

PORTRAYAL OF VERBAL VIOLENCE IN PAKISTANI FEATURE FILMS: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The current study is about portrayal of verbal violence in Pakistani feature films. The scenes of verbal violence (49 scenes) are observed which indicate this type of violence is more in recent films. Researchers selected feminist theory to investigate the phenomena and used content analysis as research method. The results depict movie representation was humiliating and degrading for women and the reason was entirely the cheap perception of producers about women. When we discuss the bold and vulgar dances of women, this trend has somewhat decreased in recent movies.

Keywords: Verbal Violence, women, Pakistani films 2013, content analysis, emotions, eye teasing, psychological violence.

INTRODUCTION

A movie has the influence to affect linguistics and adoptions of audience. This vigorous medium affects the notice conceptions and imagination of people. In the words of famous filmmaker Ingmar Bergman "Film as dream, film as music. No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of our souls." In Pakistan cinema is an easily accessible and less expensive regalement for general public. Searle Kochberg explicates that the film industry is an intricate organization, an institution with set rules and methods of working which have evolved from early days of cinema through the studio system to their present state films are conceived, engendered, distributed and consumed within concrete economic and convivial contexts.

Pakistani cinema has experienced many eras of boom, recession and Renaissance. In 1947 with the independence of Pakistan, our cinema industry suffered from lack of equipment and talent as most of actors and directors migrated to India. The first movie to be released in Lollywood was "Teri Yaad" however any hit movie was not produced until the 1950's blockbuster Do Ansoo. After the record breaking success of MaulaJutt (1979) the violent movies became the trend of the Pakistani film industry. The hero with a sickle (Gandasa) and furious look became component of every Pakistani movie. Some directors also used vulgarity as a ladder to success. This made the sophisticated audience uninterested in cinema.

In the 1990's some directors endeavored to dispense belligerent storyline with decent movies, but the cinema audience didn't plenary accepted those movies. Humayoun Gujjar (2001) was a super hit movie that brought the Gandasa culture back in industry. Although Chooriyan (1998) and Yeh Dil Apka Hua (2002) are highly grossed movies of that era, that magnetized the investors towards Pakistani films. Waar (2013) became the all-time blockbuster movie in the history of Pakistani cinema. Waar got a 9.2/10 rating on IMDB (Internet Movie Database) beating high budget Hollywood movies. The movies in year 2013 targeted some social issue based movies. The year 2014 is believed to be a year of more successful with the upcoming movies the System, Gidh, Jalaibee, Moor and Naach.

The study analyzes the violence against women in Pakistani Urdu movies of year 2013. The cinema industry of Pakistan is being suffering from the extreme violent themes and women's derogatory portrayal. Once flourishing and renowned Pakistani cinema industry shattered with large amount of flops and the number of movies per year decrease gradually. But with the start of year 2013 various hit movies were produced and some of them got international recognition (Waar, Josh, Lamha*etc.*). It is considered to be the changing phase of Pakistani film industry. The study is held to check out the amount of violence against women in Pakistani movies, the motive is to point out the issue. The issue portrayed in movies affects the spectators and create expectations.

Objectives

The study has following objectives;

- To understand the verbal violence against women that portrayal in movies
- To determine the ratio of scenes and duration of women violence in Pakistani movies.
- To examine verbal violence against women in movies is high or low.
- To analyze the different types of verbal violence against women presented in movies.

Hypothesis

- I. Pakistani Urdu films depict the optimistic and affirmative image of women and issues related to women are well represented without exaggeration.
- II. Pakistani Urdu films are exposed women in emotional and abuse scenes related to women instead of their true image.

Research Questions

What kind of verbal violence ratio in selected movies

Do Pakistani Urdu films present women in humaneness?

Do the selected movies truly portrayal women image according to society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Deniel Linz et al (1984) researched the effect of media exposure of women violence and effect on viewers. Much concern has been expressed over what is perceived to be an increasing trend toward the portrayal of brutality against women in the media. Some individuals contend that the continual portrayal of women in film and other mass media as victims of sexual assault and other violent acts encourages the battering and sexual harassment of women in real life.

Lemert (1989) et al have observed various newspaper stories about rape and concluded that these stories do not provide as much facts and information as stories about other crimes have hence they do not provide enough information to understand the causes of such rape crime. The most common reason provided in the newspaper is either blaming the victim or the assailant of the crime of the situation.

Farrel and Bruce (1997) studied the relation between exposure of community violence and effect on distress and hostility. They surveyed 473 middle schools and conducted research on

both male and female students with respect to real life violence. The study resulted in no significant relation between exposure of violence and distress though it showed higher aggression in girls due to higher exposure. The researchers suggested that children with prolonged violence exposure become desensitized to violence which also increases hostility.

