodernism, is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern societies. Hyperreality is seen as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are seamlessly blended together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. It allows the co-mingling of physical reality with virtual reality (VR) and human intelligence with artificial intelligence (AI)" (MSU) Baudrillard opines that hyperreality is a characteristic feature of the postmodern period, where he base his thoughts on the several assumptions of the relationship between humans and media, which he calls the 'mediascape reality'. Baudrillard's observes that hyperreality is not necessarily the copy of something that is there, but a recreation of something without an original. This he terms as 'simulacra'. He says: "Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a 'hyperreal'" (Baudrillard 2010:7).

The paper could be in line with these studies as the study uses the theoretical concepts discussed above to explore questions of identity, ender and the creation of an alternative world.

Methodology

The paper will do a visual narrative analysis of the movie to understand the different discussions of identity and gender within the movie. The paper uses the theoretical concepts of metanarrative to explore the intertextual nature of the movie and hyperreality to examine the creation of an alternate world within the movie which in turn leads to the existential angst within the protagonist of the movie.

Discussion/Analysis

Hyperreality is a condition that causes to create a confusion between the real and the unreal. It is the inability to distinguish between reality

and the simulation or recreation of reality. Gerwig extensively explores this concept in *Barbie*. One of the evident expression of hyperreality in the movie is the Barbieland itself. It is depicted as a utopia where everything is perfect, and everyone is successful and happy. But, it is also a place which is controlled and also dreamlike. Such a place do not exist in reality, it is only an imaginary structure. This thought that Barbie land is a plastic world is constantly echoed within the movie when the Barbies recognize and understand that they are dolls and someone is playing with them in the real world. Their life depends on how their owner treats them. Consequently, Barbieland is an inner imaginary land.

The stereotypical Barbie is forced to go to the real world to 'fix her malfunctioning' when she starts showing human traits. The real world the Barbie encounters also comes across as a hyperreality when Barbie realizes that she has caused to create unattainable beauty standards and perfection in the real world. In one of the scenes in the movie, we see Barbie looking in a mirror to see her reflection that keeps on changing. This reveals how our understanding of reality is continually shaped by the simulations and images that are presented to us.

The element of intertextuality is widely used in the movie to explore hyperreality. From the beginning of the movie, we see references being made from different movies such as Space Odyssey (1968), Wizard of Oz (1939), and Alice in Wonderland (1951). These allusions contribute to distort the reality and create a hyperreality within the movie.

Hyperreality is one of the major concepts used in the movie to understand the culture shock and identity crisis the protagonist experiences. The vast distinction between the Barbie land and the real world instigates the inner conflicts within Barbie. She doesn't know who she is anymore. In the Barbieland, she was living a perfect life with no such thoughts of self and identity. She was Barbie among different Barbies in the Barbieland. She never realized the importance of identity in the barbieland or it never occurred to her to think about identity and the purpose of her existence. But, things take a turn when thoughts of death and mortality comes to her mind. Those are thoughts that are unheard of in the Barbieland which is a utopia. The sudden appearance

of cellulite on her legs and bad breath as she wakes up in the morning are abnormal signs in Barbieland. Because, Barbieland is an unreal, plastic world lacking human essence.

Barbie's identity is constantly questioned in the movie. From the beginning to the end, she is haunted by the question of her existence. She is unaware of who she is and what her purpose in life is. These thoughts could relate to Barbie's transformation from a toy doll to a human as we witness at the end of the movie. When she was asked in an interview with Alex Moshakis if the film is about growing up, Gerwig says: "It's not about growing up, exactly, But in a way… This is about Barbie, an inanimate doll made out of plastic. But the movie ends up, really, about being human" (Moshakis, 2023). Barbie as she is in a personal conversation with Ken, says that she is determined to discover her identity and therefore she has to go to the real world. Where Ken is seen saying "There is no Ken without Barbie". Ken's existence is questioned in the absence of Barbie. He doesn't have an existence when he is away from Barbie. This is also an important idea that is dealt with in the movie.

Continuing the discussion, the metanarrative nature of the movie can be looked at as it is a story with different stories, i.e., stories within a story. The movie reflects on its own disposition as a movie and also shows how these stories can mould our identities and our perception of the world. The movie discusses the different perceptions towards Barbie in the real world. For Sasha, Barbie is a doll that caused insecurities within young girls. The doll has been criticized for promoting unrealistic beauty standards of a perfect body. It has been a topic of many feminist discussions where Barbie was seen as a symbol of perfection and beauty. Barbieland is an evidence of this contention. Whereas, by showing Barbie land in contrast to the real world, the movie attempts to portray that there is no sense of perfection. It thereby shows that Barbie is not perfect and has her own flaws. The different Barbies in Barbieland is a confirmation of this message, where there are women of different body shapes, of different colours, of different ethnicities, different face shapes and different abilities. They are all different and unique in their

own way. We see the Barbies embracing themselves in the Barbieland. They are never seen thinking about their differences or 'imperfections'.

On the other hand Gloria, Sasha's mother perceives Barbie as an inspiration that has helped her mould herself to be a successful career woman. Barbie, for her, is an empowered woman who can be anything she sets her mind to. This is referential to the different Barbies available in the market such as doctor, lawyer, businesswoman, and so on. Gloria might have played with those when she was younger which inspired her in her life. This is a clear metanarrative aspect which shows that Barbie is a doll that children play with in the real world.

Another metanarrative instance in the movie is the presence of Mattel, the toy company that manufactures Barbie dolls and several other dolls. The movie acknowledges that Barbie is a product of the company and involves them in the pursuit of finding Barbie to make her o back to the way she was. Her malfunctioning has caused a threat to Mattel and they want to take away the human traits that has already crept upon her. In one of the scenes in the movie, as Barbie is moving across a street she sees a billboard of Mattel's advertisement of Barbies. She says: "That's not me". She is not shocked to see this and is therefore aware of her being a product that is sold in the world. In another instance, when Barbie is in the Mattel headquarters, the CEO asks her to get into the box to go back to the way she was. She is seen saying that it has been so long since she had been in a box and even remembers the smell inside the box. These instances evidently shows the constant reiteration of Barbie as a doll in the real world.

Gender and Identity are two important notions that are overarching in the movie. They are excessively discussed to initiate a discourse of gender roles, societal constraints for women, and the position of women in the real world. The two extremities of matriarchal and patriarchal societies are presented in the movie. Barbieland is a matriarchy where women, the Barbies, rule the world and men, the Kens and Allan are insignificant and unseen most of the time. When Ken talks about being in the real world, he says "I was respected there", which shows that the men were treated with no respect and were considered their

playmates. When Ken saw how the real world functions with patriarchy, where men are equated to power, he realizes that he has been treated unfairly all his life. This triggers his conscience to act the same in the Barbieland.

On the other hand, the real world is portrayed as a patriarchy where men rule the world and women are expected to be submissive and under them. Barbie is welcomed to the real world with catcalling and molestation by strange men. This is a sight you will never witness in the Barbieland. Women are not disrespected there. As she enters the office at the Mattel headquarters she notices that there are hardly any woman among the executives. When she mentions this, the CEO is seen trying to make excuses and says that the company has a lot of women and finds it difficult to name more than one. The pretentious nature of the patriarchy where they show that they are 'helping' the women to come to the forefront is evident here. Also, in one of the scenes, Ken is seen conversing with a man about patriarchy when he says that they are good at hiding the patriarchy now. Gerwig tries to show that patriarchy still rules the world and it is disadvantageous to women around. In the movie, when Barbie is at the Mattel headquarters in the real world, Barbie says: "It has been so long since I have been in a box" and refuses to get into the box as she escapes to the Barbie land. She is aware of the suffocation and restriction she has to suffer when she is inside the box. This alludes to women being constrained in the real world, when in Barbieland she was so free.

Conclusion

The inclusion of the concepts of hyperreality and metanarrative in the movie helps to explore the identity conflict within Barbie. The hyperrealistic Barbieland has never caused her to question her identity. While the intervention of the real world in the Barbieland distressed her with human thoughts and traits. This led to Barbie's existential angst and her search for self. She faces differences and difficulties when she is forced into an unfamiliar space from her familiar comfortable home. Despite the challenges, she decides to go back to the real world where she determines to become human. The movie presents this value and

significance of being a human and a woman. The movie also discusses the issues of gender where it does not favour either matriarchy or patriarchy, but displays the positive and negative aspects of both the systems and thereby presenting the possibility of a place of equality where both the gender can co-live harmoniously without any restrictions or operation of power over others.

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Representation of Transgender in Indian Cinema

Shiwangi Ojha

Abstract: In the 21st century, the newly evolved generation emphasizes flamboyantly displaying themselves in the mainstream of society so that they can project their viewpoints, ideas, and beliefs firmly and rationally. Since cinema is considered to be the mirror of society, its contribution to acting as a healthy intermediary between the presenter and the general public cannot be denied. To represent the changing pattern in societal norms, cinema has played a crucial role by making its cinematic works more realistic and people-representative. In fact, the term 'people representative' brings into consciousness a general notion of 'Constitution' (i.e., to be followed by every country in its own way as mentioned in the Constitution Book). This Constitution gives each and every individual the privilege to live life according to their own 'rights'. Still, the transgender community is often marginalized by society. They are excluded from society, which makes their lives difficult.

Thus, this paper will try to examine how cinema plays a pivotal role in creating awareness about this particular section of the LGBTQ community. Further, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate the transgender community from their point of view, as it has been depicted in cinema in the past few years. It will also showcase the challenges they have faced in society and how they have fought against them. Moreover, this paper will highlight that the transgender community also have certain emotions and feelings that society denies to accept.

Keywords: transgender, cinema, right, oppression, representation.

INTRODUCTION:

"When a person starts to live according to their gender identity rather than the gender, they were born is called gender transition (National Centre for Transgender Equality)… In the general view of our society, if a person does not adhere to his real gender, it separates him to be a third gender… People those who are marginalized under this type of personality according to their nature and body are commonly called as Transgenders." (Joseph, 2019, p.233).

India is known for its rich and varied culture, which amalgamates different sects and religions of people. While India proudly asserts its belief in 'UNITY IN DIVERSITY', still, a section of society termed transgender is often neglected by the society. The term 'transgender' is not a new concept. In India, they are termed *hijras, chakkas, kinnar, meti, etc.* The transgender community has a history in India that goes back 4,000 years. They have been recognized in the Hindu scriptures as '*napumsaka*' or the 'third gender'. Their mention can also be found in the *Vedas*, *Ramayana,* and *Mahabharata*. The Hindu scriptures always held them in high esteem. Even in India, during the Mughal period, they were placed in high positions in the court. However, after the British made India a colony, they decided to eradicate the existence of *hijras* through the *Criminal Tribes Act* (1871). During this act, the transgender community was treated as criminals and tribes. Later, this law was repealed when India attained independence in 1947. But the conservative atmosphere that was set by the British also prevailed after independence. In order to get proper respect from society, a bench was set up, i.e., *National Legal Authority v. Union of India,* in 2013, and after several legal proceedings, the transgender community was declared the 'third gender' in India with respect to Articles 14, 15, and 21. After that, a bill was passed in 2016 for the equal rights of transgender people in all spheres. Later, this bill was enacted in the year 2019, bearing the name *THE TRANSGENDER PERSONS PROTECTION OF RIGHTS ACT.*

This bill declares to provide transgender equal opportunities in all spheres, including education, health care facilities, employment, schemes, etc. This Act has been regulated so that the transgender community can

also live with dignity in society. *In spite of the rich and varied heritage of transsexual individuals in the form of divinity and heroes from Hindu mythology, these individuals are still subjected to various forms of ostracism.* (Srinivasan; Chandrasekaran). Here, the cinema takes the lead in educating the audience about transgender people. *Movies play two important roles. First, they reflect the society that they are feeding to. Second, they are important in shaping and influencing the society* (Ahemad, 2022, p. b233). *The scenes displayed on the big screen attract spectators. Sometimes these films can be totally fictional or they can be based on real life. But there are some movies which are thought provoking* (Joseph, 2019, p.232). Thus, the representation of transgender in films in a proper and appropriate way is very essential.

Representation is defined as "the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way". Such representation paves the way for people in a society to get to know groups or communities that they might not interact with or have previous knowledge about. (Shageel, 2020, p. 1112)

OBJECTIVES: The main aim of this paper is to highlight the changes Indian cinema has brought to its style of portraying transgender people. The following objectives have been kept in mind while conducting this research paper on the selected films, i.e., Laxmii and Haddi.

- To show how Indian cinema uses the cultural beliefs of the Indian audience to manipulate their minds to accept the identity and gender expression of this LGBTQ community.
- To expose the hypocritical nature of society.
- To display the indomitable and rebellious calibre of the transgender community.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Though this particular topic has been analyzed before by various authors and scholars, however, this research paper has been conducted to view the present-day scenario of transgender people in Indian cinema. Many research papers are taken as secondary sources while writing this paper to get a deep critical understanding of the depiction of transgender people in Indian cinema. Nonetheless, various

researchers have expressed different viewpoints in their research papers regarding the portrayal of transgender people in Indian films. However, all the researchers share a common viewpoint, i.e., the struggle that transgender people have undergone in an oppressive and stereotypical society. Society stands at the center of the exploitation and deterioration of this community. Henceforth, this literature review section highlights the main concerns of the researchers in their respective papers. The Shageel (2020) study showed the gradual progression in the treatment of transgender people in Tamil cinema and how they are used as protagonists in films to change the mindset of the people. *Back home in India, despite being legally recognized as the third gender currently, the community largely remains ostracized and is on the receiving end of hate and discrimination more often than not. It is interesting to note that there are sometimes contradictory reactions to this community as well: on the one hand, they are ostracized and shunned, while on the other, they are believed to be spiritually or religiously superior, which leads people to believe that the blessings of the community will help them.* (Shageel, 2020, p. 1113).

In the research paper *History of Transgender Portrayal in Indian Cinema,* the two authors, Banu and Yasmin, have discussed the evolution in the depiction of the role of transgender in Indian cinema. They have referred to various Bollywood films, and their analysis shows the transgender as someone who exists merely for comic relief purposes or as someone who is a marginalized section of society. They concluded their paper by stating, "*It's important to acknowledge and highlight these new challenges that our society has got to encounter. Many of us in India are scared of talking openly about our identity and sexual orientation due to the fear of discrimination by mainstream society. Tons more representation is required in terms of cinema, which may provide the much-needed platform for interaction between people that are still within the closet".* (Banu; Yasmin, 2020).

Joseph, in his paper, while discussing the role of transgender in the selected recent Malayalam films, exclaims: "*When coming forward to the millennial time, a few films depicted characters whose sexual orientation and gender identity deviate from the patriarchal*

heteronormativity... The movie released in 2005 cannot be considered too old, but when we reach 2018, the attitudinal changes are visible not from every corner but can be treated as existential in both the reel and real life. Today, society has examples of people who are eager to live without fear for the rest of their lives. The legal protection provided by the government is a strong backbone."

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: This research paper has been conducted using the analytical method, where the role played by the main character as transgender in the respective films is discussed and analysed. Along with that, several other key elements that are necessary to enhance the audio-visual experience of the audience have also been taken into consideration.

These include the dialogue of the characters, the music used, the symbols employed, and the title of the film. These key elements are used in the cinematic work so that the audience can have a cathartic experience, empathize with the character, and leave the cinema hall as a better human being. Thus, the films that have been analysed in this paper are HADDI (2023), produced by Zee Studios and Anadita Studios jointly and directed by Akshat Ajay Sharma, along with another film, i.e., LAXMII (2020), starring Akshay Kumar as the protagonist. The films are taken as the primary sources of data collection, whereas the systematic reading of several other research papers is taken as secondary sources.

DATA ANALYSIS: Though transgender people have acquired the right to be identified as the third gender in society, society has still outcasted and marginalized them. In order to influence the mindset of the people, cinema acts as a powerful medium. Nevertheless, it is a harsh reality that the Indian inhabitants still prefer the rigid conventions and dogmas set by society. They are unwilling to alter their stereotypical belief system. Therefore, the largest filmmaking industry in India, i.e., Bollywood, has implemented certain measures to address societal issues. It has decided to showcase the issues in such a way that the Indian audience can realize their hypocritical standard and change their behavioural pattern to become better citizens.

In this respect, the films released in the 2020s after the amendment of the Transgender Protection Act (2019) have portrayed the transgender community in a different light. The current films display the transgender community as the main protagonist so that they can bring forth the hardships they have faced and overcome. Hence, the two films mentioned above have been analysed.

- ***CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE FILM, 'LAXMII':***

The story of this film revolves around the central character, Laxmii, who is transgender and was murdered by the elite class to satisfy their hunger for fame and wealth. A famous property builder occupied the land of Laxmii, where she was going to establish a society for the transgender community. They could acquire education, proper schooling, and health care facilities there. Despondent by such a situation, she went to Girja's residential place to seek out the matter. But she was brutally murdered there, along with her foster family members. The later section of the story displays how she acquires her land back. Since it wasn't possible for her to take back the land legally as she was already dead, she takes the form of a spirit and resides in a male body to avenge her murder. To get a general idea about the high stature of the transgender community that has been portrayed in the film, the various components of the film are analyzed.

MAIN CHARACTERS:

- LAXMII: Laxmii is the central character of this film. She is transgender and was outcast by her family during her adolescent stage. Later in the film, she is seen fighting for the rights of transgender people. She bought an acre of land to establish a society for transgender people. But she is usurped from her own land and murdered through deceit. Consequently, her dream of seeing that place as a transgender relief home remains incomplete. Thus, in order to fulfill her desire, she ghost-locks a male body and takes back her property unethically by murdering her murderers.

- ABDUL CHACHA: He is shown as a maverick who adopts Laxman Sharma when his family outcasts him. He mutates Laxman into his

desired personality by baptizing him Laxmii. He even considers Laxmii his own child and adopts another one like her (Geeta). He provided both of them with proper schooling and made them self-sufficient and independent. His character depicts the humane attributes that are still prevalent in society. He stands as the epitome of tolerance and coexistence with other human beings. What he did for Laxmii and Geeta is nothing to be specialized in, but in a society where transgender people are stigmatized, his moves stand as a very bold assertion of refinement.

- ASIF: He is a social activist in the expository part, but eventually he gets possessed by Laxmii's spirit. He is seen as an eccentric person who enlightens people about the superstition prevailing in society. Ironically, during the denouement, he intentionally throws away the 'red thread' that had been tied around his waist to help the transgender's spirit. His motive behind this was quite evident. He wanted the transgender woman to avenge her murder. Interestingly, in the BAMBHOLLE song, he threw Girja, the murderer, out of the temple so that Laxmii could kill him.

- GEETA: Geeta is another transgender adopted by Abdul Chacha. She is a reformer who fights for the rights of the transgender community. Her character showcases the upliftment of this LGBTQ+ community.

THEMES:

- *SUPERSTITION:* The use of superstition is engrained in this film. The use of supernatural powers, religious belief to curb that power exhibit the credence of society in such things. Girja while addressing his son states: *"You told me that Laxmii is a woman. You didn't tell me that Laxmii is a transgender. Do you know what a great sin we have committed. Her curse could have turned our life into hell."* shows the hypocrisy of the oppressive society, i.e., if it related to superstition then they are ready to believe anything. However, if this is written in the Constitutional Rights, they are unwilling to accept it. Moreover, despite having such superstitious beliefs, some people still objectify them. Thus, this movie, through the use of superstition states that if not given the proper treatment the transgender will not spare people anyone.

• *REVENGE:* The theme of revenge is central to the plot. This film shows how Laxmii gets revenge from her murderers using the body of a man.

• *EMPOWERMENT:* Through the character of Laxmii and Geeta, the film wants to empower the transgender. Their dialogues in the stage about the real situation prevailing in society makes us aware of the hardship that they have to face. For example,

SYMBOLS:

• **The colour red** is a major symbol in this film. Several things with the colour red are shown to attract the attention of the audience and evoke certain feelings and implicit meanings. The use of the red bangles, red *saree*, red *bindi, and* red *dupatta* (at the beginning of the scene) highlights the feminine nature of the transgender. However, the red eyes, red blood, and red box (from which Asif appears as Laxmii) evoke the theme of revenge. The red drums, the red *tabeez,* and the red flag outside the temple highlight the traditional beliefs of the Indians.

• The number 6 engraved at the gate of the mansion denotes the Hindi term, '*chakka*' in which they are identified in the Indian society.

• **The 'X' in the title of the film** is displayed in red and is stretched at a certain point to display it as 'Y'. This is a powerful symbol, as it denotes the X and Y chromosomes of a human being. The 'XX' denotes the female chromosomes, while 'XY' denotes the male chromosomes. In transgender people, the chromosomal combinations are a bit different. Hence, this emphasis is done to stress on the non-binary identity of transgender people.

• **The *Trishul* (trident)** used in the dance sequence 'BAMSHOLLE' as a representative of Lord Shiva is later employed as equipment to kill Girja in front of the Goddess Durga temple. This *trishul* acts as a significant symbol as it is used in various ways, for dance, killing, and to signify the powers of Shiv and Durga. According to Hindu scriptures, it also highlights the concept of SHIV-SHAKTI, i.e., the merging of two souls into one body. This concept also signifies that the transgender people are also equipped with such powers.

• ***CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE FILM, 'HADDI':***

This multidimensional film projects the hypocrisy of the Indian society. The film opens in *medias-res* where Haddi is shown as a lawbreaker. Gradually, as the scene develops, we are acquainted with his real motive. Originally, Haddi was the camouflage of Harika so that she could exact her revenge on the unscrupulous politician, Pramod Ahlawat.

MAIN CHARACTERS:

• HARIKA: Harika is the protagonist in this film. She is transgender. Formerly, she underwent surgery to become transgender. Later, she creates an alter-ego of a man, Haddi, to execute the murderers of her family. In her life as a transgender person, she is presented as having a gay personality. She loves a man and marries him. She teaches at a school. Her character displays the frenzy and sensitive side of a human being who wants love and support.

• HADDI: He is an alter-ego of Harika. Harika creates this alter-ego to protect herself from the domination of patriarchal society. Haddi also acts as an intermediary to Harika's final goal (i.e., killing the murderers of her family). Through his character, we are exposed to the hypocrisy and unethical means of society. In fact, Haddi is quite the contrary of his real self. He involves himself in illegal activities and practices, but he is deeply rooted in his ideology.

• IRFAN: Irfan is a social activist. He marries Harika, who is transgender. He envisions a society free of class and gender non-conformity. He even fights legal battles against upper-class society. Though his role in this film is limited, his character highlights an important segment of society that wants to bring about reforms against the oppressive and imperious class.

• REVATHI AMMA: She is the head of the transgender community. She owns a residence ('*Gharana*') for transgender people. Her abode is taken away illegally, and she is encountered to death by Pramod and his men.

• PRAMOD AHLAWAT: He is the antagonist of this film. He is depicted as a sadist and a goon turned politician. His entire soul is

corrupt. He wants to achieve fame and wealth by any unpractical means, and for that, he is ready to inflict pain on anyone who stands in his way. His affrontment of the transgender community upsets Harika. He is killed ruthlessly by Harika at the end of the film for his misdeeds.

THEMES:

• *REVENGE:* Revenge is the main theme around which the whole film revolves. The dark and gloomy atmosphere, the dead body, bones, etc. all add to this theme of revenge. Harika is the character who disguises herself as a male to take revenge from the politician, Pramod.

• *RELIGION:* The dialogue of Harika, where she uses the mythical story of the '*Ramayana*': *"Lord Rama gave a boon to the transgender people that our blessings will be all powerful and curses will be annihilating,"* strengthens the belief that the transgender people in the Hindu scriptures were highly regarded. In fact, the film has also shown that transgender people have a religious belief of their own. This is stressed through the depiction of the various rituals that the transgender community performs when Harika changes her gender and enters '*nirvan'* e.g., the transformation of the body. After the successful completion of this *nirvan* rite, the transgender person has to go to three more rituals: *Haldi-Mehandi,* and *Jalsa.* The Haldi-Mehandi starts from the next day of *nirvan* and continues for forty days. On the fortieth day, the *Jalsa* rite is observed. Apart from this, this film has beautifully portrayed the Guru-Chela system of the transgender. It has also showcased their belief in '*Goddess Ambe*'. Also, these cultural references are meticulously depicted in the film to make the audience aware of their lifestyle.

• *CLASS-DISCRIMINATION:* This film shows the two strata of the society, the upper-class and the lower class. The lower class is ready to engage themselves in unlawful tactics to earn a living whereas the influential class employs them to fulfill their own desires.

• *EMPOWERMENT:* This film mainly focuses on the empowerment of the transgender community. Through the character of Harika, this film showcases the upliftment that the transgender community has gained since the enactment of the Transgender Protection Act (2019). It is

well-brought in the ending scene when, after killing Pramod, Harika exclaims, "*I am a woman,/ And I shall always remain a woman".* Moreover, the film also exposes the reality of the cross-dressers who dress up as female and identify themselves as transgender to earn a living out of uncivilized means.

SYMBOLS: The poster on the wall containing the quotation: 'PRIDE: BE PROUD' (with rainbow drawing) signifies the LGBTQ+ community. Through this symbol, the filmmakers want to educate the audience regarding the pride movement.

SONG: The title track of this film, 'BEPARDA TAB JAKE MAINE KHUDKO PAYA HAI' running in BGM during the unveiling of the face in front of a mirror, signifies the unveiling of the true personality of transgender people. It also justifies the exuberant emotions of a transgender woman after discovering her true self.

FINDINGS: According to George Gerbner's cultivation theory, which studies "the effects of television, continuous or heavy television watching can have long-term impacts on people and lead them to believe that the portrayal on television is the actual social reality". This theory can be applied to film viewing as well, which is why the portrayal of communities in films needs to be analyzed. (Shageel, 2020, p.1112). Considering this statement, after analyzing the two films, it has been found that the two films want to make people aware of the changes in relation to their treatment of the transgender people, reminding us of Asif's words: "She wanted to eradicate the ghost of inequality from society". Both films have also exposed the dominance of patriarchal society, as in both films, the transgenders have to take the help of a male body to take their revenge. In fact, both the characters are also played by male actors. Hence, it can be estimated that the society may boost support for the transgender community, but when it comes to actually supporting them, no one lays out a helping hand. Another change that has been found in their representation in cinema after the implication of the 2019 Act is that transgender people have been given a ferocious voice, whereas earlier films only depicted them in side roles or as comic characters. Now, even the main characters in both films are transgender. Thus, it

can be estimated that the cinema is trying to bring about changes in the conduct of people.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY: This paper has been written to change the perspective of the Indian audience and make them aware of their surroundings' reality. The scope of this study lies in the fact that:

- It will educate the audience about the real motive behind the production of such films.
- To encourage people to accept human beings as they are.

CONCLUSION: By analysing these two films, it can be pointed out that nowadays, cinema acts as an iconoclast. It wants to provide hindsight to the audience through their own set conventions and 'so-called' cherished beliefs. On one side, it can be seen that some members of society are helping the transgender to live independently without any fear of discrimination or hatred towards themselves. On the other side, a deep-rooted stereotypical and corrupt society still neglects the transgender community. Society acts as a barrier to the progress and upliftment of this particular section of the LGBTQ community. Thus, through the characters, i.e., Laxmii in *Laxmii* and Harika in *Haddi*, Indian cinema wants to shed light on the ambitious and rebellious nature of the transgender community. It wants to demonstrate the fact that the transgender community is no longer a marginalized section of society, and they are to fight any obstacle that will barricade their path and lifestyle.

LIMITATIONS: This research paper may contain certain limitations as the study is only restricted to specific films, namely, Laxmii and Haddi of Indian cinema. Despite having several other regional film industries in the Indian subcontinent, this research paper has mainly focused on the films that have been released in Bollywood. Also, this paper only focuses on the cultural beliefs of the Hindus and their scriptures. However, it is a well-known fact that India is a secular country. In fact, this paper mostly highlights the vengeance behavioral traits of the transgender community. Furthermore, the fact that these films depict murderers that are Transgender adds to 'otherness' of the murders, and engenders fear.

POINT TO NOTE: It may happen that this paper lacks certain key aspects or valuable information regarding their condition, but whatever is presented here is to the best of the knowledge. Moreover, this research paper is written keeping in mind the outcome and influence it may have on the readers. It does not want to offend the sentiments of any individual or particular group.

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Gender Fluidity and its Wavering Representation in Hindi Cinema

Natasha Chatterjee

Abstract:

Cinema is the utmost imperative means which has the potential to leave an impact on the opinion of the masses. It has been noted that with the passage of time Hindi cinema has become more progressive and has contributed its part in spreading awareness on various socially relevant issues which include queer awareness. This paper will focus on the portrayal of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) in Hindi cinema along with the impact it has on the perception it creates in the mind of the common people. Through this paper it will be examined how Hindi films represent the queer section of our society. In other words, this paper will mainly focus on the portrayal of these sexual minorities in Hindi Cinema over a period of time.

Keywords: Gender Fluidity, homosexual, lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, queer, sexual minorities.

Introduction:

Gender Fluidity can be referred as a notion or viewpoint that gender is not a static subject and it can fluctuate. It stresses on the fact that people could not be identified only as male or female, but they can be combination of both or none of the above. This paper will throw light on the significance of flexibility in thinking of the common people so that they can accept the sexual minorities and can escape from the limitations of binary thinking. Gender fluidity in films is not only an extremely interesting concept but at the same time it is also a very complex one. These films provide ample scope for exploring bold subjects that were usually not portrayed before in

Hindi cinema. In this paper, we will delve into the importance of gender fluidity in Hindi cinema, the influence it has on the common people or our society, and the importance of heterogeneous and genuine portrayals.

The most common way in which gender fluidity is portrayed in the Hindi movies is through the portrayal of queer or in other words non binary characters. These films show the struggles and challenges of the LGBTQ community and how these people defying all the odds and constraints are shinning high. These films also emphasize on the notion that humans should not be categorized on the binary concepts rather the LGBTQ people are given the much needed prominence and platform from where they are not subjected to be confined in the orthodox gender binary. In addition to this, gender fluidity in Hindi Cinema helps to display the queer community in a more genuine and diversified manner. The filmmakers have been exploring this concept of gender fluidity with much sensitivity as they incorporate complex and multifaceted characters to throw into disarray the stereotypes that have been followed from the beginning of time. The most important thing is, Gender fluidity in Hindi cinema is still having a lot of scope for exploring the intricate character development of the LGBTQ community. In the recent years some prominent work can be witnessed. The filmmakers must be very sensitive while connecting with the real world non binary people to be able to portray their real-life experiences with sensitivity and authenticity.

