



RESEARCH PAPER

Static Gender Representation in Pakistani Cinema 1947-1990

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ABSTRACT

The cinema of any country is the reflector of a society. Pakistan has a long history of cinema in which the country many superhit movies become the part of Lollywood history. Women are considered the part of film industry as their presence attract audiences to keep cinema halls crowded. The country like Pakistan social stature is very much influences film industry. This paper aims to investigate the different phases of film industry in which gender roles are constantly changes. It also highlights the social, cultural and political norms of country and the transformation of women roles from innocent ,shy to bold and beautiful. A lot of work has done on the history of Pakistani film industry but there is a gap about the women history in Pakistan cinema and the evolution of patriarchal norms to violent heroines who has weapons in their hands. National history of Museum has displayed the history of Pakistani Cinema through posters which is used the determine the themes of this research. It should be treated very carefully to convey the images of social layers and justification of a culture through gender representation. The archival material of history of Pakistan is also used to historical analyzed the data. Qualitative method is used in the research .These kinds of roles in films set a pattern in society to treat women negatively . The violence which is created on screen flow in the culture which is faced by women in general. It is need of the time to change the gender representation on screen and make more realistic film which can awareness in the public about women.

Keywords: Aina, Folk, Gandsa, Rural , Heer Ranjha, Honor, Lollywood, Violence, Ye Aman

Introduction

Film and cinema are considered the most powerful medium to convey the image of any society. It's a way of communication that combined the reality and facticity in both ways. In Pakistan , over 20 films are produced in a year. The average are very low compared to other countries. These are also low budget films which could not be compete to any other countries of the world. In Pakistani society women are normally treated as a 2nd grade citizen. So, this reflect in Pakistani Film as well. The images of women in Pakistani films are shy, low profiled, intro-ward and subjected to the desires of her father, brother and husband. Pakistani films have depicted women in Public and private domains. In public domain she would consider entertainer, dancer who entangled with villain. In private domain she portrayed a sister, mother wife who is the symbol of love and sacrifice. In early Pakistani films revolved around the needs of common man who mostly belonged to middle class and poor classes . He enjoyed cinema and all his imaginative construction of an ideal women fulfilled through cinema. The political conditions of Pakistan also effected Pakistani cinema and women roles in films.

Like in democracy film like *Heer Ranjha* was produced but in dictatorship the violence was promoted in films and women were seen with weapons in movies. The posters of the movies shows the presence of female with weapons through which they attract the audience to the cinema halls. Films in other regional language also follow the patterns of national cinema. (Ali, 2000) In Pakistani Cinema the construction of gender through films, its posters and other modes female body parts were utilized to attract general audiences into cinema halls and theaters. This kind of visual images create stereotypical picture in the minds of viewers which eventually affects a society. Woman in Pakistani films is symbolically used for pleasure and male gratification. (Nandakumar, 2011)

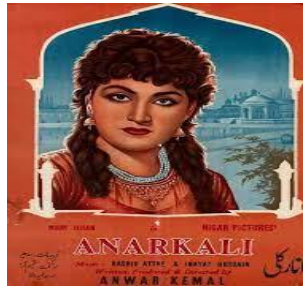
Literature Review

Cinema is considered a restricted area to research on that special Pakistan cinema. National history Museum fixed one corner for the history of Pakistani Cinema which helps Pakistani audience to see the posters of those films which were created after 1947. Pakistani Cinema by Mustaq Gazdar gives a detailed description of history of Pakistani Films from 1947 to 1997. (Gazdar, 1998) There are certain pieces of the books discuss the women in Pakistani Films industry. Love, war and other longings are more focus on the women or rather heroines in Pakistani film industry. These are the essays on cinema in Pakistan. (Ali, 2020) Cinema and society is the major reflection of women in cinema industry in Pakistan. A feminist representation of Pakistani cinema is the concrete work on the women. Narratives of gendered dissent in South Asian Cinemas by Alka Kurian, this work is the narrative of gender in South Asia region especially Pakistan. It disclosed how south Asian Cinema work. It's a deep study of film industry in South Asia. (Dicky, 2014) Donmez colin has worked on women, Islam and cinema. This work examines the relationship among women Islam and Cinema. (Donmez-Coin, 2004) Cinema and society: Film and social change in Pakistan is another work which helps to understand the social norms in a society. It is comprehensive analysis how religious values and country norms influence the portrayal of women in films. (Khan, 2016) Berkowitz give the view of a planned stimulus response model which shows effects on the viewers. It model assume that the viewers behaved in the same way as they have seen in the films. When individual seen the oppression in the have adopted the same model in society. The women are also treated in the same way as viewers seen in the films. Mia Loveheim examines media, religion and gender and its intersectional play can be visibly seen in Pakistani movies. She directly focus on Pakistani Cinema and its comparative studies in other south Asian countries. (Lovheim, 2013)

Movies are the mirror of a society. The patriarchal norms of Pakistani society overshadow the cinema in which female character are the supporters of male having the example of love, affection and sacrifice. She faced violence and her ultimate freedom is attached with the subjection of male.

