

The Bollywood's Way of Reimagining Female Icons and Their Resulting Influence on Gender Imbalance in India

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Abstract

India as a country has always savoured the sexist commercial Bollywood palette. Everything served in the form of the classic 'male gaze' approved and grand musical format has been contributory in setting definite narratives that influence the mass beyond the screening of the film as well. While cinema is an art form that reciprocates to the mass's demands and desires, the filmmakers in the country have definitely cashed on it on multiple occasions. From the acceptability of secondary position of female to revolutionary outbreak of pitiful acceptability of women in the mainstream men's world, Bollywood has always set its tone as per the need of the hour, however at the end of the day it has always been a pawn in the game that largely benefits the culturally induced orthodox views about the gender roles and relationship and its resulting gender imbalance in the society. In the recent times, one such raging phenomenon of sorts has been Bollywood's new found obsession with biopics on iconic women figures like Rani Laxmi Bai to Shakuntala Devi on rather debatable grounds of credibility. The phenomenon is revolutionary as acclaimed by the Industry but it sticks to the basics of stereotypes when it comes to gender role conventions as the tale as old as time. Although, the Bollywood imposed women liberation movement/portrayal have been quite efficient in revoking a certain cultural shift in the current times amidst too much of first world countries imposed globalization and its resulting sexualisation of a gender against the normalization of another, it has also in the same time deferred to a certain plotline that is quite instrumental in creating a unique perspective about women in general. The deteriorating culture that embraces women's role as a house maker easily camouflages her achievements on grounds of professionalism and beyond. A women's success has always been made synonymous with the satisfaction of the phallus and the warmth she extends by virtue of her womb and the resulting maternal instinct. The emotional turmoil proceeds over the need for applaud for hardships endured on grounds that are otherwise and beyond the requirement for a happy four walled home. The following research will try to analyse the co relation between Indian commercial cinemas in the arena of biopics made on women icons in Bollywood and its resulting contribution in setting definitive culturally confined gender roles that are biased on arguable stereotypes by taking into account selective cinematic study for the same.

Keywords: Gender Imbalance • Icon revolution • Film and feminism • Stereotypes • Biopics • Media narrative

Introduction

Sitting in the eventful year 2020, there is no explanation needed as to why Bollywood constitutes such a large part of Indian economy and cultural representation to the world. Bollywood has its own revelation tactics imbibed with the tenacity for survival and monopoly. Since Bollywood plays such an integral and impactful role, its influence can be analysed from different perspectives as well. One such dominant perspective would be the analysis of Bollywood and its interdependency on idol representation for idealistic content curation. Gender equality and feminism should be made a necessity not a luxury as claimed by the few privileged section of the society. The reach of Bollywood makes it possible to influence a larger mass and in return embraces the nuances of society and the changes that come along with it. Bollywood's revenue is one of the highest and the film is a craft of the twentieth century whose success model is already accounted for. Bollywood attempts to speak to the diaspora by conveying a new sense of "Indian-ness," one that is less about citizenship and more about imagined identity and community. Even while the world collapsed and halted amidst a pandemic, Bollywood found its tunnel that lead to its successful reign and over ruling survival as a dominant form of entertainment irrespective of the generation it caters to and the platform it chooses to stream from. It's been an unusual summer in India. Its movie-obsessed millions have had to do without trips to the beloved cinema ever since theatres closed in March because of the coronavirus pandemic. But there's been some relief for families cooped up indoors as streaming platforms stepped up to fill the void. A slew of films have already skipped theatrical releases to slash losses and, instead, hit the small screen. More and more A-list actors are now willing to embrace roles on originals by

Netflix, Amazon's Prime Video and Disney+ Hotstar. And the pandemic, to the growing frustration of cinema owners, has hastened a process that was already under way - the shrinking gap between the small and big screen in India. For these cinema-bound movies, streaming platforms weren't just the only option - they were the obvious choice. (pathi, 2020). The renowned writer Javed Akhtar once said that "The films certainly do reflect what is happening in society. But they reflect the desires, the hopes, values and traditions. They are not a real reflection but the dreams of a society. "Growing up in India, I heard terms like "women's empowerment" or "women advocates"— descriptors that didn't carry the negative connotations associated with the word "feminism." Although feminist advocates and scholars have applauded underlying feminist themes in innovative films, some filmmakers and actors with a huge fan base have stated that their films are not feminist.

