

The stereotypical portrayal of women

[Countries](#), [India](#)



THE STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN COMMERCIAL INDIAN

CINEMA ----- A Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the
Department of Communications University of Houston

_____ In Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts _____ By

Sowmya Nandakumar May, 2011 TABLE OF CONTENTS Chapter 1

_____ 1

Introduction Chapter 2

_____ 8 Pilot Study

— Quantitative Methodology Chapter 3

_____ 19 Methods

and Research Questions Chapter 4

_____ 22 Women in

Indian Cinema: History, Socio-Cultural Factors and Women's Roles in Films

Chapter 5 _____ 44

The Great Indian Epics and Indian Pop culture - Character Prototypes in Epics
and Their Influence on Story Telling in Indian Cinema Chapter 6

_____ 54 Elements

that Encompass the Film Viewing Audience - The Film, Audience and Film,
Film and Other Media Chapter 7

_____ 64 The

Controversy over Films with an Alternate Storyline - Films Fire 1996 and
Water 2005, Directed by Deepa Mehta Chapter 8

_____ 72 Answering

Research Questions Chapter 9

	74 Discussion
— Objectification of the Female Lead Chapter 10	
	82 Conclusion
Appendix 1	85
Appendix 2	88
Appendix 3	92
References	93

Chapter 1: Introduction According to Census of India (2001), India has 22 official languages included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. In addition to these there are 100 other languages which are not included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. Of these 122 existing languages feature films are made in 20 of them. Ganti (2004) writes, "Feature films are produced in approximately 20 languages in India" (p. 3). The term "Indian cinema" therefore could refer to films made in any of these 20 languages. On the basis of the percentage of films generated, "the four South Indian film industries (Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada), that account for almost 60% of the films made since 1971 together represent the largest section of the Indian film industry" (Kindem, 2000, p. 37), followed by Hindi cinema or Bombay cinema, popularly termed "Bollywood" which produces "about 150 to 200 films of a total of 800-1000 films a year, 20% of the total number of films made in India" (Ganti, 2004, p. 3). According to Ganti (2004), Hindi films, though comprising only 20% of the film product of the nation, are the ones that circulate nationally and internationally dominating discourses on Indian film. Hindi film represents Indian cinema internationally and is regarded as the standard archetype to follow or oppose

(p. 3). This is because the principal official language of India is Hindi succeeded by English. Hindi is the national language of India, and in a country which has 22 official languages it is convenient to have one official Indian language, which is representative of India, and Hindi is that language. Therefore, Hindi feature films become representative of Indian films in any international forum. In the purely regional context of India itself, films made in Hindi are viewed across the nation owing to the commonality of this language. Therefore for the purpose of this paper, Indian cinema refers 1 to commercial films produced in Bollywood, in the national language of India, Hindi. According to Butalia (1984), Indian cinema is the single largest medium of communication with the masses, and close to 12 million people are watching films every week in cinema houses and theaters (p. 108). Considering that the film industry entertains an enormously large population, what and who this film industry is made of becomes an important question. According to Ganti (2004), Bombay film industry is a male-dominated industry. Women pursuing careers within the industry are primarily either actresses or playback singers. This trend has changed in recent years with women making their mark as choreographers, costume designers, editors and screenwriters but their numbers are still much smaller in comparison to their male counterparts. Very few women are lyricists or composers. While a handful of them have ventured into direction, they have not achieved the commercial success their male counterparts have (p. 94). Women are thus very sparse in number behind the scenes of this film industry. In an industry with so few women working within it, it seems fair to assume that the portrayal of women onscreen by male directors and other male professionals

will have gender biases and constraints and may not necessarily explore women's world views, perceptions and subjective realities. What roles women play onscreen is more often than not, the male director's notion of what roles women ought to be playing. This notion is based on the director's beliefs, attitudes and values, combined with what the director thinks viewers want to see. What viewers want to watch is something that conforms to their beliefs, attitudes and values, which come from the social framework within which they live, which is the same social framework in which directors, live. There has to be a consistency in the beliefs, attitudes and values of all those 2 involved. This is Milton Rokeach's beliefs, attitudes and values theory from 1968, in action. Each member of the audience looks for entertainment that conforms to an existing system of beliefs, attitudes, and values which come from a socio-cultural context in society. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2005), it is only when inconsistencies arise in this system of beliefs, attitudes and values, will there be dissatisfaction leading to change. As long as there is no inconsistency, a change in concept or perception is hard to arrive at (p. 80). This is exactly what happens to Indian film directors and to Indian cinema. It conforms to the existing structure because everyone seems happy with it, and it seems as though there is no dissatisfaction whatsoever in the way women are portrayed and so there is no need for the portrayal to change. Figure 1 - The vicious cycle in Indian commercial Cinema 4. Conform to Preferences & Meet Profit Margin 3. Directors' Preference 5. Audience happy to watch films that conform to their value system 2. Audience Preference 1. Socio-Cultural Framework and Power Structure 3 Figure 1 above illustrates the vicious cycle, and going further, the thesis will look at

how one of the many contemporary women directors have interrupted this cycle and the consequent impact of two of her films. The Socio-cultural framework, and power structures in operation in society, including religion, the Hindu religious beliefs, and the influence of Hindu epics and myths on popular culture, govern the tastes and preferences of the audience. Both these factors determine the directors' preference. Directors and producers have to make films that address audience preference and also meet their profit margins. Audience is quite satisfied to see films that uphold their value system and conform to it, because they live in that social value system. This cycle is hard to end but some revolutionary directors have tried to do so. In this thesis, I will look only at one such director, Canadian-Indian film maker Deepa Mehta and two of her controversial films. Her films *Fire* 1996 and *Water* 2005, created a public outrage upon release, because the earlier film portrayed women in roles completely non-conforming to existing patriarchal social norms (as lesbians) and the latter film portrayed the ills of the Hindu religion and the atrocities committed on Hindu widows in the 1940s, making a politically incorrect point. Both films stirred the anger of religious groups and resulted in riots across North India. *Fire* 1996 is the story of two women who by chance are daughters-in-law of the same household, in heterosexual marriages. However, their marriage equations with their spouses are unequal and a lack of the love, affection and space they look for in their marriages, drives them towards each other. They find the comfort and space they always lacked in their heterosexual marital relations, in the love relationship that ensues between them. The whole idea of women being portrayed as making this choice angered political parties, religious groups