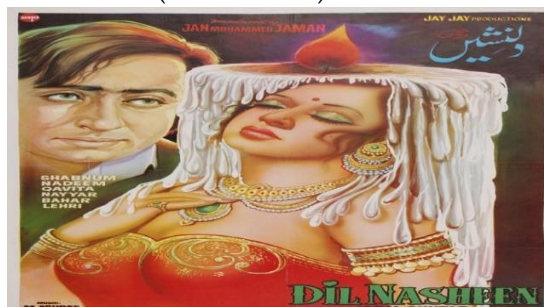
The female portrayal in Pakistani cinema is based upon the patriarchal norms of society which are normally revolves around the masculine power. Pakistani society is a male dominated society in which male is the active being and female is passive one. She is subjected the desire of male in every sphere of life. There are certain diatomite in the women roles in Urdu and Punjabi films. They are strong and same time weak; she is wise and selfish and sometimes hidden, sometimes visible. But chastity is a major criterion through which all the female gauge in Pakistani films. Another image of a bad women such as prostitutes in Pakistani films. A prostitute is beautiful, bold, aggressive and enjoyed the company of bad men. (Kapur, 1996)

In early films of Pakistan Madam Noor Jahan actor cum singer , Swaran Lata were the female stars. Lack of funds, facilities, technicians first film Teri Yad was made. It was the birth of Pakistani Cinema, but this film was a complete disaster. Sabiha Khanum was the first heroine of Pakistan whose film was hit with Santosh kumar. In 1950 a film Do Ansoo was released. This was the first hit film of Pakistan. Dupatta film was directed by Sibtain Fazili and Noor Jahan was in the lead role . Poster of this film showed the acting skills of Noor Jahan. Chanway was directed by Noor Jahan , a first film was directed by female. In 1955 film Jagga directed by Saqlain Rizvi. A women-oriented film named as Sassi reached to golden jubilee status and Umer Marvi also done good business. These films were based on the folk stories of Punjab. (D.Kazi, 2006)



Mussart Nazir starrer movies Yakkay Wali represented a woman who disguised herself in male to find out a work in male dominated society. A strong woman who faced the world with courage and bravery. It also flash the idea that women could not get work freely in the society like Pakistan. Noor Jahan and hero Sudeer became very popular after the release of Anarkali. This film shows the typical grandeur of Mughals . A Punjabi film Mustana Mahi was portrayed the folk culture of Punjab and women in folk tales Pakidtan. The face of Pakistani film industry was changed during 1960.

The state ideology of Pakistan was initially constructed on the Islamic tenets which influence the public and private life of Pakistanis at every level. The foundations of this country laid on the need of a land where Muslim could exercise their religion. Film Saheli (friend) discussed another concept of woman based on the friendship of two women who fell in love with the same man. They are ready to sacrifice their love for each other. A known name of Pakistani cinema Riaz Shahid emerged in film industry in 1960. His superhit film Shaheed was released in 1962. This film deals with the subject of colonial designs to capture the oil of Arabs. The character of a dancing girl Laila was performed by Mussrat Nazir , a beautiful and bold woman who dealt in the tune of Habbi Hayya Hayya. Apparently, she was a bad woman but in later stage she became the part of Nationalist movement. She committed suicide to fail the British designs. She poured oil her clothes and jumped into the well . This kind of strong character become popular in Pakistani cinema. (Rosen, 1986)



Armaan was released in 1966 and it was vivid picture of a wealthy girl who lived her lusty relatives, and she became a maid in her own home. This film highlight woman as an oppressed creature. Woman normally keep her sorrows and take the guilt of

another woman very easily. No one asks to male why they have borne illegal child ;it is always a woman who is questionable before society about the legitimacy of the child. Although everything happens with the consent of male and female. In 1970 , the courtesan become the subject of film. In Anjuman this role was given to known actress Rani. The hero Asif was taken up by charming hero Waheed Murad who fell in love with a prostitute. This movie has beautiful songs picturized on Tawif Rani who was the leading lady. The family of hero was ready to forgive his son Asif , the hero for his love with prostitute but they were not ready to accept a prostitute as the woman of their house. This public and private domain of woman's role justification typically is the sign of feudal society where the woman is always considered commodity and those women who are free from the domain of "Chadar and Chardawari" their status is degrading by the males. Film Chokari was released in 1967. (Rizvi, 2014)

Riaz Shahid often introduced novel concepts in the film industry of Pakistan . Film Ye Aman was the project of Kashmiris those who lived in peace as they are Hindus and Muslims . The heroine role was played by Nisho. The issue of sectarianism was dealt with complete honesty in this film. When Indian army invaded her home, she convinced her father to cut off his tongue so he could not be able to speak for freedom as her tongue so she could play the role of a freedom fighter successfully. During 1970 Shabnam and Nadeem were the most hit couple of Pakistani films who had given many superhit films to Pakistani film industry. Their movie were love stories having few hit songs and class struggle to get the girl like Chakori and Aaina. The character of the woman was the pet example of love and sacrifice in the emotional conflict of love and happiness. Film Qurbani is based on such type of character. Muthi Bar Chawal also depicted woman as the strong supporter of her man through thick and thin of his life. One misunderstanding between male and female make the character of the woman doubtful. Sangdil film is the typical example of that kind of misunderstanding between male and female. (Do Women Have Significant Representation in Pakistani Films?, 2018)