Methodology:

This paper has been put down with the help of 'Content Analysis' method. This particular method of research emphasizes on examining and reading various documents and communication artifacts that may include various types of videos, pictures, audios etc. In this paper I have tried to point out the various discussions and talks related to the subject of homosexuality and the various ways in which it is represented in Hindi films in the recent years.

Research Hypothesis:

The Hindi cinema seems somehow confused in the way it wants to project the characters which are not confirming to the binary thinking in other words it does not know sometimes how to portray its LGBTQ

characters. The discourse on portraying the love stories of queer people has been extensive and faced many obstacles. This is due to the fact that showing queer love stories on screen still has some extent of embarrassment, ignominy, derision, and the fear of condemnation of the common masses. Hindi cinema has been including these characters in its own way. But it has been seen that mostly these gay characters are not shown in Hindi cinema in a realistic manner, that is the projection of gay characters are not real and they are often used for a change of plot, comedy or some caricature in the movie. But it should be noted that the projection of these non-binary characters must be done in a positive and realistic manner so that it can have a powerful impact on the audience as Cinema plays a pivotal role in creating and shaping beliefs.

Indian cinema has witnessed some brilliant movies which raise the issues faced by the LGBTQ community. The movie Fire was released in the year 1996 and was directed by Deepa Mehta. At that point of time this was a very bold move on the part of the director of this movie to put forth a very sensitive topic such as homosexuality or lesbian relationship between the two women characters on the screen. This movie faced a lot of criticism from public. It had created history by showing such a controversial topic in such a bold manner and thereby facing a lot of mixed reviews from both masses as well as classes. Previously these queer characters were projected in the plot to bring some humour and comic relief in the story. These non-binary characters were merely showcased as companion of the main lead to create some insensitive humour in the story in the late 70's and 80's Hindi cinema.

Hindi cinema has witnessed some iconic songs in the 'so called' commercial movies where men dressed up as women and perform some antics to create humour in the movie. For instance, in the movie Lawaris which was released in the year 1981, the famous song "Mere angane mein tumhara kya kaam hai" where superstar Amitabh Bachchan was enacting as if he is a woman to create an illusion of being a eunuch. Hindi Cinema witnessed drastic change onwards 1990s in respect to the subject of the movies, suddenly the romantic love stories changed to more challenging characters and bold storylines. It was noticed that in portraying queer characters sometimes the depiction of the scene became overtly

vulgar, indecent, against the norms of the society and therefore faced public wrath. At that time queer characters did not find meaty roles to portray in commercial movies. They were used only for humour and comic relief in the plot of the movies. The responsibility is on the filmmakers to make such characters depicting queer people in such a manner, that does not hurt the sentiments of the common people as well as which does not pose as a threat to the Indian traditions. Indian cinema has been the most influential, admired and accepted form of entertainment which has the most powerful impact on the minds of the public. In the year 1991 the movie Sadak was released which portrays a transsexual character and that character was totally negative. In this movie a eunuch character named Maharani was played by Sadashiv Amrapurkar who is depicted as a brothel owner torturing young girls into human trafficking.

A few years later another movie was released in the year 1996 named Raja Hindustani which portrayed two gay characters named 'Gulab Singh' and 'Kammo' and they were used for comedy scenes through out the movie. Another remarkable movie which even won the national award was 'Tamanna' which was directed by Mahesh Bhatt. This movie was released in the year 1997 and it dealt with many socially relevant issues for instance, female infanticide and transgender. In this film a transgender character named 'Tikku' was shown, who faced a lot of mortification and humiliation from the society and his family for being a eunuch. In the movie it was shown that Tikku was employed as a hairdresser to a Hindi movie actress but later he loses his job and due to financial woes, his only resort of survival was to join the transgender community and restore to the age-old traditions of begging and dancing at wedding ceremonies or dancing at functions of newly born babies to earn a living. Here in this movie Paresh Rawal played the character of 'Tikku' with great skill and earned a lot of appreciation from both the public and critiques. The movie shows how a transwoman raises an abandoned girl child defying all the odds of the society. In the year 1999 'Sangharsh' was released where Ashutosh Rana played the role of a psychopath transgender named Lajja Pandey who sacrificed children for becoming immortal. This role played by Rana was a milestone in his career and was greatly appreciated by both public and critiques.

In the years starting from 2000 to the present times. Hindi cinema had witnessed a gradual change in portraying the queer characters. Filmmakers started to distinguish between the lesbian and third gender characters. In the year 2003 'Kal Ho Na Ho' was released where a humorous plot was employed between two male characters Rohit played by Saif Ali Khan and Aman played by Shahrukh Khan where the former's maid named 'Kantaben' mistakes them to be gay. But in reality, it was a love triangle between Aman, Rohit and Naina played by Preity Zinta. Here in this film Karan Johar tried to introduce gay themes with humorous hints and gradually this thing became a massive hit and other filmmakers also started to follow this. Some other Hindi movies where this sensitive issue has been portrayed are 'My brother Nikhil', which got released in the year 2005. This movie was directed by Onir and he did an excellent job in dealing with a sensitive topic of AIDS. This movie does not portray homosexuality as the primary theme. Here the main theme was HIV. Another film directed by the same director was 'I Am' which got released in the year 2010 which tells a story about two gay men who are abused in a hypocritic society where homosexuality is not accepted by the moral police. Another movie that talked about lesbians was 'Ek Ladki ko dekha toh aisa laga' released in the year 2019 where the protagonist was a lesbian named Sweety played by Sonam Kapoor who tries to hide her true inclination towards women to make her family happy, but eventually after many turmoils, decides to pursue her true love and at the end her family and society accepts her decision. In the year 2020 'Shubhmangal Zyada Sabhdhan' directed by Hitesh Kewalya was released and the movie depicted different themes dealing homosexuality. This movie is about a gay couple Karthik played by Ayushmann Khurrana and Aman played by Jitendra Kumar who despite family's opposition gets married to each other. Another movie that released in the year 2020 was 'Laxmii' directed by Raghava Lawrence the protagonist of the movie was Asif played by Akshay Kumar who is in possession of a ghost who is a transgender. This movie shows the past life of the transgender ghost and the struggles faced by this community.

In the recent times two movies dealt with Queer people one is 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' released in the year 2021 which deals with the issues faced by transwomen, here Manu is a bodybuilder who falls in love

with Maanvi who is a Zumba instructor, played by Aayushmann Khurrana and Vaani Kapoor respectively. Manu wants to marry Maanvi but he was shocked on knowing that the girl who he is in love is a transwoman. Manu's family and friends are against this match. But at the end love wins and they are united. Another movie that was released in the year 2022 was 'Badhai Do' directed by Harshvardhan Kulkarni. Here Rajkumar Rao (Shardul) is a gay man and he marries a lesbian woman Bumi Pednekar (Suman) to make their respective families happy. But problem creeps in to their fake marital agreement when Suman's girlfriend starts to stay with them. Both the families come to know about them. However, in the end everyone accepts the truth. Recently 'Taali' was released in the year 2023, where Sushmita Sen plays the role of a transgender, and the film was directed by Ravi Jadhav. The story of the film is based on the life of a transgender named Gauri Sawant who is a transgender activist, and has made very notable contribution for the sexual minorities in our country. The movie shows her struggle against all the odds.

Conclusion:

People belonging to the LGBTQ community are slowly finding place in Hindi cinema. Gender fluidity in Hindi cinema has an influential power that challenges old long - established notions of identity and representation. By accepting gender fluidity, Hindi cinema has become a platform for the LGBTQ communities, where, by their real-life portrayals, these sexual minorities are understood and accepted in the mainstream. In the present times non-binary characters are authentically portrayed on the screen and thereby they help in breaking the barriers and stigma of the LGBTQ community. Their portrayal has changed gradually from negative to positive. Some Young and dynamic directors are employing these themes for projecting some positive sides of these sexual minorities who were previously just treated for a comic relief in the industry. The masses are becoming more understanding towards these LGBTQ communities.

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"The body is not a thing; it is a situation": Reviewing the Trauma in Life of a Transgender through Selected Films

Tirna Sadhu and Sourav Paul

Abstract

This paper attempts to contend the fact that gender dysphoria and its associated complex trauma have become an inevitable condition in the life of a transgender that have long-lasting effects on the person's mental health and well-being, thereby disrupting the person's sense of safety in the world, causing a sense of disruption in the society as a whole. This paper would like to focus on the reality that if the people in the society do not feel safe, their bodies and minds keep scanning for threats in the societal environment. These negative portrayals disturb the individuals who feel 'different' and as an obvious consequence led to higher levels of low self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression and so on and so forth. These experiences accumulate and lead to higher levels of psychological distress adding to a transgender's sense of insecurity and alienation in home and the world. In consequence, these people are forced to navigate their physical and emotional safety or to conceal their identities out of fear. These circumstances introduce the unavoidable consequences of the person having intense emotions, nightmares, or flashbacks — a syndrome that is often termed in medical psychology as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PSTD).

The argument can be better contextualized in the films named, "Samantaral" and "Nagarkirtan" by Partha Chakraborty and Kaushik Ganguly, respectively which have relevant implications to the stories of 'us' and 'them' that never reach their terminus — mental, physical, and even spiritual goal. Thus, it can be certainly stated that the victims of this condition indicate that the majority of transgenders are living with the aftermath of trauma and the fear of possible recurrent victimization.

The paper shall reverberate with hints that the transgenders' experience of sexual violence indicates shockingly high levels of sexual abuse and assault consequently creating a history of transgenders on the silver screen. Furthermore, the paper hopes to discuss the extent of marginalization experienced and whether there remains a voice that would try to prioritize a transgender's dream of love and life, of the journey from being — as they are —— to becoming —— as they should be.

Keywords: transgender, trauma, sexual violence, Samantaral, Nagarkirtan, history

Introduction

From the very tender age of 2 or 3 years, a child begins to recognize and categorise correctly with his or her supposed gender identity. Generally, a baby boy slowly perceives the masculine gender traits while a baby girl associates herself with feminine gender traits. But, in the case of transgender babies and babies with gender dysphoria get confused with their gender identities. Sometimes from childhood, at times from the adolescence and several times from the brink of puberty they become intensely curious about their choice of gender role/performance. The absence of their desired genitalia and sex characteristics depresses them. Life begins to shock them.

Transgender people think that the sex they are assigned with and the body they received are quite incongruous, the latter becoming perhaps, a trap. This uneasiness of the trans men being trapped in a female body and trans women in a male body proceed towards a life of discomfort and dissatisfaction. A sense of inbetweeness is initiated which later transforms into gender dysphoria as the transgenders continuously realize the challenges of such a survival. "In 2013 the diagnosis of gender identity disorder was replaced by the term Gender Dysphoria that denotes persistent discomfort with one's biological sex or assigned gender". An individual who is passing through the stages of gender dysphoria can feel primarily a stark contrast between his gender identity and his assigned genitals. He can develop some secondary sex characteristics such as breast size, voice, different behavioural pattern etc. Or, a strong desire to have the genitals and sex characteristics of his desired sex to get rid

of his assigned genitals and sex characteristics. So, a strong sense of being treated as another gender type is increased within him. As well as a strong belief of having the typical feelings and reactions of another gender is enhanced.

While struggling to create a harmony between the body and mind, transgenders on the onset of puberty plan to choose Sex Reassignment Surgery or some Hormone therapy. Perhaps, this gender transition is thought to be one of the ways by which they try to affirm their desired gender. Gender Dysphoria is the most significant cause of harassment in personal, public and professional life. As transgenders' choice of gendered performance do not adhere to the societal standards of gender, they are said to be mentally ill. By not subscribing to fixed patterns of gender transgenders gradually become peripheral identities with anxiety, depression, mental stress, trauma being their only reality.

Evidence suggests that transgenders choose suicide as the only form of refuge. The ongoing argument could be pertinently contextualized in Kaushik Ganguly's Nagar Kirtan and Partha Chakraborty's Samantaral. The representation of and the treatment received by the transgender named Puti from Nagar Kirtan and Sujan from Samantaral do justice to Pierre Bourdieu's idea that human beings more often than not conform to a series of practices and allow social norms to either continue or reform itself which inevitably tutor generations on how to interact with our surroundings. Thus, the paper will keep analyzing Butler's idea through the transgenders from the aforementioned films that if gender performance is allowed to become a person's self/internal choice of how he/she would relate to the cultural standards of masculinity and femininity in their own bodies then the gender identity disorder would perhaps stop affecting the civilization at large.

Literature Review

The present paper has relied heavily upon the Book and journal articles such as; Gender Dysphoria a Book by Garima Garg, Ghada Elshimy, and Raman Marwaha, a Journal, "DIAGNOSIS OF GENDER DYSPHORIA IN ADOLESCENTS" by UMAAN and PREETHA DEVI N.B., a Journal, "Ways of life, experiences, and confrontations of

transgender people: considerations for professional action in social occupational therapy / Modos de vida, experiências trans e enfrentamentos: considerações para a ação técnica em terapia ocupacional social" byKésia Maria Maximiano de Meloa , Roseli Esquerdo Lopesb.

The book Gender Dysphoria unfolds the physiological aspects and symptoms of Gender Dysphoria in childhood and adolescent period. The first journal points at the treatment and behavioural discomfort of an adult going through gender dysphoria. The second journal documents some of the first hand experience of transgenders. The journal explores the attempts to overcome the hegemonic gender binaries of society in the film Nagarkirtan. The journal captures, the neglect, torture both mental and physical, ostracization one transgender receives not only from a heteronormative society but from his family too in the movie Samantaral. This paper also focuses on the decimation of Society's Unconventional love. How Pnuti, the trans character overcomes all the derogatory social huddles to be united with her beloved Madhu, but finally succumbs to death. Her love continues even after her death through her lover. In these two movies namely Nagarkirtan and Samtaral I want to explore how two transpersons pass through constant struggle to get their identities. Their anxieties, depression, alienation is also displayed. Furthermore, I am going to show how they react differently to the hegemonic gender binaries, just like Pnuti rebels against these notion and Sujan succumbs to it.

Methodology

In trying to understand gender dysphoria and its complicated consequences that introduces trauma in the lives of the transgenders, I would like to use verified ideas related to this by Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak and Simone de Beauvoir. The paper shall look forward to analysing the various conventional gender cliches which transcend the idea of love. The paper shall pertinently discuss the unsparing and unsentimental vision portrayed by the individual directors in the chosen films regarding the life of a transgender. Furthermore, I hope to delve into the challenging society's perception of queer love - representation of third gender- identity crisis of a

transgender and the obvious dislike of their sexual anatomy too shall be focused upon. Finally, this paper shall point out how these movies successfully document the story of a dysfunctional family.

Analysis

Gender Dysphoria and its evil consequences

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Disorders, it is defined as a "marked incongruence between their experienced or expressed gender and the one they were assigned at their birth."

Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria directly points at the discomfort and distress one faces out of a conflict between his/her assigned gender and gender identity. It is a problem in which a person's assigned gender does not correspond to his gender identity. For example, a person may bear with a penis or masculine character traits and still can assume himself to be a female, or a person born with a vagina and breasts or with feminine character traits, can easily identify herself as a male too. People suffer from GD cannot link their assigned gender with their gender identity. Consequently, their ever-growing uneasiness comes up with their rejection of physical body which proceeds further to a wish of having a body with which they can associate and respond properly. That is why they segregate themselves from the common gender binaries of a society and are considered as 'other'. Thus, 'failing' to correlate to the orthodox and rigid gender binaries of male and female they become the victim of socio-cultural stigmatisation. This creates a violent disruption in their relationship with their individual family, peers, friends and the other subjects of a society.

Mostly Gender Dysphoria can be scanned in transgender people with their sense of dissociation with their assigned gender. Although transgender is an umbrella term denoting the people whose assigned gender does not match with the social binaries of gender. The term transgender also includes 'non-binary' and 'gender fluid' too. A non-binary person identifies as neither male nor female. A gender fluid person continuously shifts back and forth its identity. But, people with GD suffers from a critical and a peculiar kind of emotion as if they are

carrying a burden of strange person's physical attributes and thus cannot assimilate their body. They suffer extremely because they cannot voice their expression, and many a time it is suppressed under the fear of not 'being normal'. These feelings generally distort their mental strength and welcome depression, anguish, anxiety, negative self-image as well as isolation from the main stream society.

Often being over conscious of their negative self-image some of them floats with the main stream current of the society by concealing their discomfort; while some of them violently protests and breaks out from the conventional restrictions and give unbounded expressions to their desired gender identity. Furthermore, among the problems they face during this unconventional journey are mostly embarrassment, even their families are discriminated, ostracized for not negotiating with the social construction of gender conformity. They themselves are subjected to public humiliation, violence, bullying and defamation. Their poor self-esteem thus enhanced with repeated disrespect which leads them to self-harming and other mental health problems, leaving them only with suicide.

Gender Dysphoria in children can be identified with their typical behaviours if observed minutely. They can be analysed through their cross-dressing, selection and rejection of toys, selection of particular roles opposed to their assigned gender in school programmes or in fantasy games etc. Moreover, a strong desire is always there to assume to roles of an opposite gender. Gender Dysphoria in adolescents can be viewed clearly when an adult breeds a strong desire to get rid of their assigned genitals and generates a wish to acquire their desired genitalia and gender roles.

So, in the present context, we can get two different persons going through GD with two different kinds of vision. In the movie Samantaral by Partha Chakraborty, Sujan was coping up with his surroundings forcibly and suppressed his gender identity and behaviour while imprisoned like a mental patient. But, in the movie Nogorkirtan by Koushik Ganguly, Pnuti rebelled against the traditional gender binaries and escaped his family, joined the eunuchs, chased down his desires of love (although considered as queer) and tried earnestly to change his gender identity through SRS.

Defying and accepting the binaries

The film Nagarkirtan by Koushik Ganguly variably exposes the extreme distress and discomfort of Gender Dysphoria centering the character of Pnuti. She was born with a male body, wrongly credited with the name Porimol, in short Pori, later transformed herself to Pnuti. From the beginning, she feels, somehow, she is trapped within a male body. From the childhood, she likes to be dressed up in dresses categorised for women. Once in her childhood in a 'go as you like' competition, she dressed as Maa Sarada and won it. But her father was not at all happy at her achievement and make her mother conscious about her behaviour after failing to recognise her actual gender identity. But as Porimal enters into adulthood, she falls in love with his private tutor Subhash da. She dreams to go to America with that Man as America grants freedom and liberty to any gender identity and their respective practices. But to her utter astonishment she discovers that that Subhash is going to marry his elder sister. Frustrated, dejected and forsaken in love for the first time, she generates a negative self-image of herself. Betrayed in love she somehow recognises the 'incompleteness' in her body for the first time. On the wedding night of her sister, she secretly decorates herself as a bride before a mirror, while tears drizzling down from her cheeks incessantly. Secretly, she starts to smear lipsticks and tries to become a bride. She enkindles her womanhood in herself and thus constantly challenging the gender binaries and boundaries of a society. She forcibly tries to shatter everything in the way of becoming a lady and does not correspond to her assigned body.

Afterwards, tired of carrying the burden of another gender characteristics, Pnuti decides to escape her 'compulsory heteronormative' household and reaches the ghetto of transgenders. There she freely expresses her desired gender identity and this time not secretly but openly. But still she has to behave, attire, and live a life like an Eunuch leads. Thus, for the first time, she breaks the gender stereotypes that was thust upon her forcibly, and she retaliates with leaving her home and assuming the role of a woman within transgenders. Here she starts to breathe, act and behave like a woman, although she survives upon begging and dancing with her fellow eunuchs.

Within these surroundings she develops her matured love towards a flute artist and a delivery boy of a Chinese restaurant called Modhu da. Modhu da is a cisender person. Their love gains fresh air. Although Modhuda's love towards her is an affectionate and passionate one, he only loves the woman self within her, and always asks him, to dress and appear like a woman with wig and proper makeup. When Pnuti's love is not granted by her guru maa, she again elopes with Modhu da from that ghetto. It seems, like a spirit of air, she transcends all the barriers and boundaries of social construction whether it is related to gender boundaries or to conception of queer love. One day they consume their love too. After Pnuti's escape with Modhu da, they go to consult Dr Manabi Bandyopadhyay. Modhu da desparately want Pnuti in her woman body. Although Punti is scared about the upcoming pains related to surgery and Hormone therapy, but her desire to become a woman with a proper body and Madhu Da's love push her passionately.

If we consider Hegel's theory of 'Being for self' and 'Being for Others' there is a sheer discrepancy between those two selves within Pnuti. While Pnuti strongly believes in her being, her-self, but she did not get the recognition of being from others. She was always at the mercy of being recognised as a woman or other people's approval. Even in this case Madhu da too wants her to have a woman body. "Madhu wants Pnuti to be happy and fulfill her desire to achieve a woman's body, it is also laced with his desperation to see her in a complete woman's body."

In Samantaral, directed by Partha Chakraborty, Sujan the transwomen, suppresses all his discomfort, anxiety, depression in the garb of a fantasy vision. He transforms all those pathetic experiences, mental tortures, sometimes brutal thrashings by her brother, and all other misbehaviours from family members into a very positive incident in his vision. She surrenders to the gender binary system imposed by society and thus accepts his imprisonment in his own house. Consuming all the disrespects, mental and physical harassment she creates a world of herself aloof from all other members of the family. He makes the ants, birds, and Nature as his only companion. To Arka, one day finally after being discovered in a saree, she confesses that nobody believes her that

she is a girl. They do not allow her to shave and forcibly trying to make a Man out of him. The family considers this queerness as his mental illness, and that's why in his childhood, one day in Saraswati Puja, he went outside his house wearing a saree, his father mercilessly beat him with a bat and kept him locked up.

Destroying the idea of Conventional Love

Nagarkirtan by Koushik Ganguly is a tribute to the great maestro of Indian cinema, Rituparno Ghosh. At the dedication slide, the director announces sharply that his film is dedicated to all kinds of love that rejects all the traditional notions of love. Likely, the movie narrates a love story that transcends all the boundaries of heteronormative or 'normal love'. The love protrayed here between a transwomen Pnuti and a cisgender Madhu is an uncommon match in Indian cinema. Thia love story goes beyond the binaries of societal injunction, and churns out rapidly against a gloomy backdrop of social resistance. The film sharply shows a love story which is not based upon any reproductive future; rather here a non-normative couple tries to fetch their recognition of love through constant struggle, distress, anxiety and sufferings. But the regressive social construction does not allow them to transgress the boundaries of heterosexual gender construction. Thus, they suffered alot but their love lives on and on even after Pnuti's suicide.

Biologically male but mentally female, Parimal or Pnuti was determined to follow her love and even prepared to struggle to the worst. She left her guru maa Arati and her second home only to be united with her lover Madhu. Once defeated in love with Subhash da, her love with Madhu was very much desperate. But eagerly and earnestly Pnuti yearned for a female body to establish herself as a woman and a proper companion of Madhu. The way she looked at Madhu's sister-in-law, clearly expresses her blazing but painful desire of getting a female body. She aspired for a bright future with Madhu. But constantly sought assurance from him whether she is feminine enough. She questioned Madhu, while consuming their love if he felt her anything but a woman? But Pnuti's hopes regarding their future with Madhu changed drastically when the wig she wore suddenly dropped before Madhu's family. With extreme helplessness,

alienation and shame, Pnuti escapes Madhu's family. When out of sheer hunger Pnuti went on begging, the local Eunuchs beat her up when they discovered that she is assigned with male genitals. Being the victim of public humiliation at every nook and corner, Pnuti submits to death finally.

Madhusudan, Madhava are the names of Lord Krishna. It is quiet interesting that the name 'Madhu' can be an abbreviation of Madhava or Madhusudan. He is also a flute player who usually plays in Vaishnav religious ceremonies. Lord Krishna is also identified with the flute and similarly Pnuti is also attracted like Radha towards Madhu da, and is destined to an unfulfilled love. Even the Eunuchs being socially marginalized, can not empathise and spare her, and brutally beat him black and blue, pouring colours over her body to dissect her gender identity. Pnuti fights for her identity she mentally connects to, but even after these long struggle she was misjudged as a boy, enacting a role of an Eunuch and begging. Although Pnuti suicides but her love remains even after her death. Madhu enters Pnuti's world of transgender by assuming the role of a transgender, in loving memory of her 'to keep a part of her alive'.

Madhu's Perspective

Pnuti's murder or unfortunate death unfolds many a blind side of Madhu's character too. Her mute suicide screams of thousand unspoken words. Her constant humiliation, struggle with body, struggle with societ, family, dejection even failure to live a happy life with Madhu, finally reflects over Madhu's face. Madhu's love for Pnuti adds a different dimension in the movie. He was thrown out from his own ancestral house and he was asked to never show his face again for the disrepute he brought to the family by loving a transgender. His family being a Vaishnavite too failed to transcend the gender dichotomy in real life.

Thus, Madhu left his family to celebrate their love. Madhu accepted this decree and left his home in a frantic search for the runaway Pnuti. In his search when Madhu saw the video of the brutality inflicted upon Pnuti he wept profusely and enquired about her. He finds her finally in a police station hanging from a roof, in a bluish body. He embraces the dangling feet of Pnuti.

Dysfunctional Family and Life of a Transgender

Partha Chakraborty in his film Samantaral not only exposes the bizarred experiences of a transwomen within a dysfunctional family, but he inculcates the virtues and positivity of a transgender too. The film depicts how a transmen Sujan, is being cornered or marginalized, secluded within her own family, imprisoned, tortured, only for saving her family's reputation in society.

The film portrays Sujan from the very first scene. He stands at a window, almost looking like a prisoner at the bar. From the beginning it is cleared to the audience that Sujan have somethimg within him that differentiates him with other members of the family. His communication with birds, nature, as well as ants are well understood. The family locked him up in a room on the roof untill Arka, his nephew comes from Darjeeling and tries to interact with him. Sujan's younger brother Koushik always treats him as an abnormal parasite, and sometimes beats him too. But to the wonder of all, Sujan strangely converts everything into a positive vision which startles Arka. Koushik even wants to send him to the mental asylum, when one day he escapes his regular confinement when Arka left the door unlocked. It seems that only this imprisonment actually makes Sujan an abnormal or mental patient. He also wants to live, breathe, play, smile, jump like us. But his wish to wearing the conventional dresses of women, tags him as a mental patient. During the search of Arka and Titli, Arka gets the information that in Kumortuli often he used to touch the impoverished clay idols.

Arko desperately wants to decipher the mystery of this as he cannot sense any insanity within Sujan. He considers him as saner than any sane people in the society because of his singing, violin playing, often reciting lines from foreign verses. One day Titli comes at Sujan's terrace and when he was curious and expressed his desire to have a body like her, Arka misjudged him by calling him a dirty pervert. Titli tries to pacify Arka by saying she can differentiate the touch of lust and the good. Sujan is trying to find something in her body, not in the sense of any pervertion. "Girls can understand what a man's touch really means,".

One day Arka, dissects that in Sujan's room a lady was sitting there and Sujan converses with her secretly. Arka enquires his grandfather about that unknown lady but does not get a proper answer. But Arka finally reaches to his end of investigation and finds Sujan wearing the saree and other cosmetics meant for a woman. This shocks Arka, while Sujan expresses her pain, anguish, frustration, depression, sense of alienation, her own family's injustice towards him in profuse tears. He directly goes to his grandfather and demands answer, that why he was silent till date about her condition.

Sujan's father was a well reputed school teacher, and when Sujan was born they were horrified when looking at him.His mother refused to part with him when, the eunuchs even came to take him away. Arka was reported that Sujan was severely beaten in the day of Saraswati Puja day with a wooden bat as he went out of the house wearing a saree. After this incident they locked him up in the house.

Samantaral touches it's most poignant and pathetic climax when Sujan liberates herself from this traumatic world of 'differences' by leaping her into suicide. He was a woman inside but the society along with his family does not allow him to live the way she wanted to. Her last letter to Arka was a zipped-up folder of frustration, helplessness, alienation, anxiety and desperation at its best pathos. She wishes Arko to be with the helpless one, the "different", "abnormal" one. She believes that her nephew will definitely stand beside the transgender or queer people in society. "It is not a crime for a man to want to be a woman and a woman to be a man—just a game of nature. Many people want to live differently than we know. Those people are not wrong or perverted, just parallel."

Thus, the film deals with the notions of a dysfunctional family along with a life of transgender in eternal pain. People must believe in the reality of a parallel world out of their world of "normal" mainstream world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of trauma in the life of a transgender individual through selected films reveals the profound complexity and

depth of their experiences. The statement, "The body is not a thing; it is a situation," underscores the idea that a person's identity and well-being are deeply intertwined with the context in which they live and the way society perceives and treats them. Through the lens of cinema, we have delved into the multifaceted aspects of transgender trauma, shedding light on the following key points:

Transgender individuals often embark on a deeply personal journey of self-discovery, grappling with questions of gender identity, acceptance, and authenticity. Films have provided a platform to portray these internal struggles, allowing audiences to empathize and better understand the emotional complexity involved.

Many of the films explored have depicted the harsh realities of discrimination, prejudice, and violence that transgender individuals often face. These portrayals serve as a stark reminder of the systemic challenges they encounter and the urgent need for societal change and acceptance.

Despite the adversity they encounter, transgender individuals also exhibit remarkable resilience and strength. Films have highlighted their ability to rise above adversity, assert their identities, and seek a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Cinema has played a vital role in increasing visibility and representation of transgender individuals in mainstream media. This representation not only helps transgender individuals see themselves reflected on screen but also educates cisgender audiences about the transgender experience, fostering empathy and understanding.

The trauma experienced by transgender individuals is often compounded by other intersecting factors such as race, class, and disability. Films that address these intersecting identities provide a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the challenges faced by transgender individuals.

Ultimately, the chosen films have contributed to a broader conversation about transgender trauma, inviting audiences to engage in meaningful discussions about empathy, acceptance, and social change. It is crucial to recognize that the experiences depicted in these films are not isolated

but representative of the real struggles faced by transgender individuals worldwide. By acknowledging and empathizing with their experiences, we can take steps toward creating a more inclusive and compassionate society where everyone's situation, regardless of their gender identity, is valued and respected. As we continue to explore this important subject through the medium of film, we move closer to a world where transgender individuals can live their lives authentically, without the burden of trauma and discrimination.

