'SECRET SUPERSTAR': RETHINKING IDEOLOGY OF MUSLIM WOMEN AS DECISION MAKER IN BOLLYWOOD CINEMA

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Abstract: Cinema is intended and thought to entertain, to take the audience to a new world that is basically different from the real one, it's a place which helps people to escape from the everyday grind of life. Film is a popular media of mass consumption, which plays a key position in moulding belief, transferring ideas, constructing reality and reinforcing dominant cultural values in the society. Movies taught us several things, which go to our unconscious mind. This preconceived thought of the male trigger to portray women as a selling object, weaker sex, pessimistic and a normal housewife. It is very difficult in male dominant film industry to overcome these stereotypical margins. Secret superstar is one such movie that breaks our very idea of gender bias and religious tolerance. Being it a girl or women, this movie portrayed women as a decision maker against all odds in life. This paper deals with representations of female characters in mainstream Bollywood cinema "Secret Superstar" and how they are depicted on screen is critical in decisive the furtherance of already existing stereotype films.

Keywords: Portrayal of Women, Decision Makers, Bollywood, Stereotype, Cinema.

Introduction: Cinema is a popular medium, which reflects our cultural values in all possible ways. Especially when it comes to customs and ritual practice it takes utmost care to replicate the originality. It also acts as a liaison between thoughts and practices. In India more than 1000 films are released every year out of this approximately 200 and odd from Bollywood. Unlike other regional film industry Bollywood industry has national market and wide reach. Women centric films are not common in Indian cinema. We occasionally watch such films portraying women as decision makers. Gorgeous women are always a need in cinema industry and they get only little space to prove their talent. They were offered glamour doll roles, emotional feminist role or damsel in misery roles.

Stereotypes of Muslim Women in Indian Cinema Identity may be a crucial issue for Muslim females as they are frail in power ratio. However it isn't the power, quantitative relation solely in fact it can be applied in every aspect of life, it may be domestic or, social or professional. Muslim women are generally considered as the cultural and moral carriers of their community thought they are not considered as guardians of it. Thus when we watch a Muslim woman in a movie, they are marginalized twice - as a female and a representative of minority community. On viewing Indian Hindi movies from 1980's until recently, the audiences and critics observe that Muslim women are stereotyped. They are proprietary to be mothers, devoted daughters, dedicated or compliant wives who do not question the authority of their male counterparts.

Review of Literature: Most of the films in India are gender biased it exalts male and deflates female. Sometimes it underplays women based on values, customs and religion. Gender refers to dividing up people based on sexual identities (Beasley 2005). Relationship between men and women are emphasizing the social construction and social ordering. Social institution defines gender roles and it tells them what to do and what not to do. How to react over emotion and other circumstances are various things people learn from a given society. Products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our identities, our sense of selfhood, and our construction of ethnicity, race and nationality, of sexuality and of 'us' and 'them' (Dines and Humez, 2003) Women working in film industry are comparatively minimal may be a reason for gender biased story. The director very idea of portraying women is based on his belief, attitude and value. What viewers want to see comes from social frame work. The dominant religion and social settings restricts a director to make women

centric films. The director should identify a strong conflict and a magical solution to deliver women centric films. The producer and directors decides one concept that is commercially viable and most of the time they play a safe role in character sketching. India with diverse culture and beliefs restricts Bollywood cinema directors coming up with revolutionary ideas. Since, it has got national level market and big budget. The representation of women and the representation by women on screen are essential for understanding the interplay between women and cinema in India (Gokulsing and Dissanayakae, 1998). Based on individual will and their choice we can analyze the representation of women in Indian cinema.

Cinema is merely a reflection of our society and sometimes over exaggerating irrational contents to the audience. In recent years, Women have made great progress as entrepreneur, politician, doctors, and engineers and so on in cinema. We could see films like No one killed Jessica (2011), English Vinglish (2012), Kahaani (2012), Gulaab Gang (2013), Queen (2014), Mardaani (2014), NH10 (2015), Angry Indian Goddessess (2015), Neerja (2016), Dangal (2016) featured women playing key role in the story. In this year one more feather added to the crown is "Secret Superstar" which portrayed Muslim women as a decision maker.