and religious fanatics, who went about threatening to kill the director, smashing and 4 destroying the theaters and cinema houses that dared to screen the film. The film was banned from screening in the city of Mumbai, the center of the Bollywood film industry, and the entire state of Maharashtra where Mumbai is located. Water 2006, made by the same director, was thrown out of India even before it could be shot on location in 1Varanasi, a small town in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Deepa Mehta's set was destroyed and the film's cast and crew were driven out of the shooting locations by state religious factions. Water is a period film set in the 1940's in the pre-independence era when Gandhi's Satyagraha movement was the biggest social phenomenon in British colonial India. During this period widow remarriage was not common. Widows were considered unlucky and a curse on society. They were sent from the homes of their in-laws and parents to special widow homes. The treatment of one such child widow who is sent to a widow house in the small town of Varanasi on the banks of the River Ganges is the essence of the story. This child widow learns the hardships of widowhood as she observes another widow in her early twenties who is also confined here. Using the " holy" aspects of religion like the town of Varanasi and the River Ganges, to bring out the negative aspects of the religion was unacceptable to society, especially to politically affiliated religious groups who were able to mobilize the masses against this film. Riots broke out in protest against the screening of this film. Deepa Mehta, who was already a controversial figure in India after Fire in 1996, was given police protection when she came to India to film Water. Finally, she could not film there and had to go to Srilanka to make the film. Why did these two films wreak such

havoc? Is it the in-built patriarchal 1 Varanasi is the holy town of the Hindu religion and the River Ganges is its holy river. It is popularly believed that bathing in the River Ganga/Ganges can wash away all human sin and purify human beings to enter heaven. 5 propaganda that thrives in Indian society or is it religious and political propaganda? These questions will be addressed in detail later. Also, given that this decade has seen many changes in Indian women's roles in society, it is interesting to explore how much has changed in a male dominated film industry. During a telephone interview student of Sociology in Chennai, India, Smriti Nandakumar, states, I did my dissertation on women who pursue unconventional careers. In the process I interviewed women in the police department, women pilots, women lyricists, women assistant directors and many others who are in uncommon careers. I found it interesting and inspiring to note that a number of them actually had it hard on their way up and really had to challenge the pre- existing stereotypes inbuilt in society. It seemed to have been rough for them, but they still seem to have managed to reach the top and achieve their ambitions. They are all respected in their families and in society for what they have done. (personal communication, Jan 8, 2011) During the last decade, women in India have been fighting a bill for 33% seat reservation in parliament for women. Women in politics and other fields believe that this bill will enable more women to come to the forefront and represent the feminine population with greater empathy and sensibility, especially pertaining to women's issues. At a point and time with such political happenings, the representation of women in Indian cinema, is a significant issue. At a time when women seem to have broken free from the Indian home and family set-up into the world, and are

ready to challenge stereotypes, is this happening in the Indian film industry and the industry's portrayal of women in films? Are Indian films reflecting this changing social trend? These are questions worthy of exploring. 6 Since a large population watches Bollywood films, Bollywood cinema is a powerful mass medium of communication in India, and cinematic portrayals definitely are highly impressionistic, as this paper will later validate. What does this highly impressionistic medium communicate to the masses through the many stories that films tell? How does it portray women and what sort of messages does it send to the mass audience? The phrase "portrayal of women" could refer to both women pursuing film careers offscreen and actresses onscreen. The study focuses only on the onscreen roles of lead actresses. A reference to off-screen roles has been made above only to mention the context in which the lead actresses are working in the industry.

7 Chapter 2: Pilot Study — Quantitative Methodology Defining Stereotypes

Although this paper is primarily a qualitative analysis of the roles given to women in Indian cinema, a quantitative pilot study was undertaken to understand the operational definitions of the term and to check if the operational definitions conformed to the portrayal of women in commercial Indian cinema. The research question of this quantitative pilot study is - Were lead actresses portrayed in stereotypical roles in highest grossing blockbuster Indian films from 1960-2009? The question that will follow it for the purpose of this thesis is: In the last 64 years how have female characters been treated onscreen and how much of the treatment has changed today?

Method Content analysis of the highest grossing all time blockbuster hit film of each decade, based on their box office earnings as recorded by

boxofficeindia. com. In this website films are classified as (i) All time Blockbuster Hit, (ii) Blockbuster Hit, (iii) Super Hit, (iv) Hit, (v) Above Average and (vi) Average. In this thesis only the first three categories are considered. Table 1 below shows the gross adjusted earnings, by decade for films in categories one and three. It shows the highest figures for category one, and the lowest figures for films in category three, indicating the range between the highest and the lowest possible earnings for a film to belong to the blockbuster league. The figures for category two films are understood to be anywhere in between this range. For the purpose of the quantitative pilot study, one film from category 1, all-time blockbuster hits was chosen for each decade. Two Indian 2 These years were chosen because India gained independence from British colonialism in 1947 until which time the freedom movement was the country's top social focus and priority. Choosing films from 1960 onwards helps to look at films made in independent India assuming that after a decade of independence, art and culture earned greater freedom of expression, availability of resources and greater breathing space in society, devoid of colonial tensions. 8 coders, one man and one woman, both 26 years of age viewed the entire film. They coded the film by observing the actresses - their traits, characteristics highlighted, costumes, interaction with other characters etc. scene by scene. Table 1

Gross Adjusted Earnings in \$, of All Time Blockbuster and Super Hit Films (Indian Rupees to Dollar Exchange Rate: Rupee 1=\$44. 17as of Apr 10, 2011)

Decade	All-Time Blockbuster	Hit	Super Hit
1950-59	26, 556, 486 7,	677, 156	1960-69
1960-69	30, 040, 751 7, 840, 163	1970-79	36, 896, 083 (Sholay 1975)
1970-79	8, 397, 102	1980-89	19, 191, 759 7, 674, 892
1980-89	19, 191, 759 7, 674, 892	1990-99	70, 015, 847 4,
1990-99	70, 015, 847 4,		

