

Media and its Power in Cultivating Social Growth

Bollywood on its Mission to Serve a Bigger Purpose

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Abstract

Crime against women in India has risen faster than most of the countries around the globe. Once known for its spiritual side, India now is among the ten most unsafe counties for women. From the time of Swayambars where a woman was given the right to choose her groom from the befitting lot of man, it is the time now when she is accused to be raped or molested for choosing a dress of her choice and the place she wants to visit. However, the truth is, in India, be it an infant or an old lady of seventy, no one is safe. Whether in Burkha or in jeans no attire can ensure her security. With time and years of civilization these crimes has increased from a total of 2,13,585 reported cases in 2010 to a total of 3,37,922 cases in 2014 as stated by the National Crime Record Bureau. Cases of molestation and eve teasing have become so common that it has turned to be a part of a girl's daily life. Dirty comments, objectionable gestures, blinking of eyes, songs and even pinching and groping are few among the numerous tortures that girls face day in and out. While some get reported, others form a part of the dreadful memory that a girl suffers in her subconscious mind. On top of that, since it is a completely patriarchal society, so the victim is at times questioned for enjoying her fundamental rights of expression, speech and movement.

1.01 Introduction

While much has been said, written, debated and discussed about this disturbing problem by the creative fraternity of writers, mass media and social workers; another very efficient and effective creative lot has done just the opposite and inspired these acts of real life through their reels. Bollywood, the biggest entertainment industry in India, which inspires and captivates its audiences have not only failed to educate the mass in this case but have taught them more vulgarity and triggered the sense of superiority in man. Objectifying women

and treating them as mere eye ball catcher in its films, many film-makers have earned money and an unsafe society for the girls and women in India. However, only the contemporary films of this era cannot be blamed in this regard, it started way back from the modern era with films where women were given negligible roles compared to men. The films of Raj Kapoor sometimes had provoking posters that showcased women in wet and transparent saris and attracted a lot of viewers. The trend was set and paid of well, so it continued. Later on rape scenes became a vital part of the films, and some films showed that a way to give justice to the victim was to get her married to rapist. So, that for the rest of her life the victim can go through the same tortured both mentally and physically. Days passed and improvisation were done, now films have dirty dialogues, item numbers and disturbing lyrics that were repeated on streets. Sometimes the whole film is based on such vulgarity and even sequels of such films are made which no doubt do well. Example films like Kya Kool Hain Hum, Kya Super Kool Hain Hum, Masti, Grand Masti. Not sure of men but very few women would enjoy such degradation, the consequences of which she has to face in actual life. Whatever, people see on screen, the type of women or the portrayal of women, they regard it as the truth and form a notion that every women enjoys such vulgarity.

It is definitely upon the audience to decide what to take in and what not but in a country where the literacy rate is considered directly proportionate to education, such common sense and logical reasoning cannot be ensured. In a country where boys from childhood are taught that they are superior if not through words but action, films should be made to break this notion and not make them. Film fraternity has this one excuse of saying that the script demanded such dialogues and the item songs. First of all such scripts should not be made and secondly songs can be changed. Item numbers can be chucked off at any point as none of the item numbers seem to have any relevance with the storyline and are just included for the purpose of glamourizing and attracting the cheap audience who shout and whistle at the lady displaying vulgar moves in minimal clothes. One should remember the audience also includes ladies who feel extremely uncomfortable and disgusted at such gestures. Songs like Ab karunga gandhi baat (R Rajkumar), dialogues like Pyaar se samjha raha hu samajh lo, warna thappad mar kar bhi samjha sakta hu (Dabaang) teach the innumerable fans of Salman Khan and Shahid Kapur that if the stars can threaten the ladies and it's a flaunting of manliness than even they can do it in real life.

1.02 Discussion

With power comes responsibility and the influential power of films of Bollywood is not a debatable issue. The idealizing of film stars and following whatever they do in terms of fashion, way of speaking and copying in every manner is not a new phenomenon in India. So, just criticizing the society without using the power of creativity to teach and preach will not help in any way. Films can do better, and inspire the youth. Only making women-centric films will not help the society which has already reached a point of complete distraction. Now, is the time to make films which are educative, which has strong message of shedding the

superiority complex of the only physically stronger gender. To undo the blunder done and make films that negates the age-old portrayed image of woman. While entire degradation of the society cannot be blamed on the film fraternity, it cannot claim to have done its share of improving the society as well. So films like 'Pink' that solely deal with issues relating to crime against women and portrays the biased attitude of the society should be made often on. This film is a trend setter and just needs to be discussed in this context.

