

Patriarchy and Performance: The Representation of Violence Against Women in Indian Films

Drashti Joshi, PG Student, Dept of English, Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji, Bhavnagar University

In: *Book of Abstract REVA University*. edited by DR. C Chamundeshwari Associate Professor, Dept of English, REVA University, Bengaluru, India. ISBN 978-93-341-7423-6.

This paper studies how select Indian films reflect and connect with social awareness with respect to feminine violence. The research is based on mainstream Bollywood films, regional movies, and parallel films to determine ways in which different forms of violence against women-physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual-are adhered to in each of them. Such prominent texts as *Thappad*, *Pink*, *Kabir Singh*, and *Animal* contain refrains of victimisation, patriarchy, toxic masculinity, and emergence of the alpha male archetype in the contemporary film scenario.

Indian cinema, in historical terms, has often normalised violence; frequently it sensationalises the suffering of the heroine to accommodate the redemptive arc of the hero. An 'alpha male' portrays men as repressors and the undeterred upholders of patriarchal ideals. Yet, some of the new cinema increasingly attacks such narratives, providing a much broader scope for women's agency and resilience. The research underlines that the treatment of violence is a factor that either upholds or critiques cultural values, supported by filmic techniques like cinematography, dialogues, and narrative structure.

Furthermore, analysing audience responses to these films provides framework sets for discussion about women's rights, empowerment, and justice. This analysis aims to investigate the extent to which cinema can sustain or challenge cultural notions regarding violence against women, impacting larger discourses around gender, media, and the implications carried by popular culture on vital issues such as gender-based violence.

Keywords: Indian Cinema, Violence Against Women, Toxic Masculinity and Alpha Male, Gender Representation, Cultural Perceptions.