

Representation of Women in Contemporary Bangladeshi Movies: An Analysis

Anukriti Aditya

ID: 163-24-573

Program: BSS (Honors)

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science



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Representation of Women in Contemporary Bangladeshi Movies: An Analysis

Submitted

To

Mr.Anayetur Rahaman

Lecturer

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Daffodil International University

By

Anukriti Aditya

ID: 163-24-573

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

B.S.S (Hons) in Journalism and Mass Communication



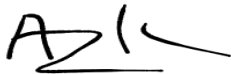
August 2020

Letter of Approval

This is to certify that Anukrity Aditya, ID: 163-24-573, has conducted her research project titled “**Representation of Women in Contemporary Bangladeshi Movies: An Analysis,**” under my supervision and guidance.

The study has been undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Social Science (BSS) in Journalism and Mass Communication at Daffodil International University.

The study is expected to contribute in the field of Journalism and Mass Communication as well as in further study about the country’s film industry.



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Anayetur Rahaman

Lecturer

Department of Journalism and Mass
Communication Daffodil International
University

Application for approval of dissertation

Mr. Anayetur Rahaman Lecturer
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Daffodil International University

Subject: Application for submission of my dissertation for approval

Dear Sir,

I have accomplished my dissertation “**Representing Women in Contemporary Bangladeshi Cinema**” as a course requirement for my under-graduate programme.

I have tried my best to work with sincerity to cover all aspects regarding the matter which I have been assigned.

I believe that this dissertation has enlarged both my knowledge and my experience. I hope you will assess my report considering the limitation of the study. I shall be highly grateful if you kindly accept my project. Your kind approval is requested

Sincerely

Anukriti Aditya

Ms. Anukriti Aditya
ID: 163-24-573
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Daffodil International University

Declaration

I hereby declare that this project report titled as Representation of Women in Contemporary Bangladeshi Cinema has been carried in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of BSS in Journalism and Mass Communication under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Daffodil International University. I have composed this paper based on the researchers ' findings from various literature. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this is an original task of me and the analysis is my own. This has not been submitted in part or full to any other institutions for any other degrees. I even certify that there is no plagiarized content in this paper.

Anukriti Aditya

ID: 163-24-573

Department Of Journalism and Mass Communication

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Daffodil International University

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Anukriti Aditya

ID: 163-24-573

Department Of Journalism and Mass Communication

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Daffodil International University

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Abstract

The images of women in Bangladeshi films are traditionally drawn as a good wife or a proletarian mother, also as a part of sexuality or sexual object. In fact, sometimes they look like the virtue of sacrifice. Most importantly, most of the time, the films in Bangladesh are made with male dominant storyline. My aim in this research is to explore how women have been portrayed in film. To reach my aim I have reviewed literature. However, the methodology for this study is firstly literature review. Secondly, watching some contemporary movies to understand how women characters have been depicted in those films.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Cinema is the strongest media. It is like a window of a society. A country and society, people are mostly reflected by cinema. So we can also say it is a voice of a society. Cinema is the strongest media which can portray the pros and cons of a society. Bangladesh is a country of Muslims, Hindus, Christian, Buddhists and some Minorities Tribes. Cinema is one of the entertainments which reflect their own culture and norms.

In 1950, Bangladesh Film Industry started their journey and Bangladesh has a brilliant past in cinema history which started from 1956. (Shegufta Yasmin-174) Until 1956, Bengali cinema was mainly made in Kolkata, India. It has been a large industry in India since the 1930s and the Bengali Muslims from East Bengal have been essentially the viewers of the film. (Shegufta Yasmin-174)

The Dhaka-based first full length sound characteristic film Mukh O Mukhosh (The Face and the Mask) was released in 1956, just following the release of Pather Pachali by way of Satyajit Ray. However, the international attention of Satyajit Ray and artistic success of some other filmmakers like Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen from West Bengal, India had created a profound impact on the filmmakers of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) was established in 1957. After the independence, the first internationally identified film from Bangladesh, Suryo Dighal Bari (The Ominous House, 1979) by means of Masihuddin Shaker and Sheikh Niamat Ali was once also influenced via Satyajit Ray's neo-realist filmmaking style. Many fantastic film with strong presentation was created in Black & White cinema.

