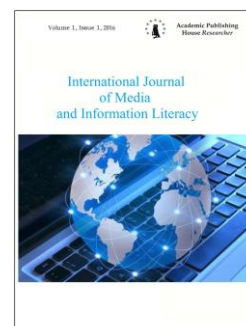


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Depiction of Gender Inequalities in Animation Films: An Indian Scenario

Sharmila Kayal ^{a, *}, J. Seenal ^b

^aAdamas University, Kolkata, India

^bMarian College, Kuttikunam (Autonomous), Idduki, Kerala, India

Abstract

Violence has a disastrous consequence on women's physical, mental and reproductive health (WHO report, 2012). In 2011, 24,206 occurrences were recorded, a rise of 9 %. More than half of the victims are between 18 and 30 years of age (National Crime Record Bureau, 2013). Government of India has taken so many undertakings, and implements various plans, programmes in regard to this and so as the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting also initiated awareness programmes through television. No one can deny the power of television's extending reach and attractive programmes which not only entertains but it pries to educate the mass. With the effort of UNICEF, Indian TV also initiates to eradicate the social evil and the plight of the women in our country from the negative consequences of gender inequalities. This study is an attempt of understanding the social message through animation movies.

Keywords: child abuse, gender inequality in Indian Scenario, social message, depiction of animation movies.

1. Introduction

Gender inequalities are the social shame and it has its deep root in our social system. India facing this biased nature towards a particular gender for time immemorial. The problem of biased attitude not only hinders the nation's social development but it degrades the nation's image, reputation and deep rooted cultural identity. We can find the evidence, like in 2011, 24,206 incidents of crimes were recorded, which has been increased of 9 percent from the previous year (National Crime Record Bureau, 2013). More than half of the victims are between 18 and 30 years of age. The quandary of gender-based violence is getting worse. Alarmingly in almost 94.2 % of cases criminals were known to the victims and those involved included family members, relatives, and neighbours. Under the IPC (Indian Penal Code) crimes against women include rape, kidnapping and abduction, homicide for dowry, torture, molestation, sexual harassment, and the importation of girls (Tilak, 2013). India's sketch as a promising contemporary nation has shaken by the recent rape case, as widespread gender-based violence has been exposed. The Census of 2011 in India has revealed that there are only 919 girls for every 1000 boys in the 0-6 age group in India, drawing attention to the imbalance in child-sex ratios. Ideally, this ratio should be above 950 (The report of United Nations in India, NGO, 2012).

This imbalance is an outcome of the practice of gender biased sex selection – a demonstration of deep rooted patriarchal mindsets leading to the preference for sons over

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: sharmilakayal@gmail.com (S. Kayal)

daughters; aided by technological misuse. Some of the effects of an imbalanced child sex ratio are an increase in violence against women and girls, trafficking for marriage and restrictions on mobility and choices of young girls. Another manifestation of patriarchy and discrimination is the high prevalence of child marriage, with almost one in two girls married before the age of 18 i.e. 43 % of women aged 20-24. Child marriage has a tremendous impact on the health, education and well-being of a girl ([The report of United Nations in India](#)).

Under this diploid situation, the UNICEF, UNESCO and Government of India have come up with many implementations in law, programmes and policies. There are laws which support gender equality and discrimination and violence against women. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) in their 2010-11 editions has stated a violence free environment for the women hood for their dignified lives. President of India has launched the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women (NMEW) which is for five year directive to achieve inter-sectoral union of all pro-women and women-centric programmes in the year 2012. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 expands the scope of sexual and gender based crimes against women. Under the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, the Government of India has undertaking to establish 100 One Stop Crisis Centres and the creation of a 1000 Crore *Nirbhaya* Fund to respond to Violence against Women and Girls. The proper utilization of media is the need of the hour and it should be reached to the grass root level for educating the people in ground level. After almost four decades, the nation has fall shorted to employ its vast educated manpower to exterminate illiteracy. Therefore highest precedence should be given to use of television for education and literacy based on the experience gained from several television pilot projects conducted in the country, stated by. Here comes the need for proper communication, the role of communication is inevitable for educating the rural masses especially those are illiterates and the medium of television is creating an atmosphere through its various programmes like 'Gyan Darshan', 'Galli Galli Sim Sim', 'CITE' etc. This medium not only provides entertainment but it's a chief component of information and education.