620, 783 2000-09 64, 874, 349 17, 396, 422 2010-2011 42, 449, 626 28, 129, 952 Universe: Highest grossing films (all-time blockbuster hits) as listed by boxofficeindia. com, based on the revenue earned by the films at the box office Sample size and inter-coder reliability: The all-time highest grossing film of Indian cinema, Sholay 1975 was chosen for the purpose of this pilot study. This study can be replicated and expanded quantitatively. Two coders coded the film Sholay, based on the operational definitions explained below. This film was chosen since it still stands as the highest grossing film in Bollywood ever, adjusted to inflation. The following were the operational definitions of stereotype that I coined for the purpose of the pilot study. I arrived 9 at these operational definitions based on my viewing of several Indian films over the years, and an extensive survey of literature on the subject of portrayal of women in Indian cinema. Operational Definitions

Subordinate role function (Lead actress role defined in relation to male lead)
 Protagonist's Mother Protagonist's Wife Love interest of the male protagonist/girlfriend Aids male protagonist to achieve his goal Screen-time less than the male lead Alternative role function Vamp/courtesan dancer Night club dancer/bar dancer/cabaret dancer Prostitute/call girl Family ahead of self Compromises personal interests at least on one occasion for the sake of family Willing to put spouse/male protagonist ahead of her own interests Non-rebellious to established customs/social patterns Sacrifices for the sake of family honor/ family's social status Career orientation Home maker: Takes care of children, Takes care of in-laws Performs household chores Lives in a joint family No specific mention made of her career interests 10 Purity/chastity Never had a pre-marital affair/never has more than one lover

in the movie Portrayed as on following customs and rituals of her respective religion Always conforms to set traditional values pertaining to marriage, prayer, religion, rituals Pious/devoted Very religious/God fearing Shown as performing religious rites/offering prayers in the " puja" (prayer) room/temple Symbolism of virtue (Presence on screen) Does not smoke Does not drink alcohol Non-flirtatious Not highly interactive with men (except her family or her love interest) Does not make sexual advancements Does not appear in an ' item' number (a cabaret dance, a night club dance) Appears in traditional Indian costumes for majority of her role screen time

Objectification Tribal costume Rain dance Behind the bushes scene Framed in sensuous ways: if she is wearing a low back blouse then framed in a way as to show that back or waist Appears in revealing clothes: (exposing large part of thighs, back, waist, pelvic region None of these - Appears in a completely " non-stereotypical" role 11 Appears as a vamp or courtesan dancer Breaks tradition, rebellious Atheist and/or agnostic Other roles in which woman does not conform to any of the above mentioned stereotypical categories Results There were 2 main actresses in the film, each actress playing the female lead opposite the 2 male leads. All scenes in which either of them and/or both of them appeared were coded as per the categories by 2 coders. The two actresses were coded separately. The following tables are the individual coding sheets of the two coders followed by the consolidated coding sheet. Coder 1 data has been presented in table 1; coder 2 in table 2; and the consolidated coding sheets of both coders is table 3. The coders simply had to answer Y for yes and N for no, for every given characteristic trait. If they found that trait to be present in the character for a scene, they

would have answered yes (Y) and if not, they would have answered no (N).

The following pages have the tables, which were the coding sheets of the

two coders. 12 Table 2 Coder 1 — Stereotypical Traits Found in Characters

Basanti and Jaya Representation of Women in commercial Indian Cinema

Name of film Coder # Scene # Rs. 162. 97 Crores Genre CBFC Rated Action

+ Many other A/U elements Basanti Serial # Amount Grossed 1975 1 Name

of Character Year of release Sholay Subordinate Alternative Role Family

Ahead of Role Function Function self Career Orientation Purity/Chastity Pious

Symbolism Objectification of Virtue None of These Y N Y Y Y Y Y Y 13 18 19

23 24 25 28 29 30 33 35 42 43 44 45 50 Y N Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N Y Y Y Y N N N

N N N N N N N N N Y Y N N N/A Y N/A N N/A N/A Y N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A Y Y N/A

Y N Y Y N Y N/A N N N/A N N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N N/A N/A Y N/A N/A N/A Y Y Y

N/A N/A Y Y Y N/A Y N/A N/A N/A Y N/A N/A Y Y N/A N/A Y N/A N N N/A N/A Y Y

Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N/A Y Y N/A Y N N Y Y N N N N Y Y N N Y Y N N Total # of Y's

14 2 5 3 8 4 14 6 0 Total # of N's 2 14 1 6 0 2 0 10 0 % of Stereotypical

Portrayals 88% 88% 31% 19% 50% 25% 88% 38% 0% Career Orientation

Purity/Chastity Pious Answers tending to stereotype 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 Name of Character Jaya Serial # Scene # Symbolism

Objectification None of these of Virtue Y N Y Y Y Y Y Y 14 16 17 20 23 25 27

37 38 40 46 49 Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N N N N N N N N N N N N/A N/A N/A

N/A N/A Y N/A N/A Y Y N/A N/A Y Y Y Y N/A Y Y N N Y N N N/A Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y

Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N/A N/A N Y N N/A Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N/A N N N N N N N N N

N N N Total # of Y's Total # of N's 12 0 0 12 3 0 7 4 11 0 7 2 11 0 0 12 0 0 %

of Stereotypical Portrayals 100% 100% 25% 58% 92% 58% 92% 0% 0%

Answers Tending to " Stereotype" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Subordinate

Alternative Role Family Ahead of Role Function Function self 13 Table 3

Coder 2 — Stereotypical Traits Found in Characters Basanti and Jaya

Representation of Women in commercial Indian Cinema Name of film Year of

release Amount Grossed Sholay Coder # Scene # Genre CBFC Rated Action

+ Many A/U other elements Basanti Serial # Rs. 162. 97 Crores 2 Name of

Character 1975 Subordinate Alternative Family Ahead Role Function Role

Function of self Career Orientation Purity/Chastity Pious Symbolism of

Objectification None of These Virtue Y N Y Y Y Y Y Y 13 18 19 23 24 25 28 29

30 33 35 42 43 44 45 50 N N Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N Y Y Y Y N N N N N N N N N N

N N N N N N N/A Y N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A Y N/A N Y Y N/A N/A N N N/A

N/A N N/A N N N N/A N/A N N/A N/A N/A Y N/A N/A Y N/A N/A N/A N/A Y N/A

N/A N/A Y N/A Y N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A Y N/A N/A Y Y N/A N/A Y N/A N/A Y N/A

N/A N/A Y N/A Y N/A Y Y Y N/A N/A Y Y N/A Y N/A Y N N Y Y N N N N Y N N N N

Total # of Y's 13 0 4 1 4 5 9 3 0 Total # of N's % of Stereotypical Portrayals 3

16 1 7 0 0 0 12 0 81% 100% 25% 6% 25% 31% 56% 19% 0% Career

Orientation Purity/Chastity Pious Answers tending to stereotype 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 Name of Character Jaya Serial # Scene # N N

