

Content Analysis of Item Songs: Reflections of A Toxic Socio-Cultural Milieu

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Abstract: The present paper is based on the premise that the item songs in bollywood movies are the worst reflections of the identity of women. Movies are a popular form of mass media and they play a key role in moulding opinions, constructing images and reinforcing dominant cultural values. The structure of the "lyrics and the dance moves" in the item songs objectify the females in the most degrading ways. In the present paper content analysis was conducted on 15 Item Numbers over the span of 23 years. Considering the over popularity of the item songs, and its corresponding impact on culture; it is crucial to analyze and interpret the lyrics and dance moves portrayed in the Item Songs. The primary themes of the Top Item Songs were analyzed and they include: the glorification of criminal activities, self objectification, dismemberment, Materialism, high libidinal drive in women, the sexual objectification of women etc.

1. Introduction

Sexual objectification is the treatment of an individual similarly as a body, an encounter of being treated as a body which is dominantly introduced as an article for the joy of men or prevalently for the consumption of male look (Fredrickson, & Roberts, 1997). Regarding an individual as an article is a difficult marvel as opposed to a tricky issue which can cause obliteration of positive picture of women in the public eye.

India is a big nation in south Asia which is considered as one of the exceptionally populated nation on the planet. Women are over half of its complete population in the nation. In Urban as well as in rural regions of the nation, women are demonstrating their valuable role and progress in various fields of their own and expert lives. At the other hand India has been appraised as the most exceedingly awful nation for women. In one of the biggest population based nation of this world, one lady is assaulted in every 20 minutes. As indicated by Indian National Crime Record Bureau Statistics, sexual violence against women have been expanded to 71% since 2010.

There are many research already found about hindi cinema about how it works, what is the culture behind it, but a very few are based upon objectification of women by the media and its impact upon women in real life. Each period of media had its portrayal of women, however they were kept to a great extent to the conventional, patriarchal structure of the Indian culture.

An item number, in an Indian movie, is a song in the movie that is shown as a part of the film yet in most cases with no significance to the plot of the film. In the previous genre of bollywood films, songs and move groupings were made to offer the crowd a reprieve from the story. Today these item numbers are made with an intent to satisfy the male desire by objectifying women and the purpose is solely commercial.

On one side the feminist perspective glorifies women and talks about gender equity and on the opposite side, bollywood (which is viewed as the powerful mechanism of media) delineate ladies ruled by a man centric culture and utilize corrupted language for them specially in the Item songs. The paper means to inspect types of mistreatment against ladies in songs that are not addressed and deliver language as Item songs which is degrading the position of females in the public eye. Today's world where we talk about our privileges and equality, yet we have overlooked how to ensure it. Everybody appreciate Item Songs for the sake of entertainment and fun however never acknowledge about its projection on the screen. It's not about accusing men or women, yet it's about accused our thinking which should be remodeled.

Movies are considered as a stress reliever for many people, and to give audience break from their hectic schedule; it acts as a source of fun and entertainment. Movies are a mainstream medium of mass usage which assumes an urgent job in molding opinions, building pictures and fortifies authoritative social qualities among the majority. Regardless of the advancement that Bollywood films have made and the expanding openness in the movies, things haven't changed much for Indian women, as objectification of women still the same as in the vast majority of the Indian films. The content analysis of the movies have been conducted and comes with the result how women are being objectified and still earns billions in the Box Office.

First thing to be talked about is patriarchal belief system behind the film writings to feature the subjection what's more, sexual objectification which incites sexual violence against women. In this way, under the umbrella of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) objectification hypothesis and Laura Mulvey (1975) Male gaze hypothesis, the content has been done in the point of view of women's activist theory.