Television paves the way to eradicate the social evils by various lucid programmes which will attract the masses. The sensitive topic like child abuse, domestic violence, and television is the apt medium of disseminating awareness and being a catalyst it is trying to change the orthodox mindset of the public. The wider television set holders and its viewers across the globe are the burning example of a part of this social change phenomenon in broadcast media. Doordarshan has crystallised its main nine objectives ([Annual report, 1983](#)), here it is highlighting a few:

- To act as a catalyst for social change;
- To promote national integration;
- To highlight the need for social welfare measures including welfare of women, children and the less privileged;
- To create values of appraisal of artistic and cultural heritage;
- To disseminate the message of family planning as a means of control and family welfare.

The UNICEF and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in India has joined and collaborate working for educating the masses about gender inequalities. It has felt the importance of television and other media for awareness. Television has its Omni potentiality to break the geographical barrier and literacy barrier. Its lighter side of educating the masses in interesting manner has proved its significance. We can take example from the Pulse Polio Awareness programme in television (*Do Bund Zindagi Ki*) by the Bollywood Super Star Amitabh Bachhan. The government of India has spent thousands of crores money to be broadcasted in media and for making this programme a successful one. TV also initiates to eradicate the social evil and the plight of the women in our country from the negative consequences of gender inequalities.

The entertainment programmes are being used to disseminate educational and pro-social messages and discusses the structural barriers that obstruct the use of entertainment media for development. Combining entertainment and education to construct social change can be traced historically to the timeless art of storytelling. In countries where a rich oral tradition still persists, folktales with moral messages are an integral part of people's informal education. Television in education has undergone many manifestations in India. It has been used as comprehensively in conformist and distance education formats. The developed countries are taking full advantage of television in education. This has greater scope in developing countries also. The use of television in

education emphasizes its role and consequence for achieving the aspirations for 'education for all' (Vyas et al., 2002).

2. Materials and methods

Objective of the study: to find out how gender inequality messages are been portrayed in animation movies; to analyze what kind of message it is delivering and its outcomes.

Methodology. This study has adopted Narrative Analysis technique to analyze how the various animated films acts as a socializing change agent and catalyst for improving the status of women as well as mediator of improving the standard of girl children by imparting necessary information. Narrative analysis in the human sciences refers to a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have in common a storied form (Riessman, 2000). This study has adopted Narrative Analysis technique in Qualitative methodology to analyze how the various animated films acts as a socializing change agent and catalyst for improving the status of women as well as mediator of improving the standard of girl children by imparting necessary information. It has taken the parameters of: Analysis of the story, character, context, time/shots, background music, dialogue, dubbing, costume, animation/video quality.

Purposive sampling in Qualitative methodology has been adopted for this study. Six Animation videos were taken for analysis which consisted of the broad theme of gender equality as a social message. The sub themes are: early marriage, child abuse, unbiased attitude to girl child etc. This message has been taken which are basically against of gender inequality and spreads awareness to the public as a whole.

Theoretical Framework. The Hypo-Dermic Needle theory or Magic Bullet theory proposes that the mass media could persuade a very large group of people directly and consistently by 'shooting' or 'injecting' them with suitable messages designed to trigger a needed response. The bullet theory graphically advocates that the message is a bullet, fired from the "media gun" into the viewer's "head". With correspondingly emotive metaphors the hypodermic needle model suggests that media messages are injected straight into a passive audience which is immediately influenced by the message. They articulate the view that the media is a precarious means of communicating an idea because the receiver or audience is powerless to defy the impact of the message. There is no escape from the effect of the message in these models. In this study, the animation movie which disseminating pro social messages to the society acts like magic bullet, with which it has triggered the message to public, and due to her extensive and unique characteristic, the people likely to be persuade with this message. The successful implementation of the taken animated videos and their feedback correlates as the message as magic bullet or Hypo-Dermic needle which has been triggered or injected to public for a better progressed and developed society.

