

## **AN ANALYSIS OF DIRECTOR SHANKAR'S FILMS USING FEMINISM APPROACH**

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### **Abstract:**

Cinema is a conceptual medium of audience. It can cover large number of audience. This mass media is a well popularized art in this world. India is the largest market for cinema. Many films have been produced every year. Especially, Box office hit collection movies reached huge audience. According to Mulvey (1975), Films stimulate visual pleasure by integrating structures of voyeurism and narcissism into the story and the image. Further Mulvey states that, Voyeuristic visual pleasure is produced by looking at another, whereas narcissistic visual pleasure can be derived from self-identification with the figure in the image. Therefore, this study has taken Tamil film director Shankar's cinema to analyze the content in representation of women. This study has taken the Feminist film theory invented by Anneke Smelik. This study objectives are Director Shankar's cinema representation and construct of women. This study using content analysis method of analyze women construction in Director Shankar's cinema.

Keywords : Feminist analysis, Gender Construction, Feminist film Theory, Gender studies, Tamil cinema

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**Introduction:**

Cinema is a conceptual medium of audience. It can cover large number of audience. This mass media is a well popularized art in this world. India is the largest market for cinema. Many films have been produced every year. Especially, box office hit collection movies have reached huge audience. According to Mulvey (1975)<sup>1</sup>, Films stimulate visual pleasure by integrating structures of voyeurism and narcissism into the story and the image. Further, mulvey (1975)<sup>2</sup> states that, voyeuristic visual pleasure is produced by looking at another, whereas narcissistic visual pleasure can be derived from self-identification with the figure in the image. Therefore, this study has taken the Tamil film director Shankar's films to analyze the content in representation of women. This study has taken the Feminist film theory. The objectives of this paper are to find Director Shankar's cinema representation and construction of women.

**Brief of Tamil Cinema:**

In the days of Tamil cinema celebrating its centenary, the development of cinema is essentially an inspiration for the development of technological and social development. Art in the culture of a society makes the necessary contribution for the society. Every art has been supported by most of the people every time. In this respect, the contribution of Tamil cinema has to be focused on what it has contributed to social development.

Tamil cinema is the most important art form of the Tamil community after India's independence. The Dravidian parties fully used the Tamil films in politics. Thus, the Dravidian parties used the film as a great campaign art. Through film, people's habits, life environment and beliefs are questioned. New culture and practices were introduced to the people. There were film actors and scriptwriters with highest positions in the state, winning the election using cinema as the tool of propaganda. This can be understood as the impact of the Tamil film in the Tamil community and shows its great importance. . It is important to find out how gender differences in films are structured.

**Brief of Tamil film director Shankar:**

Shankar is one of the noted director among Tamil film directors. His movies are received well worldwide. He is directing movies with famous actors in Tamil cinema. In his films, famous

musicians, screenwriters, songwriters are used. His movies are being raised to question the major issues of Tamil society, such as bribery, corruption and the irresponsibility of the state administration. Most of his films have been commercially gifted. This study has taken five films box office hit movies of 1990-2016. The films are Gentleman (1993), Indian (1996), Shivaji (2007), I (2010) and Endhiran (2015). Through this study we find out how women are depicted in these films using feminist film theory.

### **Brief of Feminist film theory:**

This study used Laura Mulvey's Visual pleasure and Narrative cinema (1975) theory of feminist film approach. According to Mulvey (1975)<sup>3</sup>, three perspectives that occur in film which serve to sexually objectify women. The first is perspective of the male character on screen how he perceives the female character. Then, second perspective of the audience as they see the female character on the screen. Then, male audience to take the female character as his own personal sex object because he can relate himself, through looking, to the male character in the film. Mulvey (1975)<sup>4</sup> Sexism exists not only in the content of a text, but may also exist in how the text is presented; through its implications about its expected audience. This study analysis of content in Tamil director Shankar's films using this feminist film theory framework.

### **Representation of women in media:**

According to Wolf (1991)<sup>5</sup>, in her study, the protagonists of the stories are intended to be positive role models for countless readers. The heroes are generally wise, heroines self sacrificing. Men occupy a 'public' world, women an inner, private one. Media representation of women is second gender of the power authority. The woman is presented as an object of sexual lust and aggression. Male power aims at obliterating the other: the woman, and seek pleasure in her sexual subservience and pain. Obscenity is evident also in the jokes, trivia, quizzes and fillers which inventively use and abuse the female body.

According to Karpuppiah (2015)<sup>6</sup>, Femininity is always constructed in the context of subordination of women to men; hence no femininity is considered hegemonic and the most valued form of femininity is referred to as emphasized femininity.

**Research Methodology:**

This study uses Simple Random Sampling method. It is type of probability sampling technique and it is meant to be unbiased representation of a group. According to IMDb(Internet Movie Database)<sup>7</sup> report, Director Shankar's Five box office hit collection movies from 1990 to 2016 period are Gentleman (1993), Indian (1996), Shivaji (2007), I (2010) and Endhiran (2015). Content analysis is used in this study. According to (Neundorf, 2011)<sup>8</sup> content analysis is relevant in the particular context since it presents gender researchers with a set of useful tools for studying messages containing information about sex and gender roles.

**Data Analysis and findings:**

The study aimed to find out Director Shankar's cinema representation of women in his films. The analysis was done using feminist film approach to identify the representation of women.