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Shifting Tides of Representation: Exploring the Fluidity of LGBTQIA+ Characters in Cinema

Mahendra Kumar Jena

Abstract

Contemporary cinema has evolved to become a medium for evoking diverse emotions and reactions. In the past, several sensitive subjects were often depicted in a way that obscured their true essence, reducing them to mere sources of humor. Yet, there has been a shift in how these subjects are presented. This research paper delves into the transformation of LGBTQIA+ representation in films with a particular focus on the fluidity of character portrayals and narrative evolution. Over the past decade, cinema has witnessed a remarkable shift in how LGBTQIA+ individuals and stories are depicted on screen. This study explores the journey from static, stereotypical depictions to more dynamic, authentic, and diverse representations. To understand these changes, we analyze a carefully selected group of films, using them as case studies to examine aspects such as cinematography, dialogue, and character progression Ultimately, this study illuminates the dynamic nature of queer storytelling in cinema and its role in challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity.

Keywords: LGBTQIA+, Queer, Fluidity, stereotype

Introduction

From the very beginning, the impact of films on our Indian audience has been huge. For example, after watching the climax scene of DDLJ, there was hardly anyone who did not get emotional. That was the time when people used to replicate these film characters by getting the same haircut or by wearing the same designed outfits. With time, there have been changes in films. Indian cinema has a long history of traditional

gender roles and stereotypes, there has been a growing recognition of the need to break away from these conventions and depict a more diverse range of gender identities and expressions. Earlier Films were made primarily to entertain, so societal issues were rarely discussed in them.

In these few years, we've seen films that tackle delicate topics or taboo subjects that are either ignored or not properly informed. Indian cinema has started to shed light on transgender individuals and their experiences. Films like "Laxmii" (2020) and "Super Deluxe" (2019) have portrayed transgender characters with more depth and empathy. These films have contributed to raising awareness about the challenges faced by the transgender community in India. The exploration of gender fluidity is often more prominent in independent and documentary filmmaking. Documentaries like "Breaking Free" (2015) and "I Am" (2010) have delved into the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals in India, shedding light on the challenges they face and their resilience. Talking about storytelling, Indian filmmakers are increasingly using storytelling to promote inclusivity and acceptance. They are portraying gender fluidity as part of the broader spectrum of human experiences, aiming to break down stereotypes and prejudices. Generally, taboo-based films are produced using humour as a genre to make it more appealing as the audience doesn't seem to enjoy "gyaan" in a movie.

By bringing these topics to the forefront, society at least began talking about them openly. Films featuring gender-based professions made it easier for the upcoming generation to choose a career based on their skills rather than their gender. A man can give make-up lessons, a woman can become a priest, and a transgender person can become a principal today. And films have played a huge role in providing this culture with confidence. As a result of the realistic approach taken in films, these issues are seen from a different perspective.

Another thing that changed was the perception of a hero. We had imagined a hero as someone charming enough to attract all the ladies, with a solid body, and who could do many stunts. Today's hero is someone who works diligently for a common cause, belongs to the people, and is honest.

Literature review

1. The paper aims to trace the evolution of queer desires in India, focusing primarily on how popular cinema has portrayed various sexualities and examining their impact on the broader public audience. It also engages in a conversation about queer sexuality within the Indian context. Specifically, the paper analyses two films: Nikhil Advani's "Kal Ho Na Ho" (released in 2004) and Tarun Mansukhani's "Dostana" (released in 2008). The film Dostana challenges social perceptions about sexuality and encourages homosocial bonding while avoiding the blurring of lines into homoeroticism. It introduces common "gay couple" tropes, with the male leads embodying masculine and feminine qualities. Ultimately, the film re-affirms heterosexuality despite its playful exploration of same-sex desire.

On the other hand, "Kal Ho Na Ho" includes homoerotic moments between two male characters but maintains ambivalence about whether the audience is invited to laugh at homophobia or homosexuality. It plays with the idea of same-sex desire but concludes with an open-ended, fragmented heterosexual resolution, which is somewhat ambiguous (Dasgupta, 2012).

2. The paper aims to move away from the conventional and clichéd depictions of the third gender in film. Instead, it analyzes groundbreaking movies that have portrayed more realistic aspects of the third gender. The study spans over two decades, from 1990 to 2010, and critically examines two representative films from each decade. The analysis focuses on four movies from the sample: "Sadak," "Tamanna," "Shabnum Mausi," and "Welcome to Sajjanpur." These films are credited with breaking away from clichéd portrayals of the third gender. "Sadak" and "Tamanna" bring the third-gender community to the forefront, challenging stereotypes and highlighting their struggles for acceptance. "Shabnum Mausi" tells the story of a eunuch who becomes a successful politician, inspiring others to break away from traditional roles. "Welcome to Sajjanpur" presents the third gender within a larger societal context, advocating for recognition and fair treatment. (Syeda Afshana, Heeba Din, 2017)

Aim

To examine the transformation of LGBTQzA+ representation in films with a specific focus on the evolving nature of character portrays and narrative development.

Objective

1. To assess how LGBTQ character representation in cinema has evolved from 2013 to 2023.

2. To examine changes in narrative approaches and themes in LGBTQ-themed films during the specified decade.

Methodology

The study uses a descriptive research design to carefully explore the content of various films in the realm of cinema. Its goal is to systematically observe and understand how the way things are portrayed in these films has evolved gradually.

Discussions

1. Sadak 1991- This Bollywood film features a character named Maharani (played by Sadashiv Amrapurkar), who is a transgender character portrayed in a negative and stereotypical manner. Maharani is depicted as a villainous brothel keeper involved in human trafficking and drug dealing. The character of Maharani perpetuates harmful stereotypes about transgender individuals. She is depicted as a deceitful and immoral character, reinforcing negative perceptions that have historically been associated with the transgender community. "Sadak" missed an opportunity to depict a transgender character in a more nuanced and positive light. Instead of exploring the challenges and discrimination that transgender individuals often face, the film chose to use the character as a one-dimensional antagonist.

2. Sangharsh 1999-This Bollywood film features a transgender character portrayed in a fearful and negative manner. The character in question is called "Master" (played by Ashutosh Rana), and he is depicted as a psychopathic serial killer who happens to be a transgender person

who preys on children. His character is depicted as mentally unstable, violent, and sadistic. This portrayal reinforces harmful stereotypes associating transgender individuals with criminal behavior and mental instability. The film uses various cinematic techniques to create fear and suspense around the character of "Master." This includes eerie makeup, costumes, and unsettling behavior, which contribute to the portrayal of transgender individuals as frightening figures. The film used the character solely as a source of fear and sensationalism.

3. Golmaal Returns 2008-In the movie, there is a scene where one of the main characters, Laxman, encounters another character who is portrayed as gay. In this scene, Laxman reacts with fear and irritation towards the gay character, attempting to avoid him. The portrayal of the gay character is riddled with stereotypes, including effeminate behavior, an exaggerated walk, a distinct accent, and peculiar hand gestures. Moreover, the character is portrayed as excessively clingy and persistently pursuing Laxman, evoking a sense of homosexual anxiety in Laxman's reactions. This portrayal not only perpetuates harmful stereotypes but also amplifies societal misconceptions about gay individuals, reinforcing negative attitudes and stigmatization.

4. Housefull 2010-In the Bollywood film "Housefull" (2010), there is a scene where Boman Irani's character, Batuk Patel, mistakenly believes that three men are gay, and this misunderstanding is played for humor. Boman Irani's character, Batuk Patel, reacts to his mistaken belief with discomfort and panic. This reaction feeds into the idea of "homosexual panic," a term used to describe the irrational fear or discomfort some individuals experience when they think they are in proximity to LGBTQ+ people. It is crucial to challenge and debunk such fears rather than use them for comedic effect.The film doesn't correct the misunderstanding or take the opportunity to educate the characters or the audience about LGBTQ+ issues. This omission perpetuates ignorance and leaves the mistaken belief unchallenged.

5. Kapoor & Sons 2016- a film that is widely praised for its sensitive and realistic portrayal of LGBTQ+ themes. The film introduced the concept of a gay character and his relationship in a very natural and

empathetic manner. The character of Rahul, played by Fawad Khan, is introduced as the elder son who has been living in the United States. His sexuality is not immediately revealed but becomes a part of his character as the story unfolds. As the film progresses, it becomes evident that Rahul is gay. The film does not sensationalize or exaggerate this revelation; instead, it treats it with sensitivity and respect. Rahul's coming out is portrayed as a significant moment of emotional honesty and vulnerability. The film's approach to LGBTQ+ representation is considered groundbreaking in Bollywood, as it tackled the subject matter with sensitivity, empathy, and authenticity.

6. Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga 2019- The film is notable for its sensitive and heartfelt exploration of a same-sex love story within an Indian cultural context. The film tells the story of Sweety (played by Sonam Kapoor), a young woman from a traditional Punjabi family who is struggling to come to terms with her own sexual orientation. Sweety falls in love with another woman, Kuhu (played by Regina Cassandra), and their relationship forms the central narrative of the film. It portrays Sweety and Kuhu's love story with sincerity and avoids sensationalism or caricature. Instead of sensationalizing their relationship, the film focuses on the emotional journey of its characters. By presenting LGBTQ+ characters in a relatable and empathetic manner, the film helped reduce stigma and provided a sense of validation for individuals struggling with their sexual orientation.

7. Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui 2021- this film represents an important milestone in Bollywood for its portrayal of a unique love story. In the film, Aayushman Khurana's character, Manvinder, falls in love with a woman named Maanvi, played by Vaani Kapoor. However, the story takes an unexpected twist when Manvinder learns that Maanvi is a transgender individual who underwent gender transition surgery to become a woman. It challenges preconceived notions about gender and relationships, emphasizing the idea that love is unconditional and can see beyond external appearances. This portrayal is significant because it breaks away from stereotypes and portrays transgender individuals as individuals deserving of love and acceptance

Conclusion

It is crucial to recognize that depicting transgender characters in a negative or fear-inducing manner in films poses significant problems and harm. Such portrayals perpetuate stereotypes, fuel prejudice, and can contribute to real-world discrimination. In earlier films, transgender characters were often depicted as malevolent figures with strong but excessively negative traits. Their appearance and clothing choices were intentionally frightening. Later, we observed that LGBTQA+ characters in films were given minimal screen time purely for entertainment value, often portrayed in a demeaning way. The films rarely delve into the genuine problems and challenges faced by these characters. Gay individuals were sometimes portrayed in a stereotypical and clingy manner, consistently seeking male attention, which was an unfavorable portrayal. However, in more recent years, we have seen the emergence of powerful films that boldly and positively highlight these individuals, placing them at the forefront of the narrative. As societal awareness and attitudes toward LGBTQ+ issues evolve, there is a growing need for more responsible and respectful portrayals of LGBTQ+ characters and themes in cinema to promote greater understanding and acceptance.

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From Marginalisation to Visibility: Exploring the Evolution of LGBTQ+ Representation in *Taali* through Twitter Discourse Analysis

Sayani Das

Abstract:

In contemporary society, the proliferation of social and digital media has assumed a pivotal role in strengthening the visibility of individuals from marginalised communities and facilitating their ability to articulate their perceptions. The emergence of web series as a prominent medium for media consumption has occurred within a very condensed timeframe, successfully disseminating a diverse range of significant topics. The web series "Taali" presents a suitable subject for this analysis in exploring the evolving dynamics of representation, specifically pertaining to the LGBTQ+ community. This study utilises a qualitative discourse analysis of Twitter data in order to investigate what are the most common themes and sentiments of people talking about "Taali" on social media platforms like Twitter? A qualitative research methodology has been adopted for the study, wherein data has been gathered through the social media platform Twitter, specifically by utilising hashtags used for"Taali". This research paper gives a comprehensive analysis that examines both popular opinion and theme distribution in relation to the web series "Taali". Through the use of quantitative data, the sentiment analysis has revealed a predominantly positive public perception of LGBTQ+ representation within the series. This finding suggests a potential trajectory within the domain of digital visibility. However, it is crucial to recognise the presence of unfavourable attitudes in specific domains, underscoring the need to understand potential stereotyping or disparities in representation with greater sophistication. The predominant themes seen in this study

encompassed the overarching concept of the "series" and the various elements of "performance" contained within it. Additionally, other notable themes included the role of the "actor", the significance of the "web series" format, and notably the "third gender". The research findings suggest that despite progress in promoting inclusive representation and artistic greatness, there remain gaps and complexities that warrant further study.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ Representation, Sentiment Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Digital Discourse, Twitter Data, Taali.

Introduction:

Over the past decade, digital media have transformed how we communicate, share information, and connect with others. It has become a powerful instrument that people and communities may use to express themselves, bring attention to important causes, and make relationships around the globe. The LGBTQ community has struggled against marginalization and bigotry throughout the course of history, and members of this community have frequently sought exposure and representation in mainstream media. The advent of digital media, on the other hand, has made it possible for each and every one of us to reclaim our narratives, to organize into groups, and to question the accepted values of society. Over-the-top (OTT) platforms, which include online content developments and streaming services, have had a tremendous impact on the visibility and storylines of LGBTQ people. The possibility to share varied and inclusive tales about the lives of LGBTQ people has been made possible by the proliferation of OTT platforms. Streaming video on demand (OTT) services have made it possible to investigate a huge variety of LGBTQ points of view, which has resulted in more nuanced and accurate portrayals of the community. This contains stories about intersectionality, the experiences of LGBTQ persons who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and the struggles that different LGBTQ people go through (Soni, 2023).

In India, the number of Over the Top (OTT) platforms for media material has grown a lot in the past few years. A great number of over-

the-top (OTT) platforms also function as digital media platforms, making available to their audiences a wide variety of genres of content to consume. The perception of one's identity in today's society is strongly impacted by one's gender and sexual orientation, while the relevance of technology and communication has developed into a vital part of the human experience. In the large amount of dramas and films that are available on over-the-top (OTT) platforms, only a select few significantly center their tales on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, as stated by Gauntlett (2008). The streaming services Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Alt Balaji, along with a number of other services, offer a wide variety of episodes and films that prominently feature individuals from the LGBT community and explore various aspects of their depiction, including acceptance and rejection, within a variety of narratives. Previous research carried out by Mishra and Sharma (2021) and Manukriti and Ajay (2020) investigated the depiction of LGBT people in online programs such as Four More Shots, The Married Woman, and Made in Heaven. These authors found that these shows did not accurately portray LGBT characters. This research paper is to investigate the unique aspects of the depiction of LGBT people in the webseries titled "Taali: Bajaungi Nahi, Bajwaungi," which will be the focus of the study. In addition to this, it is essential to have an understanding of how users of social media have reacted to these movies and the emotions that accompany such reactions. This research makes use of sentiment analysis as well as thematic analysis in order to analyze the conversations that revolve around the subject of "Taali" on social media sites like Twitter (Now X).

Literature Review:

Ruth Vanita (2005), Leila Rupp (2009), and Susan Stryker (2008) have all made significant contributions to the analysis of the position that sexual minorities hold in society as well as their experiences within it. The research that was conducted by Amara Das Wilhelm (2003) digs into the complex nature of these conversations with a particular emphasis on the transgender community. Nikki Sullivan (2003), Judith Butler (1990), and Jack Halberstam (2011) have all made significant contributions to the conceptual framework that underpins the linkages between gender

and queer studies. In order to speak to a more diverse range of people, both Merle Miller (1971) and Laxmi Narayan Tripathi (2015) have conducted critical analyses of and engaged with depictions seen in popular culture.

In their research article, Manukriti and Ajay pointed out that the majority of films focus on the interaction between the person and society, but the majority of web series take a narrative approach, with LGBT people typically playing supporting roles in order to advance the story. They don't usually play the main characters in the show. It would appear, on the basis of widespread cultural images, that the American culture has accepted the concept of the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals and is actively moving toward normalizing their presence; this is a development that is rather missing within the Indian setting. The use of substantial political and social backgrounds in Indian cinema as a method of efficiently communicating moral and educational themes is a well-established practice. According to Manukriti and Ajay's research from 2020, the genre and medium of web-series gives creators and viewers more creative leeway than cinema does.

The research paper produced by Paramveer Singh and titled "New Media as a Catalyst for Change in Indian Television and Cinema: An Examination of Over the Top Platform" explores at the impact that new media and OTT platforms have had on the landscape of Indian television and movie production. The study is based on the observation of patterns and behaviors demonstrated by young people as its primary data source. Within the context of the modern digital landscape, an investigation into the patterns of media consumption among young people was carried out in the form of a survey. The results of the research, as presented by Singh (2019), suggest that younger people, in particular, make extensive use of internet resources to satisfy their requirements for amusement. Notable names such as Hotstar and Jio, together with Netflix, stand out as the most formidable competitors in this space.

Within the context of the LGBTQ community, Mishra and Sharma (2021) did a theme analysis as part of their research to investigate how individuals' ideas of gender roles are influenced by the representation of

gender in the media. They found that the web series accurately represents the characteristics and challenges that LGBTQ people encounter in cultures that are dominated by patriarchy in relation to the way that women are portrayed in the series.

Arya (2023) included a theme analysis in her research, which lead her to discover that over-the-top (OTT) shows present authentic depictions of LGBT characters and reflect an impressively high level of audacity in both their shows and films. The portrayal of LGBTQ people in Bollywood has developed throughout time, shifting away from representations that continue to promote stereotypes and toward representations that are more authentic and genuine. Web programs that are classified as "over-the-top" (OTT) tend to focus on the personal and emotional struggles that people go through after discovering their sexual orientation.

There is a sizeable body of research that investigates the LGBTQ+ representation in many forms of media, such as on the internet as well as in film and television. The portrayal of LGBTQ+ persons and stories on the growing OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu, hasn't been investigated in great detail, however. Studies conducted in the past by Soesanto et al., (2023), Gray (2023), and Abbasi et al., (2008) have investigated people's feelings on the representation of LGBT individuals on social media. However, none of this discussion centered in any significant way on any online series or web film. Consequently, despite the fact that sentiment analysis may be applied to the examination of online discourses, social media, and reviews of a wide variety of media content, it is still relatively underutilized in research on LGBTQ+ representation on OTT platforms. By employing sentiment analysis to investigate the feelings that individuals have toward these films as well as their responses to them, the purpose of this research article is to fill a gap that has been identified in the existing body of research.

Research Objectives:

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand sentiment of people on the portrayal of LGBTQ+ people in "Taali".

2. To examine the most common themes about "Taali" on social media platforms like Twitter.

Methodology:

Sampling Method: The research universe are the tweets which have shared in the context of "Taali". The approach of this study utilises purposive sampling. To conduct the research, the researcher has gathered samples. Big data samples are often selected to accurately represent the population. The topic analysis methodology was taken into consideration when choosing a sampling method.

Data Collection: The data has been collected through tweets and retweets with the hashtag #taali with a primary focus. The data has been collected manually for better understanding and reliability of the data, and the data should be relevant to the research subject.

Data Analysis: The data has undergone a comprehensive analysis, including coding and additional measures, in order to justify the necessity of the objective as shown in figure 1. The NVIVO programme has conducted the data analysis and visualisation procedure in an insensitive manner.

The assistance of the Python package, specifically tweedy.py, was important in achieving the desired outcome. The researcher utilised cloud analysis to inform the decision-making process regarding the exclusion of four specific stop phrases. NVIVO has played a significant role in moderating the efficiency of data mining and visualisation. The sentiment during the study process has been categorised into four distinct parts: very positive, moderately positive, negative, and moderately negative.

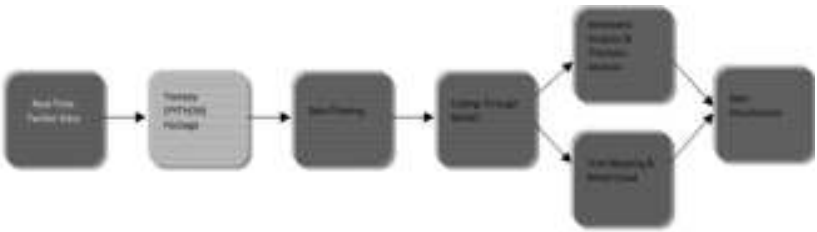

Fig (1.1): System Architecture for Real-Time Tweet Processing and Visualization

Thematic analysis is a widely recognised methodology that involves the identification, examination, and presentation of patterns or themes within collected data. The procedure for detecting, analysing, and displaying recurrent patterns or subjects (referred to as themes) within the dataset is carried out in this manner. The researcher's aim to employ this technique is grounded in the belief that a meticulous thematic approach will produce relevant analysis, thereby aiding in the resolution of specific research objectives.

Analysis:

Sentiment Analysis

Upon analysing the table 1.1, it becomes evident that there are 10 data points exhibiting a highly negative trend, 17 data points displaying a moderately negative trend, 55 data points demonstrating a moderately positive trend, and 28 data points indicating a very positive trend. When the moderately negative and highly negative data are combined in the negative column, the overall number of negative data amounts to 27. Similarly, when the very positive and moderately positive data are grouped together in the positive column, the total number of positive data is 83. The numerical span between the two values encompasses a length of 56 digits. The number of positive data points far exceeds the number of negative data points. In this particular case, the positive strategy often emerges as the prevailing choice in comparison to alternative possibilities.

Very negative	Moderately negative	Moderately positive	Very positive
10	17	55	28

Table 1.1: Source: Results of Twitter data analysis through NVIVO (sentiment coding)

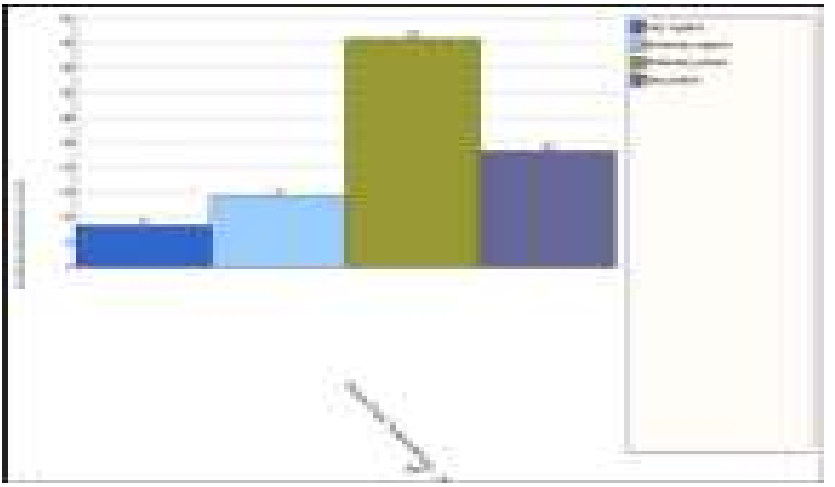

Fig (1.2): Source: Sentiment from NVIVO sentiment coding reference plotting on histogram

Theme Analysis Findings

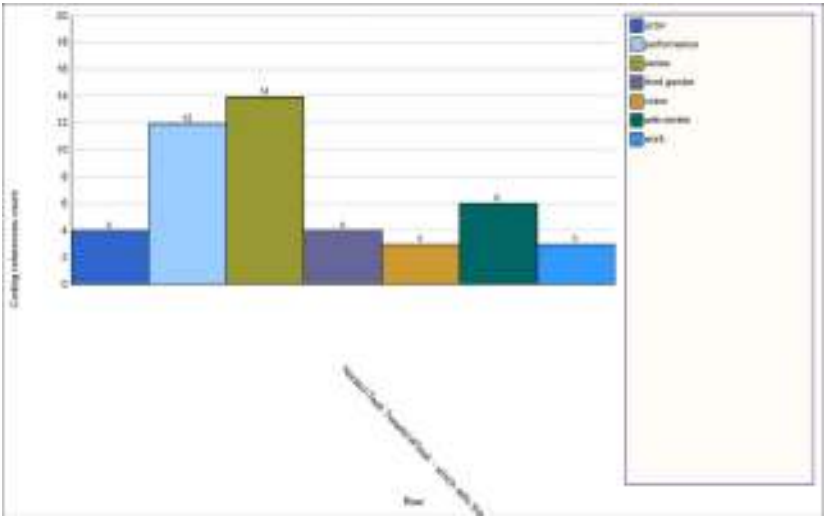

Fig (1.3): Coded Reference Theme Histogram through NVIVO

Actor (n=4): In the context of LGBTQ representation in web series, the term "actor" might represent the individuals who are tasked with bringing the characters to life.

Performance (n=12): The phrase "performance" emerges as the most prevalent term within the dataset, indicating a notable emphasis on the representation and enactment of LGBTQ storylines in web series. In this web series "Taali", the protagonist's role Shree Gauri Sawant played by Shusmita Sen was loved by many.

Series (n=14): The term "series" in the dataset holds the highest frequency and can be understood as encompassing the entirety of web series as a medium for narrative.

Third gender (n=4): The primary emphasis of this study revolves around the theme of the "third gender," specifically highlighting the portrayal and representation of those identifying as third gender within web series. This is the main theme of the web series, and the struggle for identity is profoundly shown here.

Voice (n=3): The concept of "voice" can serve as a symbolic representation of the narrative potency and unique perspective granted to LGBTQ characters within web series.

Web series (n=6): The frequency with which the phrase "web series" appears in the dataset may indicate a particular emphasis on the medium of web series as a powerful vehicle for narrative expression.

Work (n=3): Finally, the term "work" can encompass a wider range of activities related to the creation of web series, which may include deliberations on screenplay development, directing, and production endeavours.

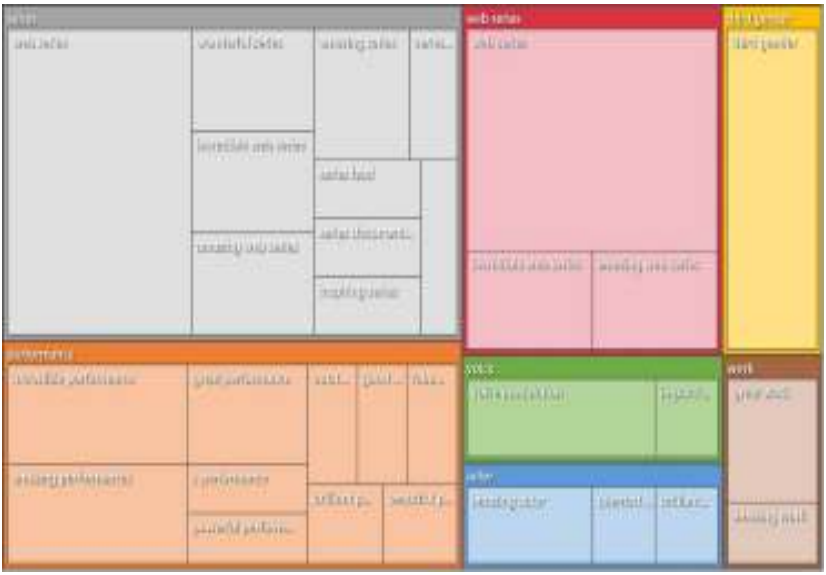

Fig (1.4): Coded Reference Theme Class Diagram through NVIVO

Text Mapping:

The utilisation of text analysis has been employed to substantiate the conclusions presented in this particular component of the study. The process of discourse word mapping is conducted with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of sentiment classification. The researcher has endeavoured to evaluate the data from both a micro and macroscopic standpoint.

A selection of terms employed in the tweets includes “taali” (6.75%), “watching” (2.96%), “performance” (2.20%), “series” (1.90%) etc.

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
taali	5	89	6.75	#taali, taali
watching	8	39	2.96	watch, watched, watching
performance	11	29	2.20	performance, performances, performer, performers

series	6	25	1.90	series
just	4	21	1.59	just
love	4	19	1.44	love, loved, lovely

Table 1.2: Source: Results of Twitter data analysis through NVIVO (text mapping)

There have been occurrences of the terms like amazing (0.99%), transgender (0.91%), Gauri (0.76%), acting (0.76%) and many more.

Word	**Length**	**Count**	**Weighted Percentage (%)**	**Similar Words**
amazing	7	13	0.99	amazed, amazing, amazingly
sushmita	8	13	0.99	sushmita
transgenders	12	12	0.91	#transgender, transgender, transgenders
gauri	5	10	0.76	#gauri, gauri
acting	6	10	0.76	acting
thank	5	10	0.76	thank, thanks
respect	7	9	0.68	#respect, respect
#sushmitasen	12	9	0.68	#sushmitasen
sawant	6	9	0.68	sawant
great	5	8	0.61	great
powerful	8	8	0.61	power, powerful
show	4	8	0.61	show, showing
time	4	8	0.61	time, times
#jiocinema	10	7	0.53	#jiocinema, @jiocinema
shreegauri	10	7	0.53	@shreegauris, shreegauri
finished	8	7	0.53	finished
movie	5	7	0.53	movie
absolutely	10	6	0.45	absolute, absolutely
brilliant	9	6	0.45	brilliant
every	5	6	0.45	every

feel	4	6	0.45	feel, feeling, feelings, feels
incredible	10	6	0.45	incredible

Table1.3: Source: Results of Twitter data analysis through NVIVO (text mapping)

Findings:

Sentiment Analysis of Twitter Discourse:

Very Negative

Tweet: *Despite legal acceptance, the LGBTQ+ community still faces social rejection.*

Analysis: Because the term "rejection" appears in this tweet, it is considered to be very negative. This tweet emphasises a significant matter wherein, despite the legal recognition of LGBTQ individuals, societal acceptance remains elusive. This is exemplified through the web series "Taali," which depicts the enduring experience of social ostracism.

Moderately Negative

Tweet: *"Taali" is a masterpiece that seamlessly weaves together societal struggles, exceptional acting, and impactful dialogues.*

Analysis: The tweet is deemed to possess a mild negative sentiment due to the use of the term "Struggles." The tweet, however perceived as relatively unfavourable, effectively captures the authentic core of the web series "taali". The tweet exemplifies the web series' attempt to depict the societal challenges encountered by individuals within the LGBTQ community, while also commending the actors for their exceptional performances and the profound impact of their discussions.

Moderately Positive

Tweet: *Identity/job/respect is everyone's right.*

Analysis: This tweet is classified as having a modest amount of positive sentiment, and it highlights a very essential topic, which is the necessity for identity in the society, combined with a job, and respect for the individual.

Very Positive

Tweet: *Shreegauri Sawant's challenges portrayed in #Taali by Sushmita Sen is the secret of her victory against the entire system!*

Analysis: This tweet is extremely positive and hopeful, and it places a lot of emphasis on overcoming challenges in the manner portrayed in "Taali." It showed how tirelessly Shreegauri Sawant campaigned for the rights of LGBT people and how she eventually prevailed against a system that was perceived to be inflexible and biased. The word "victory" and the concept that it is a "secret" present a storyline of success, perseverance, and empowerment, and they show a narrative of overcoming significant obstacles. It gives a perspective of optimism and positive change, thus creating a discourse that respects stories of success and the breaking down of structural barriers, thereby developing an attitude that is both upbeat and inspirational.