Alia Bhatt, Priyanka Chopra and Lisa Haydon-top Bollywood actresses who are global icons with millions of fans—have refused to be identified as feminist and shed negative implications on feminism, even though they symbolize strong and independent women on-screen and personally believe in empowering girls and women. It's not that I'm seeking to shame them for not wanting the label "feminist" attached to them-but what we can at least expect them to do is to eradicate myths and negative perceptions of feminism. (bhat, 2019) Despite successful box office collections, critics slammed recent films Dangal and Pink, in which the male gaze is shown to be instrumental for women's liberation. "Female empowerment in these films is often just a form of male gratification," critic Laya Maheshwari declared. "There is little autonomy or agency on the female's part; she would be lost if left to her own devices. The burden of her improvement and happiness ultimately fall upon the man's shoulders. (bhat, 2019). (rammohan, 2018). Bollywood survives on trends and there are almost always phases attached to it, something always seems to work the best, or at the least better than other options. Over the last two years, major production houses like Dharma and Yashraj have announced big ticket films with our stars, that seem to revolve around historical plots. "Our history is very rich; we have just never delved into that. In the 80's we were remaking South Indian films and then there was the parallel movement. In the 90's the love story was born, where Hum Aapke Hain Koun came and everyone made love stories. Then in 2001, cinema found a new language with Lagaan and Dil Chahta Hai. Then in the 2000's we

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were trying to do different things, and find our feet. In 2015 post the success of Baahubali, we discovered the big event film.” Karan Johar, filmmaker. (rammohan, 2018). (a march for women, feminism in the last decade: an interactive, what has been the focus of the feminist movement in the last decade, n.d.). With history becoming an integral part of Indian cinematic content and its obvious impact when portrayed through Bollywood, it is necessary to analyse subjectively, the impact of the same especially when it concerns female historical icons. Researchers have since long emphasized on Bollywood and its critical study, however have ignored the co relation of the cinema industry with gender revelation and neutrality. Feminist thought has been around for over a century now, bringing to light the lives and struggles of women and gender minorities. From the suffragettes of the early 1900s to the #MeToo movement in 2018, feminists have had a very hard time convincing the world that it is in fact, equal rights that they want, and not disproportionate “special treatment.” Most people readily profess their commitment to “equality,” but shy away from identifying themselves as feminist. Feminists, both online and offline, continue to be dismissed, discredited and threatened with violence for demanding rights and speaking truth to power. Both governments and corporations seem to now understand the importance of women’s empowerment, even as they continue to keep their distance from “radical feminists. They do not attempt to address the patriarchal structures that cause this disparity. (a march for women, feminism in the last decade: an interactive, what has been the focus of the feminist movement in the last decade, n.d.). It is important to analyse the films from two different perspective when considering the same for analysis.

One would be the success of the film and its resulting reach henceforth., The other would be the consideration of the icon selected for popularization and the star selected for icon representation, since bollywood stars have a stronger impact than bollywood actors.

Based on the analysis , it is also important to take into consideration that the films selected have different target audiences based on various factors revolving around them. However these diversification taken into consideration is severely required to better understand the influence these films and their take on representation of popular icons does to the gender convention and roles within the society.

The film selection approach for qualitative analysis:

The textual analysis of four films released in the recent times that did well in the box office and were a commercial success as mainstream cinema. Textual analysis is a methodology that involves understanding language, symbols, and pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences. Visual, written, or spoken messages provide cues to ways through which communication is understood. Often the messages are understood as influenced by and reflective of larger social structures. For example, messages reflect and may challenge historical, cultural, political, ethical contexts for which they exist.

Selecting commercially viable bollywood movies, because many researchers acknowledge their superior dominance over mass and its resulting impact by an evident diversified reach from the post-independence era. Most of them, are likely to agree to the statement that Bollywood by its extensive reach early on has emerged as a powerful monopoly in the film industry globally. Bollywood as an industry is ever growing and ever expanding, however it is also to be taken into notice that Bollywood is also the reflective medium of the mass. It has always been the mirror to the society, whenever it decided to amp itself up and revolutionise the mass with path breaking thematic content, it has almost always obediently stuck to its roots of cultural prevalence and mass acceptance. The interdependency of the industry at large over the mass has resulted in a mutual gratification of sorts that enables either to derive pleasure in the form of familiarity and comfort from the other. Bollywood has a lot at stake, its economy and buzz surrounding the fandom is a business that contributes to its lasting legacy, therefore it prefers to play the safe game when it comes to content creation and its acceptance by the mass. Ultimately, it’s the money from the mass that’s helping Bollywood grow in stature and is paving its way forward to world domination. Moreover, it always carried an impact on the country’s latest