Film and Media have created the concept of cultural identity and personalized ethnic group with illusion (Datta 2000). In her study, the view about women's movement and struggle for an egalitarian society brought women from the boundaries to the center of their texts and paying attention to feminine subjectivity. Some Women filmmakers such as Aparna Sen , Deepa Mehta, Vijaya Mehta and Aruna Raje have shown women as protagonist, highlighting their social and sexual identity and these directors have exposed immense interest in creating films where they address troubles and hardships faced by women from the women perspective.

But this film *"Secret Superstar"* is directed by Advait chandan, who has taken the reference from the episode of Satyameva Jayate - TV programme which addresses real life incidents. The inspirational incident has drawn the fictional story with the reel life heroes. The changeover in a family prototype has positioned women from inferior to superior positions; Women limited to domestic and motherly roles are changing gradually and playing some motivational roles. Only few film makers trying to change the stereotypical portrayal and defining a new beginning in relation to commercial cinema.

Objectives:

- To study the depiction of Muslim women in Indian Cinema.
- To analyze how Muslim religious values and norms are carried in contemporary films.
- To study the scope of Muslim women representation as decision makers.

Theoretical framework and Method: The analysis of film is based on qualitative research; we have chosen the narrative method for analyzing the film – 'Secret Superstar', where we have also tried to study the story in definite cultural and social frameworks.
"Narrative analysis is particularly concerned with understanding the narrative conventions on which the stories draw and, in doing so, deconstructing the ways in which audience are being asked to make the sense of contact"

Plot of the Movie – Secret Superstar: Secret superstar story is all about Insia and her dreams. The story starts with exploring Insu's amazing singing talent. Whose passion is partially fulfilled by her mother through contemporary technology (YouTube) masking Insu's identity by burqa (Veil). Insu becomes famous as secret superstar by posting videos in YouTube. Shakthi kumar a boisterous musician identifies and helps Insu to become a playback singer by offering a song and also helps to find solution for her mother Najma to get away from domestic violence.

Character and Characterization: Characters are fictitious or real persons that think act or are acted upon in a narrative. The narrator can explicitly provide information about the character or can provide information that implies things about a character. Characterization is the many ways that characters are constructed for the audience. Najma a married woman devoted to her husband and Insia a fifteen years old teen girl passionate about her dreams and very much attached to her mother. Farook the husband character suppressing opposite sex (wife & daughter) in all incidents. Chintan's a friend and a lover. And finally Shakthi kumar initiating the Insia's journey determines the climax of the story. A perfect character sketch helps audience to travel along

with the story. The screenplay of the story and the performance of these characters make this film a blockbuster movie.

Analysis and Findings: The concept of narrative is one of the main textual strategies used by seemingly very difficulty texts to represent reality. By studying stories that social groups produce, we can gain insight into the way culture functions. Culture is organized through Narrative way. Tzvent Torodov's (1978) concept of narrative structure which deals with Formula:

<div align="center">

Equilibrium ➔ Disruption ➔ Reinstated

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The story start with from point of stability or equilibrium, the story moves into a phase of disruption before stability is renewed. The Narrative's resolution may pass judgment on the preceding events, deciding who was really guilty and innocent or who was truly in love or that things are better now, or that they have returned to normal. Here plot is what does the signifying and story is what is signified by plot.

The story of Secret superstar starts with a song of dreams and shows typical life style of Muslim family at Vadodara (formally known as Baroda, Gujarat State). Insia, a young girl an excellent singer and guitarist with full of dreams. The intense love of Insia's mother and the caring Chintan friendship sets equilibrium in the story. The disruption starts with the introduction of Insia's father violent behavior while having dinner. Audience are put in toes by succeeding conflicts created by the father character by hitting her wife for selling jewels, by breaking the laptop, by cutting the guitar strings and finally by planning her daughter marriage for his own benefits. And this creates a disruption in the story and leads to reinstating by protagonist. The corrective action is initiated by Insia getting help from his friend chintan and Shakthi Kumar (Music director). The normality of the story is carried by Najma (Insia mother) character by breaking the boundaries of her violent husband and fulfilling her daughter wish. In this film we could see the challenges faced by women in a conservative Muslim family. And how a wise decision can revolutionize women is no more a slave to men.