With the passage of time, color cinema had come in the industry. At the same time, the quality of the movie story has changed. Particularly in last two decades this industry saw a major change. In that time the representation of women is also changed in modern film. Women assume a significant job in films. However, have women actually been given a fairer representation in film? Be that as it may, in the

ongoing time it adopts a crucial approach towards gender bias on celluloid. Vital questions are rising like how are the women represented on silver screen, how much the characters of the heroines are being evaluated and how the women's issues are showing. Bitter truth is most of the film are depicting women in a very poor way. Most of the female character are stereotype. Almost all of the cinemas are making on male perspective. They are dominating the storyline. Male characters are portrayed in a dominant role and while women in supporting role as happened under the patriarchal society.

Various movies want to show how should be an ideal women though the women character is just supporting role. For that reason most of the films failed to show the equality of gender roles. On that note, there are issues of gender stereotyping.

Chapter 2

Male role dominant cinemas

To consider the Bangladeshi context there was no films produced from Bangladesh area (East Pakistan of that time) before 1956. Mukh o Mukhosh and Indian films were consumed by the Eastern Bengali Muslim audience (Yasmin 175). On the other hand in “Indian mainstream cinema we continue to see a patriarchal version of female sexuality.” (Datta 74)

We come up with an own film industry in Bangladesh. Hitherto the authority of Indian films has not abridged a great deal till now. Whether Indian or Bangladeshi mainstream films it is every time based on a chief hero at the same time as female typescript are near as bits and pieces to complement hero's actions. Bangladeshi cinemas were a trendy materialize of entertainment before 1990s and after that the movement of impression (from Indian cinema) began that resulted lone uncouthness under attack for men from prom exact categorize who get sexual satisfied from cinema. Actually if, the whole world cinema takes women as mediocre raise objections next it is not startling that Bangladeshi film would achieve the same.

Hollywood or Western cinemas are called to be modern while according to a study of 2013 reveals that only “13% of the top 100 films featured equal numbers of major female and male characters, or more major female characters than male characters.” (Lausen 1)

Women as image, man as bearer of the looks. (Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema-62) . "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female...In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" ~ (Laura Mulvey-“Visual and Other Pleasures”, p.19, Springer).⁴

Laura Mulvey says that “the visual pleasure of cinema became a suspect category open by definition only to men” and women are “systematically excluded” from mainstream discourses. (Mirzoeff 166)

Cinema basically is produced to entertain or give pleasure as Laura Mulvey terms ‘scopophilia’ which is a pleasure of looking and pleasure of being looked at (835).

“The first, scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight” and the “second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from identification with the image seen” (Mulvey 836-7). Modern structure of lengthy cinema for mass viewing basically commenced in twentieth century alongside with enlargement of technological advancement.

In contemporary Bangladeshi perspective we see heroes in dominant role in most of the movies, who almost created their own genre for the audience, such as cinemas of Shakib Khan, Ananta Jalil, Arfin Shuvo, Late Manna, Riyaz, Ferdous , Alexander Bo while we don’t see such genre of actresses.

In contemporary context Shakib Khan is the most popular commercial hero of Bangladeshi cinema. Shakib Khan is the country’s current superstar and Romance King, known as King Khan, Dhakar kin. This thing is very funny. His maximum movie copy of Telegu film and hindi film. Here Hero the Superstar (Shakib Khan Produced 2014 film) is commented to copy of Telegu film Rebel and Nayak and his another film Rajotto is copy of Hindi film “Wanted.”

To consider movies of Shakib Khan, many of the titles speak a lot, such as Hero: the Superstar, King Khan, Number One Shakib Khan, My Name is Khan, Dhakar King (King of Dhaka), My Name is Sultan, Boss Number One, Top Hero, Tiger Number One, Amar Praner Swami (My Soul Husband), Swamir Sangsar (Husband’s family), Adorer Jamai (Beloved Husband), Daring Lover, Rajotto (Kingdom), Don Number One, Premik Number One (Lover Number One), Pitar Ashon (Father’s Position), etc. (Orchi Othondrila-7) These titles are based on the heroes actions and their stories.

In contemporary context our popular actor of Bangladesh is Ananta Jalil. He is Superman, James Bond, Batman, Ironman, Robinhood all alone combined on screen. His big budget films brought change in our Bangladeshi cinema industry but his films are always based on his own unrealistic fantasies and his every cinemas heroin his wife Borsha. His every cinemas have extremely dramatic story.