2. Research Methodology-

The study utilizes unobtrusive methods to analyze how decay of society portrayed by item songs of the Bollywood movies. Common themes are identified from the lyrical and Visual content. In analysing the data,

content analysis was used, which is an examination of non-interactive data that exists independent of the research (Hessey-Biber and Levy, 2011:228). The analysis was conducted on the lyrics and the visuals of fifteen Item songs. Only the most popular fifteen Item songs with more than a Million views on the You Tube were analyzed. For each of the songs that was collected into the dataset, the lyrical content was read, heard and watched. The lyrics used and the dance moves were analyzed and some general themes emerged. The purpose of this was to find specific phrases in the lyrics, identify similar patterns, and combine the lyrics into specific categories according to the use of these phrases.

Table 1: The 15 Item Songs selected for analysis over a span of last 23 years representing the social and cultural contexts of last 3 decades.

ITEM NUMBERS	YEAR	MOVIE NAME	VIEWS ON YOUTUBE
Dhak Dhak Karne Laga	1992	Beta	4.1 crores
Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai	1993	Khalnayak	15 crores
Tip Tip Barsa Paani	1994	Mohra	2 crores
Tu Cheez Badi Hai Mast Mast	1994	Mohra	5.7 crores
Chhaiyaan Chhaiyaan	1998	Dil se	12 crores
UP Bihar Lootne	1999	Shool	2.3 crores
Munni Badnaam Hui	2010	Dabangg	9.6 crores
Do Dhari Talwaar Yaar	2011	Mere Brother Ki Dulhan	6.6 crores
Chikni Chameli	2012	Agneepath	18 crores
Fevicol Se	2012	Dabangg 2	19 crores
Aa Ante Amlapuram	2012	Maximum	2.7 crores
Ghaziabaad Ki Rani	2013	Zila Ghaziabaad	3.6 crores
Pinky Hai Paise Walon Ki	2013	Zanjeer	1.1 crores
Baby Doll	2014	Ragini MMS 2	12 crores
Afgaan Jalebi	2015	Phantom	14 crores

This specific method was chosen for this research because of its importance in conducting a thorough analysis. When addressing a qualitative question about the content of a music genre, simply relying on the research of others is not nearly sufficient enough to obtain any true credibility on the topic. The only way to do so, is to first understand the body of research that is available on the subject, and then take it a step further into conducting ones' own analysis.

3. Results And Analysis-

From the Collection, Coding and Analysis of the data, the eight major themes emerged. The following results will highlight how the societal decay is depicted in the themes of these Item Numbers.

Table 2: The Coding of the Selected Item Songs

ITEM NUMBERS	CODE
Dhak Dhak Karne Laga	IN1
Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai	IN 2
Tip Tip Barsa Paani	IN 3
Tu Cheez Badi Hai Mast Mast	IN 4
Chhaiyaan Chhaiyaan	IN 5
UP Bihar Lootne	IN 6
Munni Badnaam Hui	IN 7

Do Dhari Talwaar Yaar	IN 8
Chikni Chameli	IN 9
Fevicol Se	IN 10
Aa Ante Amlapuram	IN 11
Ghaziabaad Ki Rani	IN 12
Pinky Hai Paise Walon Ki	IN 13
Baby Doll	IN 14
Afgaan Jalebi	IN 15

Table 3: The Eight Themes which emerged after the Analysis of the Visual and Lyrical content of the data

Major Themes	Item Number Codes
The glorification of criminal activities (Gang Culture, Use of Weapons, teasing, chasing and assaulting Females etc)	IN2, IN4, IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN12, IN13,IN15
Self Objectification in Females	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN10, IN12, IN13, IN14, IN15
Sexual Objectification of Females	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4, IN5 ,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN10, IN12, IN13, IN14, IN15
Dismemberment	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4, IN ,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN10, IN12, IN13, IN14, IN15
Materialism	IN2,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN11, IN13,IN14, IN15
High Libidinal Drive in women(Easy Availability of Females)	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4 ,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN10,IN11, IN12, IN13, IN14, IN15
Filthy / Obscene / Suggestive Language	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4 ,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN10, IN12, IN13, IN14, IN15
Promotion of Alcoholism/ Drugs	IN4,IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9, IN10, IN12, IN13, IN14

Dhak Dhak Karne Laga
Mora Jiya Darne Laga

This item song has been taken from the movie Beta (1992), sung by Anuradha Paudwal. After this item number Madhuri was named as the "Dhak Dhak Girl" of Bollywood industry. Madhuri's dance moves and chemistry with Anil Kapoor made this item number a hit success. The moves in this song reflect Sexual and Self objectification of the character. Dismemberment of the breast is visible in all the dance moves. High libidinal drive and suggestive language was present in the lyrics.

Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai?
Chunri Ke Niche Kya Hai?

This item number taken from the movie Khalnayak (1993), sung by Alka Yagnik became a rage in the year 1993. The lyrics was extremely suggestive and the item numbers Choli ke Piche/neeche kya hai explicitly allude to the body portions of a young woman. Its foul verses and revolting portrayal of women became debatable. The words "Kuk kuk" in the particular song are irrelevant and they are followed by a few other indecent lyrics. The song glamorizes the gang culture, alcoholism and violence. Weapons and Alcohol are freely displayed throughout the song.

Tip Tip Barsa Pani
Pani Mein Aag Lagayi

This item song has taken from the movie Mohra (1994), sung by Alka Yagnik. This song featured Akshay Kumar and Raveena Tandon who were already the superstars when the movie was released. Their onscreen chemistry in this song increased their popularity and provided them more fame. In this song the female wore a wet saree and the dance moves which were very enticing pulled a huge crowd.

Tu Cheez Badi Hai Mast Mast

Tu Cheez Badi Hai Mast

The above item song has again taken from the movie Mohra (1994), sung by Udit Narayana Kavita Krishnamurthy. This is one of the famous songs which not only made the film successful but also shot the female actress to fame. This song can be considered a worst example of sexual objectification as well as self objectification of a woman. The female in the song is referred to as "cheez" which means an object in hindi. The indecent lyrics in the particular song indicates that the woman enjoying the high libidinal drive and her youth. It is portrayed as if she is too casual about her sexuality and she has a high value due to her attractive body. The song is again reflecting criminal activities and alcoholism. Despite of the vulgar moves and lyrics, due to its immense popularity, choreographer Saroj Khan got a Filmfare award for of the best choreography.

Main Uske Roop Ka Saudai

Wo Dhoop Chaav sa Harjaai

Wo Shokh Hai Rang Badalta Hai

Main Rang Roop Ka Saudai

The above lyrics has taken from the song Chaiyaan Chhaiyaan from the movie Dil Se (1998). The song was the super hit item number from 90's has 58 million views. It was the song which was used to be on the tip of the tongue of every kid of that particular time. Malaika Arora was dancing upon a train and Shahrukh Khan objectifies her waist was the signature step of that particular number. Though the lyrics of this sufi song is not objectifying but the dance moves can be regarded as self objectifying and dismemberment of the waist is very evident in the visual content.

Is Jawani Ki Saari Bahaar Lootne

Main Aai Hoon UP Bihaar Lootne

This item song which maximizes the self objectification of a female was selected from the movie Shool (1999), sung by Sapna Awasthi. The song portrays a woman who by virtue of her looks and sexuality believes that she can rob the states like UP and Bihar. The vulgar moves, gang culture, alcoholism abuse and the male gaze were present in the complete song. The lyrics degrades and highly objectifies woman on the screen who is shown to bask in the glory of the male attention which is showered upon her beauty.

Munni Badnaam hui

Darling tere liye

This item song has taken from the movie Dabang (2010), sung by Mamta Sharma and Aishwarya. The female character is shown to be proud of being infamous due to her association with a gangster. The notorious men, alcohol, gang culture, indecent lyrics and vulgar dance moves were available in abundance throughout the song. The film became highly popular and a lot of credit is attributed to this Item number.