Answers Tending to " Stereotype" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Subordinate

Alternative Family Ahead Role Function Role Function of self Symbolism of

Objectification None of these Virtue Y N Y Y Y Y Y Y 14 16 17 20 23 25 27 37

38 40 46 49 Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N Y Y Y N N N N N N N N N N N Y N/A N/A N/A

N/A N/A Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N/A N/A Y N/A Y Y N/A Y Y Y Y Y Y N/A Y N/A Y Y Y Y

Y Y Y Y Y N/A Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y N N N N N N N N N N N N Total

of Y's 11 0 7 8 10 11 12 0 Total # of N's % of Stereotypical Portrayals 1 12

0 0 0 0 0 12 0 92% 100% 58% 67% 83% 92% 100% 0% 0% 14 0 Table 4

Consolidated Coding Sheets — Stereotypical Traits Found in Characters

Basanti and Jaya Representation of Women in commercial Indian Cinema

Name of film	Name of Character	Scene #	Amount Grossed 1975 Rs.
162.97			

Crores Genre CBFC Rated Action + Many A/U other elements Basanti Serial #

Year of release Sholay Answers tending to stereotype CODER #1 CODER #2

% of Stereotypical Portrayals % of Stereotypical Portrayals Name of

Character Scene # Pious Symbolism Objectification of Virtue None of These Y

N Y Y Y Y Y Y 88% 88% 31% 19% 50% 25% 88% 38% 0% 81% 100% 25% 6%

25% 31% 56% 19% 0% Jaya Serial # Subordinate Alternative Family Ahead

of Career Orientation Purity/Chastity self Role Function Role Function

Answers Tending to " Stereotype" CODER #1 CODER #2 % of Stereotypical

Portrayals % of Stereotypical Portrayals Subordinate Alternative Family

Ahead of Career Orientation Purity/Chastity Role Function Role Function self

Pious Symbolism Objectification of Virtue None of these Y N Y Y Y Y Y 100%

100% 25% 58% 92% 58% 92% 0% 0% 92% 100% 58% 67% 83% 92% 100%

0% 0% Firstly, both actresses together (individually and in unison) appear in

26 out of 50 scenes, which is about 52% of the entire film, much less than

their male counterparts who appear in almost all of the 50 scenes. Second,

lead actress Basanti appears in 16 out of 50 scenes, which is 32% of the film

and lead actress Jaya appears in 12 scenes, 24% of the film. The screen-time

for the actresses seems low in comparison to their male counterparts who

appear almost 100% of the film. Both actresses have been portrayed in at

least one or more stereotypical categories throughout the film barring a few

occasions. The category that is the highest is the subordinate role function

and the category that is the least is the alternative role function supporting

my corollary that blockbuster Indian films will not portray the lead actresses in alternative (non-stereotypical) role functions. The second highest category is the symbolism of virtue. The next two highest categories tending to the stereotype role are family ahead of self and purity/chastity -- though coders 15 agreed on these categories there seem to be greater differences between the coders in these two categories more than any of the others. While one lead actress seems to have been objectified, the other lead actress seems to have not been objectified at all and there is 100% coder agreement on that. Similarly, in the category of career orientation, one lead actress seems to have been portrayed in a completely stereotypical fashion while the other also tends to the stereotype but is not a complete stereotype. Both coders agree 100% that there was not a single scene that did not portray the lead actresses in at least one of these stereotypical categories. Overall, the numbers corresponding to each category by both the coders were balanced. If they had been on either extreme of the spectrum, then the hypothesis would not have been supported. But the coding results were balanced as shown in the tables above. The overall result suggests that the lead actresses are frequently portrayed in stereotypical roles for the most part of the film. The hypothesis that the lead actresses are portrayed in stereotypical roles in blockbuster Indian films is supported for the highest grossing film in Indian film history, Sholay 1975. This method could well be applied to other blockbuster films, which will help ascertain if the hypothesis will be supported for highest grossing blockbuster films over the last fifty years. This pilot study has been included in the qualitative analysis of the subject only to emphasize that even if a mathematical and quantitative

approach is undertaken, it is more than likely, that the results will match the current study, ascertaining that women are more frequently portrayed in stereotypical roles in Indian commercial cinema. A detailed look at a film such as *Sholay* 1975 supports the point of view that women do not have defining and empowering roles. Mulvey (1975), quoting Budd Boetticher writes, 16 What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance. (p. 9) While it is apparent that women have been portrayed in stereotypical roles including the role of the vamp, there are certain censorship norms that films had to conform to and these norms came into being in the 1930s, during the primary stages of Indian cinema. According to Shah (1950), the Censor Board prohibited films and/or scenes that explicitly represented passion and love, indelicate sexual situations, immorality, first night after marriage, brothels, prostitution, illicit sexual relationships, etc. While a number of rules may have been relaxed in recent years, the basis of these rules remain the same and to that extent influence the portrayal of women in popular Indian cinema, ensuring that roles conform to the existing socio-cultural framework. This thesis explores how patriarchy imposes certain roles on women. Why are women's roles in films stereotyped; where these stereotypes come from and what they mean to Indian society and film? The subject of this thesis can be placed within the framework of a number of theories. The first of them would be Milton Rokeach's (1968) beliefs, attitudes and value theory, which has been explained in the introduction chapter of the thesis. Other

psychological theories, including Leon Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and Laura Mulvey's (1975) psychoanalytic theory which are at play in Indian society, have been elaborated, in context, in the course of the paper. Since cinema is a mass medium of communication, the idea of satisfying the masses by providing them with entertainment that caters to their needs is fundamental to this industry. Blumler & Katz's (1974) uses and gratification theory which emphasizes on what people do to media is also at play in the Indian film industry and will be further explored in the following chapters. The other dynamics in operation are the persuasion theory of alter-casting, the psychological dynamic of implicit stereotyping, and Gramsci's concept of hegemony (1930s), all of which have been in subliminal operation in society and culture leading to repetitive female stereotypes in Hindi cinema.