Derne (1999) demonstrated a qualitative study on violence and sexual material in selected Hindi movies. The content analysis of movies ended up at the notion that Hindi movies used forced and physical aggression as mean of expressing love. Sexual violence was legitimately part of movies, making violence as an expected content of the movie

Carll (1999) measured that the films and news are at different level of credibility. According to his study the commonly held impression is that the rape and exploitation of women are less likely to be noteworthy than other kinds of violence against women. The films represent the fictional characters with exaggeration in their personalities and production, while the news is the source of actual and non-fictional information. Therefore the slanted portrayal of women and violence is even more unfavorable as it will mislead the audience into viewing these false facts considering them real.

Afzal Shayfarad et al (1999-2000) lead a research on “critical study of social issues in Pakistani movies”. The study analyzed the movies representation and the difference in real life. The content analysis of Pakistani movies of year 2000 suggested that the violent scenes in Pakistani movies, particularly in Punjabi movies were not depicting the reality of Pakistani society.

Anderson et al (2003) researched on the influence of media violence on youth, in which the televisions, video games, music and movies were analyzed. The study concluded high amount of violence on media, the media violence appears to be creating increase in aggressive and violent behaviors of youth in both short and long term effects. Randomized experiments, Cross-sectional surveys, Longitudinal surveys are used for the implementation of the research process. The short term exposure of violent media creates physical and verbal aggressive mindset, actions and sentiments. The exposure of violent content for long term in childhood proves to cause violent behavior later in life. The study found that the reduction in exposure to violent media can reduce the effects and violence in youth but the type of intervention is not defined. The environment in which the content is being viewed also makes difference in the absorption of the effect of the violent media.

Jana Bufkin (2008) studied the images of sex and rape through the content analysis of movies of 1996. The researchers selected 50 top grossing movies of 1996 and analyzed the presentation and nature of the rape and sex in the movies. The movies are analyzed by three individual coders. The unit of analysis was movie and scenes where coders defined the the genre of the movie and the target audience. The study concluded that the most of the movies content depicted that the portrayal of rape was committed by aggressive, distressed, poor individuals who use children for their satisfaction. The results showed that the both cases are shown more that their occurrence in reality and the sexual behaviors are increasing in dramas, music videos, films and general TV shows. Furthermore study indicated strange or uncommon cases of rape and sexual assault rather than common cases. 64% movies of the sample were primarily made to attract male audience while 36% were directed for women. 60% movies of the sample didn't show any single scene of sex while 35% movies of the male audience had sex scenes. Only 17% of the scenes were rape scenes.

Kokab (2013) analyzed cultural, violence and dress pattern in Pakistani movies (2000-2012). The population of the study is Pakistani movies released during 2000- 2012. The research selected 5 Pakistani movies through convenient sampling for observing verbal and physical analysis and dressing. The duration of dress pattern and scenes duration is taken as unit of analysis. Frequency of physical violence showed in movies is calculated as 50 scenes (532 seconds) while verbal violence appears to be 82 scenes (1155 seconds). The study outcomes showed high rate of physical and verbal violence in Pakistani movies. The dressing of the women in movies was depicting the Hindi movies in most of the movies.

Feminist film theory is derived from feminist theory and it is the theoretical film criticism. Haskell (1973) the feminist film theory revolves around the representation and spectatorship issue in the movies. The most assessed topic is the stereotypes of women mostly in Hollywood. Feminist film theory has many approaches regarding the content of cinema, representation of gender and impact on spectators. Feminist film theory is under the influence of feminism and judges the films in adversary way. The purpose of theory is to discuss the roles of women in particular film and in the certain genres of the movies. The genres for instance Hollywood crime drama movies, especially those which impose doubtful behaviors and sexual motivations, in these genre women are represented too violated and mostly punished with death.

Weiner (1994) gave three principles of feminist research *i.e.* feminist research involves an analysis of unexamined norms about women and dominant forms of knowing and doing. Secondly it explains the feminist research as dedicated to improve life chances for women and girls. Furthermore it is concerned with developing professional and personal practices, it is thus critical, political and praxis-oriented.

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis is a valuable research method for social sciences; it is a systematic research method for analysis of characteristics of writings, pictures, and objects. Earl Babbie (2009) defined content analysis as the analysis of recorded human communication. The present study contains the content study of films and counting the occurrence of verbal violent scenes against women.

In study researchers selected 2013 year movies as time period of study. They further narrow down and selected four Pakistani movies as sample size to investigate violence against women. The unit of analysis in this study is the scenes and length of time in seconds consumed by Pakistani films for the representation of verbal violence against women.

Categories Operationalization Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is nonphysical behavior of damaging someone by using language, whether written or spoken words. It can be categorize in following types.

- i. **Eve-Teasing**
Eve-teasing is stalking, harassing and molestation of women by men. It is mostly executed in colleges, streets or markets. Here Eve refers to the very first women according to religious creation myth.
- ii. **Emotional Violence**

Emotional violence occurs when a person says or does something to hurt any other person. It includes jealousy, humiliating a person, sarcasm, yelling, degrading *etc.*

iii. Psychological Violence

Psychological violence happens when a person threatens or tries to gain control over other person by pressure/fear. It includes threatening about family, reputation, harm or violence. It can be causing by generating fear, screaming or yelling, stalking and gaining control over someone.