Text mapping of Tweets:

According to the figure 1.5, there has been a notably positive reaction to the production "Taali," with mentions of "Sushmita" and the hashtag "#sushmitasen," indicating a significant engagement of this person, as the main character. The frequent use of adjectives like "love," "amazing," "brilliant," and "powerful" throughout the discourse suggests a positive response from the audience.The common use of words like "performance" and "acting" suggests that the audience places a high value on the shown acting skills in "Taali". Furthermore, the discussion that is still going on about transgender people and the mention of a specific person by the name of "Gauri" point to a strong narrative or character emphasis on transgender issues. This fosters an environment that encourages respect and recognition, as seen by the frequent use of the word "respect."

Fig (1.5): Source: Word cloud from NVIVO textual analysis coding

It is important to note that even while the conversation is generally optimistic, the use of terms like "movie" and "series" raises the possibility of ambiguity or conflicting viewpoints over the precise composition of the web series. The measurements for user engagement, which are represented by various variations of the word "watching," emphasise a high level of audience participation and imply that many viewers are actively engaging with the content. They actively participate in discussing their thoughts and feelings after watching, which encourages a dynamic and largely positive dialogue on the site.

Conclusion:

The primary objective of the study was to gain an understanding of the feelings that individuals have regarding the representation of LGBTQ+ individuals in web series, with a specific emphasis placed on the web series titled "Taali." It is possible to draw the conclusion, given the findings, that the general public has a favorable attitude toward the portrayal. In addition, whereas in the past they were portrayed only as a source of humor or received little on-screen representation, today they are being given ample screen time to communicate their point of view to a larger audience. This is a significant improvement from the situation in the past. Despite this, there is still a widespread problem in which members of the LGBTQ community are not given favor when it comes

to casting decisions for significant roles. Instead, cisgender men and women are given preference for these positions. They have not been cast in any of the episodes of the series, despite the fact that the show is based entirely on them. Tweets by a substantial number of people have also brought attention to this issue. One of the ways in which the representation of LGBTQ people in this series differs from that in other series is the fact that they are portrayed here fighting for both their identity and the respect they need from society. This is one of the ways in which this series distinguishes itself from other series.

In conclusion, the thematic analysis of the discourse reveals a receptive and engaged audience that demonstrates a high appreciation for the film "Taali" as a result of its fascinating narratives, particularly those that are centered around transgender themes, as well as noteworthy performances. The performance seems to have produced an environment characterized by appreciation and recognition, so establishing a conversation that was able to interact with the audience in a fruitful manner and elicit a positive reaction along with respect. The chat contains a spirited interchange based on admiration and acknowledgment, and it mentions a play that has been well received and that has produced a conversation that is mostly positive and encouraging among the members of its audience.

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The Aesthetics of Hyper-realism in Netflix's Love, Death and Robots: *Jibaro*

Debarshi Arathdar

Hyper-realist phenomenon

In order to talk about the nature of reality, one needs to consider the nature of lived experience in tandem. However, to actually attempt an account for both of the following is the very core of the modern scientific-philosophical enterprises that remains as ever-promising and an ongoing project.

Netflix's episode from Love, Death and Robots posits a non-verbal depiction of a toxic relationship being developed by two predatory creatures, culminating in the eventual demise of one of the following entities. The episode is characterised by visual aesthetics of the highest technical order that deal with elements of ornamentation adoring all the characters. The short episode provides us with a totally language-free episode recounted in the form of a fable, embodying the narrative strand of traditional fairy tales with a twist of violence.

Narratives now occur in trans-medial domains, thereby opening a vista of the multivariate traffic undergone by different sensory domains. Participating together in the construction of newer modes of thought, trans-medial narratives have thereby a larger appeal on the consumer. Media is a complex interplay of signs on different levels, often channelizing within us a fetish for its intensification of content. It makes us be in the immediacy of the image, often ending towards 'hypermediacy' that "makes us aware of the medium or media and (in sometimes subtle and sometimes obvious ways) reminds us of our desire for immediacy" (Bolter and Grusin 1999).

Hyper-realist tendencies

In today's age of the mechanical reproduction of images, the animated image perhaps stands as the epitome of modern technology in expanding the dimension of the 'motion picture'. The details exhibited in the animated images of Jibaro, represent the state of the art graphics. What is perhaps more interesting is the cinematography employed in Jibaro, that is equally accomplice in establishing the viewer within the hyper-real(m).

One needs to only look at the shifting ontological relations between Video games, Interactive digital narratives and animated shows to notice the common grounds being in such trans-medial narrative domains. All of the following media domains are characterised by their hyper-real tendencies that attempt to dissolve the medium momentarily and yet mediate the user via particular cues. Perhaps, the multi-sensory appeal of each of the following domains hold the key alongside their immersive story-worlds that perhaps help us to live and leave the simulation at the sametime. A sense of hyper-immersion modulated by the narrative medium is characteristic of the new media techniques that seek to elaborate the frameworks via which one participates in navigating through such narratives. The "concept of immersive media instead intends to emphasize the degree of sensory involvement activated by video games and VR compared to traditional media. The former would be able to build an effect of presence based on the stimulation of multiple sensory channels: going beyond the simple cognitive involvement of literature and the auditory-visual regime of cinema, adding a tactile and bodily dimension, these experiences would be globally more immersive and thus engaging" (D'Armenio, 2022).

The visuals are reminiscent of modern-day video games with their hyper realistic imagery and high frame rates that successfully deliver a sense of hyper-immersion; celebrating the dynamic scapes of modern day virtual environments, an echo of the blasting content on the psyche. The story is a recounting of traditional folklore from around the world fused with elements of greed, lust, instinct and primitive violence. The character of the Siren is influenced by several myths that deal with the imagery of a fairy-nymph luring men to their eventual doom, one that

shifts its *topos* from sexuality to power politics and primal instincts. A similar narrative strand is often shown with that of mermaids- from the pirates of the Caribbean to Harry potter. Perhaps, the Siren serves a parallel to the mermaid concept (that of alluring its prey within/near water bodies) that is recounted in different forms of mythologising around the world.

A study of Jibaro's gamified aesthetics

The Jibaro episode is tainted with a sense of supernaturalism as the Siren embodies all the characteristics of a mythical creature as often found in cross-cultural narratives. The elements of hyper-realism are exemplified by the game-like animation that follows a certain cinematographic aesthetic, wherein minute details and vibrant effects are put to primary concern. The paper addresses *Jibaro* as a visual narrative dealing with elements of the hyper-real wherein human and non-human interactions are (re-)presented on scale of animative excess. The animation in *Jibaro* is performed not purely on computer but involves a coherent interplay of both human characters/actors/dancers that provide the content for their motion and non-verbal communication alongside morphing their outlook to generate a sense of intensified imagery, one that is extreme in ornamentation and colour contrasts (Love, Death + Robots | inside the Animation: Jibaro | Netflix, n.d.).

Jibaro episodes deals with a troop of Renaissance knights and a convoy of priests raiding/riding through a (mythically enchanted perhaps?) forest when all of a sudden they are jarred by the blaring sound frequencies of the Siren itself. Meanwhile the deaf soldier finds a token of gold in the river while washing himself and the viewer is subsequently presented with the dance of the 'Siren'. The Siren's cry has a psychological impact on the troop wherein influenced by its blare, they start behaving in a chaotic manner, unleashing their latent violent selves upon others as if in a quest to win the Siren, that has influenced their will to act upon themselves. The deaf knight is the only left alive who eventually chases the Siren down after discovering its bejewelled armament/body. Upon finally meeting the Siren, in a scenic mid of the waterfall moment, the deaf soldier discovers the double-edged nature of

his love/lust, one that exchanges blood for jewels. The gory scene is a testament to the paradox of human principles and ethics that are laid bare at the viewer's discretion. An intimate connection between elements of human agency is shown wherein not only the living but also the inanimate elements of matter seem to echo a sense of Eliot's 'objective correlative' (Eliot 1920) as after the dis-embarkment of the Siren, the rivers turn red and the forest turns hallucinatory in its presence. Upon consuming the 'infected' water, the deaf soldier is revived with his auditory sensorium and starts hearing the natural sounds around him until eventually he meets the Siren again that ultimately culminates in his death as he can no longer escape the Siren's call/cry. A similar narrative strand is often shown with that of mermaids- both in the pirates of the Caribbean and harry potter's goblet of fire. Perhaps, the Siren is an extension of the mermaid concept that is recounted in different forms of mythologising around the world. The Siren stripped of its ornamentation/appearance loses its real self and its cry is the anguish of having lost the virtual self in a world of signs and signifiers.

Conclusion

The visuals are reminiscent of modern-day video games with their hyper realistic imagery and high frame rates that successfully deliver a sense of hyper-immersion; celebrating the dynamic scapes of modern day virtual environments. The story is a recounting of traditional folklore from around the world fused with elements of greed, lust, instinct and primitive violence. The character of the Siren is influenced by several myths that deal with the imagery of a fairy-nymph luring men to their eventual doom.

The presentation of the episode reminds oneself of advanced computer simulated graphics, often tending towards an aesthetics for detail as espoused in modern day video games. The Jibaro episodes question both human and non-human agency alongside the causality and co-relations one exerts upon the other. It is an exploration of love and attraction that speaks volumes about human nature whilst being silent with its usage of language, in succinctly not using any. *Jibaro* is a brilliant example of non-verbal communication at its prime, wherein the

functional role of language for communication has been substituted by not only the non-verbal (paralinguistic, gesture) effects of the characters but also the cinematic techniques and colour schemas being employed. The *Jibaro* episode highlights the postmodern fetish for intensified and explicit imagery wherein adult content is parcelled into an animated form, a form that stereotypically displaces the seriousness of the act whilst radically changing our perspectives regarding the nature of such acts themselves. One that makes us question not only the nature of such content on such a form but the emergent blend of reality that we become the subject of, in turn, the user.

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The Adoption of Over-The-Top (OTT) Services: Significantly Impacted Traditional Media in Various Ways

Shantanu Siuli

Abstract

OTT platforms offer users the convenience of accessing content on-demand. Viewers can watch their favorite shows, movies, or sports events whenever and wherever they want. OTT services are accessible on a wide range of devices, including smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, and laptops, allowing users to consume content on their preferred devices. OTT platforms have invested heavily in creating high-quality original content, attracting subscribers with exclusive shows and movies. These platforms offer a wide variety of content, catering to diverse tastes and interests, from niche documentaries to international series. This personalization enhances content discovery, helping users find new shows and movies they might enjoy. Adaptive streaming technology adjusts video quality based on the viewer's internet connection, ensuring a smooth viewing experience. Traditional media outlets are facing increased competition from OTT services, compelling them to adapt by launching their own streaming platforms. Traditional media is evolving by producing original content for streaming platforms and exploring hybrid models that combine traditional broadcasting with streaming services. The aim of this paper is to showcase the competition between OTT and traditional media continues to shape the landscape of the entertainment industry.

Keywords

Adaptive streaming, Traditional media, OTT platforms, content discovery, niche documentaries, and high-quality original content.

Introduction

Many OTT platforms operate on a subscription-based model, where users pay a monthly fee to access a library of content. This model allows for a steady stream of revenue, which can be reinvested in creating high-quality original content. OTT platforms use algorithms and user data to personalize content recommendations, making it easier for viewers to discover new shows and movies based on their preferences. OTT platforms have disrupted the traditional cable and satellite TV industry. Some viewers have opted to cut the cord and rely solely on OTT services, leading to a decline in cable and satellite subscriptions. The growing popularity of OTT platforms has led to increased competition. Established media companies, as well as tech giants, have entered the market with their own streaming services, creating a crowded landscape. The proliferation of OTT platforms has led to content fragmentation. Consumers may need subscriptions to multiple services to access all the content they desire, which can be costly and potentially frustrating. OTT platforms have a global presence, allowing content creators to reach a global audience. This has enabled international content to gain popularity in regions where it might not have been accessible previously.

Increased competition often drives companies to innovate and develop more complex technologies. These advancements can lead to a better user experience. For example, in the tech industry, companies compete to create faster, more efficient, and user-friendly products or services. This competition can result in better smartphones, streaming platforms, software applications, and more. Competition also leads to a higher number of original content offerings. This is particularly evident in the entertainment industry, where streaming services and content providers are constantly vying for viewers' attention. As a result, consumers have access to a wider variety of shows, movies, and other content. This increase in content options can lead to higher quality material as providers strive to stand out from the crowd and attract viewers. India has witnessed a significant digital transformation across various sectors, including finance, healthcare, education, e-commerce, and more. This transformation has been accelerated by the widespread adoption of

smartphones, affordable internet access, and government initiatives like Digital India. The increased use of technology has generated massive amounts of data, both structured and unstructured. This data has become a valuable resource for businesses, enabling them to gain insights into consumer behavior, preferences, and market trends. Big data analytics and artificial intelligence have been instrumental in harnessing this data. The financial technology (fintech) sector in India has thrived, offering digital payment solutions, peer-to-peer lending, and online investment platforms. This has increased financial inclusion and made banking services more accessible to a wider population.

India has emerged as a hotbed for technology start-ups. With a supportive ecosystem, access to venture capital, and a pool of skilled tech talent, start-ups are driving innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity. India has also made strides in the visual effects (VFX) sector. The country has become a hub for VFX and animation services for the global film and entertainment industry. Indian studios and professionals are sought after for their high-quality work. India's rich cultural heritage, diverse storytelling traditions, and multilingual population have made it a fertile ground for content development. Streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar have invested heavily in producing original Indian content, further boosting the entertainment sector. Over-the-Top (OTT) providers in India, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ Hotstar, and others, have been experimenting with various approaches to generate revenue. At that time, the majority of these platforms were primarily using ad-supported methods to monetize their content. This includes showing advertisements during free content or offering a lower-priced subscription tier with ads. To increase revenue and attract more users, many OTT platforms were also developing product and service offerings to entice free users to become premium members. This typically involves providing exclusive content, ad-free streaming, offline downloads, and other perks to subscribers who pay for premium memberships.

These platforms were investing heavily in creating and acquiring a diverse range of content to cater to the diverse tastes and preferences of the Indian audience. This includes not only international content but

also a substantial library of regional content in multiple languages. Original content production was a significant focus for OTT providers in India. They were producing a wide array of original series, movies, and documentaries to differentiate themselves and attract subscribers. The competition among OTT providers in India was intense, with several platforms vying for a share of the market. This competition was driving innovation in content creation, pricing strategies, and user engagement.

Literature review

According to a critic, as of 2020, India had reached a remarkable 520 million smartphone users. This high level of smartphone adoption is a clear indicator of the shift in how people access and consume media content. According to a critic (2002), the increase in broadband coverage from 14% to 40% by 2020 suggests improved internet connectivity. This enhanced access to high-speed internet is crucial for facilitating digital media consumption, especially video content. The proliferation of smartphones and improved internet connectivity has played a pivotal role in the transition from traditional media consumption to digital media. People are increasingly turning to their personal devices to access a wide range of digital content. The data indicates a significant decline in the preference for viewing TV shows among Indian consumers. The percentage drop from 47% to 10% over the last year underscores the growing popularity of digital alternatives for entertainment.

Methodology

Descriptive research aims to describe and provide an accurate portrayal of the characteristics or behaviors of a particular phenomenon. In this case, it is focused on understanding the factors influencing OTT service usage among customers in Kerela and West Bengal. The primary data collection method used is a questionnaire survey. This involves designing a set of questions related to the research topic and administering them to the respondents. It's a structured approach to collecting data from a sample of the population. After collecting the questionnaires, the data were coded and analyzed. Coding involves assigning numerical or categorical labels to responses, making it easier to analyze the data quantitatively. The analysis likely involved statistical techniques to identify

patterns, correlations, and trends in the data. The statement mentions that the choice of this methodology was driven by the need for high representativeness and ease of data collection. Descriptive research is often chosen when the goal is to obtain a broad understanding of a phenomenon within a specific population. The use of questionnaires can efficiently collect data from a large number of respondents.

Discussion

OTT platforms have revolutionized the way people consume content by providing a vast library of films and TV episodes. Subscribers can access this content at any time and from anywhere with an internet connection, which is highly convenient. The convenience and flexibility offered by OTT platforms have led to a shift in consumer behavior. Many people now prefer to watch movies and TV shows on these platforms rather than going to traditional cinemas. This shift is due to the ability to watch content on-demand, without the need for fixed showtimes or physical travel. As a consequence of the rise of OTT platforms, the number of moviegoers has been on a decline since 2002, as mentioned in the Deloitte analysis. This trend is expected to continue as OTT services continue to gain popularity. Traditional movie theaters face the challenge of attracting audiences in an era of convenient streaming options. In contrast, OTT platforms have consistently seen revenue growth. Netflix, one of the leading OTT providers, experienced a significant increase in income, with $20.2 billion in revenue in 2019, compared to $15.8 billion in 2018. This growth is driven by both subscriber expansion and price increases. The annual report from the Motion Picture Association noted a 4% drop in worldwide movie attendance in 2019, with a more significant decline of 4.6% in North America. This decline is attributed in part to the growth of OTT platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+.

OTT platforms provide filmmakers, producers, and studios with additional avenues to create and distribute content. This expansion has contributed to the growth of the entertainment sector, allowing for more diverse and original content. OTT platforms enable movies to reach a global audience almost immediately upon release. This global reach can

generate increased discussions and exposure for certain films, potentially leading to higher box office receipts. OTT platforms have been particularly beneficial for foreign language movies and documentaries. These genres have gained greater success and popularity due to their availability on OTT platforms, making them accessible to a wider international audience. As you mentioned, OTT platforms allow movies to have a longer shelf life compared to traditional theater releases. Movies can be available for streaming for years, providing a continuous revenue stream for film companies. One of the main concerns with OTT platforms is that they may diminish the traditional cinematic experience. Watching a movie on a small screen with subpar sound at home is not the same as the immersive experience of a movie theater with a big screen and surround sound. This could lead to a decline in the overall quality of the cinematic experience. The availability of movies on OTT platforms can deter some viewers from going to theaters. This could potentially impact box office revenues for certain films, especially those that rely on the theatrical release for a significant portion of their income.

The abundance of content on OTT platforms can lead to oversaturation, making it challenging for individual films to stand out. It may also make it harder for smaller, independent films to gain attention amid the vast library of available titles. The first step involves identifying and extracting key themes or trends related to the impact of OTT platforms on the movie industry. These themes likely involve aspects like viewership trends, revenue changes, shifts in consumer behavior, and so on. The pandemic led to a sudden and severe economic disruption. Many businesses, particularly those in the hospitality, tourism, and entertainment industries, were forced to shut down or scale back their operations. This resulted in job losses and financial hardships for many people. With the closure of malls, restaurants, hotels, and cinema halls, people had to find alternative ways to entertain themselves. Television and the internet became primary sources of both information and entertainment. Streaming services and Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms saw a significant surge in subscribers during this time. Major media companies also launched their own streaming platforms to cater to the growing demand for content. As many workplaces shut down or shifted

to remote work, people had to adapt to working from home. This shift brought about changes in work routines and the use of technology for remote collaboration. Reliable information about the pandemic became crucial, and television and the internet played a vital role in disseminating updates and guidelines from health authorities. News organizations provided continuous coverage of the evolving situation.

The pandemic also had a social impact, with people turning to social media and online platforms to stay connected with friends and family when physical gatherings were restricted.

Virtual meetings and video calls became the norm for maintaining social connections. The entertainment industry had to adapt to the new reality, with many film and TV productions temporarily halted. However, some creative content, such as web series and short films, continued to be produced remotely. The pandemic accelerated the digital transformation of various industries. Businesses that had previously relied on physical presence had to adopt e-commerce and digital services to stay afloat. Governments and health organizations encouraged people to follow safety measures, such as wearing masks and practicing social distancing. Public health campaigns were conducted through various media channels to raise awareness about these measures. There are several reasons why people have shifted towards OTT platforms and away from traditional television subscriptions:

Flexibility and Convenience: OTT platforms offer on-demand access to a wide range of content, from movies and TV shows to live sports and news. Viewers can watch what they want, when they want, without being tied to a fixed broadcasting schedule. This flexibility is a significant draw for consumers who have busy lifestyles.

Device Compatibility: The widespread adoption of smart TVs, streaming devices (like Chromecast, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, etc.), and smartphones has made it easier for people to access OTT content on a variety of screens. These devices provide a seamless experience, allowing users to switch between different OTT services and traditional TV channels.

Cost-Efficiency: While some OTT services require subscription fees, they are often more cost-effective than traditional cable or satellite TV packages. Users can choose the services they want and avoid paying for channels they don't watch. Additionally, many OTT platforms offer free content supported by ads.

Content Variety: OTT platforms provide a diverse range of content catering to various interests and demographics. Users can access a vast library of movies, TV series, documentaries, and original programming. This extensive content library is a strong incentive for consumers.

Global Accessibility: OTT services often transcend geographical boundaries, making it possible for viewers to access content from different regions and languages. This global reach broadens the choices available to consumers.

Personalization: OTT platforms leverage algorithms to recommend content tailored to individual preferences, enhancing the overall viewing experience. This personalization makes it easier for viewers to discover new shows and movies.

Live Streaming: Many OTT platforms now offer live streaming of sports events, news broadcasts, and special events, eliminating the need for a traditional cable or satellite subscription to access live content.

Portability: With mobile apps and the ability to stream on-the-go, viewers can watch OTT content anywhere with an internet connection, further enhancing convenience.

TV Subscriptions: Traditional TV subscriptions typically provide access to a fixed set of channels based on the package you choose. You may have some flexibility in selecting packages, but you often need to pay for channels you may not watch.

OTT Streaming: OTT platforms usually allow users to select specific streaming services or apps. You can choose to

subscribe to the ones that have the content you want to watch. This a la carte model can provide more flexibility in channel selection.

As the pandemic spread, lockdowns were enforced in numerous countries to limit social interactions and prevent the virus's spread. People were advised or mandated to stay at home, and many businesses and industries were temporarily shut down or severely restricted. Many businesses and industries, particularly those that involved physical presence and close contact, such as restaurants, malls, and cinemas, were forced to halt their operations or operate with significant restrictions. This led to widespread economic challenges and job losses. Entertainment venues like cinemas, theatres, and live performance spaces were among the first to close their doors. This meant that people had to find alternative sources of entertainment while staying at home. With the lockdowns in place, television and the internet became the primary sources of information and entertainment for people. Streaming platforms and online content consumption surged as people sought ways to pass the time and stay informed. Over-The-Top (OTT) media platforms, which deliver content over the internet, saw a significant increase in popularity. Many major media brands and studios launched their own streaming services or expanded their presence on existing platforms. This trend had been growing before the pandemic but accelerated during this time. Due to the limitations on film production and the closure of cinemas, many prominent actors and filmmakers turned to OTT platforms to release their content. This shift in the industry blurred the lines between traditional cinema and streaming services. The increased demand for online content and the influx of established media brands into the streaming space contributed to the rapid growth of OTT media platforms. Services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, and others saw a surge in subscribers during the pandemic.

Online platforms offer a wide range of content catering to diverse tastes and preferences. This diversity has attracted audiences looking for specific genres, languages, or niche content that may not be readily available on traditional television. Traditional television, which was already facing challenges from digital media, experienced a further decline in

viewership during the pandemic. Live events, sports, and TV shows were postponed or cancelled, leading to a decrease in the appeal of linear television. The pandemic disrupted the production schedules of many TV shows and films. This led to delays in the release of new content and forced networks to rely on reruns and older content, which may not have been as attractive to viewers. The entertainment industry had to adapt to remote working and collaboration, impacting the way content was created, edited, and distributed. Virtual events and award shows became the norm.

The Indian OTT industry is expected to grow substantially over the next decade. The estimated growth rate of 22% to 25% CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) is impressive and indicates a thriving sector. This growth rate suggests that the industry will likely reach a market size of $13-15 billion. The growth projections are based on a joint report by media and entertainment experts, indicating that this industry's potential is being recognized by both industry insiders and experts. The report from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) provides valuable insights into the OTT industry's growth potential. These organizations are reputable and well-regarded in their respective fields, lending credibility to the projections. The OTT industry in India is identified as one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country. This growth is driven by a combination of factors, including increasing internet penetration, a young and tech-savvy population, and a growing demand for on-demand content. With more than 40 OTT platforms currently operating in India, there is a diverse range of content available to consumers. This diversity contributes to the industry's growth as it caters to various tastes and preferences. The rise of OTT platforms in India reflects changing consumer preferences. Viewers are increasingly turning to digital streaming services for entertainment, which has disrupted traditional television and film distribution models.

The availability of affordable high-speed internet services has likely played a significant role in driving the growth of the digital content industry. Faster and more reliable internet connections make it easier for people to stream content online. The doubling of internet users over the past six years indicates a broader audience base for digital content

providers. As more people gain access to the internet, the potential market for online streaming services expands. The rise in the number of internet users who prefer digital payments suggests a shift towards online transactions, including payments for subscription-based streaming services. This ease of payment may encourage more users to subscribe to such services. International OTT leaders like Netflix, Disney+, and Prime Video offering specially selected prices in India, which are significantly lower (70% - 90% less) than their prices in the USA, is likely a strong incentive for Indian consumers. Lower subscription costs make these services more accessible to a broader audience. A significant increase in investment in Indian content implies that there is a growing demand for locally produced and culturally relevant content. This investment likely includes the creation of original Indian content, which can attract and retain subscribers. OTT platforms have made significant advancements in terms of streaming quality, often offering content in high definition (HD) and even 4K resolution with Dolby Atmos sound. This high-quality streaming experience can be a major draw for viewers who want to enjoy movies and shows with the best possible audio and video quality. OTT platforms provide the convenience of watching content anytime, anywhere, on a variety of devices such as smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, and laptops. Viewers can pause, rewind, or fast forward content, which adds to the convenience factor. OTT platforms have a vast library of content, including movies, TV shows, documentaries, and original programming. The ability to access a wide range of content genres and the availability of exclusive shows and movies make OTT platforms attractive to a diverse audience.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic forced people to spend more time at home, leading to a surge in demand for digital entertainment. With movie theatres closed and traditional TV schedules disrupted, consumers turned to OTT platforms for on-demand content. OTT platforms offer a wide range of content that can be streamed on various devices, including smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, and laptops. This convenience and flexibility have attracted a diverse audience, from younger viewers to older demographics. The gradual shift toward internet-only use for

entertainment has been driven by the proliferation of high-speed internet access and the convenience of streaming. Traditional cable and IPTV services are facing increased competition from OTT platforms. As more people cut the cord on traditional cable TV or never subscribe to it in the first place, advertisers have recognized the importance of reaching these audiences through OTT services. OTT services often have a global presence, making it possible for advertisers to reach international audiences with their campaigns. The ubiquity of smartphones and tablets has allowed people to watch their favourite shows and movies on the go. Whether during a commute, waiting in line, or relaxing at home, mobile devices have become primary screens for content consumption. The rise of streaming platforms has also provided opportunities for a wider range of content creators, including independent filmmakers and niche genres, to reach global audiences. This has led to increased diversity and creativity in the content available. Although the traditional family gathering around the TV may be less common, the social aspect of television hasn't disappeared entirely. People often discuss and recommend shows or movies to friends and family, creating new forms of shared experiences.

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Independent Content Creation - Empowering Filmmakers and Artists in OTT Era

Samarpita De and Pramiti Roy

ABSTRACT

The advent of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms has rekindled and revolutionized the entertainment industry, providing a new parameter and frontier for content creators and filmmakers. This abstract explores the transformative impact of independent content creation in the OTT era, focusing light on how this digital revolution has empowered filmmakers and artists with much élan and entity like never before.

In the past, traditional film and television production was marked by high entry barriers and censorship limiting the opportunities for independent filmmakers to proper showcase their talent. However, the rise of OTT platforms has dismantled these barriers, creating a level playing field for both established studios and emerging talent. Independent filmmakers now have the array of opportunities to procure their content directly, infusing visual empowerment to global audiences, unencumbered by the constraints of traditional distribution channels.

This abstract will delve into these themes, drawing on real-world examples and case studies to illustrate how independent content creators have leveraged OTT platforms to disrupt the traditional entertainment industry. By embracing the possibilities of the OTT era, independent filmmakers have not only found their voice but have also enriched the global entertainment landscape with fresh and diverse narratives. This transformation underscores the profound impact of OTT platforms in empowering and elevating the voices of independent filmmakers, offering a glimpse into the future of the entertainment industry.

INTRODUCTION

The Beginning of OTT Platforms: Owing to its immense flexibility and versatile content creation and immense liberty to showcase its content directly to audience using the bliss of internet has captivated millions of eyeballs, gaining popularity in contemporary era. This has resulted into consolidation of massive diverse audience based from traditional cable, cinema hall to the over the top platform.

Providing Opportunities to Independent Creators: OTT platform is a versatile arena where it cordially welcome array of divergent contents through the length and width of the globe thus creating opportunity to Independent filmmakers so that they can showcase their innate talent through a level of playing field thus this give rise to eco system of Independent Content Creators**.**

Providing Freedom to innovate through path breaking content: Through OTT platform Independent Filmmakers can nurture and invading different genres format content story technique process without the barrier of censorship interference. Moreover it is the OTT platform which values more to creativity and innovation rather than restricting the ideas and talent in name of arbitrary censorship. This has resulted into path breaking critically acclaimed contents viable to target audiences.

Initiating Globalization and Financial cause: OTT platforms have initiated the notion of "Globalization" where independent filmmakers can easily connected to global audiences thus broadening the reach of their content for cultural exchange and cross border collaboration. Moreover the OTT have provided a viable platform of extracting financial benefits, licensing agreements, revenue sharing, direct distribution and funding for emerging new talents of independent filmmakers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:-

- How OTT platform initiated economic viability of Independent Filmmaking procedure to easy accessibility of target audiences towards nurturing different apps of OTT.
- OTT has procured the emerging trends in nurturing different genres and storytelling techniques.

- To estimate how the OTT platforms has influenced Independent Filmmaking landscape in India from production to audience reach.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:-

- What is the contribution of OTT platforms in supporting and promoting their innate creative works to quench the thirst of movie lovers?
- Can you elucidate the pattern of filmmaking of OTT arena in ompare to traditional film distribution channel?
- How does OTT era in India has encouraged the process of storytelling and theme oriented choices of Independent Filmmakers?
- How does OTT platform has procured its impact on creative independence of new filmmakers in India?
- How has Covid-19 pandemic affected the production and distribution of Independent content on OTT platforms in India?
- How does OTT platform goes for ethical responsibilities to Independent Filmmakers in producing and showcasing their content for OTT audience in India?