Nainon Se Karti Hoon Takraar

Main Do Dhaari Talwaar Yaar

The item song was taken from the movie Mere Brother Ki Dulhan (2011), sung by Shweta Pandit and Shahid Mallya. The lady in this Item Number is considered as deadly as a weapon due to her looks. She is being sexually objectified and considered to be valued for her high libidinal drive and sex appeal.

Chikni Chameli Chhup ke akeli

Pauwa chadha ke aayi

This item song has taken from the movie Agneepath (2012), sung by Shreya Ghoshal. This Item song is glamourizing materialism, sexuality, alcoholism and substance abuse. It is the height of sexual objectification, self objectification and easy availability of women for sexual pleasure. The actress is drawing the attention of men towards her different organs like waist and eyes. She is happy comparing herself to intoxicating substances.

Mere Photo Ko Seene Se Yaar

Chipka Le Saiyaan Fevicol Se

This item song has taken from the movie Dabangg2 (2012), sung by Mamta Sharma and Wajid Khan. In the item number the lead actress Kareena Kapoor Khan was saying to the guy to stick the photo of her in his chest with the fevicol and compares herself with the chicken and alcohol to be consumed by men. She objectified herself and is trying to prove that she is desired by the masses and has more intoxicating properties than a bottle of whiskey. She confesses that she is readily available for the man and would please him by all means.

Aah Ante Amlapuram,

Aa Ante Aahapuram

This item song has taken from the movie Arya (2012), sung by Malathy Laksham. In this song girl is referred to as "nuclear bomb" or "patakha" by males. It resembles, calling them "bomb" is the new form of saying that they look excessively hot.

Jisko Bhi Dekho Saala Pichhe Pada Hai

Ghaziabaad Ki Rani Hoon Main

This item song has taken from the movie Zila Ghaziabad (2013), sung by Mamta Sharma and Mika Singh. In this song the lady is being called “maal” or item. People are throwing themselves on the lady and teasing and chasing her. The female is enjoying the male attention and is seducing men with her moves and attractive body.

Arey Mumbai ki na Dilli walon ki

Pinky hai paise walo ki

This item song has taken from the movie Zanjeer (2013), sung by Mamta Sharma and Meet Brothers. This song properly shouts to PINKY as an item, to be purchased by neither the people of Mumbai nor Delhi yet just by the people who are rich enough to buy her. Pinky has no qualms about dancing late in exchange of rupees or dollar. The suggestive lyrics and the seductive moves of the actress made the song very popular among the masses. The song however became very embarrassing for the girls with this name across the country as it is a very popular Indian name.

Ye Duniya Pittaal Di

Baby Doll Main Sone Di

This song has taken from the movie Ragini MMS2 (2014), sung by Kanika Kapoor and Meet Brothers. Young ladies love to be compared to as a doll yet they do not realize makes them fall into a category of objects. The girl referring to herself as a baby doll made of gold is self objectifying herself. The lyrics of the song are not as offending as the picturization of the song casting a porn star who is extremely self objectifying throughout the song. The song is the epitome of dismemberment as the camera keeps shifting the focus from one organ of the female to the other. This song which has high adult content was continuously appearing on the cable TV which is accessible easily to small children.

Afghan Jalebi Mashooq Farebi

Ghayal Hai Tera Deewana

The above song has taken from the movie Phantom (2015) was sung by Asrar and Akhtar Chahal Zahri. The lady in the song is being called an Afghan Jalebi (sweet dish) for the men. The song is full of men carrying weapons and they are portraying gang culture. In the lyrics the girl is being requested to show her face to the admirer who is in awe.