18 Chapter 3: Methods and Research Questions Methods This paper begins with a quantitative pilot study, specifically with a content analysis of an all time blockbuster Indian film, *Sholay* (1975); which after adjustments to inflation, in March 2011, still remains right on top of the box office hit list. This quantitative study helps operationalize definitions of "stereotype" which is then subject to further analysis in the qualitative study of the paper. The qualitative, narrative part of this paper has references to a number of books, journals, films, newspapers, magazines websites and other electronic resources. The paper also draws, when pertinent, from the two greatest epics in Indian mythology, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*, and a few other mythological stories and characters, all of which form a strong foundational structure for story-telling and story-writing in India. A number of character archetypes have evolved from these mythological stories. Their

influence of present day character creation in stories will be elaborated on. The influence of the two great epics on popular culture in India is significant in order to understand epic archetypes, which have led to film stereotypes. In addition to those resources, the paper will trace the role of women in Indian cinema using photographic images from various films mentioned, in order to argue the point of view of the camera and how this point of view is governed and dictated by the patriarchal framework of Indian society. All the films featured in the paper, either in the form of discussions, writings, examples, or pictures, are films that have been chosen by decade (based on the context of the subject of discussion), from the website www.boxofficeindia.com. These examples from the films will explain the roles of lead actresses in these films and will point out that, while the stylizing of films has led to changed roles for women, the fundamental stereotypes continue to be in operation and do not show any significantly new ideological trends. Finally, the paper will also have interviews of people working in film and other related media, - their opinions and points of view on the subject of women's roles in Indian cinema. Based on the above pilot study and the brief analysis of the films, *Fire* 1996 and *Water* 2005, five research questions are identified. Research Questions According to Butalia (1984), " As women become more and more visible on the screen, however, it becomes important to ask what this visibility consists of. What are the sorts of roles women play? How are they projected? Do women film stars serve as models for Indian women? How far do their films reflect social attitudes towards them? How far do they shape such attitudes? " (p. 109). Drawing from Butalia (1984), from above, the research questions for the thesis are: 1.

What kind of roles have women been playing in Indian cinema over the last 60 years? 2. What is the fundamental nature of these roles? What do these roles entail? (motherhood, role of wife, role of girlfriend, role of vamp, stripper, prostitute, comic role etc. as the case may be) 3. If these roles are the most common for women in Indian cinema, then why would that be? -The historical, social and cultural reasons for the commonality of these roles and why it must be important for screen writers to conform to the stereotypes existing in society? 4. When women have played other kinds of alternative roles (role of lesbians, role of the independent widow, etc.), what demarcates these roles from the regular ones and do these 20 films enter the mainstream? If not, why would that be? It is clear from the discussion of the films *Fire* 1996, and *Water* 2005, that non-stereotyped roles can lead to severe social repercussions. This paper will explore the theoretical framework within which cultural stereotypes evolve and sustain themselves in Indian society, leading to repetitive female stereotypes in Hindi cinema. According to Acitelli, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Houston, stereotypes are drawn from existing prototypes in society and culture. Categorizing life experiences becomes so convenient for human beings, and the categories become so relevant that it becomes difficult to break out of this easiness (personal communication, Dec 2, 2010). Drawing from Acitelli, in the case of Indian society, the patriarchal view of women has been so convenient over the years for division of labor and accountability of tasks that these categories became a way of life, so much so, that now, it is the foundational power structure of society and cannot be easily broken. The power structure reinforces the stereotypes and the stereotypes further

strengthen the power structure. The next question is where are these stereotypes coming from? What are the reasons for these stereotypes to have translated into the big screen of commercial cinema? The answer lies in the three factors explained in detail in the next three chapters — historical and sociocultural factors, the influence of epics on popular culture and storytelling and finally the elements that make up the film viewing audience including the other media that they are exposed to.

21 Chapter 4: Women in Indian Cinema History, Socio-Cultural Factors, and Women's Roles in Films

In the context of an evolution in the roles of women in Indian films, Laxmi (1991), writes, " From the passive wife of Dadasaheb Phalke's " Raja Harishchandra" to the long-suffering but heroic mother-figure of " Mother India" to the liberated single-parent of " Mother `98," it has been a rather long and challenging journey for women in Hindi cinema". In a single sentence, Laxmi traces the history of Indian films, all the way back to the silent film, Raja Harishchandra in 1913, moving on to Mother India 1957 and Mother 98 1999, during which time women's roles in Indian cinema have changed in many ways. Since the 1960s, as more and more women's issues come to the forefront of the patriarchal Indian society, the more varied women's roles have become in Indian cinema. However, does variation necessarily eliminate typicality of roles? First, while many films have been made on social themes in the realm of women's issues including dowry, widowhood, rape, etc. it is not necessary that any of these films have been blockbusters; neither have they been popular viewed. Second, according to Butalia (1984), such films only take a superficial interest in women and their issues (p. 109). This means that although they deal with social issues

pertaining to women, the films do not focus on the women's points of view but rather, on how the man plays the hero in these situations and fixes them. The first women to act in Indian films in the 1920s were women of mixed British, European and Indian origins referred to as the "Anglo-Indians". Since they had hybrid origins, they were deemed separate from the women of pure Indian origin (Ganti, 2004, p. 13). There was a stigma associated with Indian women acting and in the context of this social stigma, when Indian women began to act, directors, in order to conform to social norms might have been pressured to portray Indian women leads as characters who live within the confines of society even in the films. In Indian cinema, this is probably the beginning of the idea of having to necessarily cater to audience needs and conform to existing value systems. Actresses in Indian films typically begin their careers when they are teenagers as opposed to male actors who start in their twenties. Even if the actress has completed only a decade in the industry and is just about 30 years old, though she may not have actually aged in terms of years, the industry considers the actress an "old face" and directors begin their hunt for "fresh faces". On the contrary the male actor's career period is much longer lasting unto his early fifties, sometimes. It is very common to see an aged actor in his fifties playing the male lead, opposite a female lead of 19. However, if slightly older female leads are cast opposite younger male actors, the actresses are criticized by the press, industry and audiences of having lost their "youthful charm" (Ganti, 2004, p. 114), because the audience likes to see young women in the lead, who is attractive to the male lead and performs sensuous song and dance sequences. This indicates the male centralism and bias not only in the minds