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- **Standardisation of Freedom of Speech and Expression of the OTT Grandstand** - By Kumar Achintya

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Definition and characteristics of Independent Filmmaking:-

Independent Filmmakers get more independence and freedom in portraying their master talents and content message in compare to those working in traditional media. Somehow, while nurturing the topic I have accumulated certain characteristics of Independent Filmmaking process.

- Independent Filmmakers can nurture and explore certain niche topics which are unexplored before.
- Independent Filmmakers have their own style of storytelling and they avoid the commercial constraints imposed by major studios.
- Independent Filmmakers also get different mixture of sources to fund their project like crowd funding, grants, investments etc.
- Independent Filmmakers also find out alternative distribution of their movie release like film festivals, OTT platform or marketed directly to audiences.
- They are motivated by deep passion of storytelling and go on high into investing their time and energy for the project even the projects sometimes failed to guarantee financial profits.

Historical context of independent cinema in India:-

Independent cinema in India has a rich and diverse history that has evolved over the decades. The development of independent cinema in India is closely linked to the broader socio-political and cultural context of the country. Here's a brief overview of the historical context of independent cinema in India:

Early Beginnings (1950s – 1960s):- Independent cinema in India can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s when filmmakers like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, and Mrinal Sen emerged. They were part of the parallel cinema movement and focused on telling realistic and socially relevant stories. Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali" (1955) is considered a landmark film in this era, which garnered international acclaim.

New Wave Cinema (1970s – 1980s):- The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of the New Wave cinema movement in India. Filmmakers like Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalani, and Adoor Gopalakrishnan explored new narrative styles and themes. These films often tackled issues such as rural life, social inequality, and the human condition.

Parallel Cinema (1970s – 1990s):- Parallel cinema continued to thrive during this period, with directors like Aparna Sen, Goutam Ghose, and Mani Kaul contributing significantly. These filmmakers challenged the dominance of mainstream Bollywood cinema and aimed to create a more artistic and realistic form of storytelling.

Regional Independent Cinema:- India's vast and diverse cultural landscape also gave rise to regional independent cinema movements. In states like Kerala, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra, filmmakers produced works in their regional languages that explored local issues and cultures. The Malayalam film industry, for instance, is known for its realistic and socially relevant films.

Global Recognition (1990s – 2000s):- Indian independent cinema gained international recognition in the 1990s and 2000s, with directors like Deepa Mehta ("Fire," "Earth") and Mira Nair ("Salaam Bombay!," "Monsoon Wedding") finding success on the global stage. These filmmakers often dealt with themes that resonated with both Indian and international audiences.

Digital Revolution (2000s – Present):- The advent of digital technology in filmmaking democratized the medium. Independent filmmakers found it more affordable and accessible to create and distribute their work. This era also witnessed the emergence of young, indie directors like Anurag Kashyap, Dibakar Banerjee, and Zoya Akhtar, who challenged traditional storytelling norms.

Film Festivals and Platforms:- Indian independent films started gaining recognition at international film festivals like Cannes, Berlin, and Sundance. Additionally, the growth of streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ Hotstar has provided a platform for independent filmmakers to showcase their work to a global audience.

Diversity of Themes:- Independent cinema in India has diversified its themes, addressing issues like LGBTQ+ rights, environmental concerns, and women's empowerment. Films like "Aligarh," "Tumhari Sulu," and "Gully Boy" are examples of independent films that tackle contemporary social issues.

Hybrid Films and Experimental Styles:- Some contemporary Indian filmmakers have embraced hybrid forms and experimental storytelling, blurring the lines between fiction and documentary. Filmmakers like Ritesh Batra ("The Lunchbox") and Chaitanya Tamhane ("Court") have garnered international acclaim for their unique approaches.

Independent cinema in India continues to evolve, with new voices, styles, and narratives emerging regularly. It plays a crucial role in offering alternative perspectives and addressing societal issues while contributing to the rich tapestry of Indian cinema.

The Role of OTT platforms in promoting Independent Content:-

Over the years OTT platforms contributed significant role in promoting Independent content and into the entertainment industry. Moreover it is a OTT platform that provided important platform for uprising independent content creator who can showcase their content and social message without inhibition of censorship and stringent ethical norm.

Some Important aspects while nurturing the topic are:-

- OTT have provided important platform for the filmmakers to showcase their work globally getting the global audience unlike traditional distribution channel which require expensive marketing and distribution network.
- It is very easy for the OTT platform to collect extensive data on viewer preferences and behaviour thus helping the independent filmmakers to define and redefine their marketing strategies.
- One of the important aspect, OTT platforms also helped independent filmmakers to gain recognition at Film Festivals, thus exposing through streaming platforms that can be broader audience.

- Unlike traditional media OTT platforms profit from "long-tail" content, which may not have immediate blockbuster hit but can generate steady income over time.
- Some OTT platforms, like youtube, empower individual to independently share their content with low budget that can ultimately gain visibility and support.

DATA ANALYSIS

Interview 1

Mr. Arjun Dutta

Director of Guldasta and Srimati, Bengali Films, who happened to working with projects that soon to be release in OTT platforms.

1. What is the contribution of OTT platforms in supporting and promoting their innate creative works to quench the thirst of movie lovers?

Reply:- Well, OTT platforms have helped immensely independent filmmakers to promote and showcase the talents, social message and social output to heterogeneous dynamic audience.

2. Can you elucidate the pattern of filmmaking of OTT arena in compare to traditional film distribution channel?

Reply:- In contemporary era filmmaking in OTT platform is more flexible and easily palatable for a large and vast audience in compare to traditional media which has limited area of filmmakers to showcase their talent owing to ethical ground and censorship.

3. How does OTT era in India has encouraged the process of storytelling and theme oriented choices of Independent Filmmakers?

Reply:- OTT platforms have provided a platform for a wide range of content that may not have found a place in traditional cinema due to its niche or unconventional nature. Independent filmmakers have seized this opportunity to explore diverse themes, narratives, and genres.

4. How does OTT platform has procured its impact on creative independence of new filmmakers in India?

Reply:- We as film directors have always preferred OTT platforms rather than traditional distribution system to showcase our point of view, interpretation through our cinematic message.

5. How has Covid-19 pandemic affected the production and distribution of Independent content on OTT platforms in India?

Reply:- During shutdown period when major traditional screens close down for the pandemic it is the OTT platform that emerged as raging entertainment window both for the audiences and independent content creators.

6. How does OTT platform goes for ethical responsibilities to Independent Filmmakers in producing and showcasing their content for OTT audience in India?

Reply:- OTT platforms may provide legal support and guidance to independent filmmakers, especially when dealing with issues related to copyright, licensing, and contracts.

Interview 2

PIYALI DAS

Freelance Entertainment Journalist

Owner of popular youtube channel "ADDAZONE PIYALI"

1. What is the contribution of OTT platforms in supporting and promoting their innate creative works to quench the thirst of movie lovers?

Reply:- OTT platform is now blooming industry in contemporary entertainment industry which has provided excellent opportunity for the directors, artists and cinematographer to get involve into the new industry with good financial profit. Moreover, efficient and creative person also got enough sky space to showcase their talents.

2. Can you elucidate the pattern of filmmaking of OTT arena in compare to traditional film distribution channel?

Reply:- There is no methodical difference into filmmaking between traditional media and OTT platform in terms of technological provision. But I personally feel traditional media needs time consuming, distribution dependent long process to complete their project in compare to OTT platform.

3. How does OTT era in India has encouraged the process of storytelling and theme oriented choices of Independent Filmmakers?

Reply:- OTT platform has provided independent filmmakers to select their topic of storytelling in flexible pattern, because OTT platform has provided unhindered door and window to open up on various topic which may not be nurtured earlier. In my experience every themes of each and every episode requires distinct style of storytelling. Thus, this has made OTT platform a popular and preferred media.

4. How does OTT platform has procured its impact on creative independence of new filmmakers in India?

Reply:- As already told you OTT platform in India has always influenced and encouraged creative minded independent creator in every length and width.

5. How has Covid-19 pandemic affected the production and distribution of Independent content on OTT platforms in India?

Reply:- During pandemic covid 19 Indian movie industry went to doldrums then it is the OTT which provided financial support to entertainment related personalities to earning their bread and butter.

6. How does OTT platform goes for ethical responsibilities to Independent Filmmakers in producing and showcasing their content for OTT audience in India?

Reply:- Independent Filmmaker can select their own diversify content, but it has to keep in mind that OTT platforms are giving enough independence to creator to showcase sex and violence in order to grab TRP. This has popularised OTT platform among teenagers to adult people who can easily go through unnecessary sexualities through OTT. So personally I feel as responsible citizen of India it is primary responsibility of Independent Filmmakers to do their work ethically since it may deliver wrong social message to many.

SURVEY:-

For the seminar topic I have conducted survey of 25 people who are using OTT platforms as their means of entertainment.

• Do you feel the OTT platforms contribute in supporting and promoting their innate creative works to quench the thirst of movie lovers?

• Do you feel the pattern of filmmaking of OTT arena is better in compare to traditional film distribution channel?

3. Do you feel OTT era in India has encouraged the process of storytelling and theme oriented choices of Independent Filmmakers?

• Do you feel OTT platform has procured its impact on creative independence of new filmmakers in India?

• Do you feel Covid-19 pandemic affected the production and distribution of Independent content on OTT platforms in India?

• Do you feel OTT platform goes for ethical responsibilities to Independent Filmmakers in producing and showcasing their content for OTT audience in India?

INTERVIEW AND SURVEY ANALYSIS

From survey and interview answers it can be analysed and elucidated Independent Filmmakers in OTT era are exposed to vehement opportunities into this digital streaming era. OTT platforms explores in genre popularity and often determine which specific genre are more appealing to OTT audiences, offering cost effective options for independent filmmakers.

Through OTT platform audience behaviour can be monitored easily through viewership metric and viewing devices through smart phone, laptop, tablet etc.

During pandemic era it is the OTT platform which provided financial stability to Independent Content Creators earning them both fame and money.

Growth of Over the Top (OTT) Video Services: A Possible Threat to Traditional Pay Television Services

Moumita Chakraborty

ABSTRACT

Over-the-Top (OTT) video platforms, were formerly seen as a luxury is today a commodity now. In India, there is an increasingly growing number of consumers adapting to it. Television content is no longer only displayed on conventional television screens. The providers of television material are vying for viewers' viewing time, after digitalization of media and the advent of more displays into our life, and quicker network technology. This evolution brings new kinds of services which is very much potential to change the current television market. Today, in OTT platforms long with various series' big budget movies are equally getting released. During COVID-19, all the movies theatres were close, but to run the industry and earn revenue, they released many big movies in OTT platform which was indeed a success as people were watching them sitting back at the comfort of their home. Hence, digital media is replacing traditional television viewership and advertising in the same way that smartphones have replaced classic radios in every house. This paper aims to analyse how the top over-the-top (OTT) platform is growing over the time and becoming a preferred source of entertainment amongst young consumers over traditional Pay TV service (Cable TV/ DTH) in India and how it is becoming a threat to the TV Service. This article aims to evaluate prior studies on online television viewing, digital media consumption patterns, findings of various journals, and also do a qualitative research on people residing in Kolkata, Barasat, and provide insights on the future of OTT TV and its impact on the current television ecosystem.

Key-words: over-the-top television, Traditional television, Digital Media, consumer, Digitalization, Internet.

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to visual presentation, digital media has proven to be a significant game changer (Gershon, Richard A., 2016). People are switching from viewing television, their traditional medium, to new media. Since the introduction of Over the Top services and online videos, the entertainment sector is in disarray. Changes are inescapable whenever a new technology enters a given industry. The goals we want to attain and how we want to reach them are both impacted by new technologies. The entertainment sector is not an exception to the tectonic shifts brought about by broadband and digital technologies. Movies and television programs that are directly delivered to a digital user without the usage of cable or satellite television are referred to as over the top services. According to the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC, 2013), an online provider of video content over the internet is known as an OTT. The media and entertainment sector, the education and training sector, the health and fitness sector, the IT and telecom sector, the e-commerce sector, and others all make up the enormous market for over-the-top services. Due to the rise in online video viewers, the media and entertainment sector has become the most important sector in the Over the Top market. The number of digital subscriptions has increased, and revenues from 2018 have doubled. In 2019, digital media overtook filmed entertainment to become the third-largest section of the M&E market. The traditional entertainment sector has been greatly influenced by the recent internet and entertainment scandal. For ease and account sharing, OTT players offer a variety of accounts and a number of viewers per subscription. With the use of sachet packs, OTT platforms have been able to offer a variety of access ranging a few days to weeks. The lockdown imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic not only hurt businesses and the economy, but it also changed people's behavioural habits. Due to additional advantages such on-demand services and ease of access, video streaming services have replaced traditional television and movie theatres as the preferred form of entertainment

following a significant change in consumer social activities. There will likely be a rapid increase in the number of people using pay-per-view and video streaming services in nations like China and India. The way that entertainment is consumed is evolving, and this has an impact on how content is distributed as well as how it is produced. With some tweaks and modifications, television programming stayed largely unchanged for almost 20 years. The content itself has altered as a result of digital disruption, in addition to the way that material is delivered.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the factors influencing the use of OTT platforms
- To recognize popular OTT platforms & content preference of viewers in OTT platforms
- To make a study on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the OTT platforms.
- Identify the challenges for traditional television industry

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. This study is limited to 100 respondents. As a result, conclusions and recommendations based on the study cannot be generalized to the entire population.
2. The Study also restricts itself to the geographical area of Barasat, Kolkata.
3. The time constrains also is a limitation of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Martin Peitz and Tommaso Valletti (2015) in their study demonstrated the connection between media services, communication, and internet access. They also developed a connection between infrastructure products and content services that was complementary.

The factors influencing the adoption of OTT services have not been the subject of many researches. Sujata et al. (2015) have investigated OTT services and the many elements that influence user behaviour.

The availability of content and ease are the main points made. The majority of factors influencing the expansion of OTT have been explored by Sujata et al, however they have not discussed how this will affect Pay TV or traditional TV.

Baccarne, B., Evens, T. & Schuurman, D. (2013), in their paper, The television struggle: an assessment of over-the-top television evolutions in a cable dominant market" mentioned the loss of traditional television's monopoly due to the introduction of digitalization and the addition of more screens in our lives. He discovered a number of variables in his research that contribute to the success of OTT TV, including pricing, video quality, simplicity of use, tailored channel offerings, interaction, and flexibility.

Leung and Chen 2017 applied the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and explain the intentions of consumers in adopting mobile television and their interest in content offered. The lack of channels, mobile viewing habits, and content interest were all found to have a substantial impact on customers' intents to use mobile TV services. Lifestyle choices had a considerable impact on consumers' content interest even if they did not appear to be a significant predictor of behavioural intention.

Choy Har Wong, Garry wei-han tan, Zeck-Soon and Keng Boon Out (2015) investigates the user-centred aspects of performance expectations and technology readiness for mobile TV uptake. Their research reveals a relationship between performance expectancy and behavioural intention to use new technology.

Ferguson and Perse, directly compared the two media—the internet and television—and proposed that the internet would eventually succeed television as a useful substitute. They recommended that any analysis of consumer adoption of new media start with how the audience views the new media—whether they see it as a useful substitute for current media or not. The decision to use a new medium is based on how well it can achieve the specific goals of an existing medium. If the new medium can produce better outcomes, it will start to function as a replacement.

Meghan McAdams 2019, in her study about OTT- Understanding the Modern Media Streaming Landscap, States that OTT apps unmistakably represent India's future. The main finding of her study was that 50% of OTT consumers are suffering from "subscription fatigue" as a result of interacting across numerous platforms. It was also noted that the development of expansive platforms like Disney Plus may have an impact on the chances for more specialized small-scale enterprises.

The reports of PwC India predicted a significant market opportunity for OTT platforms in India. However, the paper notes that content price may be a barrier to growth and advises a changed policy to support the OTT sector in India. The abundance and high quality of content available on these platforms, competitive internet data plans offered by Indian telecom service providers, and the dynamics of the global media industry, which have a significant impact on the economic and policy issues of OTT service providers, are all factors that the literature review suggests are contributing to the growing popularity of OTT. Thus, usage of OTT platforms is rapidly increasing, particularly among young people.

UNDERSTANDING OTT AND ITS EVOLUTION

Over the top (OTT) describes video content that is delivered over a high-speed Internet connection as opposed to a cable or satellite provider. The term "cord cutter" is frequently used to describe viewers who object to paying for bundles of content. These content providers are referred to as OTT. platforms. Popular OTT services in India include **Netflix, Amazon Prime**, **Disney+Hotstar**, **HBO Now**, **Sonyliv**, **Zee5, Voot, Hulu, ErosNow**, and more.

In 2008, Reliance Entertainment's **BIGFlix** became the first organized OTT platform in India. **nexGTv**, the first app to live stream Indian Premier League matches on smartphones, was introduced by **Digivive** in 2010 and was the country's first over-the-top mobile application. It continued to do so in 2013 and 2014. In 2012, Eros International created **ErosNow**, which quickly gained popularity. In January 2016, the American streaming provider Netflix entered India. Additionally, it established a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) and began commissioning content. In 2016, Amazon Prime Video was introduced. In February

2018, Amazon India introduced Amazon Prime Music. After fifteen months of preparation, Star India finally unveiled **Hotstar** on February 11, 2015, just in time for the 2015 Indian Premier League. A membership tier for international material and the potential for premium sports content was introduced by **Hotstar** in April 2016. **Voot** was introduced in march 2016 by Viacom 18's digital divisions. **Hoichoi** is the country of India's first specialized regional-language OTT service. It debuted in 2017 with 30 new episodes, 12 original Bengali films, and content dubbed from English, Hindi, and Arabic. It has now acquired about 200 Bengali films. Sun TV Network's regional OTT service, **Sun NXT**, debuted in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Bengali, and Kannada in June 2017.

IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON OTT PLATFORM

Increase in subscriptions: Due to limitations and lockdowns, more people stayed at home. As a result, OTT platforms saw a spike in subscriptions and watchers as people looked for entertainment and diversion during the pandemic. OTT services have taken over as the main source of new content since cinema theatres have stayed shuttered and television production has been impacted. On these platforms, more people watched more movies, TV shows, web series, and other types of entertainment. Release of Films on OTT: Several directors choose to release their films directly on OTT platforms because of the uncertainties surrounding theatre releases during the pandemic. This pattern, often referred to as "direct-to-digital" or "OTT-first" releases, grew in popularity and introduced a new method of film distribution. Budget Shift: As a result of the pandemic's impact on traditional advertising channels, businesses transferred their advertising spending to digital platforms, especially OTT. OTT platforms saw a rise in ad income as a result. Boom in Regional Content: As people examined content in their own languages as a result of the epidemic, there was an increase in people's appreciation for regional content. This desire was met by OTT platforms by offering a wide range of regional content. Innovative Marketing Techniques: To draw and keep users during the pandemic, OTT platforms used novel marketing techniques. Some of the strategies explored were free trials, bundled subscriptions with telecom providers, and exclusive content offerings. Impact on the Film sector: Discussions and arguments

concerning the future of the movie theatre sector have been spurred by the move of high-budget movies to OTT platforms. While some directors favoured online-only releases, others stayed devoted to the conventional theatre paradigm. Global Expansion: The pandemic sped up Indian OTT platforms' international growth. These platforms looked into foreign markets in order to attract a wider audience because they had a captive audience at home.

Reasons for growth of OTT platforms:

- Through the available OTT apps, the OTT platforms are quickly accessible.The OTT apps have overtaken social networking apps like Facebook and messaging apps like WhatsApp as the most downloaded app categories. Between 2017 and 2022, the Indian entertainment and media sector will have an excess growth of 46%, with the streaming market accounting for the majority of that development.
- Rising Internet and broadband penetration, reducing data costs, the spread of internet-enabled mobile phones, content personalisation, and pricing are further important factors causing OTT platforms to grow. There were 692.0 million internet users in India in the start to 2023.
- The accessibility of devices capable of viewing online video was crucial for the consumption of OTT services. In India, the smartphone is the most popular device for streaming videos. According to Gevers' 2019 figures, 362 million hours were spent on OTT platforms by roughly 144 million users in February.
- The availability of tailored content on OTT platforms is a significant element in their increased appeal. According to IHS Markit research, 76% of respondents said that the availability of localised content and 74% said that the caliber of dubbing and subtitles of foreign content were the important deciding factors.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on primary data collection and secondary data sources. The research study is based on interview conducted in Barasat,

Kolkata. About 100 respondents are selected through simple random sampling technique. The data is collected through a structured interview questionnaire. The variables of study are age, sex, marital status, occupation, exposure to mass media like tv, mobile phone, internet, computer etc.

Demographic study of the sample

Gender of respondents

Gender	Male	Female
No of respondents	45	55
% of respondents	45%	55%
Total respondents	100	100%

Age of respondents

Age	18-25	25-55	55 and above
No of respondents	32	53	15
% of respondents	32%	53%	15%

Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Married	Unmarried	Widow
no of respondents	65	28	7
% of respondents	65%	28%	7%

Employment / occupation of respondents

Occupation	Employed	Business	Not working
No of respondents	42	35	23
% of respondents	42%	35%	23%

DISCUSSION

The researcher, from the study has found that, series or movies that are released in OTT platform is viewed more than any other means be it Traditional Television or Movie Theatre. There is a distinct growth in the usage of OTT platforms which started increasing after COVID-19

outbreak. The study shows that women watches series on OTT platform, more then male, also OTT is viewed by the people in the age group of 25-55 year, where 65% is married and employed as well. From the interview of the respondents it is found that out of 100 samples, 85% of them have OTT subscriptions in their phone even if it is only one OTT platform. Most popular OTT platforms for the respondents are Hoichoi, Hotstar, Amazon prime, and Sony live. According to the respondents, series that they mostly liked in Bengali OTT platform are Srikanto, Byomkesh, Indubala Bhaater Hotel, Gora, Dakghor etc, in HOICHOI, From other OTT platforms, most liked series are Aarya, The family man, Farzi, Four more shots, Gullak, Scam 1992 etc. Be it romance, thriller, comedy, Action, they have a wide range of contents to choose from. From the study it has been observed that people spend at last two hours per day to watch OTT series and movies. The respondents have asserted that during the lockdown period of COVID -19 many new series and movies were being released in the OTT platforms and as they were not able to go outside, they subscribed a number of OTT platforms for entertainment purpose. They also said that even though now movie halls are open still they find it convenient to watch those movies in the comfort of their home until they make plans to watch a movie with friends outside. Therefore, they wait patiently for the movie to get released in their subscribed OTT platforms to watch with comfort. The main factors that inspire them to go for OTT platform, are, fresh content, big Actors and Actresses working along with other tv actors for series that never happened in traditional television daily soaps, All episodes are released in one day, which gives them option to complete a series in one night without a break. According to the respondents, they also like traditional television, as they have some favourite TV shows for years that is continuing. But ever since, new movies and series are released in the OTT platforms, the willingness of watching traditional television program is taking a back seat. The study also finds that OTT platform is becoming a big challenge to the traditional television, as the content, convenience and newness that a series of OTT platform is able to provide to its audience is somewhere not surfacing in the daily soaps of television.

SUGGESTION

- The requirement for the bulk of users who occasionally use OTT platforms will be met by the introduction of better and more efficient subscription options.
- The gathering of critical customer feedback will help to maintain service excellence and keep subscribers by strengthening the bond between the streaming platform and its users.
- The OTT platforms should produce advertising, which should be targeted to the viewer's interests and have the least potential negative influence on the viewing experience.
- Consumers should have the option to choose their desired language and content, as well as their preferred language.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that OTT platforms have given a touch competition to the traditional television medium and have impacted on its existence amongst the young audience. Along with the advent of OTT Platform, the entertainment industry has seen a visible change in terms of content and viewing preference of the audience. Along with series, big shot movies are also being released on OTT platform other than movie theatres. In fact, directors are making movies only for OTT release these days. Big stars, who were only seen in movies are also working in series for OTT platform these days. It is also observed that many bold original contents are also shown in OTT platforms. OTT gives option to watch a programme or a movie at any time 24*7, viewers no longer have to miss out their favourite show. It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic's entrance has benefited OTT platforms, as evidenced by the rise in young usage and OTT's status as the preferred medium. The most popular OTT material among young people is movies and web series, which they favour since it is available and uncensored original content. The most popular OTT services are Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+Hotstar, and Hoichoi because they provide their users with the greatest quality content and most streamlined user experiences. The majority of existing OTT platform users are generally happy with their

user experience, and most consumers want to increase their OTT use in the future. Tradition television medium must come up with some newness to cope up with the audiences demand in case of easiness of usage.

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Questionnaire

- **Do you have subscription for OTT platforms?**
- **Which OTT platform do you watch the most?**
- **How many hours per day do you spend watching programs in OTT platform?**
- **Do you think after the lockdown period of COID-19, there is any change in the viewing pattern of Television programme?**
- **Have you watched all those series and movies that got released in OTT platform during COVID-19 lockdown?**
- **What type of content you prefer watching in OTT platform?**
- **Now, when movies are being released in big screens / movie theatres, do you go to the theatres or wait for it to get released in any OTT platform?**
- **What is the reason for the increase in the viewership of OTT platform?**
- **What are the main factors that inspires you to watch OTT platforms.**
- **Do you think traditional television is in a threat as people prefer watching shows in OTT platforms more?**

Redefining Motherhood: A Study of Rituparno Ghosh's *Unishe April*

Arnab Chatterjee

Abstract:

This paper seeks to explore how the notion traditional motherhood in patriarchy has been questioned and substantially subverted through the analysis of a Bengali movie, *Unishe April* that refuses to centre around the normative gender roles and explore the subjectivized selfhood of women. Popular movies usually idealise the patriarchal model of motherhood ready to sacrifice even her life for her family. Those who do not conform to the image of the sacrificing mother are viewed as monstrous mother. Most of the mainstream films discursively produce the image of a mother devoid of agency and selfhood. Since the \heyday of Indian nationalism, the worshipping of Mother India installed patriarchal values and tied the identity of Indian woman to the monolithic idea of being a mother and becoming a mother. The patriarchal ideology of nationalist discourse, to put into the words of Partha Chatterjee, projected 'woman' standing as a sign for 'nation', namely, the spiritual qualities of self-sacrifice, benevolence, devotion, religiosity, and son on" (Guha 2000: 257). This discourse of motherhood strategically deifies the woman once she performs the expected role of reproduction and gradually cancels out the idea of sexuality behind maternity. Jasodhara Bagchi (1990) in her analysis of the maternity of nineteenth century Bengal finds the glorification of motherhood as a problematic site. The film under discussion directed by Rituparno Ghosh foregrounds the conflict between the prescriptive normative femininity and independent women's subjective emotional self with a critical understanding of the ways the politics of patriarchy operate to promote the traditional motherhood and portray alternative motherhood. In this film motherhood is not a tool for

what Michael Foucault calls "the great confinement" of women and the mother refuses to become objects of exploitation. *Unishe April* shows how women as mothers cannot remain only care-givers and they have a right to live their own life. A woman has to negotiate with a number of identities and she cannot merely live within a formulaic structure of a virgin daughter, faithful wife and all giving mother. This film underscores the fact that a mother's body cannot be completely devoid of desire. The paper will focus on not merely the ways women have defied the accepted social codes but also the ways they have redefined motherhood.

Keywords: gender, patriarchy, motherhood, normative, alternative

Motherhood is understood and represented in patriarchy as not merely a biological process for procreation but a set of feelings to confine women within the domestic space through the socially modulated responsibilities of women as mothers. It is not merely a reproduction of a species but a set of social relations that subordinate women and render their status as care givers. The anatomical division of roles between the human male and human female underlines not merely the discriminatory sexual difference but leads to the sex-gender distinction where the primary importance is given to the male. Henrietta Moore, a feminist anthropologist argues: "Whatever cultural elaborations may exist in family forms and gender roles, [only] women everywhere give birth to children" (1988: 23). It is highly difficult to think about replacing maternal body with anything as the maternal as 'conceptual impasse' has been constructed as instinctually determined and intrinsically physiological (Stanton 1986: 177). Motherhood becomes a site for using the womb (with willingness/ unwillingness) for establishing the power the phallus, regulating sexuality and making sexual division of labour. The intervention of feminist theory on the patriarchal discourses surrounding motherhood demanding unconditional love, care and nurture has unearthed the façade of the glorification of motherhood under the veneer of exploitation and questioned the culturally constructed notion of motherhood. This paper takes up *Unishe April* as a case study to look at how within the heterosexual world Indian women can initiate a language for critiquing the socially defined monolithic idea of sacrificing mother. They do not

bypass motherhood taking recourse to contraception and abortion; they become mothers, subvert patriarchal assumptions and redefines motherhood by bringing out the emotional and psychological complexities and attempt to usher in changes to the complex signification of motherhood in the social and cultural structure. The rationale behind choosing *Unishe April* is not merely the ways it offers a radical critique of the patriarchal reification of motherhood but the ways it locates and attributes new meanings to become mother without capitulating to the ruling of patriarchy. It dismantles the patriarchal expectation of a healthy male child and subverts the mother-son relationship in the patriarchal matrix of mother-child by replacing it with mother-daughter relation.

In Brihadâranyaka Upanishad Adhaya IX, Brahamana IV the reason behind the creation of women is only associated with procreation: Prajâpati ("Lord of Creatures") said to himself: "Well let me make a firm basis for it" (semen). So He created her, He placed her below and worshipped her, therefore one should worship a woman by placing her below. He (Prajâpati) extended His organ that projects and with it he impregnated her. The genesis of women as mentioned here underlines not merely sexual difference but also renders women as passive receptacles of sperm. There is no space for the choice and agency of women in the processes of reproduction and the politics of subordination of women can be easily discernible. The *Manusmriti* emphatically projects that "woman was created for the exclusive purpose of giving birth, to men for the continuation of the line" (Bhattacharji, 2010, p. 57). It projects motherhood as the ultimate purpose of a woman's life and then teaches society to respect women as mothers : Verse 2.145 says, "The teacher is ten times greater than the tutor; the father is a hundred times greater than the teacher; but the mother is a thousand times greater than the father" (Olivelle, 2004, p.34). The glorification of motherhood in Indian culture can be traced back to the Hindu scripture. One's mother and motherland is superior to heaven (*Janani janmobhumischo sargadopi goriyosi*) is the mantra of worshipping mother. Sukumari Bhattacharji claims: "motherhood came to be increasingly glorified; it is an emotional and ideational compensation for the reality which in most cases is imposed upon her" (2010 p. 58). The glorification of motherhood is

strategically created by talking about *matri shakti* and worshipping female goddess like Durga, Kali and many other goddesses. But there is a huge discrepancy between the ways of worshipping and the ways mothers are treated in reality. As Bhattacharji rightly demonstrates: The Mother Goddesss discharges her functions without any pain, with divine delight, the human mother begins and ends her motherhood in pain… Her motherhood brings her some months of bliss when the infant is very young and totally dependent on her. But soon, rather too soon, this brief reprieve is over and the glory of motherhood fades slowly but surely (2010: 65).