trends starting from lifestyle to fashion to eateries and strategic promotions for favoured business on the receiving end. Therefore, Bollywood has a resonating effect globally and mostly on the South Asian /Third World countries. While selecting a Bollywood film that portrays the recent phenomenon with obsession with female icons that apparently contribute to the growing revolution of equality and cultural gender inclusiveness in an otherwise conservative and discriminative society, it has been found that most of the films are based on unfortunate realistic parameters of female acceptance in a male dominated society .The parameters that have been taken into account when it concerns streaming platform has been diversified for better understanding of the prevailing situation. films have been taken into account that has been released via theatres and that has been released via OTT platforms like amazon prime or Netflix.

The most credible historical replication of the situation, in a Bollywood commercial film, was found to be in Manikarnika (2019). Story of Rani Lakshmbai, one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and her resistance to the British Rule. Directors: Radha Krishna Jagarlamudi, Kangana Ranaut, Writers: Vijayendra Prasad (story and screenplay), Prasoon Joshi (dialogue) and Stars: Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, Kangana Ranaut, Kulbhushan Kharbanda. The movie is based on the story of iconic historical figure, Rani Laxmi Bai, a woman warrior and an Indian queen of the Maratha princely state of Jhansi in North India currently present in Jhansi district in Uttar Pradesh, India. She was one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and became a symbol of resistance to the British Raj for Indian nationalists. Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi was released on 3700 screens in 50 countries worldwide in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on 25 January 2019. The film performed well internationally and in India in its theatrical run. It had the highest first day collection for any female-oriented film. The film opened to a positive critical response. The storyline revolves around the struggle and patriotism of Rani Laxmi Bai against the empowering and overruling British who were in a rage to engulf India as whole under the brutality of colonisation. Kangana Ranaut, the lead actress had received critical acclamation for her authentic portrayal in the movie and rightfully so. However, the issue lies in the fact that the movie has been portrayed in a manner that places her first as a mother and a wife before her significance as a warrior, although arguable by many the dilemma lies in the fact that emotional bias takes precedence over a courageous revolt and revoke that a warrior irrespective of her gender fought for. It should have been a plot that primarily revolves around patriotism and heroic decisions that a ruler made for the sake of her kingdom, instead the story revolved around a woman and her loss and its resulting drive to ward off the British.

- Selecting one Bollywood movie that was recently released via the OTT platforms, Shakuntala Devi was released via the much in demand, Amazon Prime. The millennial generation has been claimed to be biased over the usage of OTT platform against traditional formats. India’s on demand digital streaming industry surpassed the national film industry in terms of both viewership and growth, with a staggering 240% increase in viewership in just 3 years post 2016. Amidst the ongoing global pandemic, OTT platforms have cemented their place by providing on demand digital entertainment in the comfort of one’s home. Thereby challenging more traditional media platforms such as cable or satellite television. The adjacent figure highlights the overwhelming popularity of OTT services (70%) especially during the lockdown period, citing it as the most popular source of entertainment for the GenZ’ s and Millennials of Urban India. India’s on demand digital streaming industry surpassed the national film industry in terms of both viewership and growth, with a staggering 240% increase in viewership in just 3 years post 2016.

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Sony Pictures Networks India and Vikram Malhotra under his banner Abundantia Entertainment. The film stars Vidya Balan as Shakuntala Devi, who was also known as the "human computer", along with Jisshu Sengupta, Sanya Malhotra, and Amit Sadh. In 2001, Anupama Banerjee arrives in London with her husband Ajay, and reveals that she is suing her mother, Shakuntala Devi. The film shifts to Shakuntala Devi's childhood in Bengaluru in the 1930s, where her family discovers her incredible talent for quickly solving complex mathematical problems in her head. Her father, Bishaw, decides to use Shakuntala's talent and have her do "math shows," where she would entertain people with her problem solving prowess. Shakuntala continues to do math shows and earn for the family as she grows up, The film instead of focusing on the mathematic genius that Shakuntala Devi proved to be and instead of emphasizing on the struggles that she went through, it primarily focuses on the emotional aspect of a woman's life as predictable by Bollywood standards. The story puts the central protagonist as an emotionally vulnerable woman who cribs about all the relationships that she shares with people around her.

