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Women's lead Roles in *Blockbuster* Hindi Movies (2013): A Content Analysis

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Abstract:

Hindi cinema has been successful in portraying Indian women of different shades in a society dominated by patriarchal values. This paper deals with representations of women characters in Bollywood movies (Dhoom3, Chennai Express and Krrish3). This is a qualitative analysis research paper, the roles given to female characters in Hindi cinema and quantitative study to explore the manner of presentation of women characters in Bollywood. In this paper, conventional roles of lead heroine in top ten grossing Bollywood movies at the Indian box office in 2013 is considered. Content analysis of the lead actresses of the three highest grossing Bollywood movies at the Indian box office in 2013 is done. Movies are ranked according to the domestic net collection of the movies. Movies are classified as (1.) All time Blockbuster (2.) Super Hit (3.) Hit.

Keywords: *Bollywood movies, Chennai Express, Content analysis, Dhoom 3, Indian Box Office, Indian culture, Highest grossing, Krrish 3, Women characters*

1. Introduction

Cinema is meant and believed to entertain, to take the viewer to a world that is starkly different from the real one- a world which provides escape from the daily grind of life. Hindi cinema has played a major role in reflecting Indian culture. The pattern and style of cinema have changed and evolved ever since its beginnings. Hindi cinema influences the peoples' lifestyle as well. When it comes to projection of women in Hindi cinema, the topic remains debatable. It is often argued that cinema portrays women roles are restricted to being actor's girlfriend, mother, sister or wife. However, with progressing times women are also seen playing better roles like that of a corporate professional, successful entrepreneur, flourishing sportswoman and thriving pop-star to name a few. As most Indian movies are inspired from real life situation, it would be apt to say that portrayal of women in Indian Cinema reflects a lot on Indian women. Therefore, it is important to study the kind of women projection done through cinema in India.

2. Review of Literature

➤ Sowmya Nanda kumar (2012); her work on "The Stereotypical Portrayal of Women in Commercial Cinema", content analysis of highest grossing all time blockbuster hit film all the time. In conclusion this work found women in various forms in Indian cinema in stereotypic roles.

➤ Shyam Kumari and Shradha Shivani, (2007); "A Content Analysis of Female Portrayals in Indian Magazine Advertisements" since 1970's some research studies have been performed by the developed countries on portrayal of women in advertising though very few researches can be outlined in developing countries mainly in case of India. Methodology is content analysis, a total of 120 print advertisements were studied from the India Today, Femina and Auto car published during April 2011 to July 2011. The present study inspected the portrayal of women in Indian magazine advertising.

➤ Tere (2012) concluded that it is tough to come to a common conclusion when talking about the portrayal of celluloid women. The researcher identified that it is incorrect to conclude that women have been portrayed in alike manner.

3. Objectives

- To explore the total number of content on woman in blockbuster movies.
- To evaluate the total time provided to the contents of blockbuster movies.
- To analyze the manner of presentation of women in blockbuster movies.

- i. To understand prominence of roles given to female actors.
- ii. To explore the dimensions of women characters.
- iii. To find out the featurization of culture and cross culture through women character in blockbuster movies.

4. Methodology

Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (p.14). Content analysis is used for the purpose of measuring variables. It is an efficient way to investigate the content of the media. The description of this research will make it clear how the present research has been conducted. Researcher has adopted content analysis method for the study. This is a primary source of data collection. Researchers have selected three movies to evaluate the analysis of women lead roles in movies through qualitative approach. This is a qualitative analysis research paper, the roles given to female characters in Hindi cinema and quantitative study to explore the manner of presentation of women characters in Bollywood. According to dictionary.com, Blockbuster film can be defined as a motion picture especially one lavishly produced, that has or is expected to have wide popular appeal or financial success whereas Hit film is the film that has a strong impact on the audience. Collins dictionary defines ‘Super hit’ film as an extremely popular film.

4.1. Universe

Highest grossing movies, 2013 (all-time blockbuster hits) based on the revenue earned by the movies at the box office.