3. Discussion

The book 'Educational Television in India: Present Scenario and Future Perspectives' (Rasool, 2012) analyses the current situation of educational television in India, its expansion and involvement to higher education, the discernments about television as a medium of education, information and the global endeavours in using television for edification. The study also analyses the various confronts of its multifaceted nature, lists the failures and successes and also investigates the potential and insinuations of using television for higher education. Taking advantage of the digital revolution and the junction of information and communication technologies, the book presents a new concept of instructional television in India. The new paradigm shall help in making the quality education available to all irrespective of their geographical setting. Besides executing motivational function, television helps in providing breakthrough learning and cognitive development of its viewers. Because of its better accessibility, it can convey learning substances to the masses in more unswerving, efficient and own way than other educational media (Vyas et al., 2002).

The media might also indirectly change behaviour by affecting public opinion and increasing problem salience in the minds of legislators, who can implement public policies that facilitate healthy behaviour and discourage unhealthy behaviour (The Health Communication Unit, 2001). The Public Service Announcements has started new initiatives as animation to educate and inform the public. Regard to this, (The Health Communication Unit, 2001), has formulated for effective

public service announcement (PSA) and states it must have following characteristics: it should have a clear and realistic objective, be designed for, and tested with a specific focus audience; have a number of qualitative features including: a. an appropriate type of appeal; b. an appropriate messenger; c. credibility; d. understand ability; e. relevance; f. high quality mechanical construction; g. high quality creative execution. It should be distributed using channels and vehicles that are suitable for the focus audience and the chosen objective and it should be distributed in substantial quantity/with substantial frequency to ensure that the focus audience is adequately exposed to the message in the television (Hizal, 1983) specifies diverse functions of television in delivering education through distance mode, like sustaining and enhancing teaching; inculcating; elucidating, illuminating; inspiration and encouragement; imposing study speed; presenting an orientation to vast masses; changing behaviour; and presenting unreachable facts and events.

Television can be an efficient instrument as distance education delivery system. It can be incorporated into the curriculum to provide information either on a single lesson, or a specific unit or even full course. The instructional television can be interactive (allowing the viewers to interact with instructor or other students live) or passive (airing pre-recorded programmes) (Walker, 1995) also errand television for its audio and visual effects and reported that it can be used to display processes or corporal skills; to explain movement; to show visuals that reflect on the colour profundity cues and motion of the object; can be used for those who lack reading skills; help make distance learning more personalized; make teaching learning live, attractive and dynamic; and is useful for skill development.

In addition to the benefits, he draw attention to some of the restraints of television of its being primarily a one-way communication medium; broadcast is difficult to integrate with other media. The process of implementing gender Mainstreaming, Mass Media shows, off-putting role of media as they produce and reproduce negative stereotypes It is argued that Mass Media endorse a non-balanced and stereotyped portrayal of women and they play a dominant role to the stereotyped socialization of youth. Sims in her study enumerates that the Disney films have frequently studied because they are a major source of entertainment for many children and potentially could have an impact on their social, emotional and mental development and gender depiction messages from the films, usually finding that they contain stereotypical messages that negatively characterize females (e.g., female characters who are overly passive) (Hedrick et al., 2008) had scrutinized the effects of Disney movies on viewers' attitudes toward women's abilities in leadership positions. They found that, the portrayal of women can influence the viewer to have either positive or negative attitudes toward women's abilities.

An organized communication campaign designed to educate viewers about certain social issues. These types of messages-variously called pro-development, pro social, enter-education and edutainment-incorporate persuasive educational messages in entertaining formats such as television animated programmes, music videos with social message and the like. We more generally call this approach of using entertainment for educational purposes the *entertainment-education strategy* in. The entertainment-education communication strategy provides a means to overcome the limitations of entertainment-degradation and boredom-education types of programs. Many producers are seeking to create programs that are entertaining, educational, socially responsible and commercially profitable. There are several advantageous characteristics of entertainment-education programs, though they are generally more complex to produce, require a greater degree of planning and analysis than entertainment programs and present difficult ethical choices.