Her successful and inspiring story as a legendary woman takes a backseat against the relationship issues that takes precedence in the plotline. The credibility of the same on the grounds of relatability is questionable.

•Another commercially successful movie that Bollywood has come up with in recent times is Raazi, Raazi (transl. Willing) is a 2018 Indian Hindi-language spy thriller film directed by Meghna Gulzar and produced by Vineet Jain, Karan Johar, Hiroo Yash Johar and Apoorva Mehta under the banners of Junglee Pictures and Dharma Productions. It stars Alia Bhatt and features Vicky Kaushal, Rajit Kapur, Shishir Sharma, and Jaideep Ahlawat in supporting roles. The film is an adaptation of Harinder Sikka's 2008 novel *Calling Sehmat*, a true account of an Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) agent who, upon her father's request, is married into a family of military officials in Pakistan to relay information to India, prior to the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. Principal photography of Raazi began in July 2017 in Mumbai and was completed on 27 October 2017. It was shot across several locations including Patiala, Nabha, Malerkotla and Doodhpathri. Raazi was released on 11 May 2018. Made on a budget of ₹350 million (US\$4.9 million), Raazi went on to gross ₹1.96 billion (US\$27 million) worldwide, emerging as one of the highest-grossing Indian films featuring a female protagonist. It was also a critical success, with Meghna's direction and Bhatt's performance receiving praise. Raazi received 15 nominations at the 64th Filmfare Awards, where it won five awards, including Best Film, Best Director, and Best Actress for Alia Bhatt. Indian Army officer Lieutenant General Nikhil Bakshi addresses a group of Indian soldiers aboard the INS Viraat, detailing a woman's exploits while serving as an undercover agent of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's external intelligence agency, in Pakistan. The plot revolves around an Indian Army officer Lieutenant General Nikhil Bakshi who addresses a group of Indian soldiers aboard the INS Viraat, detailing a woman's exploits while serving as an undercover agent of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's external intelligence agency, in Pakistan. Raazi is an inspirational movie however the issue again prevails over the fact that the emotional vulnerability of Sehmat is way more than her husband although both of them are shown to be patriotic and working for their respective countries. Although she inspirationally chooses to be involved with the welfare of her nation, she also chooses to quit it all as expected of a woman after she faces loss over her husband's death and pregnancy with her first born.

A woman's emotional turbulence conventionally leads to her isolation. Although this is based on a true story and the factors involved are more fact than fiction, however it needs to be brought to the foreground that every story always has two angles to it, The prefer ability of one over the other depends on the director and the choice of filmmakers. It is unfortunate that Bollywood sticks to its basic rules of preferring the emotional angle always when it comes to the story of women icons while ignoring the angle that revolves around their struggle and success in life beyond family, friends and lovers. It would have been possible to end the movie on the note as to how till the very end of high risk possibility, she chooses to serve her nation at the cost of her life at risk.

*The fourth movie taken into consideration was Padmavaat. Padmaavat is a 2018 Indian Hindi-language epic period drama film directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Loosely based on the epic poem of the same name by Malik Muhammad Jayasi, it stars Deepika Padukone as Rani Padmavati, a Rajput queen known for her beauty, wife of Maharawal Ratan Singh, played by Shahid Kapoor. Sultan Alauddin Khilji, played by Ranveer Singh, hears of her beauty and attacks her kingdom to claim her. Aditi Rao Hydari, Jim Sarbh, Raza Murad, and Anupriya Goenka featured in supporting roles. The issue with this film is its credibility right from the beginning and the very inception of the story that's based roughly on a poem.

Although, it right away claims about the fiction nature of the film and its content. At the end of the day, India is a nation is Bollywood obsessed country with a large low literacy rate and maximum of the mass belonging to the lower middle class and low strata of economy. These people have a certain set of beliefs and traditions that they are accustomed to. When their arguable beliefs are validated by Bollywood, the supremacy of their impact further increases. Bollywood and its fictional quotient takes backseat against their relatability with the orthodox patriarchal mass of the society. Post the film screening, Padmavaati was being worshiped for sacrificing herself in the name of sense of dignity. This created a lot of backlash from feminists, however the truth lies in the fact that Padmavaati was an icon to beckon with and an inspirational figure for women belonging to many diversified parts of the nation. She was popularised further and Bollywood contributing to her popularity by choosing Deepika Padukone, a megastar portraying her character further validated her role and presence as a women icon to many.