of those who make films but also the viewers who have been conditioned over years to view characters in films from this point of view. Patriarchal Indian society views young women as being sensuous and sexually appealing and older women as being less attractive. This is the male fantasy in operation which expects the female lead has to be young and in her prime, while the male lead can be in his early fifties and yet pass for a young hero/protagonist in his late twenties and early thirties. I have worked in the South Indian (Tamil) film industry and understand the way the casting process works. Many a time the casting hunt involves looking for a young 23 actress in her early twenties to act with the male lead who is probably in his early forties or even fifties. This suggests the possibility of an inherent "male gaze" within and outside the industry. According to Mulvey (1975), "... the fascination of film is reinforced by pre-existing patterns of fascination already at work within the individual subject and the social formations that have molded him" (p. 6). There exists a pre-conceived notion in society and within the industry about the kind of woman who should play the lead actress based on a fascination built by the film form and its pattern over the years. The highly male dominated audience perceives women in a certain way, the directors have their version of what people might want to see, and they build their stories for the people, and the stereotypes are further reinforced and the cycle continues. Not only is there a certain established pattern associated with which the woman plays the lead actress, there is also a pattern associated with the portrayal of women who play the lead. Gokulsing & Dissanayake (2004), attribute historical and cultural reasons to the portrayal of women in "stereotypical" roles in Indian films. In traditional

Indian society, there were definite and consensual norms of behavior — that regulated the conduct of women...Sita³, immortalized in the Ramayana is the ideal woman, the ideal wife; she is steadfastly loyal to her husband and obeys his wishes unquestioningly... In traditional Indian society... women's roles were essentially as daughter, wife and mother. According to ⁴Manusmriti which had a profound effect on shaping the morals of Indian society, a female should be subject in childhood to her father, in youth to her husband, and ^{3 4} Sita — Lead lady character in an Indian epic story, Ramayana *Manusmriti — An ancient code of conduct governing social and familial lives of individuals in society ²⁴ when her husband is dead, to her children...women were given no kind of independence...She is told to be cheerful, efficient in the management of household affairs, fastidious in cleaning utensils, careful with expenses... these norms governed the lives of women in traditional India and they find clear articulation in Indian cinema, especially in popular films (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2004, p. 78). While women were embodiments of purity, they could have romantic love affairs which are based on the “*⁵Radha-Krishna" model of pure, all consummating, absolute love with no space for mistakes, errors or slips. Indian films represent the lead actress in the role of romantic woman based on this model. Women who are portrayed as per the norms of the traditional value system of society are shown as women who are rewarded while those characters in the story, who transgress the boundaries of traditionalism, are punished (Gokulsing and Dissaayake, 2004 p. 78). In this context Ganti (2004) writes, In the very early days of cinema when Phalke was beginning to make films, women were not willing to act due to the stigma attached to

public performance. Acting, singing or dancing for an audience was associated with prostitutes and courtesans, and so were outside the boundaries of decent society. (p. 114) It appears from the above that the socio-cultural context within which women started acting in films, conditioned the roles that were given to them in films; their film roles had to conform to the existing socio-cultural realities of women, and to the semiotics of their real life roles (upholder of family values, representing the status of family and community, etc.).

5 Radha-Krishna- Krishna is one of the many Hindu Gods. He is considered a re-incarnation of the god "Mahavishnu". Radha is his lover. The love between Radha and Krishna is widely read and narrated and is considered a very pure, sensuous, erotic and romantic love.

25 Since women and their actions were considered epitomes of family honor and respectability in Indian society, Gokulsing & Dissanayake (2004), observe that in films, " Their need to preserve honor is expressed through elaborate codified behavior patterns that require the women to remain secluded, confined to the domestic domain and dependent on the husband" (p. 79). According to Davidson (1981), Few directors have possessed sufficient moral neutrality to treat centrally the sexually dynamic female without resorting to caricature or to a kind of implicitly self-pitying sentimentality... the flat characterizations and mawkish moral slants make the central females seem like puppets, there to stir up sufficient melodrama to enable the filmmaker to make his moralistic points. (p. 31) In trying to portray characters in these " stereotypical" socially acceptable roles, Richards (1995) observes, " The Hindi film upholds the traditional patriarchal views of society which, fearful of female sexuality, demands of the woman, a

subjugation of her desires" (p. 3). Gokulsing & Dissnayake (2004), point out that in conformity to social norms, women have been given two significant kinds of roles in commercial films; that of the mother (whose attributes are matched to that of the supreme form of feminine energy, the Goddess) and the wife (based on the mythological characters of Sita and Sati Savitri; Sati — the characteristic of extreme devotion to the husband). They say, Sati Savitri is a very pious and spiritual mythological character, whose husband dies when he is still very young. Savitri cannot accept this and she is so in love with him that she follows the God of death " Yama" who has taken her husband's soul. As she travels the path of the dead, she convinces Yama to return her husband to her. Unable to refuse the demands of this persevering and sacred woman, Yama, miraculously returns her husband to life. Savitri's love for her husband, Satyavan, is greatly revered in the Hindu religion. The Sati concept led to a considerable number of films in the 1920s and 1930s... and although it is no longer fashionable, its effect was to portray women ' stereotypical', unidimensional creatures with no personal ambitions of their own" (p. 79). The theme of marriage, being married, performing the roles and functions of the typical Indian wife, conforming to the rules of family, being the perfect mother, wife, daughter, daughter-in-law, etc. were all central to Indian film stories. Belonging to a patriarchal social structure and enacting the role of a woman in the confines of this structure and social order became the role of women in cinema as well. Chakravarty (1989), commenting on realism in Indian films says, " A woman's social and individual identities are therefore both conferred by marriage... while part of this has a dramatic function...the overall traditional attitude to women

remains in place..." (p. 46-47). The socio-cultural context imposes roles on women and these roles are carried onto cinema. This is where the persuasion theory of altercasting enters this discussion. According to Terry & Hogg (2000), this theory suggests, When a person accepts a certain social role, a number of social pressures are brought to bear to insure that the role is enacted. The social environment expects the person to behave in a manner that is consistent with the role; the role also provides the person with selective exposure to information consistent with the role. Alter-casting means that we 'force' an audience to accept a particular role that makes them behave in the way we want them to behave. (p. 201-226) Women have somehow inherited specific social and cultural roles, which carry into the mainstream film industry and they end up always being cast in similar roles. A fine example is Sati in India, which refers to the act of the widow supposedly jumping, of her own free will, (but this act was forced on many widows) into the funeral pyre of her dead husband, to indicate that she has no life without him, it also is used to mean extreme devotion and love for the husband. This can be seen in the highest grossing film of the decade 1990-2000, "Hum Aapke Hain Kaun" 1995. Dwyer (2005), comments on this film: when Nisha's elder sister Pooja dies in an accident, their father suggests that the younger sister Nisha, marry Rajesh, the dead older sister's husband. Nisha and her lover Prem (who is Rajesh's younger brother), are willing to sacrifice their love...the younger generation is prepared to sacrifice love for the welfare of their loving and supportive families, who are the entire focus of the film...Film was popular for its depiction of family rituals (p. 113). As opposed to the portrayal of women as ideal wives and mothers, the