4. Conclusion/ Discussion

The following themes emerged after analyzing the visual and lyrical content of the Bollywood Item Songs. The glorification of criminal activities which includes Gang Culture, Use of Weapons, teasing, chasing and assaulting Females etc), Self Objectification in Females, Sexual Objectification of Females, Dismemberment, Materialism, High Libidinal Drive in women (Easy Availability of Females), Filthy / Obscene / Suggestive Language and Promotion of Alcoholism/ Drugs. The term Item song is used for songs which is a musical performance often shown as a part of the movie in the trailer but without any importance to the plot. It is often a catchy and a sexual dance performance by a popular actress who is called an Item girl. To attract audience the film makers are objectifying females, their character, their body-parts and regarding them as items. Even the highest paid female actresses to a degree have acknowledged this status and ready to self objectify themselves for money, career opportunities and popularity. The content analysis uncovers that the women in these Item Songs have simply been appeared as sexual items. The male look theory of Mulvey is well-suited here with the thought that the male gaze fixes upon the body of female characters and they are supposed to be styled accordingly. The female should confine herself as an object of male desire. The sexual objectification drives the male look from three measurements; from the perspective on male character, from the perspective on camera focal point and from the eye of male onlooker who take a gander at the female character by accepting her similarly as an object for her sexual wants. Under the overwhelming control of patriarchal society women will undoubtedly get their objectives by giving their body as an item for sexual fulfillment of male character and the audience. The item songs may appear even in the movies with a very strong cast and story line. These chosen examples of films or item songs are created by the well known film makers and best of the lyricist. This is probably to fulfill the demands of the predominant male audience who wish to see women in films and item songs as an erotic object of their sexual desires. This explains why the film makers believe that the objectification of women would be economically beneficial for their film. Women are treated as an entertaining sex object and sexual maltreatment and objectification which prompts misuse of women is viewed as necessary for the commercial success of the film. The sexual objectification of women in the media excites the sense of sexual maltreatment, sexual attack and other rough acts, for example, rape which in the light of the objectification hypothesis of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) is the most exceedingly awful effect of sexual objectification of ladies in media. These chosen examples of Bollywood item songs are discussed to highlight the fact that women are explicitly objectified in the Indian media. This inappropriate portrayal of women being teased, chased, stared and groped by men to some degree are liable for the inappropriate behavior of men in the society. Furthermore, rape and savagery against women in India is continuously on the rise. The country which is every now and then shook by gang rapes should be more careful while approving the content of the Item songs through the censor board. Even the Nirbhaya case which caught the attention of the world media could not bring any change in the condition of Indian women who continue to suffer due to unsafe conditions, perverted and patriarchal mindset (Sharma S. and Dubey M, 2021).

The media works for the sexual fulfillment of the males and often subtly encourages sexual hostility among men in the patriarchal culture. Therefore, such a sort of diversion is really implied for misuse of women under the patriarchal society. The study infers that the sexual objectification of women can incite the sexual violence against women. Most of these Item songs glorify the Gang culture as the Item girl is shown dancing among gangs of males who are holding weapons and indulging in drugs, smoking or alcohol. They are staring, shouting, teasing, groping and assaulting her without any resistance on her part. Though these Item Songs appear to portray women as very empowered and controlling the men on the screen the reality is absolutely contrasting. The truth is that these songs are a terrible, glorified and romanticized version of women in sexual roles. These women are just to serve as a sex object for male gaze, groping and teasing. The actresses in these songs perform provocative and sexual dances which are being applauded by drunken and lecherous men. The Item girl is often dancing alone surrounded by a gang of men who are falling upon her to grope or tease her. Munni, Pinky, Sheela and Chameli are very common names of Indian girls. After these Item Numbers their names become a source of embarrassment for them as they are often teased by others. The study suggests that the negative and dirty portrayal of a female should be reduced and a positive picture of women should be portrayed to the general public. The situation of women in society reflects how attitude towards females percolates from reel to real life. The way these songs extend beyond the films in which they appear show that media and society still finds it very natural to use bodies of women as a source of entertainment. One horrifying output is that females are accepting self objectification as a norm for gaining popularity, acceptance and success. The rapes, gang rapes assaults and crime against women point towards the need to reexamine these media portrayals which may negatively influence the socio-cultural milieu and make the world more toxic for females. Consequently, it is suggested that a constructive picture of women ought to be depicted through the movies or other media for improving their condition in this country which is still too unjust and unsafe for females.

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