Analysis

*The four movies taken into consideration revolve around women centric topics and have been critically acclaimed and have been reciprocated to well by the mass. However, the films centre around female icons that contribute to national upliftment. The emphasis of the story should lie with the fact the icon representation enables the promotional equivalent of feminism and gender equity. The first ground for equity is the balance equilibrium that the plotline creates successfully irrespective of the stereotypes that conventionally cultural norms establish. However instead these films are structured around plotlines that place women in the centre stage quite ironically, almost as supporters of male characters but in a subtle way. The characters are placed in a way that signifies their presence as what the convention supports, a woman of sacrifice, unquestionable sense of compromise and unconditional emotional turbulences that almost always revolve around family disputes. Never a tear is shed or a sleepless night is felt for the inconvenience that a woman might possibly face by virtue of their career or work or simply life beyond the four guarded walls.

• The movies have been depicted on characters whose source of credibility is always a question based on the factor that history is human made and intercepted and is open to subjective analysis and interpretation. This results in the fact that there was always an open possibility of the fact that stories could have been based around an angle that portrays a woman's struggles beyond the stereotypical but instead the emphasis is laid on its characterization as the quotient of support to a phallus and its toxic egoistical existence. For example, in the movie Rani Laxmi Bai or Padmavaati, the historical figures taken into consideration are known to be sacrificial, one in the name of patriotism and the other in the name of dignity and virtue however in both of the cases the women have been shown as taking control of their lives once the male characters made an exit from the plotline, also the characters have been despite the existence of roadblocks in many ways shown to be emotionally vulnerable and weak in the established conventional stereotypical way.

• The next significant mention was the fact that a woman's portrayal physically has been made in a way that satisfies the male gaze. The idealistic weight, the height, the attires and the facial features have been kept far from the point of relatability to the actual representation and instead have been carved out of male fantasy. Even in instances like the movie, Shakuntala Devi, Vidya Balan as an actress have been dressed up in attires that fit her perfectly to flaunt her curves and make her look curvaceous. Her fabric for her attire has

been chosen in a way that best suits her body type and not a single humanly flaw is visible with her skin and face, coming from a mathematic genius who in real life looked far from what has been depicted in the film. In the case of portrayal of historical characters, the reality is unseen and unheard of and yet the flaws have been gotten rid of and the woman has been flaunted in ways that's acceptable by man-made beauty standards. The depiction is from times when make-up was unthinkable of and yet it's what constitutes the physical appearance of woman characters.

- Within the films, the other important point of consideration would be the forceful integration of male and child characters and their indispensable role in the woman's life. Even though the plotlines are supposed to be on the note of their struggle that involves war, dignity, career or security, it ultimately ends up revolving around the same old cliché position that a woman is placed in and supposedly should be involved with. The woman is made to deal with many but the family issues take precedence over her strength of capability always. Although, a woman's maternal instinct and her support for her lover and family is never a bad thing, its primary focus within a plotline creates a certain stereotype about the existence of women and their psychology.

- Apart from the points mentioned earlier, the film had very less to contribute to the awareness about gender equity and balance that should prevail within a society. Never in any instance are normal gender stereotypes broken, like that of men helping out with household work or men to be shown as sacrificial and emotional the way women are portrayed to be. The paternal instincts of men are never a major part of the plotline although the credibility of the same cannot be accounted for in real life.

- The most important part of the film, towards the lack of promotion of equality would be the anti-establishment of dialogue that promotes equality. The dialogues that talk about women's strength sound motivating but not promising simply because its more in the format of a monologue rather than conversation with other characters in the film.

- The chief lack of contributory roles by male characters make the stories even less inspirational. The woman is always a lone warrior against the backdrop of distraught as opposed to the characterisation of strong male leads with women characters providing them with constant support. This disrupts the normalcy of gender equilibrium that these stories promise to deliver and the icons are perceived in one certain way only.

- The movie as based on an idol representation ultimately fails to create the impact that it should create and especially within the context that it promises to deliver either. Starting from the choice of idols to their representation and to their portrayal, everything is conveyed in a way that best fits the patriarchal hierarchy that already has set the boundaries to acceptance of women liberation. The revolution as claimed by Bollywood is just a masquerade parade to camouflage for the flaws that already exists in the human perception about gender equality. The icons have been designated against the choice of many others and have been shaped just the way the male dominated society would prefer. There is no stance of rebellion, no unconventional choice ever made and flaw ever portrayed.