**Introducing heroines in the sample:**

In the five films that have been studied, the actresses in three films are shown to encouraging audience's sexual thoughts. Heroine's introduction scenes are exposed body parts in closeup shots(near the object) using in this movies for stimulating audience's sexual thoughts. According to Karuppiah (2015)<sup>9</sup>, the heroine introduction scene in the movie Thilalangadi (2010), the camera moves through various body parts (back, legs, hand, waist and breasts) of the heroine before showing on her face. The camera also pauses when focusing on her breasts. Heroines are often seen wearing clothes that are very sexy and seductive. sexual Women have been found to be a sexually sensitive item in the five films of director Shankar. As hence, the heroine in the introductory scene as a sexual object promotes the viewer's sensuality, as a whole film, audience's expectation is the heroine to be a sexual object.

**Importance to heroine's in this films:**

In the five films that have been studied, three films are of "Action" genre. Next one is 'Adventure' and another one is 'Crime'. In all the films, women are often not used in any other scenes except love and song scenes. 'I' and 'Endhiran' which are centered on the heroine's character.They are suffering and the protagonist is portrayed as an act saving them so that the

heroine is attracted. It also seems that the use of the heroine in determining the genre of the film is fewer likely to be used in the film's storyline. The role of the heroine is evident in provoking the hero's senses and appealing to him.

### **Physical appearance of the heroine in the films:**

In the five films that have been studied, the body shade of the heroin is white tone in all five movies taken for the study. While the colors of women in the Tamil community are so varied, the color of the movie heroines is only white and can understand that Shankar's films are contradictory real life. In the same situation, the physical appearance of the heroines is presented as skinny and tall. This is also a violation of the reality of the Tamil community. The depiction of these heroines creates mental structures that originate in the thought of Tamil social audiences. It's hard for them to realize that this is a violation of real life. This study has proven that the role of the film is important for the emergence of the white color of the Indian cultural globalization period. Furthermore, this has been demonstrated by the transformation of the Tamil community from the eating habits and the importance of the food that does not increase the weight of the body.

### **Economical background of heroines in the films:**

In the five films that have been studied, in four films, the heroines belong to the highest class. In addition, the heroines are constructed independently and Distinctly in three films, one is a medical college student and another one is interested in animal welfare. Three of the five heroines are structured to set up their livelihood on their own money. Many people expect women to be economically self-sufficient because the role of the economy plays an important role in domestic violence. These films portray heroines as economically independent.

### **Heroine's life style in these films:**

In the five films that have been studied, women are represented normal in other scenes and as sexual object in song scenes. The heroine who is portrayed as an actress in the film 'T' is cheated by the protagonist in some sequences. In the film 'Shivaji', the heroine has been shown to be a source of suffering by the protagonist. In the film 'Endhiran', the heroine's action will be shown to give the protagonist a hardship. In all the films he heroine's body needs to be protected, and

most of the time it is structured that the girls are dependent on the protagonist. Based on the study, love and family are mostly related to their conversation. There are fewer conversations like her own life and their future. Heroines future is not discussed at all and is many in the content of hero. In particular, the five films that have been studied are centered on social issues. But in none of the films women speak on social issues. Through this study, director Shankar has constructed women to be not socially aware and unwilling to talk about social issues. This is similar to Mulvey (1990)<sup>10</sup> discussion on traditional cinema, where the male character plays an active role while the female character is often passive, powerless and the object of desire of other characters.

### **Male-Female Relationship in the films:**

In the five films that have been studied, the protagonists are found to be using heroines as sexual object of love. The scenes where the protagonist and heroine are combined are mostly romantic and sexual. Most of the scenes are often accompanied by song footage. Thus, the male and female relationship only based on this context. In the social context in a society, women have more social relations life style, family life, social responsibility and empowerment.

### **Objectification in songs:**

In the five films that have been studied, the heroine transforms her appearances in song scenes compared to ordinary story scenes. In general story, most of the heroines wear sarees, chudidhars and modern clothes. In 'Gentleman' and 'Sivaji' movies, heroines wear sarees. But in the song scenes they are wearing aprons that are seductive in nature. In the films of 'I' and 'Endhiran', in casual scenes the costumes of heroines are seductive to audiences. In the scenes of 'I', the heroine is wearing lingerie and it is seen that the hero is unconscious. The scene of the heroine's costumes will be set as the comic talk of the movie. Similarly, in five films, sexually sensitive words have been placed about heroines based on her body parts, clothes and skin tone.

In all five films, scenes show the heroine body parts exposed when other men, including the protagonist, performing lustrous facial expressions. The movie heroines in the study are seen to expose the beauty to the men and enjoy it. It depicts women as the sexual objects for men. Protagonists are most closely acting in the song scenes with heroines in the five films that have

been studied. In this scenario, it is proven that the heroines are used in the screenplay of director Shankar to trigger the sexual feelings of the audience.

Mulvey(1990)<sup>11</sup>, Women are used as passive objects of the active male gaze. Their presence is meant to satisfy visual pleasure of heterosexual males on or off the screen. In this scene, however, she is neither passive nor submissive but is shown as a temptress seducing the hero, hence is used to satisfy the male gaze of the audience.

### **Conclusion:**

The films taken shows that the representation of women in Director Shankar's films are exaggerated, objectified and used as secondary characters to male protagonists. It is necessary to visualize the real life of women in Tamil cinema as women are making significant contributions to social development in the Tamil context. Film should represent women in more dignity and socially responsible manner.

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