other popular portrayal is the exact opposite characterization, that of the vamp. " She flouts tradition, seeks to imitate Western women...drinks, smokes, visits nightclubs, is quick to fall out of love...portrayed as a morally degraded person...unacceptable for her behavior... punished for it" (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2004, p. 79). One of the most popular actresses to play vamp was an Anglo-Indian actress named Helen Jairag Richardson. She played the sexy stripper, the vamp, the cabaret dancer at the bar, etc. Helen was always considered best suited for the vamp role and never played a heroine or main female lead ever. So this stigma attached to the vamp seems to have an impact on the careers of actresses in the industry. Once a vamp, always a vamp! However, it is not clear if directors specifically chose to avoid asking Helen to play heroine because of the " vamp" stigma or because there may not have been as many good actresses (who also should be good dancers) around to play vamp. Another popular portrayal is the anti-stereotype character of the courtesan dancer. The courtesan dancer is considered the male lead's respite and comfort in his moments of Helen Jairag Richardson was an Anglo-Indian actress, with an Anglo-Indian father and a Burmese mother. She was born on Oct 21st 1939. She usually played vamp, cabaret dancer, etc. in popular Indian cinema. Having established her reputation as vamp Helen could never play a female lead in any popular blockbuster film. However she did play supporting actress in some films but they were not blockbuster hits. She did receive recognition from the Indian Film Fare Awards and was awarded best supporting actress a few times. The government of India conferred her with the Padma Shri title, the fourth highest civilian honor in the country, for her contribution to Indian cinema.

28 emotional trauma. Once he is relieved by life and fate of his many traumas, he will leave the women who gave him comfort when he most needed it and carry on with his life. In effect, courtesan dancers are women used by male leads. The man, in his disturbed phase of life finds comfort in this extra marital affair or fling or this fascination for another woman, but comes back to his family values eventually and this is justified. He is still a "good" and "moral" man with a few flaws which can be overlooked. However, the woman in the "fling" relationship is always "bad" and "immoral". This is very characteristic of Indian society. It is more common in Indian society for a man to be quite graciously accepted by his family, despite having an extra marital affair or a fling, than it is to see a woman being accepted by her family under the same circumstances. Courtesan dancers were these women of the "other world", a world that the family woman would never want to see herself in. So even to women viewers, the idea of the courtesan dancer being the bad woman who the man eventually must leave for his wife and family, does not seem unfair. At this juncture it becomes important to give society's family values more priority than the feelings and emotions of the courtesan dancer or the other woman. According to Ganti (2004), courtesans were women who knew and performed songs and dances in the courts of kings, were well versed with poetry and literature and possessed tactful and engaging conversational skills; they were patronized by the ruling elite. Unlike prostitutes, they had a lot more control over their bodies and entered into monogamous physical relationships with their patrons. However, the British who were trying to displace this very ruling elite considered courtesans part of this elite and in an attempt to reduce their power and

influence, started using them as prostitutes for British soldiers in India, stripping them off their socio-cultural status (p. 13-14).²⁹ It appears that what happened to courtesan dancers in reality (stripped of their status, riches and emotions), happens to them in popular films as well—they are simply characters used by the male leads, and they have no more additional value. Dwyer (2005), in her analysis of popular Indian film comments on the highest grossing film of the decade (1960-69), *Mughal-E-Azam* 1960, in which Anarkali, a courtesan dancer in the court of Mughal emperor Akbar, and Salim, son of King Akbar, fall in love. For the crime of love, the two of them are sentenced to death by the emperor. Salim is killed and Anarkali is buried alive although Akbar lets her escape through a secret tunnel. (p. 167). She says, “ Film brings out themes that are popular in Hindi Film...struggle between public duty and private desire...the self-sacrificing woman” (p. 168). The courtesan dancer is stripped off her status and emotions for having fallen in love with the prince who belongs to the ruling elite. However, over the years women’s roles in films have evolved and many blockbuster films have featured women in important roles. These roles give women ample screen time and performance time. But the important question is what these roles imply and how that might have an effect on viewers. As Butalia (1984) says, However a starting point may be that in spite of increased visibility, Indian women are not in general autonomous and self-defined in the films. This is not surprising given that 90 percent of the directors and producers are men. It is not an oversimplification to say that in popular Indian cinema women are seen very much in bad or good roles. The good ones are, more often than not (self-sacrificing) mothers, (dutiful) daughters, (loyal) sisters or

(obedient and respectful) wives. They support, comfort and very seldom question their men. They are self-sacrificing and above all pure.... On the other side of the coin 30 modernity often seems to be equated with being bad. Bad women, other than being modern, are often single, sometimes widowed. They may be westernized (synonymous with being fast and 'loose'), independent (a male preserve), aggressive (a male quality) and they may even smoke and drink. Often they will wear western clothes but the moment they suffer a change and reform their ways, they will clad themselves in a sari and cover their heads. There are, of course, exceptions to the above stereotypes, but they remain exceptions. (p. 109) While courtesan dancers are one end of the spectrum, the vamps are on the other end. As discussed earlier, these are the women who would be cabaret dancers in bars and pubs, the cigarette-smoking, sexily clad, sensuous women who are open about their sexuality and easily flirt with and entertain either the male protagonist or the male antagonist in the film. Some of the most popular actresses who have played these roles in films were Helen Jairag Richardson, Aruna Irani and Bindu Zaveri from the 70s and 80s. While they have played vamp, two actresses, Zeneth Aman and Parveen Babi have played the relatively more unconventional female leads — relatively more westernized in their outlook as characters, more daring wardrobe and sensuous dance sequences. According to Das (2007), Parveen Babi (April 4, 1949 — January 20, 2005), was one of the most successful Bollywood actresses in the 1970s and was known for her portrayal of strong women who did not care about the conventional norms of society. She was the first Indian actress to have featured on TIME magazine's cover, in 1975. Actresses