In colonial Bengal the Mother Goddess is projected as the synecdochic representation of colonised India. But this projection is strongly couched in the orthodoxy of a Hindu Brahminical patriarchal order. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's clarion call of *Bande Matram* centres around this trope and the Swadeshi movement that took place in Bengal used the image of the Mother India. The struggle of the Indian nationalism was most often fought around the issue of 'Reforming Women' and in the colonial discourse women were used as crucial markers of cultural difference (Chatterjee: 1993). On the one hand the British colonial masters came with a lot of initiatives for the reformation of the position of women in India during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was followed by the 1874 Right to Property Act and the Age of Consent Bill of 1891 that changed the legal age for physical relation from 10 to 12 for girls. On the contrary, the Bengali nationalist project that attempted to interpellate the woman to a new subject position of Bhadramahila about which Malavika Sarkar writes: "enlightened yet domesticated, by nature loving and devoted to the family's well being, her emancipation was to be viewed within the context of a family's situation" (1981: 92). This Bharamahila is a potent signifier of grihalakshmi and the projected image of the nation is the powerful mother-godddess of the Hindus either Durga or Lakshmi. What is interesting to note is how the reproductive domain of women was seen as abstracted or even fetishized (Sarkar: 2011).

In India the ways discourses surrounding motherhood since the Hindu to present day media texts show maternity not merely as an experience of the mind and body but also as an institution (Rich: 1976).

Mainstream Tollywood movies catered towards the taste of the mass culture limn sacrifice as the defining criterion of motherhood. The image of an ideal good mother is perpetuated through the depiction of their life confined within the home and the hearth. She cooks for all the members of her family and takes her meal after serving all the members and she is either solely dependent on their husband or son. Mothers and wives are always portrayed wearing a sari as an "emblem of her chastity and goodness" (Dwyer & Patel 2002:87).The role played by Chhaya Devi as Suchitra Sen's mother in a highly popular Bengali movie called *Saptapadi* foregrounds the typical mother as her daughter knew her as her ayah. When the daughter comes to know that she is her mother and her father attempts to shoot her, the mother comes in front of her daughter to save her and dies. Sarah Hardy points out: "the idea of a good mother is deployed through material and discursive spaces in order to mobilize subjectivities that are socially adapted and useful" (2005:16). The depiction of the mother figure here fully conforms to the patriarchal expectation as the good mothers usually serve their sons or daughters as ayahs and their voice can hardly be heard. What is discernible is their silent presence and unpaid labour and sacrifice of life both literally and metaphorically. Patricia Uberoi (1990) has demonstrated that by depicting women in this way the media-scape naturalises dominant gendered roles and behaviour and therefore any attempt for the exploration of female subjectivity is made redundant.

Popular culture thrives on a number of social and cultural stereotypes that bolsters the basic premise of patriarchy and therefore in popular movies made for a fairly backward audience mothers are generally divided as good mothers and bad mothers

The idealized version of motherhood firmly rooted in patriarchal mindset has been disseminated and discursively produced. Shoma Chatterji (2000) contends that the notion of a 'monstrous' or 'bad' mother is in many ways an alien concept in Indian society and restricted to the image of the step mothers. In terms of visual representation, Rosie Thomas states that one of the "tenacious rules" of commercial films is that it is "impossible to make a film in which the protagonists' real mother is villainous or semi-villainous" (Thomas 1995: 164). It is pertinent

to note that the depiction of bad mothers is not completely absent from the domain of commercial movies though none of them can think of dashing the brain of a sucking baby on the wall like William Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth or Medea. Two Popular Bengali movies like *Maya Mamata* (1993) and *Beadap* (1996) provide a depiction of bad mother. In Maya Mamata Mamata's mother is a social worker and she does not provide care and nurture to her daughter. When she wins a trophy for delivering lecture on motherhood and brings it back home, her ayah tells her that trophy will be useful for preserving the tears of her own daughter. In Beadap a divorced parents reject the responsibilities of a son and he becomes a decoit. This movie contradictions Thomas's opinion as here the protagonist's mother is really villainous. What is interesting to note is how both the parents refuse to take care of their son and only the mother is shown as 'bad' and punished at the end of the play for her deeds. It seems a kind of a cautionary tale with a clear message of how the bad mothers face comeuppance. Though it is possible to locate bad mothers in mainstream Bengali films, the modes of representation are strongly embedded within the intricate structures of patriarchy.

Though popular culture of film industry usually feeds on the gender stereotypes, all popular movies do not always gravitate towards cementing the polarities of the masculine and the feminine and question the gendered stereotypes. In *Uttar Falguni* (1963) an empowered courtesan is shown to kill her husband so that her daughter does not face social stigma. Tollywood had begun to talk about empowered women in 1963 through the star figure like Suchitra Sen. Though women empowerment is shown on screen, it again operated only for performing the role of the 'good' mother. In the same year Satyajit Roy made *Mahanagar* in the light of the liberal feminist thought where a woman breaks the traditional *griho Lakshmi* image of Indian middle class family and begins her career as a salesgirl. Strong female leads make its way through films like *Parama*, *Chokher Bali*, *Shwet Pathorer Thala* and many others. The myriad aspects of motherhood have been explored by Ritwik Ghtak in his films like *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, *Bari Theke Plaie* or *Titas Akti Nadir Nam* and finally in *Kamal Gandhar*.

Rituparno Ghosh and Aparna Sen whose crusade against patriarchy is well known choose the form of parallel movie to question and critique the traditional notion of motherhood in Indian society and culture and to show alternative idea of motherhood. Motherhood becomes a site of contestation of patriarchy as the patriarchal projection of the institution is turned upside down.

In *Unishe April* Rituparno Ghosh clearly brings out a woman's agency and a life of her own embedded in the experience of motherhood. Ghosh demystifies the traditional patriarchal model of idealizing motherhood through the depiction of a life of a dancer who has mothered a daughter. For the ordinary Bengali audience who would love to revel in dance, melodrama and music this film released in 1994 and led by Aparna Sen and Debashree Roy turned their common what Raymond Williams calls 'structure of feelings' upside down. The film centres around the complicated relationship between a mother and a daughter and the narrative shuttles between the past and the present temporal zones to give access to its audience the complex recesses of the mind. Rituparno shows Sarojini a professional dancer as a non-conformist to the traditional stereotypical idea of motherhood. Her daughter Aditi in spite of becoming a doctor by profession has imbibed the patriarchal notion of the expected role of a mother and never supports the ambition of her mother. Having lost her father at the age of eight, Aditi tries to cling to her memories spent with her father and distances herself from her own mother whom she sees as a negligent mother who only concentrates on her career and steers clear of her duty as a mother. The problem that engulfs Aditi is her expectation to see her mother within the role of the doorkeeper of the Hindu patriarchal order. She wants the structure of a 'happy' family where happiness will be constituted at the sacrifice of the mother and the burial of her dreams as a woman. She does not seem to be happy with her mother's friendship with Somnath and want her perhaps to live with the memories of her dead husband, Manish with whom he spent an unhappy married life. Sarojini was not merely absent at the moment of the death of Manish; she does not even remember his death anniversary. The more she tries to erase Manish from her life through her career and friendship with Somnath, she finds

how he lives through his daughter. The first impression of an uncaring mother engrossed in stage, rehearsals, name and fame is broken when Sarojini slaps her daughter for attempting to commit suicide when her boyfriend Sudeep refused to marry her. She has internalized patriarchy to such a level that she stoops sidelining self-dignity thinking it is her duty to make the relationship work out. When Sudeep informs his mother won't allow him to marry a dancer's daughter, she completely breaks down. Sarojini knows how it is difficult to accept a female artist in a traditional Indian family and immediately asks her daughter if there would at all be any problem had she been an absentee Economics professor. Aditi clearly tells her that her mother's profession was never s problem for her. What made the distance is the lack of time of her mother for her upbringing. The conversation between Sarojini and Aditi at least provides a scope for Sarojini to tell how she tried to adjust and failed due to the dominant male ego of Manish. The strained relationship between the mother and daughter gains some kind of vigour and life as both of them cry in front of them and come forward for cooking in the kitchen without a knowledge of the things needed for cooking.

Though the discussion of motherhood in any analysis of *Unishe April* is focused on Sarojini, the traditional mother figure is present in the representation of Boya who becomes a shelter and solace for Aditi: "Boya, you are the home amidst all the chaos, today and forever". In an article published in the Telegraph Pooja Mitra writes "the first heart-wrenching moment for the little child happens as she is left alone in a house with a dead father, acquaintances, and mentions of her absent mother. Mithu, with all her insecurities, knows her Boya is around and she is not alone. The spontaneous seeking for her Boya and the subsequent whispering of her personal needs in her Boya's embrace is a relationship no less than that of mother and child". It is pertinent to note that this idea of care and nurture embodied through Boya is placed outside the reproductive domain of women. Though the scene is charged with emotion of a little daughter who is desperately trying to come to terms with the recent death of her father, Rituparno constructs a mother figure who can professionally work as a care giver and displaces the biological mother as the sole care giver.

The problematization of motherhood poses direct challenge to the newly ordered patriarchy. It draws our attention to the possibilities of women who can become mother and at the same time can create possible spaces for their own choice. *Unishe April* does not glorify the patriarchal mindset of expecting absolute sacrifice on the part of the mother. Rituparno delves deep into hidden recesses of the female mind and make them visible to the audience. It highlights how Indian mothers also need a personal life and has every right to make a career of her own. What is interesting to see is that there is no tendency in the film to cancel out sexuality from maternity. Sexuality is perhaps a sacrilegious term in the context of discussing the traditional notion of motherhood in India. Rituparno boldly asserts the role of Somanthbabu so well that at one point Aditi tells her mother that why she didn't marry Somanthbabu. Aditi's realisation underlines how a widow needs companionship after the passing away of her husband in spite of fulfilling her role as mother. She realises that the meaning of her mother's life does not lie in bringing up the child; she has a life of her own. An Indian mother must have the agency to exercise her free choices breaking the shackles of the grand narratives of sacrifices that she has to make even at the cost of her own life.

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The Impact of OTT Platforms on Traditional Broadcasting Affecting Different Ages of People: Challenges and Opportunities in Terms of Media

Shelly Sen

Abstract

This paper will highlight the impactfulness of the OTT platforms on traditional broadcasting, along with the challenges and opportunities. It will state how this OTT platform has affected the traditional form of media that is affecting the traditional form of broadcasting. Moreover, this research will also help to find out how this ott platforms affecting on the different ages of people. As to complete the research the researcher has used both methods i.e. primary and secondary analysis (quantitative and qualitative research). The primary research that has been done is based on the survey questionnaires of 51 respondents. On the other hand, the secondary research has been completed with the help of existing form of research that is available on the internet that is (journals, books, and websites). As in the present scenario, people have become much more digitalized, so it will show the factors that how people are becoming much more onto the OTT platforms. Similarly, everything has got pros and cons. This research also it will be state about what are the opportunities that are created in the traditional broadcasting media. Moreover, this study intends to add the body of knowledge on this subject area that can offer insights into this intricate and dynamic form of link in this research.

Keywords: OTT platforms, digital media, traditional broadcasting, entertainment, preferences, business, generation.

Introduction

The world of media has experienced a change because to the Over-The-Top (OTT) platform fire which has significantly altered the broadcasting industry. This research addresses the difficulties and possibilities that have resulted in the media industry for different age groups, from young children to elders, as a result of OTT platforms. Knowing the differing interests, rates of adoption, and technology hurdles among various age groupings become important as electronic streaming platforms transform how material is watched. The current study will throw light on the transformational influence of OTT platforms, giving perspectives on the evolving nature of the media sector and suggesting methods for standard broadcaster to successfully go through the changing landscape.

Background of the Study

OTT platforms are the most subjectable to experimentation as it give an unique and wide range of content. In contrast to this, it can be said that content on television is most accurate across different channels. It can be said that the viewers, have to limit themselves from watching it from specific from watching it from a specific genre. In the present scenario, OTT is said to be no longer an experiment or an internet geek's fantasy (Dahal, 2023). Today, in the present scenario TV is increasing in terms of delivered over the internet and also from the new form of media. Among the other platforms, Netflix has been around for so long. The revenue that results in over-the-top is expected to reach 158.84 billion dollars by the end of 2024.

Figure 1: Research Framework
(Source: Self created in MS Word)

However, in the industry of OTT, it is profitable as the technology is a dominant kind of channel for the consumption of video that is along with Pay TV and also with the traditional forms of services of broadcast. With this breakout of several forms of covid 19, the policies for blocking around this world. Many of the companies that are entering the space of the OTT, that is opening up new kind of possibilities for advertisers and also for buyers as well (Xu *et al.* 2023). This research will be based on the changes in the medium that is taking place in the modern world that will help the readers to know about the changes and how it is getting evolving along with their challenges and opportunities. It will also highlight the effects of different ages on people, and how people perceiving along with these changes.

Research Aim

The purpose of this research is that it will help to analyze those factors that can influence the decision to choose OTT services. However, it will help to find out how these OTT platforms are affecting traditional media with special attention on identifying the challenges and the opportunities with different ages of people that make the development of the OTT services presents for the media industry.

Research Objectives

- To understand the future scope and challenges of the OTT platforms considering the ages.
- To analyze the factor of elements of cost on the consumer contribution towards the OTT streaming of video.
- To keep and draw people of all ages, optimize the viewer's engagement across all devices.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors that can influence the rise in terms of the OTT Platforms over the traditional platforms?
2. What brings millennials to prefer the OTT platforms to the traditional form of seeing the platforms like Television?

3. What and how has the use of OTT platforms changed the viewing habits of individuals of all ages, particularly kids to seniors?

Research Rationale

In the present scenario, changes are taking place from time to time. The competition is also rising, one wants to compete with one another. The studying that will be based on discussing and exploring several OTT platforms that are standing out in the market among competing with one another. As per the report, people are completely inclined towards digital media rather than traditional media (Sahu *et al.* 2021). But there are still certain ages of people who still prefer traditional media rather than digital media. With these changes, and how people perceive those changes with several age groups it has been highlighted in this paper. However, it will also enhance the factors that are the opportunities and challenges that are created in the perspective of the media.

Research Significance

The analysis will state that the popularity of these OTT Platforms over this traditional form of media can be connected to factors like the ability to factors like the reviewing of the content at any point in time that can be accessed as the content of ad-free and whole pre-release of special shows. Mainly this paper will focus on understanding this new form of entertainment and how it can impact the viewers of different ages of people (Saini, 2020). Moreover, this research will help to find out the changes that are taking place in the present scenario, with the opportunities and challenges.

Literature Review

Empirical Study

The review of this empirical literature will produce a basic understanding of the impact of the OTT Platforms on traditional broadcasting understand the several aspects that are vital for the research and also form an understanding of the approaches and also methods that have been acquired by the researchers in research of the specific area. With the help of this research, the evaluative area of the research can be recognized.

According to Dahal, (2023)In this paper, it is covering about the OTT Platforms video platforms, which are examining a luxury today as a commodity. In India, it can be said there is an increasing amount of growing number of buyers, that are adopting it. Indian form of streaming services like "***Hotstar***" and "***Jio Cinema***" have increased their powerful base, and worldwide players like Netflix and Amazon Prime have usually grown in the market share of India. However, this paper will inspect the advantages and the future in terms of services streaming in India with an analytical form of research. To illustrate this, the several forms of OTT services, the factors for the growth, background for technology, content, and also the developments for the future that have been expected from the industry. To complete this paper, the secondary research has been used. With the help of models, the paper has been, illustrated on several OTT platforms.

According to Korbut, 2021, In this paper it is highlighting on the industry of telecom's, it can be said that revenue streams have been utilized by the sms, and voice but with an increase in the OTT services, which is the scenario that is been changing from time to time. This paper will focus on analyzing the move from the SMS and the voice of the era of the cellular form of communication to a data-focused business. In this paper, the researcher has used the ten years of the traffic of data, and count of SMS, and also the traffic for data and the particular form of revenue of operators of Telecom Of Nepal. This research will be inspecting the inspecting of how these user behaviors will shift from voice and SMS to the usage of data patterns that will be considered good insights. This change in the industry of telecom and also the impact of OTT services on the traditional form of streams of revenue. It will also highlight the need for operators for telecom to transform these changes by accepting new technologies and also providing new forms of innovative products to meet the producing needs of the client. However, this paper will give several strategies to be implemented by the operators for telecom in response to the loss of revenue because of the OTT services. However, to complete the research the researcher has used the qualitative form of data, to understand the impact of these OTT players on the industry of telecom, in Nepal.

According to Edwards, Sakellariou, & Anstey, 2020 In this paper, will point out how sports customers have acquired Over the Top services to point out how this consumes content for the sport. However, this is encouraged by the technology acceptance model (*TAM*), This research will allow the readers to understand the behavior of the consumer/ customers at the time of consuming the sports events and also the perceptions of the users towards the OTT services. To illustrate this, the researcher has used the primary method to complete the research. The researcher has received 352 responses for the survey to analyze the topic. As stated this research is the first research paper that will investigate how sports audiences have acquired the OTT services to absorb the content for sport and inspect the perceptions of audiences towards the usage of OTT. From the results, it has been found that the benefits of viewing commercials that are free and viewing this quality were the pivotal reasons for impacting the adoption of the OTT services.

According to Jaiswal, & More, 2022 In this paper, it is stating that the concept of the OTT is running under a controlled or uncontrolled form of environment that is obtaining increasing motivation that is across the world. However, it highlights the issue that is managed in the other form of government. With the help of traditional means of communication, that is the set of content that is being set free that raised the questions

Theories and Models

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory describes how societies adopt technological advances. OTT platforms may be thought of as developments that have been adopted by various ages at various times. The younger ones were fast to accept OTT, but older people took longer to do so.

It is advised that advertising strategies as well as material selections be adjusted to account for adoption rates of different age categories.

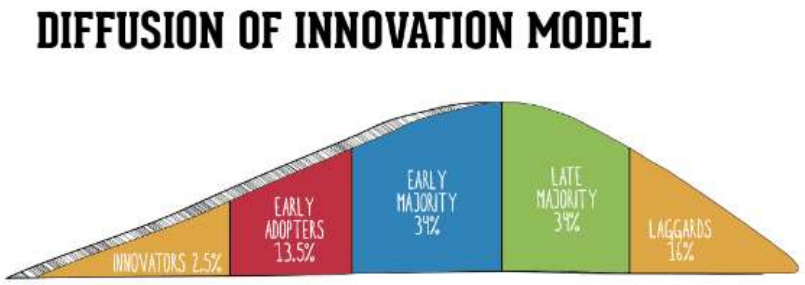

Figure 2: Diffusion of Innovation Model

(Source: https://www.smartinsights.com/)

Uses and Gratification Theory

Media users consciously select and utilize media for enjoyment, such as pleasure, knowledge, or interactions with others, according to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Sihombing.*et al.* 2021) OTT platforms have provided viewers more control over the material that choose, offering theman opportunity to choose content that suits their own specific needs and tastes.

It is suggested to understand the various motivations of different ages and offer information that satisfies their demands for enjoyment, learning, or social interaction.

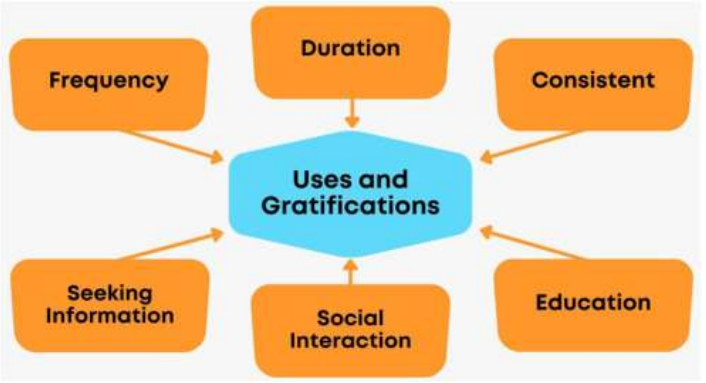

Figure 3: Uses and Gratification

(Source: https://ars.els-cdn.com/)

Audience Segmentation Models:

Media companies commonly use segmentation of viewer models that divide viewers into groups according to their psychological characteristics, media intake patterns, and demographics. OTT platforms offer useful information that makes precise categorization possible. As an example, elder consumers can like regular television programming whereas younger audiences would favor upon request or smartphone material.

Recommendation: Establishing materials and advertising approaches that are modified to the groups of different ages, improving the distribution of material according to every organization's preferences.

Model of a Two-Sided Market:

The idea of a "two-sided market" means an internet site that links several different user groups, usually both manufacturers and customers (Shin, *et al.* 2022). In the context of OTT, it links consumers with creators of content. All existing broadcast and fresh material providers to take advantage of OTT platforms have to understand the workings of this business.

To build a successful environment on OTT platforms, it is suggested to come up with tactics that maintain a balance between the needs of creators of content and consumers.

Figure 4: Two Sided Marketplace

(Source: https://images.ctfassets.net/)

Literature Gap

With having an adequate form of information that is beneficial for conducting this research, the empirical literature also provides certain forms of limitations and drawbacks in this paper that shall give a direction to this present research in filling up the gaps in this literature.

The major limitation that is being examined among the researchers is the ample responses shall provide a key direction for the present research in filling up the gaps in the studied literature.

Methodology

Method Outline

This research will outline a proper procedure, from planning to obtaining suitable results, depending upon the objectives that have been accepted. The phase of planning of the research will be associated with the control and recognition of several forms of goals to fulfill the objectives of the research. Depending upon the selection of these appropriate strategies, methods, and approaches the process of data collection is initiated (Kumari, 2020). Forms of this data collection are the most vital stage in which the findings and results are being acquired. After the data has been collected from the specific sources that are being recognized by the researcher, the suitable techniques that can be submitted at the most possibilities result while answering the questions of the research (Waghmare, 2022)Therefore, it can be said that the procedure of the research that will be involved in terms of the procedure of the research it will be connected with "*planning", "identification of the right methods", "approaches", "strategies", and "resources", "data collection", and the "analysis of data*" that is to obtain the results.

Research Philosophy

Research can depend upon the several philosophies of the researcher that will help as to planned objectives that are based upon the purpose and also the problem of the research. Recognizing the philosophy of the research will help to control the further form of aspects at the time of advancing the research like the approaches, strategies, or methods.

Several philosophies can be affected at the time of conducting the research like "***positivism"***, "***realism interpretivism"***, "***objectivism", "constructivism", and "pragmatism"***.

This particular research will follow the positivism philosophy given at the time of the research outcomes, that will be depended upon outcomes of this research that will depend upon the questions of the research that have advanced for the research and can provide quantitative explanations that are in regards to a clear-cut knowledge about this background of the research (Kathuria *et al.* 2021) This will highlight the fact that the research shall be dependent upon the quantifiable outcomes of the

Research Approach

Different kinds of approaches can be utilized at the time of the performing of this research and the conduct of this analysis of the data. The two most right forms of the approaches that can be followed by the deductive approach and the inductive approach (Chandavarkar *et al.* 2023) This deductive form of approach will be well-focused to get the results from a complete set of information. This choice is an appropriate approach to the research that is dependent upon the research philosophy. In this particular research, the positivism philosophy will highlight the need to take on the deductive approach for the analysis of the research (Sundaravel *et al.* 2020). This will highlight on the research the research that is being carried out on the actual information and also the understanding of the knowledge that will allow the planned analysis in the furthermore stages to get the potential results that can be explained and addressed at the time of the research questions. Hence, it can be said that this will be the right form of the appropriate approach for this research.

Research Design

This research study can be subdivided into quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative form of research will be well focused upon the observation and also on perception-based analysis that is based on analysis of resources and data, while quantitative research will provide the measurable and statistical data from the research, Selection upon the design of the research that is based upon the philosophy and also on the

approach of this research at the time of the organizing of this research (Mishra *et al.* 2023). This research is dependent upon the positivism philosophy that will highlight the philosophy and the approach at the time of the conducting of this research. This research is based upon the positivism philosophy that will highlight the need to develop statistical results at the existing information on the base of the knowledge that can correspond to this "***deductive approach***" that is being opted for this study.

Figure 5: Research Design

(Source: Self created in MS Word)

However, in this research, both the "***quantitative" and the "qualitative"*** form analysis will be carried out to supplement the limitations of this whole research that is providing the enough limitations of either of the analysis that is providing the adequate form of outcomes. This combination of the results will help to approve the reliability of the information that is being collected from these secondary sources and also on the primary sources with a well throughout evaluation.

Research Strategy

This strategy of the research will explain the techniques that us being utilized by the researcher to reach out to the candidates to collect the essential information that is significant to this area of the research. A study that can include ***numerous strategies*** that will help to collect and examine a wide range of data that is related to the development of this demand for the development of the desired outcomes (Vidhya *et al.* 2022). However, this selection of strategies is extremely dependent on the research philosophy that is being acquired for this overall research. In this research, which is dependent upon the positivism philosophy, the suitable collection of resources can lead to verifiable outcomes that can be taken out from an existing knowledge base. Concerning this ideology,

the most appropriate strategy is for the collection of data that is collected with the help of surveys that can be managed with the help of questionnaires or interviews. This strategy can be utilized for the collection in terms of secondary data with the help of an archival research strategy.

Research Method

Several forms of methods of research can be utilized as "***mono methods, mixed method***, and ***multi-methods***". This research is dependent upon the investigation of the impact of the Ott platforms on traditional broadcasting that can used as the "***qualitative" and "quantitative***" form of the analysis of the research. This will be explored in the particular area from a common point of view. This will explain a "***multi-method"*** form of research analysis from the right options to produce the exact results of the research (Háló *et al.* 2023). This research will indicate a huge area for this research. The idea that shall be covered by using the "***multi-method"*** solution is to get the separable results of the research.

Data Collection Method

The method for this collection of research will outline the resources and the procedures in terms of the collection of the correct information that depends upon the whole analysis that is to be performed. In this research, both the "***secondary"*** and the "***primary"*** data that is being utilized to get the findings of the research. However, the primary data that is being collected from the several ages of customers, is to get the perspectives of what they think about it. The survey questionnaire that is made it consists of a few questions including demographic questions.

The secondary data that is being collected the based upon the research strategy from the several secondary sources that are from journals, articles, websites, etc (Shin *et al.* 2022). The data that is being gathered from both the secondary and the primary sources are gathered and also recorded to make it easier for the process of data analysis.

Research Ethics

The several stages involved in this research that have considered the value and the ethics that are important to support the procedures and

the standards at the time of performing this research. However, this research will include the following ethical considerations that are:-

- The process of this research the strategies that are opted for the collection of data, and the analysis that is being adhered to the standards and the policies of conducting research.
- This collection of the data will involve the people who use the OTT platforms on the consent that is being provided by every single one of the participants.
- While doing the research no injury is being caused to any kind of the community or the nature at the time of the conducting of this research.

Research Limitation

The process of this research is completely suitable for evolving the results with the use of effective techniques and strategies for the procedure of the overall research. However, this the major limitation of this research that is depends upon the participants who used the OTT Platforms.

Findings and Analysis

Analysis

Primary Analysis

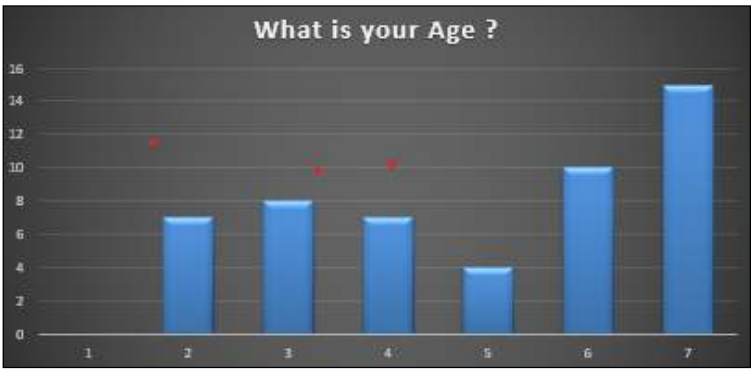

Figure 6: Age

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

In this graph, it is stating about the participants who took part in the survey. This graph shows the several age categories of those who took part in the survey. However, it can be stated that the highest category of the ages that took part in the survey is the age 65 or over, and the lowest range rate that is the age range of 45-54

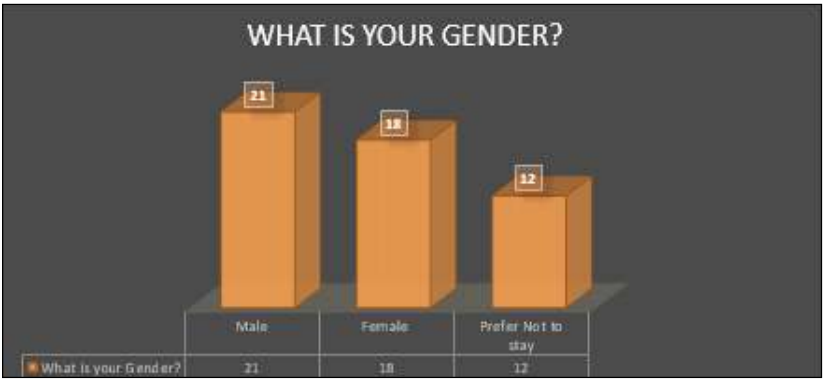

Figure 7: Gender Analysis

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

This graph depicts the analysis of the gender of those who took part in the survey. However, after the analysis, it can be seen that the highest number of participants who took part in the survey is the ample number of males, rather than the other preferred options that are available.

Figure 8: Location Analysis

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

This graph, it is depicting the analysis of the location (Chatterjee *et al.* 2020). However, from the analysis, it has been found that the highest number of participants who took part in the survey were the participants who belonged to the city, rather than the other available options.

Figure 9: Occupation

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

This graph, shows the categories of the participants who took part in the survey. In this survey the ample options that are available are from - the students, employed, unemployed, and also the person those who are retired (Chandavarkar, Nethravathi, 2023). It can be seen that the highest number of people who took part in the survey are students and the least number of participants who took part in the survey are the employed person.