In a Bangladeshi research of ASA University in figure 12, young generations express their views about golden era of Bangla cinema. 40% think that cinema

before 1971 was better. 69% think that cinema upto 1990 was better than those of today. Only 8% appreciates cinema from 1990 till now.

They said that many films were produced in last 20 years which are very good but apart from these others are of very lower standard. Those who support the period from 1971 to 1990 as better time for cinema, argue that in that period our cinema industry was not polluted, did not develop the tendency of copying. (Yesmin-184)

In Bangladeshi contemporary cinema perspective women just use or showing sexual objects nothing else. I am showing some poster of contemporary Bangladeshi cinemas how woman have been portrayed in this poster.

Chapter 3

Depicting male's point of view

“Each time a women stands up for herself, without knowing it possibility, without claiming it she stands up for all women,” a very strong quote for woman power which is said by Maya Angelou. (Give her identity)

The film Kistimaat which got released in 2014. It is an action drama type movie. This movie was directed by Ashiqur Rahman. The cast was Arefin Shuvo, Achol, Misha Soudagar and many more. This movie was released on the Eid day.

Like the all other movies this cinema also shows the male's point of view. On the other hand women character shows as submissive, tortured, and evil or the epitome of beauty. This movie shows the heroin as a queen of beauty. The first shot of the hero Durjoy get a heroic entry with his attitude. On the other hand in the first scene for Priya we can see Priya is doing a photo shoot. Which is just for cheap entertainment for the audience.

Durjay has been seen on screen for most of the time. He is seen to be an honest policeman and work for the country and society. As he was about to perform his duties, he was confronted by the villain Lion. There, too, he acts like a formidable hero. Stops occupying space illegally. But on the other hand, the physical weakness of the heroine Priya is shown. While changing the house, she is almost falling as soon as you pick up a box. That's where Durjay gets acquainted with Priya. Priya thinks of Durjay as a bully. Some cheap entertainment can be seen in 36 minutes.

Durjoy knock priya door, priya open door and she want to know why Durjoy knock the door. Durjoy reply she want priya's milk.

Where “18+” jokes are made about Priya's sensitive body part. On the other hand, the villain's bad deeds are stopped by Durjoy. He always suppresses the villain with his physical strength. In the meantime, Priya got a job as a model in a big company. But there she was physically humiliated. However, a good thing is shown here that the heroine protects herself in the primary way. But later on, the hero saves the heroine with his physical identity. Then Priya says she wants to come and give all her responsibilities to Durjoy. This attitude shows that women are actually dependent on men. Some songs of the movie are shown where the heroine is presented as appealing.

In it, Durjoy finds his lost mother and sister, who were lost in childhood. At that moment, the villain disgraced Durjoy's sister . For this reason, the villain Lyon kills Durjoy's sister, and Durjoy is hanged .

In this situation an item song is shown where the appealing woman entertains, which was useless. In the course of events, Durjoy learns that the villain Laon and his brother Tiger are responsible for his father's death. Then the hero decides that he will take all his revenge. So he uses his intelligence to fulfill all his revenge.

If we review the whole movie, we can see that the heroine has no role in the main story. He has been kept in the whole movie only for some cheap entertainment. The character of the heroine has been kept only to make it attractive among the general audience. If we look at the dress and make-up of the heroine, we can see unnecessary physical display in some places. The general audiences of Bangladesh expect entertainment when entering.

And the director has used the heroine only for entertainment. Just like Item Song was in the movie. To conclude, it isn't about equivalent privileges of ladies in films sharing screens, however it is about ladies not to be depicted as men's longing, rather as individual human character. Such portrayal will pull over our watchers from the male centric control.

Chapter 4

Presenting women as sexual object

Shakib Khan's recent popular film Rajotto, directed by Iftekhar Chowdhury, of 2010 is going to be discussed. Shomrat (Shakib Khan) is the hero who is proven to be a gangster who falls in love with Riyana (Bobby). Riyana appears forty minutes after beginning the film who opens the door at night carrying extreme make up. She is shown in modeling pose with a couple of shot to show off that Shomrat has fallen in love.

Samrat and Riyana met accidentally .When Samrat and Riyana met, they started a conversation. After 48 minutes, in the movie, Samrat, the hero, starts dancing in his imagination with Riyana.