According to Vladimir Propp (1968) there are functions which can be employed to analyze all narrative forms.

All stories are identical in some form and starts with introduction. Insiya's introduction in train with guitar and amazing singing skill and her public display conveys that she is capable of doing something unflinchingly. Chintan admiring behavior and helping tendency shows that he plays the donor role. Najma introduction with bruised face and concealing act reveals that she belongs to a conservative family playing helper role. The introduction of Farookh (Insiya father) character and his facial expression, rigid behavior reveals that he is the villain who disrupts normality. Shakthi Kumar a boisterous musician plays a dispatcher role and fulfill Insiya dream by offering a song.   All these characters help us to understand the extensive details the ways in which stories are structured.

Discussion: The approach is to recommend the Indian cinema to expose role of Muslim women not be used as good looking female in the films rather she should be a successful , ambitious , educated women. The status of Muslim women under the community is constructed as virtuous women, maintain with religious practices, inferior in career orientation and lower in education level. So in future, Hindi cinema should re-construct Muslim women in high ranking in education and label them as successful in career. The portrayal of Muslim women in "secret superstar" has surely changed and jolted the conservative ideology. Cinema is the medium that reciprocates in bringing a social change (Ruchi & Manju, 2013). It's true that cinema has adverse effect in changing our perception. The duty and responsibilities lies in the sensible presentation of creators.

After looking at the general plots of the film *Secret Superstar* in the following section we examine the identical processes of Indian women having outfit in representation in cinema. We will look out how gender is organized by culture and interrelated with social relations; the significant point in cinema reflects those revealed facts and shows woman as a victim or as an agent. The subjects of rebellion, empowerment, education, decision making are the themes related to their outfits.

Fig. (a): A scene from The Film Secret Superstar Directed by Advait Chandan

Basically females from Muslim religion has very limited rights to empower themselves in normal middle class family. Insia, a intelligent girl, who want to achieve her goal as a Singer out of her obstacle with valuable support from mother using *You Tube channel* as a tool to showcase her talent *Fig.(a)* . Technology an empowering tool to safe guard and uplift the weaker sex in the society is something new to the audience. As a daughter, she wants to save her mother from her abusive father, who is a bread winner of the family and this ideology gives feminist view from the Insia's character. Her Mother Najma, is uneducated women who want to make her daughter empower her dream by gifting laptop helps her to shine as a superstar and also plays an inferior to her husband in family. In the climax scene, Najma loved so much her daughter and her obedience. Make her to think and protest against her husband's suppression and harassment. A transformation within and a decision by signing divorce paper made herself as rebellion from submissive women, and her thought as feminist . She decided to empower her daughter to participate in award ceremony. The award ceremony and recognition of guilty winner is an innovative idea.

Fig (b): A Scene from Secret Superstar Film

She invites the secret superstar to come to the stage and take the award. Insia hesitation and her happiness are blend and hidden behind the hijab. She finally reveals her identity live on television, and dedicates her award to her mother. The film touches all the subjects of outfits such as rebellion, empowerment, education, and also a decision maker. The editing approach is also an important tool that the director used effectively to convey the story. Advait chandan has captured what he had in the script and also extracted the best performances from the acting cast Fig(b).

Conclusion: The movie succeeded to overcome gender biased character sketches from typical film script. The climax scene in which the "Insia" unveiling her Hijab metaphorically reveals that she came out of religious hurdles. It is not only a creative idea but it is also a revolutionary thought to support women from minority section. The main aim of this cinema helps women to shape their ideas over harassment in religious context. It also brings social change in treating women and giving equal space for their dreams. Women as a decision maker in films is a good thought not often produced and addressed in films. The judiciary solutions for divorce also represents strong message for those who supports triple Talaq system and such type of portrayals is a welcoming sign in film making. Thus, this film fought for social injustice and women empowerment by portraying them as decision makers.

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