At least nine characteristics of entertainment make it especially appropriate for disseminating pro-social messages that provide education and advance development goals (Piotrow, 1994). Entertainment is (1) perennial, (2) pervasive, (3) popular, (4) personal, (5) pleasurable, (6) persuasive, (7) passionate, (8) profitable and (9) practical. Entertainment is a *perennial* communication genre; it was present thousands of years ago, it is here today, and it will likely continue to flourish in the future. The entertainment media are *pervasive*. It is expanding in all countries in various forms. Entertainment is universally *popular*; people across cultures like to be entertained. Entertainment media programs can present educational content in a more *personal* manner than is often possible in real life. For instance, while a personal friend might be hesitant to discuss various family planning options, a character in a television advertisements or animated programmes can more openly communicate such personalized information. Issues that may be

difficult to discuss interpersonally, such as the mistreatment of children, contraception, AIDS, illiteracy and spouse or child abuse can be more openly addressed through media characters on entertainment programs.

4. Results

Child Abuse – “Never to afraid of speak your mind – somebody is harming – SPEAK UP”

The first video deals with ‘*child molestation prevention*’, it’s in English language and duration of this video is 9.25 second. The back ground music, costume, story plot were apt to its objective. This animation movie depicts a street child whose mother is a beggar and has three to four siblings. Once a gentleman happens to come and met with that boy, he offered ice creams and money. The boy started thinking that he is very generous and concerns over their poverty and hunger. Next shot is that, the gentleman started luring to his family also by giving money and other needed things, he made convinced to his mother to take him out. The climax of this animation movie is that, the gentleman takes that boy to a hotel room, where he has already planned to take nude picture and video of the victim with the help of the concerned hotel manager. The boy got trapped and victimized with that man’s sick mentality. After this incident, he happened to saw that person with another street children, then he could not resist himself and informed to his friend, they called up to police and the accused along with the hotel manager got arrested. This movie gives a social theme that ‘doesn’t get flatter of some ones over concern or over mercy attitude towards you... especially if it is some unknown person’.

Next movie ‘*komal*’ is in English language; duration of this movie is 9.46 second. It’s a child line help care facilitated by government of India. This movie tells and an attempt has made to make people aware about the ‘Sexual Offence Act, 2012’. The helpline number (10-9-8) is also very easy to remember and it’s a good way to disseminate this information to public, which this animated movie has attempted. This movie is basically deals with the domestic abuse occurred by family or relatives. The plight of the baby school going girl is the main character of this movie.

The story starts with a normal baby girl who goes to school and loved by all the people around her. Her uncle (father’s friend) love to spend time with her and she also like the same. That uncle molested *Komal* in absence of her parents and told not to tell others. This tragic incident made her numb and isolated. The teacher first noticed about her pity situation and made her to say what has happened with her, and then she told her mother first that how she feels dirty after this incident. This movie also adopted the mental dilemma to stand against with abuse with the fear of losing social respect and reputation. The parent after that calls to child help line number and takes advice. The teacher then started counselling to school children. The movie is well demonstrated about ‘*Good touches*’ and ‘*Bad Touches*’. The good touch includes parent touch, doctor’s touch and the movie well pictures the different type of abuses i.e., make someone undressed/ showing dirty pictures and films and elaborately it tells about the ‘*Unsafe Touches*’. Remedies of this situation if someone will get trap are included in this movie – ‘shout’, ‘run to someone you trust’, reveal the truth to that person whom you have trust’. Finally it gives a message to all ‘if someone sees child in distress call to 10-9-8’.

“MEENA” – Programme initiative by UNICEF in 1997

Theme: ‘*Indiscrimination attitude for health check up to girl child*’

This animation movie of ‘*Meena*’ deals with the indiscrimination attitude to girl child as a social message. The duration of the movie is 10.52 second. It’s in Urdu language and has good dubbing and subtitle. The story starts with a sick girl who is suffering fever along with her brother. Their family runs traditional circus in village fair and they seek medical check up for the boy as soon as they noticed that the boy is suffering with high fever. The ill girl uncle suggested not taking her to health centre because she is girl and girl need not have any health check up, only hot tea is enough for them to be cured. Next scene is that the girl started showing circus with high fever and faints, after that her mother realised her fault and both her parents took her for health check up. The final message came up with this movie is ‘the kids to be cured and treated equally without any discrimination to girl child’ and the importance of education and access to school also highlighted in this movie.