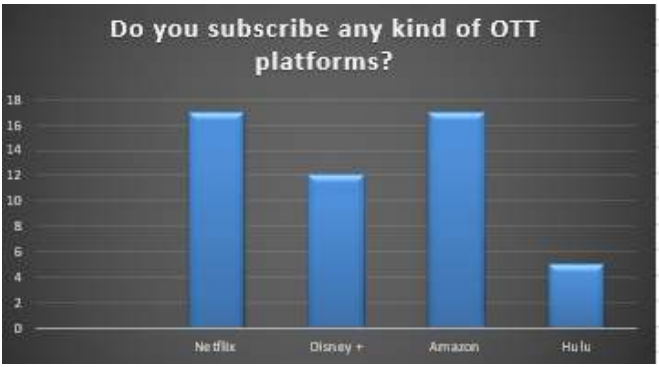

Figure 10: Subscription of OTT Platforms

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

This graph, it is stating about the different kinds of OTT platforms available in the survey options. It can be seen that among all the popular platforms that are available (Mishra *et al.* 2023). It can be seen that Netflix has one of the highest subscriptions of the OTT platforms. Whereas, it can be seen that Hulu has the lowest rate, that participants have selected for it.

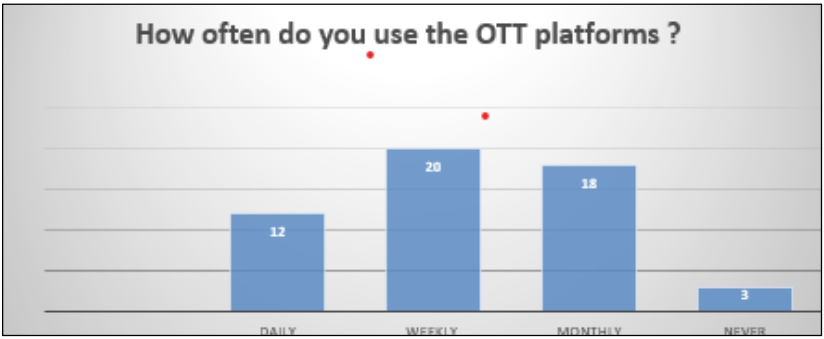

Figure 11: Using of OTT Platforms

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

This graph, states the utilization of OTT Platforms. From the survey, it has been found that the using of the OTT platforms that are the weekly number of users, and the least rates that has got the availability of options never.

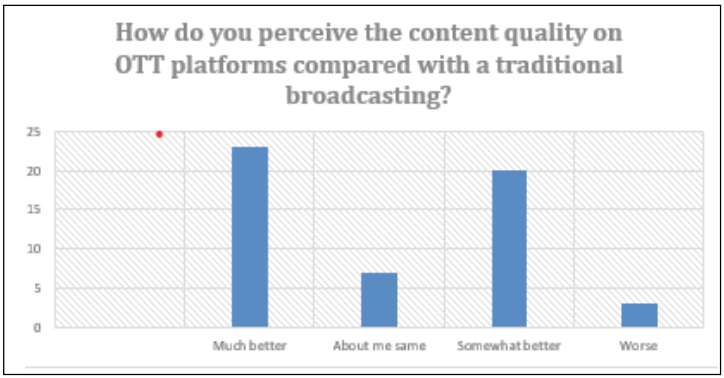

Figure 12: Perceives of the Content Quality of OTT

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

In this graph, it is showing the perceives of the content quality on ott platforms as compared with traditional broadcasting (SHAHAB, 2023). From the respondents it has seen that the highest rate of options that has got much better rather than the other options that are available .

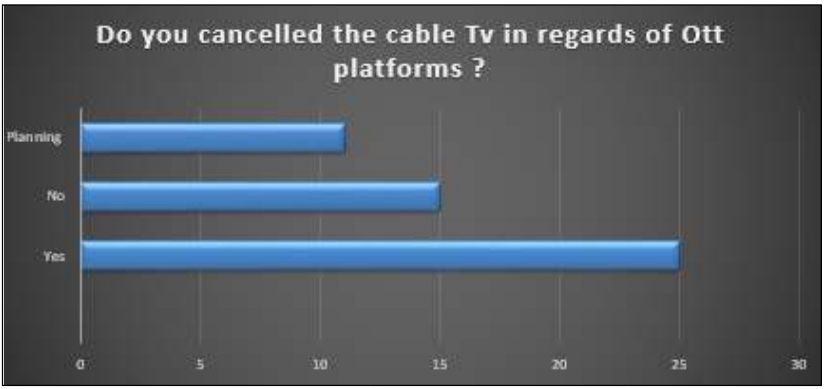

Figure 13: Cancellation of Cable TV in regards of OTT Platforms

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

In this graph, it is showing the cancellation of the cable tv as in comparison with the OTT platforms. It has found from the survey that most of the respondents has selected the options yes.

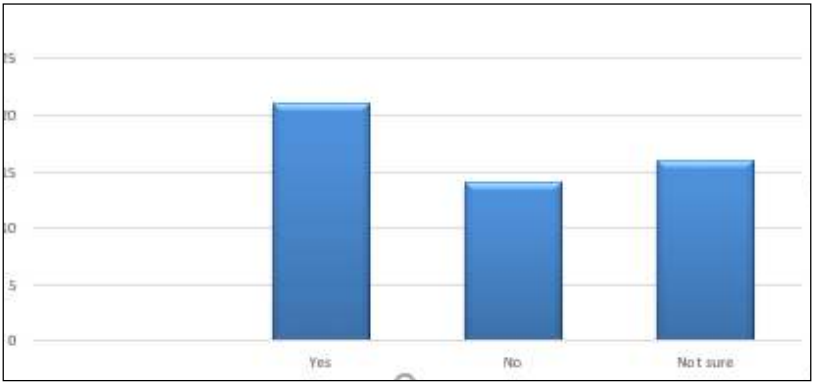

Figure 14: Facing of Challenges because of the OTT platforms

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

From this graph, it has been seen that most of the respondents highest rate of respondents has gone with the options yes, that as because of the OTT platforms broadcasters are facing challenges in the present scenario.

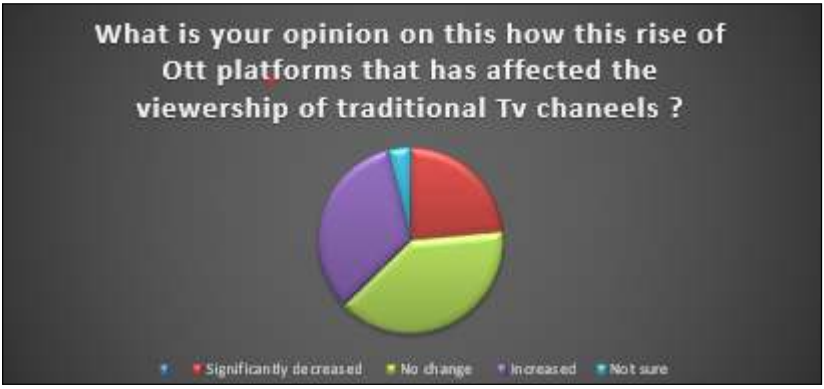

Figure 15: Opinion on Rise of OTT platforms

(Source: Self-created in MS Excel)

In this graph, it is stating about the rise of the OTT platforms that has affected the viewership of traditional tv channels. It has been found from the survey that

Secondary Analysis

Figure 16: Indian Video Monthly Consumption

(Source: https://digitalcontent.prensariozone.com/)

This graph shows the report of the Boston Consultancy Report, which is from two years ago India's market of OTT is poised to extend to reach USD 5 billion in terms of size by 2023. Also, this number should be likely to correct upward on the back of quick uptake as that is been seen at the time of the Covid 19. As per the report, it can be stated that the first dependent platform in India was the Bigflix, which was launched by Reliance Entertainment in the year 2008. On the other hand in the present scenario, "***Netflix***" and "***Amazon Prime Video***" are the biggest players. From the perspective of satisfying the buyers Netflix, and Amazon Prime Video are the Svod Platforms that are Amazon Prime Video and Netflix that has led the way with scores over 50 %.From the perspective of several subscriptions it can be said that Hotstar is the most subscribed of the OTT platforms in India, that is around 300 million subscribers who are active, with over 350 million downloads.

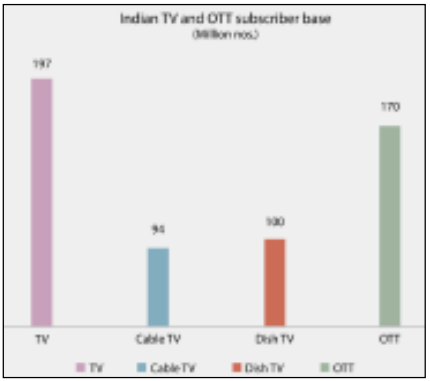

Figure 17: Indian TV and OTT Subscriber Base

(Source: https://digitalcontent.prensariozone.com/)

This graph shows the subscribers that are spread between the metros and the rest of these markets, and in the future that will be driven by the non-metros, rural market, and semi-urban. The worldwide OTT revenue of media is expected to reach over USD 167 billion that is by 2025, more than double the 83.3 billion generated that is in 2019 (Dhiman, 2023).. The main engine for the growth will be from the traditional form of broadcasters that are rapidly increasing in terms of turning to streaming services to increase their reach and also compete with the giants of video.

Figure 18: Global OTT and TV Video Revenue

(Source:https://digitalcontent.prensariozone.com/)

In this graph, shows the highest subscription of the streaming form platform across the world, showing the share of the global form of market is decreasing from 29% to 20% that is a whole decline of 31 percent, with a new form of competitors that is entering the Svod market. However, the turning up of services of new subscriptions, another kind of necessary saw drops in the share of the market, in 2020. However, it is showing the decline of Amazon Prime Video which is from 23% to 16% as per Ampere. In the year 2020, an average of four "*Svod Subscriptions"* per household in the US, that is with a slow form of growth in slowing significantly from 2021.

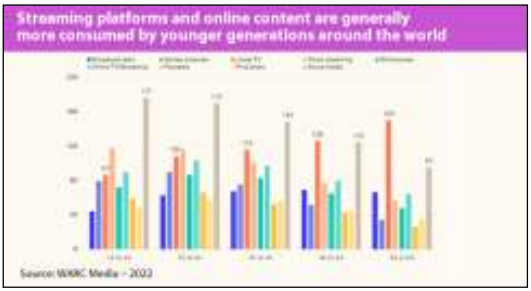

Figure 19: Streaming Platforms and Online Forms of Content Consumed by Younger Generations

(Source:https://digitalcontent.prensariozone.com/)

In this graph, it states for the Rights to Broadcast all the major league soccer games in that country, over the next 10 years on Apple Tv+. This is the agreement that depicts that the matches of this competition can be followed with the help of this MLS Season Pass in the Apple TV+ application that will cover all the global types of markets along with the plans of subscriptions.

In this, Dazn was the one who could lead the way to increase investment in the streaming of the platforms in sports rights. This service was regarded as 54%, of the OTT subscription that can spend the rights in 2022.

Discussion of Findings

Primary Analysis

The primary analysis that was conducted that was based on the data that was collected from the participants of the survey that was conducted. As to elaborate on this, the questionnaire that was made in context to the topic that has been selected. However, the survey questionnaire that was made that was based on the assumption of 51 respondents. Moreover the first few questions that was few demographic questions. and the rest that was associated with the topic. Although it was mandatory to answer all the questions those who took part in the survey.

Secondary Analysis

The secondary analysis that has been shown is based on the study of secondary resources that are from the "*articles, websites, journals*," etc. The secondary form of analysis that is based upon this supports the findings of this primary analysis, to a very large area. In this analysis with the help of charts that was presented on the internet that has been presented in the whole chapter.

Conclusion

Linking with Objectives

- To understand the future scope and challenges of the OTT platforms considering the ages.

The upcoming generation of OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms offers huge opportunities as well as barriers, particularly whenever taking into account different age groups. Over-the-top (OTT) platforms will probably keep developing and provide interactive and specific solutions for younger viewers. However, guaranteeing suitable for their ages material and regulating young people's screen usage is going to be a major challenge.

The difference between regular TV and streaming could become more confusing among adults as OTT services grow strengthened in daily life. Issues regarding security might rise as well with the increase of specific suggestions and specific marketing.

Usability and simplicity of use are going to be important to elders. Over-the-top (OTT) platforms must make certain that the interfaces they provide are accessible as well as simple to use for older people.

In general, the future growth of OTT services depends upon being able to be creative alongside solving issues like content curation, silence, and access that are unique for particular age groups.

- To analyze the factor of elements of cost on the consumer contribution towards the OTT streaming of video.

User contributions to OTT video streaming are strongly impacted by cost-related issues. The price and attraction of OTT platforms are heavily affected by monthly rates. Buyers evaluate the worth of an offer about the regular expense. The choice to join or keep it might be influenced by extra spending, like data use and exclusive content.

In addition, the addition of trials for free and variable rates has an impact on the options available to customers. Although unique materials could justify high costs, affordable prices could attract more viewers.

In simple terms, all aspects of pricing, such as the cost of subscriptions, extras, and incentives, have a direct bearing on viewership and loyalty in the highly regulated OTT industry, establishing how individuals interact in and participate in the online streaming industry.

- To keep and draw people of all ages, optimize the viewer's engagement across all devices.

Optimizing engagement with content over every platform is vital for keeping and attracting viewers of all ages. In the beginning, it's important to have straightforward user interfaces and effortless cross-device syncing. It guarantees an effortless and useful interaction across smart televisions and mobile devices, suiting the tastes of different ages.

Adaptation is just as essential. Make use of technologies to provide suggestions for materials that are based on consumer tastes and related to age preferences. Active and useful content may improve engagement with content in younger viewers. Features for simpler browsing might be beneficial to elders.

The importance of access cannot be understated. To satisfy different demands, include captions that are closed, voice explanations, and adjustable text sizes.

In conclusion, an extensive plan that takes accessibility, individualization, and access into account throughout devices is vital for appealing to viewers across all ages and ensuring a bigger and more engaged viewing base.

Recommendations

Adaptation of Digital Transformation:

To remain successful in the shifting communication environment, broadcasting companies should give the shift to digital-first priority. This involves making investments in OTT platforms, creating easy-to-use applications, and providing content to watch on demand. These online communities need to be made with simple-to-use interfaces and individualized suggestions if they are to be useful to a range of different ages.

Data-Driven Form of Insights

Utilise data analysis to learn more about the tastes of the audience. This is going to help in customizing content for different ages, improving advertising efforts, and increasing engagement among users. To properly utilize the potential of big data, work with data analysis companies.

Content Diversification

To appeal to a range of age groupings, traditional media outlets need to expand the programming they give. To attract both older and younger people, establish a mix between regular traditional television and immediate material.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Develop partnerships with OTT platforms and online media producers to reach new consumers. Working together can result in the production of special material and cross-promoting, bringing in new people while keeping the attention of those with more experience. Find ways to incorporate OTT material into conventional broadcasting.

Modifying Advertisement Models: Traditional broadcasters have to adapt their marketing approaches to account for shifting viewer preferences. To improve the viewing experience, use easy-to-use advertising forms like native advertising and placement of products. Utilise analysis of data to effectively target adverts, decreasing viewing advertising weary.

Recommendation: Improving the overall user experience across every platform must be prioritized. It should make sure that the material is easy to access, that the loading times are brief, as well as the quality of the streaming is steady.

Helpful Initiatives:

Broadcast could begin educational programs to draw in elderly people viewers who might be less used to OTT services. These initiatives may take shape in the form of ways-to manuals, seminars, or webinars that teach people ways to utilize these tools effectively.

Regulating Adaptation: Work alongside governmental organizations to adjust to the changing media ecosystem. Promote adaptable regulations that support development without preserving equal competition. Keep up with environmental developments and change the strategy as necessary.

Conclusion

To sum up, the emergence of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms has completely transformed the media environment and put traditional broadcasting in risk for audiences of all ages. Traditional TV viewing is at danger as younger customers become more and more responsive to the customised, on-demand material provided by over-the-top (OTT) providers. But the sector has a chance to innovate and adjust as a result of this change. In order to be profitable, conventional media companies must accept digital transformation, make use of data analytics, and improve customer satisfaction. A vibrant multimedia ecosystem that appeals to a range of age groups might result from finding an agreement between traditional and over-the-top (OTT) services. For the media sector to continue operating and expanding in the digital age, it is vital that it travels these obstacles and takes advantage of new possibilities.

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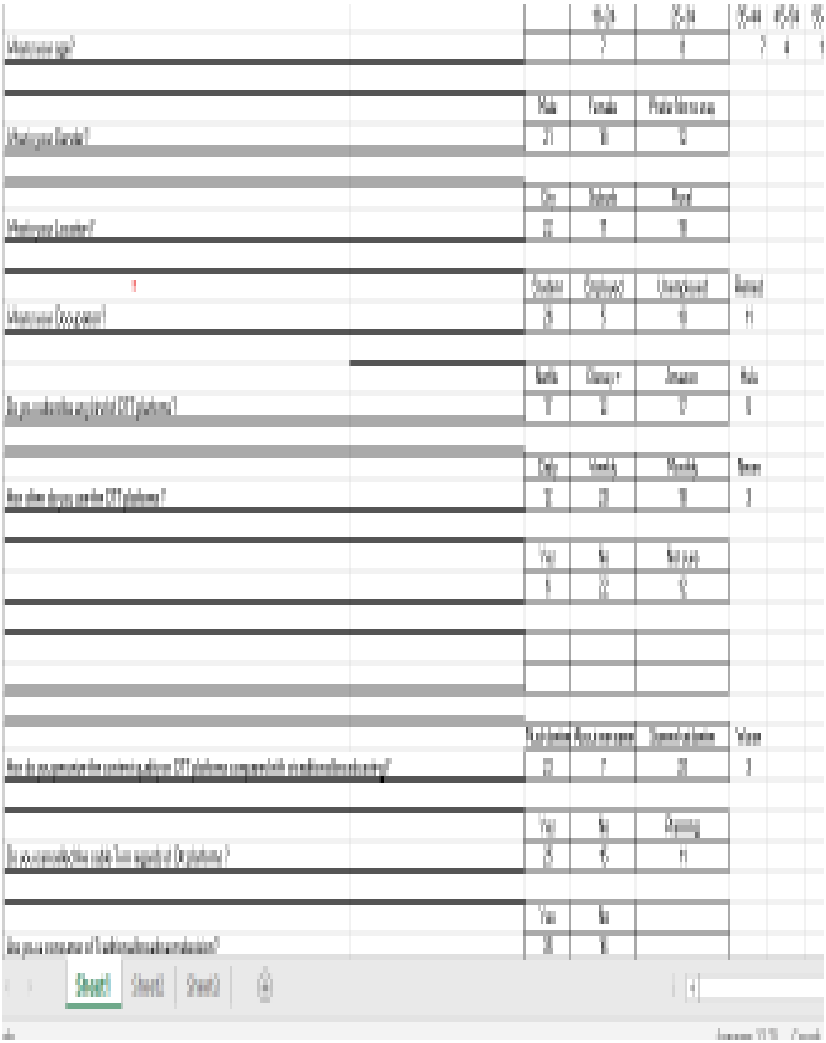

Impact of OTT on Gender Equality & Women Centric Content in India

Suvojit Das

ABSTRACT

This study is trying to investigate the impact of OTT viewing contents, specifically study on Gender based contents and Women Centric contents. This investigation is fully analysis with social concerns. During the analysis, I fully concerned about the background and trends which is going on over OTT contents. This research is well finish with some data, getting from Goggle and statistical data. The Statistical Data is collecting from random people with specific age limit who are clearly and much follow OTT content. The analysis data, over here is totally not biased but depends on human reactions over specific OTT Contents. The mentioned genres on OTT are now being very popular from the year mid-2019. In 2023, approximate 52% of content which are women key character contents. India has 424 mm OTT viewers, 119 mm paid subscriptions. This paper is divided on 3 parts. First is the Introduction along with a brief to the readers about the topic and motive. Second, discuss on detailing of the topics and viewing the impact and effect on mentioned contents and name of the powerful contents on specific genres. And lastly discuss about the data analysis report and goggle reports. This research paper is end up with a bulletin named Conclusion and Reference.

Keywords: OTT, Content, Genre, Data, Impact

INTRODUCTION – INTENT OF THE STUDY

There is almost nothing that is immune to the revolutionary change the Internet has caused since 1990s. The usage and application of the

Internet have transformed almost every aspect of the way human society lives and works. One of the most remarkable changes of this revolution is in the field of visual mass communication media particularly in terms of movie. After some several years, visual media started to upgrade and show new thing. Thus OTT platforms, started in India and day by day it discloses it various type of content which connected viewers and help to relate with reality along with shows such real story which are very important for our society. Some unavoidable stories, makers tried to showcase to the viewers to show the facts and situations on that times. The first dependent Indian OTT platform was BIGFlix, launched by Reliance Entertainment in 2008. In 2010 Digivive launched India's first OTT mobile app called nexGTv, which provides access to both live TV and on–demand content. Since 2018, shows of OTT became popular. After covid19 situation, 2020 to 2023 in this 3 years OTT did their highest business ever. OTT helped people from boredom, saved precious time. Viewers are used to see daily soaps, movies, shows and many contents in their flexible time. From paying 4 to 5 hours daily in broadcast media with wasting time, viewers identify smart process like OTT views. They watched contents in their flexible times and did their works in time. In India, there are over 40crore viewers and including 12crore paid viewers.

These OTT contents are basically made with a theme and creates a genre. OTT contents are classified with based on story like male centric content, social message content, nature content, game & reality show, talk show, gender equality based story, female domination and female centric content, content like untold story from past history, reality based story. This type of content are getting so much appreciation, also viewers wanted to see these which excited makers to create such great content, which is better than any type of broadcasting content or shows. In this case study, researcher try to show how gender equality shows on OTT contents, how they treat women, director's or writer's thinking which reflects on shows, how much effective the women centric content in society, these type of quarries over gender equality and women centric content.

From 2018, women centric content became more popular on OTT and now days, year in 2023 viewers see 46% of women centric content including there are some gender equality based content, which means audience demands various types of content, thus progressive India also grow with it' visual content through OTT platforms, showing such great contents like gender equality, protest & protect, real world & society, women domination – harassment, rights of women & justice. Where women got 15 minutes of role only just for attracting viewers, using them just like a key of hits but now women are not only the lead of 2 hours show, also women centric contents make in series of 9/10 episodes with 40/50 minutes of timing of each episode. Here audience like them, not their beauty but their acting skill, perfection, for that reason women centric content & gender based contents get most of claps which make them hits and remembering iconic roles.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

With tremendous growth of OTT consumptions in India, since the last few years, it's an important area to study the effects of those contents specially gender equal based and female centric content on the audiences, specially the youth and middle aged persons. This research paper will be an attempt to study the recent developments in the content and concept development of the Indian OTT content, effects of content viewership and the overall effect of these web series and web movies on the audiences both in psychological and social aspects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To conduct the research and reach a conclusion, mixed methods of research will be followed, qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative aspect will provide the data to help understand the choices and consumption patterns of the respondents and effects of the contents on them, which will be acquired through questionnaires. Survey will be conducted, where 40 people from different age groups and socio economic back groups with be provided with the questionnaire to find out about their opinion and its impact on them. A qualitative understanding will come through in depth analysis of the contents of the series, movies and the shows shown in OTT platforms in India.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Gender equal based content, women / female centric content made in OTT, progressively from 2018 about and 46% of total content made on this topic in 2022-23. This topic based contents get claps, appreciations, stars, fames etc but a male centric or a fully romantic / thriller genre content gets a heavy schedule promotions somehow female centric content and gender equality based content did not get that. This type of biased backdated things bring bad effect on such good contents which are far better, realistic and social from those old type similar content. Sometimes producers also didn't pay for promotions but they have to understand female centric content audience started to like that's what those content and lead actress got good results from media and society which are not scripted.

Problems faced at the time of research analysis, when questionnaires made ready for researcher case study and sent to limited various people for their unfiltered answers and from those answers researchers got to know about the impact of female centric content on viewers or how they treat & look those contents but they got blanked and didn't fill the answers because they didn't known about female contents, lack of promotions, branding, advertisements etc. This issue can be called major but it can be minor issue. The issue is getting from the response of some random people from different age groups, different economic-socially status about the answers of questionings, which are decided for the case study and research analysis. Another problem is qualitative answer. The responses getting from those peoples, some are not serious about the matter and write down some disgusting answers, for that case researcher makes fresh ratio and study those answers carefully that the research paper or analysis theory doesn't effect for that random answers which are not required. But the theory doesn't delete or throw those answers because all the answers are as much as important like a heart in a body. I also faced this problem so at first I simplified all the individual answers and study them carefully and make ready the analysis theory and finish my case study with fresh and unbiased manner which is very important for a research paper and a researcher too.

OBJECTIVES

This case study go through into a research to showcase the readers about some facts of OTT content in India on Gender equal based and Women centric contents.

While doing this research paper work, many important areas regarding the content development and effect of OTT Platforms' contents on netizens came into consideration. In term of concept development, many new trends are observed in the field of Indian OTT platforms. Priory is given to women centric plot development, where female characters are portrayed in much dignified, progressive and realistic manner. Makers tried to show the power of a woman and portray them as a goddess or just like a person with extra ordinary powers how male centric content shows hero with super powers which looks very lame in reality. A homemaker, a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a simple ordinary girl belong from a middleclass family or a rich family, one who haven't anything and other who can make everything possible with money, both two types of characters portrayed in the Indian OTT content and showed how women can make possible their own things follow their paths, fix problems, struggle and won the battle however they do. Web series covering contemporary socio political aspects, economic exploitations and prevailing injustice based on caste, creed and gender are being made in a bold manner, with strong story lines like AARYA, DARLING'S, BULBUL etc. Entertainment is provided along with strong theme. Various genres are getting covered by the web series and web movies with such social realism covered with fantasy characters and implied hard things (domination, tease, domestic violence, rape, mental abuse, child marriage, murder and look back & protest openly, fearlessly etc) which can never be betrayed like PINK, MIMI, DELHI CRIMES, MAHARANI.

This case study started with the thoughts of OTT impact of Gender equality & Women centric content on viewers and audience. The contents are getting popular with a time limit and spreading news by viewers that contents could be do impact on human psychology and bring gender equality in human thinking also in society. But is really OTT Female contents get equality?

With this strong question and thought, this research started and this research try to show the importance of Female centric content, good topics, good stories which are very truthful and connect with reality. Various elements and parts of those particular content shows how the good web movies and web series makers created. But the impact or good effects are happening in reality or that's just only for magazines, papers, press conferences. This is the ultimate point where this research started and stuck with these questions. Now it's the time to see the output what actually happened in reality by the OTT Women Centric Content and how much impact does create or this type of hits of those shows are really limited into mobile and visual devices and OTT INDIA system, nothing else.

DATABASE COLLECTION & DATA ANALYSIS

This research started to find out the impact of OTT on Gender's equality over Women centric content. The case study followed 40 people from different age groups will be provided with the questionnaire to find out about their opinion and its impact on them. A qualitative understanding will come through in depth analysis of the contents of the series, movies and the shows shown in OTT platforms in India.

QUESTIONS AND DATA:

There are 41 peoples from different age groups, various professions, different caste and language with their personal opinions. But almost 35 people belong from Bengal in Hinduism with Bengali culture but anything side isn't taken during the data collection and analysis. So, the qualitative questions are getting their honest answers from 41 heads. But the options of answers are given in tick box options in Goggle Forms, so they chose multiple options in one question as they do or use OTT female centric contents and impact of those contents. So the percentages are counting as they select or given their individuals. So the counting of the heads can be extended in the percentage numbers. In this situation, the case study improves sincerely and the research done very carefully. The numbers of options and percentages are showing how much people are connected with OTT female centric contents not displayed the total heads and percentage among them.

Only the analytical part discloses the impact of mentioned topic and how much these contents are valuable for viewers. The analytical part surely mentioned every logic and cue got from the qualitative research questioning process. The research took those answers who got among more of votes and thus the ultimate finding are done with absolute no error and honesty with trends of OTT in India

1. HOW DO YOU USE OTT?

A.	Daily	14
B.	Weekly	14
C.	Monthly	3
D.	Sometimes	11

2. WHICH ARE 2 OTT PLATFROMS, U USE MOST?

A.	Netflix	27
B.	Amazon group	20
C.	Hotstar	22
D.	Zee5	12

3. DO U LIKE THE OTT WOMEN CENTRIC SHOW?

A.	Yes	24
B.	No	5
C.	Maybe	10

4. WHAT TYPE OF OTT WOMEN CENTRIC SHOW, DO U LIKE?

A.	Reality show	3
B.	Daily soap	1
C.	Cinema	4
D.	Web series	39
E.	Cinema	22
F.	Talk show	22

5. DO U THINK, OTT WOMEN CENTIC CONTENT SHOWS VULGARITY OR NUDITY!

A.	Yes	3
B.	No	23
C.	Maybe	13

6. WHAT TYPE OF GENRE OF OTT WOMEN CONTENT, DO U LIKE TO WATCH?

A.	Comedy	7
B.	Romance	15
C.	Crime thriller	37
D.	Adventurous	14
E.	Rom com	9
F.	Ditective	18

7. HOW MUCH OF OTT WOMEN CENTRIC CONTENT DO U WATCH?

A.	About 5	13
B.	More than 5	9
C.	Appx 10	4
D.	Above 10	3
E.	Not so much	12

8. DO U THINK, THIS TYPE OF SHOW CAN BRING GENDER EQUALITY?

A.	Yes	16
B.	No	9
C.	Maybe	16

9. DO U THINK, WOMEN CONTENTS ARE SHOWING MEN ARE CHEAP OR TRYING TO UNDERESTIMATE MANLY THINGS!!

A.	Yes	7
B.	No	22
C.	Maybe	12

10. WHICH ACTRESS DO U LIKE TO WATCH IN OTT CONTENTS?

A.	Sushmita sen	25
B.	Huma qureshi	16
C.	Sehfali sah	9
D.	Sakshi tanwar	10
E.	Swastika mukherjee	23

11. IS CENCORSHIP NEEDED FOR OTT CONTENT ESPECIALLY FOR FEMALE CENTRIC CONTENTS ?

A.	Strongly disagree	8
B.	Disagree	11
C.	Agree	20
D.	Strongly agree	2

The questions are analysis basis of the polling answers mentioned above. And here also mentioned 4 names of contents including which are 2 of movies and 2 of web series, following the Women centric content and focusing the matter of impact on viewers and gender equality. Above qualitative process showed viewers mostly like 4 contents. In OTT movies there are

PINK & MIMI

In OTT web series DELHI CRIMES & MAHARANI

These 4 contents got most votes and mentioned as most loveable and reality based women centric content ever. And talking for Gender Equality based content TALLI got a heavy appreciation in now days and

TALLI released in this year, 15 of August, played by SUSHMITA SEN, one of the finest actress ever in OTT world in India.