4.2. Sample Size

The All Time Blockbuster Hindi movies (2013), was chosen for the purpose of the research. This study can be expanded quantitatively. These movies were chosen since they still stand as the highest grossing movies, 2013 (All Time Blockbuster). There are 4 main actresses in these movies; all characters are playing the female lead opposite the male leads. Katrina Kaif (Aliya), Deepika Padukone (Meenalochni), Priyanka Chopra (Priya) except Kangana Ranaut (Kaya the supporting actress); have played the main female characters.

Following table shows the gross earnings in ₹ of all time blockbusters, super hit and hit movies in 2013.

Rank	Film Names	India ₹	Worldwide Gross ₹	Verdict
1.	Dhoom 3	280 Crore	553 Crore	All time Blockbuster
2.	Chennai Express	226 Crore	424 Crore	All time Blockbuster
3.	Krrish 3	240 Crore	375 Crore	All time Blockbuster
4.	Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani	190 Crore	309 Crore	Super Hit
5.	Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela	113 Crore	202 Crore	Super Hit
6.	Bhaag Milkha Bhaag	108 Crore	126 Crore	Super Hit
7.	Race 2	98 Crore	162 Crore	Hit
8.	Aashiqui 2	78 Crore	110 Crore	Hit
9.	Special 26	73 Crore	103 Crore	Hit
10.	R... Rajkumar	69 Crore	102 Crore	Hit

Table 1: Gross Adjusted Earnings in ₹, of All Time Blockbusters, Super Hit & Hit Movies

Source: <http://www.filmsite.org/boxoffice.html>

5. Tabulation and Data Analysis

These still stand as the highest grossing movies, 2013 (All Time Blockbuster).

Film names	No of actress	Name of Actress	Movie Characters names
Dhoom 3	1	Katrina kaif	Aaliya
Chennai Express	1	Deepika Padukone	Meenalochni
Krrish 3	2	Priyanka Chopra & Kangana Ranaut	Priya & Kaya

Table 2

Name of the Movies	Duration of the Movies (Minute)	Woman Centric Movies	Total Time Given to Actresses to Play Their Roles	Number of Leading Female Actors in Movies	Total Duration of Songs Picturised on Woman
Dhoom 3	02:57:25	No	00:20:57	1	00:08:27
Chennai Express	01:35:29	No	01:10:06	1	00:22:26
Krrish 3	01:52:54	No	01:29:25	2	00:28:14

Table 3: Frame of the Movies

Table 1 depicts the frame of the movies in which total duration of the movies, woman centric movies, total time given to women actors in these movies and duration of songs picturised on woman. The biggest blockbuster Dhoom3 was of longest duration i.e. of two hours and fifty seven minutes and twenty five seconds whereas Chennai Express the second highest blockbuster was of one hour thirty five minutes and twenty nine seconds i.e. seventeen minutes twenty five seconds shorter than the third highest blockbuster krrish3. None of these movies were woman centric movies. The longest time duration given to woman to play role was in Krrish3 for one hour and twenty nine minutes and twenty five seconds in which two woman were picturised and then in Chennai Express for one hour ten minutes and six seconds and twenty minutes and fifty seven seconds in Dhoom 3. Two woman played different roles in Krrish3 and one was in Chennai Express. There were five songs in Krrish3 which were picturized on woman which were of duration of twenty eight minutes and fourteen seconds and five songs of twenty-two minutes and twenty six second duration were picturised on woman in Chennai Express and two songs of eight minutes twenty seven seconds were picturised on woman in Dhoom3.

Names of the movies	Woman in Leading roles	Woman in Supporting roles	Total
Dhoom 3	1	0	1
Chennai Express	1	0	1
Krrish 3	1	1	2

Table 4: Prominence of woman characters

Table -4 describes the role of woman characters in the top blockbusters. There were two female characters in Krrish3; one in lead role and other in supporting role whereas in Dhoom3 and Chennai Express only one female character was present in a lead role. No female character was in supporting role.