The song camera's focus and angle is very vulgar and perverse. The story continues with the elevating motion of Riyana's younger sister being raped and eventually Samrat taking revenge on the villains with the aid of being the undercover CID Officer. "Bobby's glamorous presence on display are strong points of the movie, as are its item songs considering the cinema going crowd of Bangladesh" and "the film Rajotto is very similar to the Indian movie 'Wanted', starring Salman Khan." Interestingly Riyana or Bobby is mentioned to do internship in clinical career while she is shown to be in her place of business only as soon as when she needs to hear a villain's conversation. Other than that she suggests no capability as a physician when her sister was suffering and her father desired to disguise the reality with the aid of not taking her into hospital.

After Samrat takes the sister to hospital the household brings her home besides therapy while the neighbors start denouncing the family. It encourages on the fact that a rape sufferer need to be hidden fearing the society's scorn. Moreover, Riyana calls Samrat for assist citing that her father's strain got high, although in the scene the father used to be showing a chest ache on the left side. It is a bit funny that her father dies inside some time having a coronary heart assault while the health practitioner daughter only mentions his excessive blood stress calling the hero except trying to cure it or calling an ambulance.

This is a misrepresentation of medical doctors who are women due to the fact she has been proven to be just a dumb girl, not any clinical professional. Ultimately in all the situations Riyana is the gorgeous, helpless victim while Samrat is her rescuer. This movie has an extremely dramatic story. This movie is also full of songs that signify ladies as seductive sexual objects.

Chapter 5

Monpura and Patriarchal Society

This movie is considered as one of the best movies in Bangladeshi film industry. This movie brought a big change during the bad times of Bangladeshi cinema history. This movie is directed by Giasuddin Selim which was released in 13 February, 2009. Although the movie was initially released only in Dhaka and Rajshahi, it was released in cinemas across the country within three weeks.

At the same time, the movie broke the record of 45 years in terms of income. The movie is made with the unrequited love of Sonai and Pori. Chanchal Chowdhury who play the role for Shonai and Farhana Mili payed the Pori character. Also Fazlul Rahman Babu, Mamunur Rashid, Shirin Alam and many others are also in this movie. Shayan Chowdury Arnob is the music director of this movie.

Let's get to the story of the movie. The housekeeper is killed by the landlord's mad son. Sonai goes to Monpura Island with the responsibility of murder to save her owner Gazi's son. There he met Pori, the daughter of the fisherman. Pori also loves to sing. But her father does not like it. There Pori and Sonai fall in love with each other. One day when Pori came to meet Sonai, Gazi saw Pori.

Then he trick to make marry Pori with the mad boy. Ghazi simultaneously tricks Sonai. After showing greed for property to the father of the Pori, Mr. Gazi arranged the marriage of the Pori with his mad son. The father of the Pori also agreed to the marriage out of greed for wealth. This time Sonai wants to run away with the Pori. But he fails.

On the one hand, Sonai police arrested him on the charge of murder and on the other hand, the fairy got married. As a result of this marriage, various problems continue in the life of the Pori. In this situation, the fairy is told that Sonai will be hanged. Upon hearing this news, the fairy could not bear it and committed suicide. After being released from jail, Sonai saw the body of the fairy in the backyard. And this is how the tragic love story ends.

Let's get to the analysis of the movie. The movie shows a little tragic love story as well as brings up several issues. At first Mr. Gazi brought home a master to cure his son. He decided to marry a boy to a beautiful girl. This practice is still practiced in many places in our society. If there are any problems, it is said,

"Marry the boy." As a result, the girl's life later became miserable. Also, marriage means to be a beautiful girl. And beauty means to have fair complexion, hair, hands and feet. External beauty is everything here. Later it was seen that the heroine Pori wanted to leave the house alone but she could not. In our society, the movement of girls alone is restricted. Mr. Gazi's wife always silently or loudly agrees with her husband's various lies and bad deeds, which are still very common in our society.

The wife must obey and consent to all the words of the husband. The biggest thing that can be seen after this is that the father of the Pori marries the Pori without the consent of the fairy. Marriage is life time decision for two people. But most of the time it is seen that no opinion of the daughter is taken in such a way in marriage. The decision was imposed on her. Movies are called the mirror of society. In this movie, Giasuddin Selim tells a love story of his ordinary village as well as various other aspects.