ANALYSIS & FINDING PART:

A survey conducted among 41 people, belonging to different age groups, different professional background and living in different locations revealed the facts that young generation among the age group of 17 to 40 years prefers watching entertainment on OTT platforms rather than television. Moreover they do try to relate with the characters and gets influenced by their mannerism. The contents of the web series being new and innovative, often drawing references from contemporary socio political scenario around us does attracts the attentions of the netizens, which has actually led to the success of the OTT Platforms. Entertainment is the main urge behind watching contents on OTT Platforms and it also works as a mode of escapism for them. More than often the netizens try to imitate the language used, mannerism and lifestyle pattern of the characters shown on screen. And follow this trendy rule, Women centric & gender equality based content get more appreciation than any others. Viewers specially a woman, a daughter, a wife, a mother, a sister, a ordinary girl also felt connection with those contents while they are watching those contents or shows and connected to reality which happened surrounding into the society.

Those 41 peoples who helped in this research with their honest answers on impact of OTT from Women centric content about gender equality and surrounding all things, the result and analysis made basis on their opinion.

Most lovable contents and talking & analytic with those contents, this research got to know that viewers connected with them specially feminism. Like, PINK & DELHI CRIMES got most of the votes. These 2 contents showed how women are treated in India also in 2023. DELHI CRIME tried to mention that male ego factor which is destroying women's life day by day. For example Rape & Murder are two most valuable and real social things, which we wanted to do ignore or forget and considered the girl as guilty not the accused person or man who is the gutter for that incident. We decided the girl as shameless just for

her attitude, dress and body structure but that is not the problem, male centric ego, psychological thinking with girls, thinking all the women as their personal property so what want to do, it can possible these types of psychological disorders created a rape, murder, domination, violence etc.

As well as, PINK showed however it can be thinking, but Women are not men's property, and when Women indicated "NO" by any chance and any manner that could be considered as "NO". Otherwise, harassment could be the cause of men's death or injury by the women and that would be self protection not attempt to murder. Everyone has their right to protect themselves as well as girls. This is also clearly showed that, sitting with a men and drinking a glass of wine are also not indicated, the woman is ready to sleep with him that will be her own choice, nobody can force her. It is very natural to go club, disco, party, bar and etc.

On the other hand, MIMI & MAHARANI related somewhere with their story line. These two contents imply Women Empowerment. MAHARANI showed how an illiterate woman took place as a chief minister, her journey, her struggle against her husband. Because that male ego fail front of his wife, but that is not failure that could be celebrated as a joy, how a village women became a wife, mother and a chief minister. This content showed a women also could play chess in the ground of politics to ensure and strong her position.

MIMI also played well in field of Rajasthan. Mimi tried to show nothing is bigger than a power of a mother. Mimi took a risk to become a surrogate mother for money, which money helps her to take her Mumbai and she wants to be an actress. But when she realized the reality, that was too late but being a surrogate mother, she loved her surrogate child as a real mother do and fight for the baby until the noise was over. That is a power of a mother, presents gender equality where women can do all the things if they want.

Above mentioned all the explanation with the thoughts of contents, what is doing and what is not to be, everything is written after analysis the case study.

This research paper comes with it' Findings. At the end of this research, it is enough understand that the women centric contents are getting popular. Those contents are talking about women's right, gender equality, Feminism, value for law etc.

On the other side, this is also clearly understand, viewers are attracted with those contents but that is only limited into OTT world. The things, which happened in society and got news from media and newspaper, it clearly indicated nothing is improved in society. The impact of women centric contents are really counted as lame jokes. If people liked the contents, watch them, feel them and showed as not a backdated person, they grew up with new things & new thoughts and treat women as equally with giving all opportunities to make a new society so; for what reason 32,559 in 2017; 33,356 in 2018; 32,032 in 2019; 28,046 in 2020 & 31,677 in 2021: these numbers of rape cases were happening.

There is a question again and again stuck into this research and not get the time for analysis with these questions & left for future researcher that,

Does really any impact works on viewers by Women centric content?
OR

These types of Women centric contents are made to show the position of women higher and try to show men cheap and a role of violence through all the shows, movies, web series etc.

So, where are all the impacts, with which peoples are talking about and giving speech for an hour and where does equality? when people are used to get occurred to talk with a third gender person?

CONCLUSION

Basically, OTT contents get viral or promotes in social media by user and advertisements like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. Specially, for mentioned content the amount of advertisements of those contents get reduce other than. Here, the promotion laps for that many viewers are not getting aware about that very good content. After some month or several days, when they check they noticed. For this fact,

Gender equality based content & Women centric content if OTT in India, which are made in 2018 to 2020, those are getting good response and being famous after 3 to 5 years of release. This is the reason of branding, promotions. But the good fact is these are OTT contents and available on OTT platforms, viewers can see those contents in their flexible times and keep away themselves from boredom. Otherwise people even not known about these contents like Female centric contents in theatre are decided as a flop show in box office but the fact is when audience known about the show then they decided to come. For gender based and women centric content, lack of promotions, posters, advertisements, media conferences makes good contents as flop and people didn't know about the movie. OTT platforms save valuable contents from these sides because women centric contents are large demanding issue for OTT content makers.

OTT users watched women centric content but not frequently or regularly because the numbers of Female centric contents are very few, some of are very lengthy, very short story line, boring but some of as good as good story line with strong motive realism based content. Because the role of Women in those contents are really heart touching but is there any impact works so why all the domination and violation does happen? And this point clearly shows if crime is not reduced from society and people are talking about equality & women empowerment so what's the difference created in society, Is that only for the gossips while OTT contents are the main subject of gossip?

This research paper started with the enthusiasm to disclose about the progressive society and the Impact of OTT on Women centric show. But analysis & Finding shows a lot of errors into the viewers which reflect in their answers. So this is the big question where does equality and female centric base content give their impacts? And, Does really those shows works or those try to enrich women position with try to prove men guilty always? Because all the Gender equal & Female centric contents shows men guilty & cheap minded with male centric ego but this picture is not same in every house.

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Harmony in Flux: Portrayal of Natural Elements in Select Films through a Pre-Socratic Lens

Agnideepto Datta

Taking inspiration from the ageless insights of Pre-Socratic philosophy, this investigation aims to uncover the intricate relationship among nature, human beings, and the art of cinema. The Pre-Socratic philosophers, known for their focus on the fundamental building blocks of the cosmos, provide a philosophical underpinning for delving into how natural elements are portrayed within the medium of cinema. The Pre-Socratic philosophers, those ancient thinkers who laid the groundwork for Western philosophy, engaged in a profound exploration of the cosmos that was nothing short of revolutionary in their time. Their theories, often shrouded in mysticism, were ground breaking attempts to understand the fundamental nature of reality and existence. From Thales' belief that water was the primordial substance from which everything emerged, to Heraclitus' notion that change and flux were the very essence of the universe, these philosophers dared to question conventional wisdom and divine explanations. Anaximander's concept of the boundless "apeiron" challenged the notion of a finite world (Doe 37). Through their diverse and often contradictory theories, the Pre-Socratic philosophers ignited a philosophical revolution that continues to shape our understanding of the world, reminding us that the quest for truth is an ever-evolving journey filled with wonder and mystery.

The Pre-Socratic philosophers were pioneers in their relentless quest to understand the fundamental nature of the universe. Their ideas on nature laid the groundwork for Western philosophy, challenging traditional mythological explanations and igniting a spark of rational inquiry. Anaximander, for instance, believed in the concept of the "apeiron," an

infinite and boundless substance that defied the limits of the finite world. He astutely observed that the origin of the emergence of existing entities is also where their eventual decay occurs as a necessity. They reciprocate penalties and retributions among themselves as a consequence of their wrongdoing, all regulated by the passage of time (Anaximender 48). This profound perspective highlighted the cyclical nature of existence and the interconnectedness of all things, foreshadowing the later philosophical explorations of unity and the cosmos.

The intricate connection between the concepts of time and space and their profound interrelation with the natural world has been a topic of deep reflection across the annals of human history. Time and space, as fundamental dimensions, define our very existence within the sphere of the natural environment. Time, marked by its unceasing progression, encapsulates the ever-shifting and dynamic essence of the natural world. It manifests through the cycling of seasons, the rhythmic ebb and flow of tides, and the continuous transformation of landscapes—all harmonizing with the relentless march of temporal progression. In contrast, space serves as the canvas upon which nature employs its diverse palette, creating an array of forms and structures. The sweeping expanses of dense forests, the endless reaches of arid deserts, and the intricately woven networks of rivers and mountains all exemplify the fusion of space with the natural world. Together, time and space provide the backdrop against which the intricate tapestry of life unfurls, offering insights into the ecological cadences and patterns that govern our planet. Ultimately, the amalgamation of time and space within the context of the natural realm stands as a testament to the captivating intricacy and enduring allure of the environment—an eternal wellspring of inspiration and a subject that continues to captivate the realms of science, philosophy, and art.

Anaximander's concept of the "apeiron" finds a thought-provoking representation in the 2016 film "Arrival," directed by Denis Villeneuve. The film revolves around humanity's attempt to communicate with extra-terrestrial beings who perceive time differently from humans. The aliens' circular, non-linear language, reminiscent of the "apeiron's" boundless nature, challenges conventional notions of time and linear thinking. In

one notable scene, the protagonist, Dr. Louise Banks, begins to perceive time as the aliens do, experiencing her life's past, present, and future simultaneously (Villeneuve 2016). This portrayal of time as an expansive, interconnected whole resonates with Anaximander's philosophical idea of the limitless "apeiron." "Arrival" illustrates how cinema can delve into profound philosophical concepts, offering audiences a glimpse into the complexities of existence and the mysteries of the universe through the lens of science fiction.

Anaximander's conceptualization of an unbounded cosmos, particularly his notion of the "apeiron" as an infinite and boundless source, finds a captivating resonance in Terrence Malick's cinematic masterpiece, "The Tree of Life" (2011). Within the film's narrative, Malick artfully interweaves the personal with the cosmic, employing breath-taking visuals and poetic storytelling to create a profound tapestry. Anaximander's vision of an endlessly expansive cosmos is echoed vividly in the film's portrayal of the universe's magnificence, tracing the birth of stars and the emergence of life on Earth. Through its cinematic journey, "The Tree of Life" encourages viewers to contemplate the infinite dimensions of time and space, a theme that harmonizes with the ancient philosopher's belief in an ever-expanding and boundless reality. In essence, Malick's cinematic oeuvre, akin to Anaximander's philosophical insights, prompts deep reflection on humanity's position within the cosmos and the intricate interplay between the individual and the infinite. "The Tree of Life" emerges as both a visual and philosophical meditation on the limitless nature of the universe, delivering a distinctive cinematic exploration of Anaximander's age-old concept.

Heraclitus' aphorism, "panta rhei" or "everything flows," stands as a profound encapsulation of his philosophical perspective, akin to the ceaseless course of a river that never rests. Within this succinct yet immensely profound statement, Heraclitus captures the very essence of the ever-shifting, transient character of the world we inhabit. His conviction lay in the belief that the universe, in all its facets, was caught in a perpetual state of flux, a notion that stands in stark contrast to our innate inclination towards permanence and stability (Heraclitus np). "Panta rhei" beckons us to embrace the fluidity intrinsic to existence, imploring

us to delve into a deeper comprehension of the intricate interconnectedness of our reality and the ephemeral nature of all things. In its essence, Heraclitus' maxim serves as an enduring reminder that life's journey mirrors the unceasing flow of a river, urging us to navigate the currents of change with wisdom and acceptance. Within these unending currents lies the profound beauty and intricate complexity of our constantly evolving reality.

Heraclitus' timeless concept of "panta rhei," which underscores the ceaseless flow and change inherent in the universe, finds a mesmerizing representation in Darren Aronofsky's film "The Fountain" (2006). The movie intricately weaves together three parallel storylines, each exploring themes of life, death, and transcendence. In these narratives, "panta rhei" becomes palpable as characters confront the impermanence of existence and grapple with the elusive pursuit of immortality. The film's visual aesthetics, particularly the recurring imagery of flowing water and the Tree of Life, serve as metaphors for Heraclitean change. The protagonist's journey through time and space mirrors the philosophical idea that everything is in constant flux. "The Fountain" invites viewers to ponder the interconnectedness of life and death and the acceptance of the ever-changing nature of reality. Aronofsky's artistic portrayal aligns beautifully with Heraclitus' philosophy, emphasizing the profound wisdom that understanding and embracing the flow of existence is the key to finding meaning in our transient lives.

The Pre-Socratic philosophical viewpoint, rooted in the ancient wisdom of thinkers like Heraclitus, Anaximander, and Thales, provides us with a profound perspective for understanding our connection to the natural world. These philosophers' teachings, characterized by their exploration of the fundamental elements and principles of existence, not only unveil the intricate complexities of our environment but also stress the urgent importance of establishing a harmonious coexistence with nature. They astutely recognized that nature isn't a mere external entity but an intricately interwoven part of our existence, significantly influencing our reality. Through their deep contemplation of elements like water, fire, and the boundless cosmos, they prompted us to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the profound beauty and intricate nature of our environment.

Moreover, their philosophies underscore the pressing need to acknowledge our role as custodians of the Earth, advocating for a sustainable and balanced relationship with the natural world. Embracing this harmonious coexistence serves as a tribute to the timeless wisdom of the Pre-Socratic philosophers, acknowledging that our own well-being is inextricably linked to the well-being of our planet.

Cinema possesses a remarkable capacity to frame and showcase the beauty, fragility, and dynamism of natural elements in ways that resonate deeply with our collective consciousness. Through the lens of filmmakers and storytellers, we are offered a unique perspective on the environment, one that prompts us to re-evaluate our relationship with the world around us and seek a more profound understanding of our place within the ever-evolving cosmos.

Within the realm of cinema, we are privileged to witness the stunning magnificence of unspoiled landscapes, the intricate ballet of delicate ecosystems, and the breath-taking marvel of natural occurrences. Films such as Terrence Malick's "The Tree of Life" serve as poignant reminders of the splendour and complexity inherent in the natural world. These visual narratives provide us with a profound awareness of the fragility inherent in our planet's ecosystems, compelling us to contemplate our responsibility as caretakers of the environment. Furthermore, cinema possesses the unique ability to capture the dynamic forces that shape our world, whether it be the relentless fury of a storm, the graceful meandering of a river, or the gradual and patient growth of ancient trees. These cinematic depictions underscore the intricate interconnectedness that defines all life and emphasize the ever-evolving nature of the cosmos we inhabit.

Ultimately, as we immerse ourselves in these cinematic experiences, we are not only prompted to marvel at the exquisite beauty of nature but also to acknowledge its inherent vulnerability and remarkable resilience—a sentiment echoing the insights of the Pre-Socratic philosophers. It inspires us to embark on a thoughtful re-examination of our influence on the environment and to embark on a quest for a more profound comprehension of our place within the intricate fabric of the

ever-evolving universe. In this introspective journey, cinema emerges as a potent catalyst for fostering environmental awareness, akin to the philosophical pursuits of ancient thinkers. It serves as a resounding call to action, serving as a poignant reminder of our ethical responsibility to safeguard and nurture the extraordinary world we inhabit, echoing the philosophical ideals of stewardship and harmony with nature championed by figures like Heraclitus and Anaximander.

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Our Contributors

1. **Tapu Biswas**, M.A , MPhil, Ph.D, D.Litt. is currently Associate Professor, Teacher-in-Charge, Department of English, & Vice-Principal, Bhasha Bhavana Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India. Dr Biswas was formerly the Assistant Registrar of Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He is honorary Jt. Secretary, Shakespeare Society of Eastern India. He is today the Hony. Secretary of the Tagore Gandhi Institute for Culture Studies and Service–Learning (both are Govt. Registered educational and Cultural Society). He is a Recipient of UGC Research Award Post Doctoral Fellowship 2014-15. He is also the recipient of **International Mother Teresa International Award 2021**.

2. **Anirban Banerjee** is an Assistant Professor of English at Swami Vivekananda University in Barrackpore. He has done his M.Phil. research from Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol. His area of research is myth and mythopoesis. He has published a paper on the heritage of Bengal as seen in a village full of terracotta temples.

3. **Dr. Rituparna Chakraborty** is an Assistant Professor, Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University. Rituparna Chakraborty has done her M.A. in English from West Bengal State University and M.Phil. from Rabindra Bharati University. She was awarded Ph.D. from Raiganj University. She has cleared the UGC-NET examination. She has presented research papers in a number of National and International Conferences. She has also published several articles in UGC-CARE listed journals and International Peer-Reviewed Journals. Her areas of interest include: Popular Literature, Gender Studies and Postcolonial Studies.

4. **Pritha Misra** is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. She was a first class first awardee in her bachelor degree from Serampore College, University of Calcutta along with a diploma in Journalism and mass communication. She has completed her master's degree from University of Burdwan. She has worked as a field investigator in a project of ICSSR IMPRESS, funded by the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India. She has presented papers in different National and International seminars. She has her papers published in one International and one National journal. Her areas of interest include Health Communication, Development Communication, Advertising, Media and Cultural studies.

5. **Shyamal Mondal** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Mahishdal Raj College, affiliated to Vidyasagar University, West Bengal. His research interests focus on the postcolonial writings and literary theory. Currently, he is pursuing his Ph.D. from the Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University.

6. **Dr. Shubham Bhattacharjee** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. He has received his Ph.D. from Rabindra Bharati University. During his research period, he engaged classes at Rabindra Bharati University from July 2019, initially as a Junior Research Fellow and subsequently as a Senior Research Fellow. Previously, he had also pursued his B.A. (Hons.), M.A. and M.Phil. from the same institution. He also possesses a second M.A. Degree in English Language Teaching from Netaji Subhas Open University, West Bengal, alongside a Post Graduate Diploma in Translation and Transcultural Studies. He is currently pursuing MBA in Human Resource Management from Indira Gandhi National Open University. Dr. Bhattacharjee has cleared the UGC-NET and WB SET examination on multiple instances. Prior to joining Swami Vivekananda University as an Assistant Professor, he served as an Assistant Professor at Sister Nivedita University,

Kolkata. Dr. Bhattacharjee has presented research papers in numerous national and international seminars. He also has several published articles in UGC-Care Listed Journals to his credit. His areas of interest include Romantic Poetry, Victorian Poetry, Modern and Postmodern Literature, 20th Century Literary Theory and Criticism etc.

7. **Shreyoshi Dhar** is currently serving as an Assistant Professor, Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University. She is pursuing her Ph.D. programme from Rabindra Bharati University. Previously, she had also completed her B.A. (Hons.), M.A. and M.Phil. from the same institution. She is also in possession of a second M.A. Degree in English Language Teaching from Netaji Subhas Open University, West Bengal alongside a Post Graduate Diploma in Translation and Transcultural Studies from School of Languages and Culture, Rabindra Bharati University. She has cleared the UGC-NET examination on multiple instances. Prior to joining this institution as an Assistant Professor, she worked as a Guest Faculty in Bengal School of Technology and Management, had engaged classes at Rabindra Bharati University since December, 2022 as a Junior Research Fellow along with being a Resource Person at Rani Rashmoni Green University, Tarakeshwar, West Bengal since April, 2022, where she was in charge of the day to day functioning of the Department of English. She is also currently pursuing her MBA course from Indira Gandhi National Open University. She has presented research papers in numerous national and international seminars and also has several published articles in reputed journals to her credit. The areas of her interest include Victorian Literature, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism.

8. **Farha Khatun** is a PhD scholar of English at Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore, North 24 Parganas. She is also at present working as State Aided College Teacher (Category-I) in the Department of English at Dumkal College, Murshidabad, West Bengal. On academic level, she completed her graduation in English (Hons.) from Dumkal College under

University of Kalyani, West Bengal and postgraduation in English from Guru Ghasidas Central University, Chhattisgarh. Her research interests include Postcolonial literature, American literature, African American literature, Indian writings in English, Film Studies, Dalit literature and Partition literature.

9. **Dr. Moupikta Mukherjee** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. She has completed her postgraduate degree from the University of Calcutta and has received her doctoral degree from IIT- ISM Dhanbad. Her research interests are based on her fascination for how art and performance serve as an important medium of intervention for ensuring holistic development and empowerment for individuals with disabilities. She has been exploring this phenomenon from different perspectives in both her research and practices. She has worked on creative, pedagogic, research and field work related projects with various non-profit organisations like Kolkata Sanved, SAMYA foundation, Partner Hooghly and Shyambazar Blind Opera House. She has presented papers in the field of art intervention and disability studies in several International Conferences and has her work published in journals of high repute.

10. **Sonakshi Mukherjee** currently serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Chandernagore Govt. College, affiliated with University of Burdwan. Furthermore, she holds a Master's degree with first-class from IGNOU and a B.Ed. degree with distinction from Magadh University alongside an UGC-NET JRF. In addition, Ms. Mukherjee successfully completed the DOEACC A' level course at NIELIT, Jadavpur University, and excelled in Voice and Accent Training (VNA) at The Orion Institute, Kolkata. At present, she is pursuing her PhD degree from North Bengal University, West Bengal. With a teaching experience spanning eight years, she has contributed her expertise as a TGT–English

faculty in both national and international educational boards. Her scholarly work is well-regarded, with numerous publications in various national and international journals, many of which are listed by UGC-CARE. Additionally, Ms. Mukherjee has presented her research in several national and international seminars and conferences. Her research interests encompass diverse fields such as Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Cultural studies, and Gender studies.

11. **Namitha Merin Thomas** is a Research Scholar at Christ (Deemed to be University), Bangalore. She holds an M.Phil. in English Studies and also has experience in teaching. Her areas of interest include Caribbean literature, Diaspora studies, Travel literature, Film Studies, and Cultural Studies.

12. **Shiwangi Ojha** is currently pursuing Masters in Journalism and Mass Communication at Swami Vivekananda University. She has done her graduation from Calcutta University in English Honours.

13. **Natasha Chatterjee** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. Her area of interest is Indian English Literature. She has done her Masters in English from Dr. C.V. Raman University. She has done her B. Ed from Dr. C.V Raman University. She has done A-Level from DOEACC Society. She is pursuing her Ph. D on the selected novels of Sudha Murthy and Anita Desai. She has presented papers in various national and international conferences. She has also published many articles in various journals.

14. **Dr. Tirna Sadhu** is an Assistant Professor of English at Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. She holds a Master Degree in English Literature from Visva Bharati, Santiniketan and has completed her PhD from the same institution. She has an experience of ten years in the academic sector and has published several articles in reputed journals.

15. **Sourav Paul** is a Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University.

16. **Dr. Mahendra Kumar Jena** obtained his Master's degree and Ph.D. from Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, a Central University of National Importance. One and half decade of his Journalistic career, worked for Hindi dally Prabhat Khabar, Dainik Jagran, Audio Visual News channel Aajtak and Ananda Bazar Patrika. For more than 13 years he worked for Ananda Bazar Patrika. As a teacher he worked for DAV CPS, SKBU and Swami Vivekananda University. Presented academic research papers in National and International Seminars and Conferences. His academic write up published in National and International reputed Journals. Presently he is working as an Assistant Professor in Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Swami Vivekananda University, Kolkata.

17. **Sayani Das** is a research scholar with over two years of experience in mass communication and journalism. Presently, she is working as a guest lecturer at the Institute of Mass Communication, Film, and Television Studies, Kolkata. In 2023, she received a gold medal from the University of Burdwan for securing a first-class first position in her M.A. in Mass Communication. She has presented papers at four international conferences and been published in six journals and six book chapters in both the national and international arenas.

18. **Debarshi Arathdar** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. He has completed his post-graduation from the University of Delhi and is currently pursuing his PhD from the same institution. Prior to joining Swami Vivekananda University, he was employed as a Guest Faculty in several colleges at the University of Delhi. His research interests include Cognitive Literary Studies, Narratology, Phenomenology, Contemporary Literary Theories and Philosophies and the interfaces between A.I. and Literature. He has presented his research at both National and International Conferences. He has published several articles in internationally acclaimed Peer-reviewed Journals and contributed Book Chapters in forthcoming projects. His research aims to unveil the complex

intricacies of the mind's creative and comprehensive relation to texts at large.

19. **Dr. Shantanu Siuli** is an Assistant Professor of English at the School of Humanities & Social Sciences; Swami Vivekananda University; Barrackpore. He has completed his Masters from University of Calcutta and his PhD from Seacom Skills University. With an experience of over 10 years in the academic sector, Dr. Siuli has published several papers in peer-reviewed international journals alongside having attended multiple international conferences. His research interests revolve around 16th & 17th Century Literature, Renaissance Studies, Ancient European Classical Literature, Divine-aesthete Theory and Devotional Literature on Interdisciplinary Approaches.

20. **Samarpita De**, SACT, New Alipore college. Did her masters in JMC from University of Calcutta. Completed MBA degree from IISWBM (University of Calcutta) ranking first class first, bagging gold medal. She did her masters in kathak classical dance from Allahabad University with high distinction. She has been teaching in college since 2010.

21. **Dr. Pramiti Roy** has completed Ph.D. from the University of Burdwan. She has done English Hons. from Asutosh College, University of Calcutta, have completed Masters in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Calcutta and have secured the 1st class 2nd position. She worked with the *Times of India* Kolkata, from 2013-2016 as a Feature. She has served as a Lecturer in the department of Journalism and Mass communication at Jogesh Chandra Chowdhury College under University of Calcutta from 2014 till 2016. She has worked as an Assistant Professor (Grade-2) in Amity School of Communication, Amity University Kolkata from Aug 2016. She is currently serving as the Director of School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Head, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Swami Vivekananda University. She has a number of National & International publications to her credit.

22. **Dr. Moumita Chakraborty,** currently working as an Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. In 2021 she completed her Ph.D. from Assam University, Silchar. She has specialization in Advertising, Digital media, and Development Communication. She did her Master's with distinction from SRM University Chennai. Her published work encompasses book chapters and articles with impact factor 2.5.

23. **Dr. Arnab Chatterjee** is Assistant Professor of English, Harishchandrapur, Malda, West Bengal.

24. **Shelly Sen** is a conscientious, professional and approachable individual with a MBA degree in Communication Management Specialization at Adamas University. Experienced in creative design, marketing, and management across different industries and a number of disciplines. At present she is pursuing Ph.D. under the subject Journalism and Mass Communication from Swami Vivekananda University.

25. **Suvojit Das** is a student of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Swami Vivekananda University.

26. **Agnideepto Datta** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. He has completed his postgraduate degree from University of Calcutta and has received his M.Phil. degree from Vidyasagar University. He is currently pursuing his doctoral degree from Bankura University. His research interest includes Genocide and Incarceration studies, Philosophy and Literature, and South Asian Literature. He has presented multiple papers in International Conferences and has his research articles published in International Journals and edited volumes.

The Editors, TI Vol XVII

Amitava Roy is currently Professor Emeritus, Bankura University. Former Director, Shakespeare Centre for Advanced Research, Rabindra Bharati University. Former Shakespeare Professor in English, Rabindra Bharati University. President, Shakespeare Society of Eastern India. Author and editor of over fifteen books and three hundred articles and papers in national and international journals and newspapers. Globally renowned Theatre Director and Actor.

Bryan Reynolds, (USA) Ph.D UCI, is Chancellor's Professor, Department of Drama Claire Trevor School of the Arts, University of California, Irvine, C A 92697-2775.

Papia Mitra Ph.D is Associate Professor, English Department, at Surendranath College for Women, Kolkata, India. She has done her research on Comparative Religion in New Zealand and is a specialist on myths and Sanskrit Literature.

Sheila T. Cavanagh, (USA) Ph.D, Chair Professor, Masse-Martin/ NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Subir Kumar Dhar, Ph.D, is currently Dean School of Humanities & Director School of International Languages, Former Honorary Director, Tagore Gandhi Centre, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata and Former Professor and Head, Department of English at Rabindra Bharati University. Internationally acclaimed Blake and Shakespeare expert. Author of two books and numerous papers.

The TI Manifesto

THEATRE INTERNATIONAL, EAST-WEST Perspectives on Theatre: the title tells you where we are at. This is an international journal-cum-Dramabook. In the constitution of its Editorial Board, in its wide-angle global readership, in its range and scope of subject matter and focus, in its selection of experts and specialist writers this publication caters to the frontierless international communitiy of the Performing Arts and Artists.

This publication hopes to enrich the Indian theatre culture in concrete ways—for the present dramatic culture lacks a creative correlation between theory and praxis. Our connections and involvement in University Performing Arts, Drama and Literature Departments makes **Theatre International** favorably situated to bridge the grey areas between pedagogy and performance. On the other hand, theatre is ultimately performance. Hence papers and articles on the productional aspects will find valuable place in all issues of *TI.*

Moreover, the realization that the theatre cuts across both culture and history is evident in the works of our avant-garde theatre thinkers. The University Drama Departments have every access to and special avenues of communication with theatre movements throughout India and abroad. *TI* is committed to the task of making the necessary intercultural linkages and disseminating the available material to theatre enthusiasts and professionals here. Likewise, *TI* can help make the intelligentsia abroad aware of the Indian, Asian and African theatre scene. Hence *TI* can serve as a medium and forum for international cultural exchange.

Both our masthead and our readership include and span high-IQ decision makers in the performing arts spread across the five continents—University Faculty, members of Akademis and theater ensembles,

performing artists and intellectuals, the cultural avantgarde of Europe, America and Asia. The contents of *TI* will thus range from *Kathakali* to *Kabuki,* from the *Yakshagana* to the *Guerilla theatre,* from the *Peking Opera* to the performative processes of the *African folk traditions,* from Tagore to T. S. Eliot, Shakespeare to Stanislavsky, Kafka to Karnad, reflecting and embodying the creative thrust of the global theatre scene.

TI has published and will publish *Special Issues* in future on Brecht, Tagore, Folk theatre, Political theatre, Theatre and Film, Translation, Adaptation and, of course, on Shakespeare among other subject areas.

The Shakespeare Society of Eastern India, under whose aegis *TI* is being published, has helped spearhead the new resurgence of both academic and popular interest in Shakespeare that emerged from the mid-seventies throughout Bengal and India.

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≡ **UGC-CARE List , 2019**

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1	International Journal of Cultural Studies and social Sciences	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2347-4777	NA	View
2	Theatre International	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2278-2036	NA	View

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400	Theatre International	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2278-2036	NA	Vie

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