who were cast in unconventional and more modern roles were recognized for having been different from the norm. Although the idea of the vamp being the immoral woman and the female lead being the moral and chaste woman was high, this did not substantiate women's roles. It only led to demarcation between the vamp and the lead actress, with emphasis of certain character traits in these roles. The commonality between both the roles is that, they were both objectified anyway. On screen the only real difference between the vamp and the lead actress in terms of their objectification was purely contextual to the story. Many a time, the difference between the vamp and the so called heroines was probably that the vamp characters are more open about their sexuality on screen. They already were "bad" and "immoral", pursuing cabaret dancing, wearing revealing and sensuous clothes, openly flirting with men, etc. all of which they did as a matter of choice. They were portrayed as characters who chose this way of living. The heroines, on the contrary, despite having some sensuous moments on screen, which included wearing revealing clothes and dancing some sensuous dances with hip shakes and breast thrusts were still pure. Why would that be? — Simply because their moves were portrayed as being the point of view of the hero. These acts done by the heroine were done with or in the presence of the male protagonist during his moments of passion and desire and it comes across as being his point of view of the woman he loves and desires which is much more legitimate in the minds of the audience than the open and unrestrained sexuality of the already immoral vamp. Although both heroines and vamps had many similarities in terms of what they wore and how they danced and how they were objectified

on screen, the confines within which they exhibited their sexuality on screen, psychologically demarcated them in the minds of their audience as either being good or bad, moral or immoral. The differences between the heroine and the vamp indicate that the Madonna and the whore complex operates in Indian society. The girlfriend/wife/mother is a Madonna and therefore has to conform to those pure traits while the vamp is a whore and can simply be immoral. The justification of her immorality is that she is a whore. The pictures below highlight the contrasting qualities of the Madonna and the whore. Sholay 1975 -Helen dancing to the song Mehbooba Mehbooba Sholay 1975 — Hemamalini dancing to Jab Tak Hai Jaan In Sholay 1975, an all time blockbuster Hindi film, Helen makes only a special appearance as a gypsy dancer with a very sexy costume and dances as the male antagonist of the film watches her. One could compare that to the present day bar dancer, stripper, etc. only that it was done in the “ gypsy” context at the time. The audience would look at Helen, her costumes and her moves as being justified by the theory that she is just a gypsy woman who is entertaining men out of her choice to do so. Many a time vamps become entertainers for the antagonist and at times even partner them and this further strengthens the idea of their being “ bad” and “ immoral”. On the right is the heroine Hemamalini, sprawled out, with specific shots aimed at her hips during the entire sequence of the song, but this in the minds of the audience, is legitimised exposure because in the sequence she is dancing for the very desirous antagonist in order to be able to save the lives of the male heroes of the film. Although the shots used on Helen and Hemamalini, showing their hips and stomachs might seem to have similar effects on the viewer,

the perceptions of these shots are very different because the context in which the heroine is objectified and the gypsy woman/vamp is objectified vary greatly. Even in the film *Sholay*, there are two heroines with very opposing characteristics. One is the very talkative, boisterous but yet projected as homely and the hero's love interest, and the other is the widow, very quiet, introverted and portrayed as submissive and timid through the film. The role of the talkative woman is played by Hemamalini and the widow by Jaya Bhadhuri. Both the roles, though opposing in nature, clearly conform to the social norms of how a woman should behave and how a widow should behave. Dwyer (2005) comments on film *Sholay* 1975, the highest grossing film in Indian film history, "Hemamalini shines as the chatterbox 9tonga-driver who is forced to dance for Gabbar's sadistic enjoyment, while Jaya is silent apart from the flashback to the family's 10Holi party" (p. 218). Helen in *Caravan* 1975 Helen in *Caravan* 1975 In film *Caravan* 1971 Helen performs the cabaret to the song *Monica oh my darling*. This is a fine example of the absolute stereotypical "vamp" woman portrayal in commercial Indian cinema. The heroine will never perform the cabaret in a bar. It will always be the vamp. Although the heroine might be portrayed in sensuous ways by the camera, it will not be in a bar or a pub or any place or profession that is considered compromising in anyway. The 9 A Hindi word for horse cart 10 A Hindu festival of colors in which people throw color powders and color water over each other as a celebration of the triumph of the good and devout mythological character Prahlad, over the evil female demon, Holika who tried to kill him. 34 heroine's objectification will somehow be justified. But the vamp is the one who is objectified in the context of a pub, a bar or a cabaret

performance. Below are some pictures of vamps/gypsy/tribal women, heroines and others from various films portrayed in erotic ways by the camera. Aruna Irani in film Caravan 1971 In the song Chadthi Jawaani Meri as the tribal, gypsy woman Actor Sashi Kapoor And Parveen Bhabi in film Kranti 1981, in the song Mara Thumka —in the role of supporting actress Actress Zeenath Aman in Satyam Sivam Sundaram 1978 In the above pictures, hero Shashi Kapoor, is looking at the heroine Zeenat Aman who is cleaning the temple opposite his home in the most erotic possible fashion. However, her sensuousness on screen is not as blasphemous as Helen's or Aruna Irani's cabaret in other films, because she is cleaning the temple as the hero watches her. What we see of Zeenat Aman is the point of view of the male protagonist and is therefore justified. A point to note here is that in the cinema of the 80s, 90s and the 2000s, the difference between the heroine and the vamp becomes hazy but in the 60s and 70s, there is a clear demarcation between these roles and the traits that accompany them. Any sort of sexuality that the heroine exhibits during the 60s and 70s period, is done within the confines of the male gaze upon her. While this is true to a great extent, of cinema in the later decades also, the interesting thing about the last couple of decades is that there seems to be a merging of the roles of the heroine and the vamp. Why? As society becomes more modern and is exposed more to the Western world and globalization, it becomes necessary to conform to the modern male's idea and fantasy of what a woman should be. As Sivasankaran says, The only thing that has happened is a globalized objectification where the heroine and the vamp, all rolled into one cater to the globalized man's needs, desires and fantasies. How the Indian

male with a Western and modern, globalized outlook wants his woman to be, is what is seen in the merger of roles of the heroine and the vamp. Nothing has changed in terms of substantiating the role of the female lead itself and this is really sad. (personal communication, March 26, 2011) This is where Blumler & Katz's uses and gratification theory comes in. According