Theme: *'Chhoti si Dulhan' / 'Little Bride' in "MEENA"* – Programme initiative by UNICEF & Hanna Barbara.

This movie deals with the consequences of early marriage like high risk of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, sick ness, malnourished children, anemic mother etc. The duration of this animated movie is of 11.54 second. The movie also depicts that 'Education is the primary need which should be provided to girl child and it leads to better progressive society. Marriage of girls should be conducted after 18 years of age. The story plot consists of a school going girl, who wants to study more but in the tender age of 15, her family wanted to marry her off. The orthodox social mindset has beautifully picturised here, where a good guy should not be missed for marriage, though the girl child is immature. The male character (groom) made them understand that it is necessary to avoid marriage below 18 years and priority should be education to girl child, because it not only makes independent but it also enlightened one to overcome with the social evils and superstitions.

Theme: *'Equal Nutrition & Food' / 'Dividing the Mango' in "MEENA"* – Programme initiative by UNICEF.

In this movie the unequal mindset portrays first that the girl unlike the boy should not do the things because it's not welcome by the society. The duration of this movie is of 11. 22 second. A girl should not climb the tree or cannot enjoy unlike her sibling. She should not have equal proportions of nutritious food as like her brother. The story started with girl climbed up a tree and got a big mango and gave it to her mother, who will divide it among them. She gets a small proportion and big one goes to her brother. She feels strange and asked to her mother and granny, got reply that boy is growing so he needs more. Dinner time the boy gets more food with nutrition and girl don't get, so she asks her mother why so? And same reply she got but this time she tells that same work we are doing, in fact she is doing more than her brother so she put a proposal of interchanging their role in family, father supported and it starts.

Next scene deals with the girls daily routine what her brother has to do like early morning getting up, light the fire, sweeping, feed the house live stocks, collect the cow dung and clean the house, fetch water, clean the utensils, wash the clothes, take care of other sibling and in circumstance boy gets tired to the core and wonders how her sister manages all the things by her own. In other side, girl completed the work of her brother and that night she gets more food than her brother and boy started screaming that he has done a lot work and he has to get more food. Then her all family member realised the situation that 'there should be no discrimination of nutritious food to both the children because the both are growing up and girl needs more attention and care because she has to do hard work apart from her school. In this movie *'Cleanliness'* is also another important aspect which has been well covered. *'Washing hands'* before food also have prioritized in this animation movie.

Theme: *'Importance of Girl Education' in "MEENA"* – Programme initiative by UNICEF.

The central theme of this movie emphasizes upon the importance of girl education. The duration of this movie is 8 minute. The story starts with because of education and girls father is a illiterate got cheated by baron but in the meantime his daughter checks the paper and tells her father the exact debit money. But it did not help her to go to school which she wanted to have formal education in school. Her father shatters her all the hopes of getting admission in school. She follows her father direction and the climax of this movie is, without gone to school, she started to hear the entire lesson from outside and remembers and with the help of remembering the counting, a thief gets caught red handed by *'Meena'*. This incident made her father to realises the importance of sending school to girls. The movie also highlights the importance of in discriminatory attitude of health checkup, cleanliness.

5. Conclusion

Gender inequalities are the social embarrassment and it has its profound derivation in our social organization. In the Golden Era of technology advancement, people come in contact with media constantly throughout their daily lives. Being continuously bombarded with messages, the media has a powerful and tremendous influence on their thought processes as individuals and as a worldwide society. Gender stereotyping always has and still exists in our society. However, this issue is getting evidently solemn as gender stereotyping has now reached the young masses, which are much more habituated to the effortless, apparently easy influence of the mass media in today's

society; media is a foremost persuader in shaping stereotypes and attitudes. The Children's Television Act of 1990 has necessitated broadcasters to provide educational and informational programs. It is probable that pro social values which including the reduction of gender stereotypes in the content of children movie. This is because television programs has the authority to modify the kinds of beliefs that children hold about males and females and their beliefs about what constitutes suitable behaviours for the two genders.

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