Women characters	Dhoom 3	Chennai Express	Krrish 3
Wife	0	0	1
Mother	0	0	0
Wife+Mother	0	0	0
Social activist	0	0	0
Singer	0	0	0
Fiancee	0	0	0
Dancer	0	0	0
Girl friend	1	1	0
Working Woman	1	0	0
TV actress	0	0	0
Patriot	0	0	0
Superwoman	0	0	1
Policewoman	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

Table 5: Types of women characters' in movies

Table-5 describes the types of characters woman has played in the movie.14 types of characters were categorized via Mother, daughter, girlfriend, sister, superwoman, singer, social activist etc. out of the 4 heroines in all the movies only one actress has played role of wife that is in Krrish3 while the other two leads in Dhoom3 and Chennai Express has played role of actor's girlfriend. Only the biggest blockbuster Dhoom3 out of all has shown working woman which is a very small percentage. The supporting actress has played superwoman in Krrish3 which was a very dominant role played by a woman.

Name of the movie	Educated	Decision Making	Confident	Love	Strong personality	Career interested	Ritual followed	Religious/ God fearing	Not mentioned
Dhoom3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Chennai Express	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Krrish 3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 6: Dimensions of women characters'

Table-6 shows the personality of the female characters portrayed in the movies. All of these blockbusters project educated, confident, filled with love and decision making strong personalities. None of these movies projected religious woman the one who followed only rituals except Krrish3. This data shows a very remarkable finding that with changing times stereotypic character of woman is being broken by the society. Today's society believes in woman and their never ending powers. They are given equal status as now a day women are educated and they are given decision making power. They are ambitious interested in making career and are strong personalities. They Love, care and are confident enough to fight with any situation they come across.

Names of the Movies	Before Positive/ after Negative	Before Negative/ after Positive	Positive + Negative	Positive	Negative	Not Mentioned
Dhoom 3	0	0	0	1	0	0
Chennai Express	0	0	0	1	0	0
Krrish 3	0	1	0	1	1	0

Table 7: Shift of women characters' in movies

Table-7 explains the art of living of the women characters' projected in the movies. The leads in biggest blockbusters i.e. in Dhoom3 and Chennai Express and Krrish 3 were shown in positive roles. The supporting woman character in Krrish 3 was projected in negative role but the character turns positive afterwards. This shows the woman are considered nice and taken positively.

Name of the movies	Slightly objectionable	Objectionable	Highly Objectionable
Dhoom 3	0	1	0
Chennai Express	1	0	0
Krrish 3	1	0	0

Table 8: Characters portrayed in objectionable ways

This table 8 identifies the women characters doing objectionable scenes. The highest grossing blockbuster Dhoom3 had single scene in which the female character did lip to lip kiss scene which is covered under the category of objectionable scene whereas in Chennai Express and krrish3; kiss scenes were there which are considered under slightly objectionable scenes. None of the movies projected actresses doing highly objectionable scenes like bed scenes, under water romantic scenes and nude scenes. This table tells that to be a blockbuster and to leave an impact on audience woman need not to be portrayed as an object. They need not to play nude scenes or shown involved in bed scenes. They should be projected normal.

Name of the Movies	Smoking	Drink Alcohol	Appear in Item Numbers	Highly Interactive with Other Man	Flirting	Sexual Relationship before and after Marriage	Other
Dhoom 3	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Chennai Express	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Krrish 3	0	0	1	1	1	0	1

Table 9: Presentation of Non- Virtue (Presence on Screen)

Table-9 represents the presence on screen through which woman character was projected. None of the movies demonstrated woman indulged in smoking, drinking alcohol and sexual activity which behold women dignity. Dhoom 3 and Krrish3 showed woman characters that were highly interactive with other man. Only in Chennai Express which was a culture oriented movie did not show the female lead interacting with other male but character was very strong.

Name of the movies	Indian	Western	Indian + Western
Dhoom 3	0	1	0
Chennai Express	1	0	0
Krrish 3	1	1	1

Table10: Types of costumes worn by the women character

Table-10 shows costumes worn by actresses in these movies. Movie like Krrish3 has used western as well as Indian costumes both i.e. presence of cross-culture is there and actress in Chennai Express wore cultural dress while western wear was projected in Dhoom3. Majority shows that Indian cinema is promoting culture and cross-culture.