Political situation in Pakistan always effect cinema like in Zia,s period was considered the dark age for Pakistani Cinema. A film Aina was released which showed the symbolical differences between Z. A Bhutto and Zia . This remain on the box- office 400 week and considered the most popular. Film in the history cinema. Punjabi filmed invaded cinema during 1980-1990. The classical Mulla Jutt was releases in 1979 in which Mulla helped the most oppressed women of his village. Due to the policies of censorship the violence was promoted in Punjabi film. The films remained incomplete without weapons and gandasa even the women also used it in films. This gandasa culture changed the looks and dresses of women in films . Women wear lachha in Punjabi movies and they also used the language of violence. Aurat Raj was a woman-oriented film but again a film which could not addressed the issues of the women in Pakistani Society. The future of Pakistani film was on the verge of decline. Average 40 films were made usually financed by the fil maker with single studios. Punjabi films of Pakistan have started the subjects of rural life, traditional norms and folk tales in Pakistan. Many heroines become popular with the particular images of bravery and strength who could fight against injustice. Anjuman is the most prominent actress of all times who with actor Sultan Rahi. Two of her movies were block buster in Pakistan. Chan Veryam and Sher khan. These film highlights the loyalty and honor of a woman. (R, 2023)



Punjabi films during 1980 revolved around the revenge and injustice and sometimes women are used for the price of revenge. As films are the mirror of society so movies during Marsha law depicts those resistance through this visual medium. The target audience of Pakistani film was middle class and poor section of society. Film either Urdu or Punjabi it does not make any differences. The used to sexual violence is very common especially in Punjabi movies. The movies like Josh and Anjuman depicts these kinds of inhuman treatment. The most important debate is to portray woman as weak creature who does not her own existence , she has needed the support of a male. This weakness create an image of otherness. Sexual abuse and murder are the subjects deals in Zinda Bhaag and Armaan. These movies shows that hurting, pushing, hitting and slapping to a woman is normal in Pakistani society. This kind of physical violence leads towards murder is very much common in Punjabi films. (Ayesha, 2015)

Women were depicted as model, the reality-based gender representation can be seen in few Pakistani films. The cultural and human values are neglected. The lifestyles of films like pubs, discos, parties were normal during 1960 -1980 films which were ended on the glammers scenes or dances in Urdu films. In the early years of Pakistani movies were more mature realistic and female body were respectability represented but later era these images were distorted. The social and political environment of the country may lead towards change of woman image in Pakistani cinema. Pakistani culture was not object to be displayed and sometimes Pakistani fil maker copied the female costumes from cinema across the borders. But the body of female and her white skin always remain the fashion of Pakistani Film industry. (Shah, 2016) There are certain problems which women are facing in Pakistani Cinema:

- Stereotypical roles in which she is the helpless damsel as a dutiful wife and sacrificing mother.
- Female roles are only focused on their body shape and appetences rather than their cinematically skills and acting abilities. The beauty standard are rather high in Pakistani film industry. Women are more decorative objects as mere a normal woman.
- The woman character are not diversified in Pakistan. Their on-screen depiction is very less as compared to male character.

- The casting couch is very much common not only in Lollywood but the other film industry of the world. Female are harassed and they have to pay the price for one role in the advertisement and in a film.
- Pakistani film industry is dominated by males. Women voices are unheard, and it is difficult for them to advance further.
- There are certain cultural and religious constrains which hamper the abilities of a woman to become an actor. This profession is considered the profession of prostitutes and women of respectable families are not allowed to opt this.

Conclusion

Although the situation is changed after 1990 as Pakistani film industry was near to collapse. The output of the films was dropped from 100 to 40 with a single studio. Sultan Rahi was murdered. Anjuman did not appear in Films. Sangeeta put hold on her career due to the death of Nazar-ul-Islam. These factors led towards the decline of Pakistani film. Pakistani movies were revived after 2003 when new scripts were introduced and created a space for women to work . Woman oriented movies like khuda ket liye, Bol, Dukhtar and Verna were made. More progressive and enlightened director like Shoaib Mansoor has started versatility in Pakistani Cinema. But it was very difficult to say that cinema was revived as Pakistan is still producing the low budget films. As Pakistani tv dramas are more popular in public and better in quality of work and screening not only in Pakistan but abroad. Pakistani industry has a long run to go to create a better cinema and quality work for gender in and off screen.

Recommendations

- Woman oriented movies must be produced, and this profession should be considered a better profession for females in Pakistan.
- Pakistan need more female directors .
- Large scale modification are required in Pakistani film industry like new technologies, new scripts and professionalism.
- The representation of gender may be better through the awareness and education.
- Creation of more space for women in public sphere can make a difference.

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