1.03 Case Study on Pink (Dir: Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury)

Cast: Amitabh Bachchan as Deepak Sehgal, Taapsee Pannu as Meenal Arora, Kirti Kulhari as Falak Ali, Andrea Tariang as Andrea, Angad Bedi as Ranveer Singh, Tushar Pandey as Vishwa, Raashul Tandon as Dumpy, Piyush Mishra as Prashant Mehra

The film opens with a suspense wherein Ranveer, is seen bleeding and is taken to the hospital by his friends and simultaneously three girls are seen returning home in a cab. One of whom has blood stains on her. Later it is revealed that one of the girls Meenal had hit Ranveer who was an influential politician's nephew and who tried to force himself on her. The situation turns worse when Meenal refuses to apologize for her act due to which she gets abducted and molested by Ranveer's friends in a car. On top of that she is arrested for acting in self-defense and hitting Ranveer. The actual story starts in the courtroom where Deepak Sehgal a retired advocate puts across Meenal's and her friend's case and in this process brings out the plight of women in Indian Society.

The film is graced with some very powerful dialogues that seem straight from the hearts of the women. Like one that made the girls win the case "No means No" as said and explained by their advocate. This dialogue completely opposes the dialogues that were delivered in previous hindi films like the one- "Ladki ki na mein bhi hain hoti hain" which means 'Even when the girl says no, deep down inside she means yes'. Such dialogues are very dangerous as the consumer of this thought feels that if he tries and persuades a girl then eventually she will give in as deep down inside she likes him but is shy to accept his proposal at the first go. This leads to stalking, blank calls and when after that things don't fall into places molestation and finally acid attacks follow. Other important factors that the film discusses are the ignorance of people about northeastern states and their representatives in big cities. Girls of northeast are thought to be easily available just because they look smart and have a modern sense of dressing. Also a very important factor of supporting or rather defending the man or boys in Indian society even if their actions are condemnable was brought forth. The mean-mindedness of people who hold the girls themselves responsible for being raped and molested saying that she wasn't dressed properly or was in an unsafe place and the notion that drinking, being friendly and wearing western outfit are indications that a girl gives to invite boys for intimate sexual relations were negated and logically laughed at. Lastly, it was concluded by saying that if a girl says 'No' irrespective of the fact that she's a minor, an adult, one's wife or even a sex worker, a person should get the message and back off immediately because a 'No' has no other connotation and it means just 'No'.

This film worked as an eye-opener for many, however, only those who have a conscious and could see through the pain a girl passes through the commendable performances portrayed by the characters, can or would have learned a lesson. Others would remain the way they are and find faults in the script or say it was an exaggeration of events.

1.04 Conclusion

From the above inference, one might deduce that just like good educative films cannot guarantee to disseminate effective lessons to all the individuals in a society, same can go with the films that disseminate vulgar ideas or objectify woman. Logically enlightened people will take in whatever is good from a film and will negate the rest. Here, it needs to be remembered that the individual under scrutiny is not the logically enlightened one, but the one who swallows a message without using his logical reasoning which in cases one doubts whether he possesses at the first place. One such film may not serve the purpose but just like years of diminishing portrayal of women has made even the leaders of the country question her integrity, making of bulk of such good educative films in this regard can bring in some change. Furthermore, films like Pink might not be able to educate all sections of the society but films that objectify women or have objectionable dialogues can definitely motivate the irrational minds to increase their dreadful activities because such people tend to relate to negative things and copy it faster than they would imitate a good act. The society has already gone to the extent that women have to carry pepper sprays, chili powders and even knives in their handbags. In such a scenario, just sharing their grieves on social media will not enhance the glory of the film fraternity, they need to undo what they have done in years and be bold in taking credibility for this. Or else, the time isn't far when 'mass molestation' a term shamefully invented in India, may lead to 'mass destruction' a revolution by the creators of a society all over the world 'The Women'.