Names of the movies	Over Make-up	Make-up	Minimal make-up	No make-up
Dhoom 3	0	1	1	0
Chennai Express	0	1	1	0
Krrish 3	1	1	1	0

Table 11: Grooming style of women characters in cinema

Table-11 illustrates the grooming style of women characters. Every lead was in full make-up whereas in Krrish3 supporting actress was shown in over-makeup. This shows that actresses are projected in bold look emphasizing fashion industry. Today the film industry promotes the fashion industry blindly using women.

Name of the movies	Good	Vulgar	Abusing	Mutual
Dhoom 3	1	0	0	0
Chennai Express	1	1	1	1
Krrish 3	1	0	0	1

Table 12: Manner of the used languages by the women characters

Table-12 describes that lead female roles in all the blockbusters used good language to communicate. But movies like Chennai Express and Krrish3 also projected women using abuse words which are against the Indian culture and even vulgar language was used in Chennai Express. This shows that cinema is changing its trend. There is a pragmatic shift in the roles given to women from a stereotype to self dependent, confident and aggressive women.

Name of the movies	Rich	Poor	Before Rich after Poor	Before Poor after Rich	Middle	Not Clear
Dhoom 3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chennai Express	1	0	0	0	0	0
Krrish 3	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 13: Economic status of women characters in movies

Table -13 depicts that with the changing economy of India where a movie is made in a very high budget; women are represented rich and are equipped with every facility according to the technology. In Dhoom3 the economic status of the actress was not clear but the way she dressed and addressed other characters in the movie showed that she belonged to a rich or upper-middle community. This data shows the financial strength of women.

Name of the movies	Inspiring	Casual	Romantic	Sad	Dramatic	Patriotic	Theme	Item
Dhoom 3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Chennai Express	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
Krrish 3	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1

Table 14: Appearance of women in songs

This table represents women appearing in total songs. In Dhoom3 female character performed in total 2 songs out of 7 songs; one dramatic and one item song. In Chennai Express 5 songs (total 7songs) were there having female in them, songs been casual, romantic, dramatic, theme and item songs respectively. Krrish 3 had 5 songs in which female actresses performed which were of inspiring, romantic, sad, theme and item category. This shows that movie makers prefer female actors more in their songs in order to capture audience attention.

Names of the Movies	Marital	Single	Engaged	Live in Relationship	Widow	Not Mentioned
Dhoom 3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chennai Express	0	1	0	0	0	0
Krrish 3	1	1	0	0	0	0

Table 15: Relationship Status of women in movies

Table 15 depicts the relationship status of women in these movies. It identifies 1 married female in Krrish 3 and three unmarried females in all of these movies. The married female character played the lead role and the unmarried female character played supporting role in Krrish 3. The remaining two actresses who played lead roles in Dhoom 3 and Chennai Express are identified as unmarried.

6. Findings and Conclusion

- There is a pragmatic shift in the roles given to women from a stereotype to self dependent, confident and aggressive women.
- It is identified that out of the three Blockbuster Hindi Movies of 2013, there is not even a single movie which is women centric. Krrish3, Dhoom3 and Chennai Express were super hits and all three of them were male centric stories.
- The types of characters played by woman actors in these top Blockbusters movies are stereotype character like a mother, daughter, girlfriend, sister, wife, singer and social activist except one character who played as superwoman.

- iv. All of these blockbusters project educated, confident, filled with love and decision making strong personalities. None of these movies projected religious woman the one who followed only rituals except Krrish3. This data shows a very remarkable finding that with changing times stereotypic character of woman is being broken by the society.
- v. Women are mostly shown in positive characters in top three blockbusters of 2013. The only woman character that was shown in negative character in is only that Krrish3 also turns positive; therefore women are portrayed in happy and positive forms.
- vi. The onscreen presence of women in these movies did not show women indulging in any kind of obscenity or other objectionable matter. It shows how women can play strong roles without indulging in anything which is not accepted by our society.
- vii. None of the woman was projected in any kind of smoking, drinking alcohol, and sexual activity which sometimes become necessary in times where everyone works together and share symbiotic relationship.
- viii. The dressing senses of female characters of these movies promote culture and cross-culture both.
- ix. The top three Blockbusters of 2013 shows that film directors prefer female actors more in their songs in order to capture audience attention.

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