- Another critical issue that was addressed by the movie is about the fact that never a woman is shown to be without the existence of a dominant male figure, when shown so, it's a villainous role. Like for example, in movie like Shakuntala Devi, her primary focus being on herself and her goals have been portrayed villainously and has set the perception of her not as an idol for inspiration but the portrayal of do nots.

- Except for the incidents as mentioned above, there are some examples of inspirational nuances that have been portrayed in the film, however they take a backseat in the idol representation. The movie at several points of time addressed the issue of informing people about feminism through the idol representation but fallen back short when it comes to the curation of idol against a prevailing characterisation. There are flaws starting from the choice of idols like for example Padmavaati cannot be about a strong female lead, her sacrifice is unjust and her role sacrificial to an unreliable level. her choices secondary to a man's prevailing ego and her existence merely defined by her partner.

- Several points of time, even the audience of the film, was getting into a dilemma about the context of these films, the critiques have often ignored the perspective pertaining to gender equality and have instead focused on the artist performance, most of these films have casted A-grade actresses in the lead, actresses with high influence over the mass by virtue of their reach because of Bollywood and its engulfing influence. These actors are stars by their right and therefore when these stars choose to portray strong female leads, the success and its resulting impact becomes even stronger. This of course has its own perks, but its lows include the fact that its negative impact reaches out to more people and easily creates the make believe scenario surrounding icon representation and conventional acceptance.

- Although throughout the movie, there were no initiatives from the movie makers side to break any stereotype through idol representation, instead it has contributed further to acceptance of what's acceptable to male gaze.

Conclusion

The subjective interpretation in the form of critical study aimed to find out the effectiveness of Bollywood in camouflaging for the lack of content deliverance that promotes gender equity. The movie industry plans to create a place in the mind of the people which they are doing very successfully through their interdependence on societal and cultural structure in India. Bollywood has predominance over other forms of audio visual formats of entertainment. The main reason for that is their pivotal role as monopoly in the recreational filed irrespective of the age group or socio demographic barriers that mostly divide the target audience otherwise. When a person watches a film for 3 hours, the viewer's attention is unappalled due to the entire active involvement with watching the films. Another important reason for getting excellent visibility is when Bollywood picks up trends that are most in demand, in the recent times icon representation in the form of prominent historical figures have been quite popular. With the need for feminism on the rise due to ever increasing discrimination and disparity and growing crimes, the role of Bollywood as a social revolution tool increases. However unfortunately, Bollywood is leading a parade of sorts in the name of revolution. It is catering to patriarchal hierarchy and conventions that are discriminative in nature. The critical study of a few commercially successful films in the last few years that have been well received by the audience and also had been critically acclaimed has been taken into consideration. India's obsession with stars has also been taken into consideration when selecting movies for critical study. In India, Idol worshipping is very popular; hence the presence of celebrity plays an important role both in the movie selection as well as in creating the impression among the people. People remember and connect well when their favourite celebrity comes on screen to talk about a certain issue or when stars decide to portray a certain idol/character. The inspirational story behind popular historical figures becomes even more credible and inspirational.

To conclude it is true that successful commercial Bollywood movies, which are based on popular icons have a larger reach and therefore leads to larger impact. The casting of viable popular Bollywood actresses who are also largely successful as actors increase the acceptability of these icons as inspirational in the mainstream world. Although the life story of icons is more fact than fiction, it is also important for filmmakers to contribute to the popularity of a certain angle to the story than almost always emphasising on the part that caters to the gender roles set by the patriarchal society. A women's story can be interpreted in two ways, one as a woman with achievement irrespective of whatever happens as a woman, its subjective to her journey that leads to her triumph and the other could be the interpretation on behalf of the society that has prefixed way of looking at a woman as merely a second sex, whose life irrespective of any other factors should preferably always revolve around emotional biasedness and relationships to be handled for getting approval as an idol woman of sorts. The failure to do which could result in the blacklisting of the woman as an inspirational figure in any way. Indeed, it has always been the same and always shall be. Bollywood in the name of bringing about a revolution in support of women and gender equality is mere contributing to setting roles as defined by the

preference of the phallus. The portrayal of strong women icons is just a mere camouflage of the loopholes that exist when making these movies starting from their selection to their angle of portrayal. Either this is a safe game for Bollywood or it's just a way to strengthen the patriarchal hierarchy established through ages and to continue the legacy of conventional gender roles.

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