Chapter 6

Cinema halls are not gender friendly

An ASA University research in Bangladesh found that 29% of educated young generation go to cinema hall to watch movies in the country. But they are not very regular. It means 71% of this age and social group do not go to cinema halls for enjoying movies. The reasons behind this are worse environment of movie theaters, poor storyline and low quality or under-rated movies etc. The survey was taken among the undergraduate students. Many of them once watched cinema, but now they have stopped viewing Bangla cinema. The girl students said that their parents do not allow them to go to cinema hall because of hall's environment. And also Bangladeshi research of ASA University on 100 young people it was seen that "only 20% people think that cinema hall's environment is gender friendly" and "majority 82% think that our cinema does not reflect the real Bangladesh at all... especially our cinema industry is compared with the distort image of Indian film industry" (Yasmin 178).

The purpose of this study to make a picture how are women demonstrate in cinemas in the recent times, how are the relationship between women and the industry, what is really being said about women's rights. I will discuss about this with some of recent Bangladeshi cinema along with movie poster.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Most of the time Bangla cinemas have extremely dramatic story and also most of the time cinemas' titles are very weird. Most of the Bangla cinemas' story and title is copied from Hindi cinema and hero and heroine overacting and they are English pronunciation makes cinema more disgusting. And also they are dressing sense and sense too much poor. But yeah recently Bangladeshi cinema can also achieve some good quality cinema. We are got some new creative hands. Actually we need a revolution in Bangladeshi cinema industry. Some director they are makes some bangle cinema like they are story type more realistic and they are movie direction and also women or heroin representations in those movies just wow.

Do you remember Bangladeshi drama film director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki directed cinema "Third Person Singular Number"?

This movie is considered as one of the best movie in Bangladeshi film industry. This movie was released in 2009. The story is a portrait of a young women, Ruba, whose live-in boyfriend has been sent to jail. The movie follows her struggles navigating a conservative society after his arrest.

This movie actors Mosharraf Karim, Nusrat Imrose Tisha, Abul Hayat and musician Topu. This movie was awarded Best Film, Best Director for Farooki, Best actress in Meril Prothom Alo Awards 2010 and also this movie achieved so many awards.

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki directed another movies Television (2012) and No Bed Of Roses (Doob)(2017) get critically acclaimed across the world and received numerous international and national awards.

Our Bangladeshi director Anam Biswas doing best work in Bangladeshi Film industry. Anam Biswas is a Bangladeshi Director, screenwriter, composer and writer. He is the director and screenwriter of "Debi", released in 2018. "Debi" is a 2018 Bangladeshi supernatural thriller film based on Humayun Ahmed's novel of the same name. The film was released on 19 October 2018.

This movie actors Chanchal Chowdury, Jaya Ahsan, Iresh Zaker, Animash Aich and Subman Fariya. Jaya Ahsan doing very good job in this film. The story follows a lonely housewife Ranu (Jaya Ahsan) and her paranormal powers. Women was portrayed in this film superb. This movie received huge commercial success and became highest grossing Bangladeshi film of 2018. Aynabaji was the one of most talented work of the Anam Biswas.

Badrul Anam Saud directed “Gohin Baluchor “is one of the great work. This movie release on December 29, 2017. This movie cast Suborna Mustofa doing very hard and great job. She was showing Women power.

Rubayite Hossain directed “Made in Bangladesh” cinema is one of the best example of women power. It is drama film and this film release in 2019. This movie lead actress Rikita Nandini Shimu doing very good acting. This movie plot Shimu, (character name) is 24 years, and she works in a clothing factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh and she faced with difficult conditions at work, she decides to start a union with her co-workers. She faced threat from the management and disapproval of her husband. Shimu is determined to go on and together they start fight and find a way. Her over all presentation in this movie too good.

Taneem Rahman Anshu Directed by “No Dorai.” It is the first Bangladeshi surfing film. This movie released in 2019. The story of “No Dorai” is based on the life of a young Bangladeshi girl, who defies society's norms to follow her dream of becoming a surfer. Sunerah Binte Kamal and Sariful Razz in lead role.

You know after 2010 and 2015 we are getting so many brilliant Bangla movies. And Director changing they are mind and they makes another platform for women or heroin. They are showing women power and they are proved that every cinemas don't need to show item songs, don't need to show women body, don't need to show women are alone they have no power, women also take responsibility for her family. Women is power.

Cinema representing a county and countries culture. So we are badly needed watchful, tasteful and stricter “Censor Board”. And also need Directors and Producers should be adequate educated and cultured, this thing is very important. Respect women artist and they are work. Don't make they are uncomfortable. Cinema is mirror of society.

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