No. of Scenes and percentage of scenes of Verbal Violence in movies

| Name | Eve-Teasing (Scenes) | Eve-Teasing (%age) | Emotional Violence (Scenes) | Emotional Violence (%age) | Psychological Violence (Scenes) | Psychological Violence (%age) |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Josh | 1 | 14.29% | 6 | 23.08% | 1 | 6.25% |
| Anjuman | 2 | 28.57% | 8 | 30.77% | 5 | 31.25% |
| Zinda Bhaag | 3 | 42.86% | 6 | 23.08% | 6 | 37.5% |
| Armaan | 1 | 14.29% | 6 | 23.08% | 4 | 25% |
| Total | 7 | | 26 | | 16 | |

Table shows the number of scenes and percentage of the verbal violence displayed in movies. The verbal violence is divided in three categories i.e. eve-teasing, emotional violence and psychological violence. The total scenes of eve-teasing are 7, emotional violence scenes are 26 and psychological violence scenes are 16. Josh displayed 14.29% of eve-teasing, Anjuman 28.57%, ZindaBhaag 42.86% and Armaan 14.29%. The percentage of emotional violence is 23.08% in Josh, 30.77% in Anjuman, 23.08% in Zinda Bhaag and 23.08% in Armaan. The percentage of psychological violence against women is 6.25% in Josh, 31.25% in Anjuman, 37.5% in Zinda Bhaag and 25% in Armaan.

Duration and percentage of Verbal violence in seconds in movies

| Name | Eve-teasing (Seconds) | Eve-teasing (%age) | Emotional Violence (Seconds) | Emotional Violence (%age) | Psychological Violence (Seconds) | Psychological Violence (%age) |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Josh | 20 | 8.89% | 563 | 21.83% | 44 | 4.09% |
| Anjuman | 105 | 46.67% | 1,076 | 41.72% | 350 | 32.59% |
| Zinda Bhaag | 90 | 40% | 380 | 14.73% | 344 | 32.03% |
| Armaan | 10 | 4.44% | 560 | 21.71% | 336 | 31.28% |
| Total | 225 | | 2,579 | | 1,074 | |

Table shows the duration of the scenes of verbal violence and the percentage of duration. The total duration of eve-teasing is 225 seconds, emotional violence is 2,579 seconds and psychological violence is 1,074 seconds. The percentage of eve-teasing in Josh, Anjuman, Zinda Bhaag and Armaan is 8.89%, 46.67%, 40%, 4.44% respectively. Josh displayed 21.83% of emotional violence, Anjuman 41.72%, Zinda Bhaag 14.73% and Armaan 21.71%.

th percentage of psychological violence is 4.09% in Josh, 32.59% in Anjuman, 32.03% in Zinda Bhaag and 31.28% in Armaan.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The study about verbal violence against women in movies of 2013 analyzed according to the three categories of verbal violence including eve-teasing, emotional and psychological violence. Total verbal violence in all four movies is 3,878 seconds and 49 scenes. The total scenes of eve-teasing are 7, from which Josh has 14.29% of scenes and the duration is 20 seconds. Josh comprises the boys teasing girls in street by calling them with cheap names and attempts to harass them. The tone of scene is negative and quality is observed to be high. Anjuman contain 28.57% of eve-teasing scenes that occupied 105 seconds of the movie. In the movie Anjuman the girls are being teased by men in immoral ways like snatching the *dopatta* and calling the girls with offensive names. Zinda Bhaag is observed to have the highest no. of eve-teasing scenes, it has 42.86% scenes and duration is 90 seconds. The reason of its high number of offensive scenes was the harassment and molestation of women by men in the movie. In Armaan eve-teasing occupied 10 seconds of the movie in 14.29% of the scenes. It can be observed that the eve-teasing is common among the Pakistani movies. The exposure of such issues in movies in may cause the negative effect on society.

The emotional violence is an important form of verbal violence, through which victim can be bothered without touching or using a weapon. The total number of scenes of emotional violence is 26 with the duration of 2,579 seconds, which are highest among the all other categories. Josh contains 6 emotional violence scenes (23.08%) with the duration of 563 seconds. Anjuman consists of 8 scenes (28.57%) of emotional violence and the duration is calculated to be 1,076 seconds. The no. of scenes in Zinda Bhaag is 6 (*i.e.* 42.86%) and duration is 380 seconds. Armaan comprises 6 scenes (23.08%) of emotional violence and duration is 560 seconds. All above mentioned movies involves the shouting, blaming, humiliating, considering worthless, sarcasm and yelling on women according to their percentage of scenes. Armaan has the large no. of scenes of emotional violence as it involves a girl having a step mother, who treats her as a servant and worthless person. She yells and shouts at her in most of the scenes and ignores her sentiments. Anjuman has 1,076 seconds of emotional violence, portraying a *tawaif*, who has to face harsh arguments and behaviors of society. While, Zinda Bhaag portrays women who are being abuse and mistreat by men. Josh includes women who are under the landlord of the village and have to suffer harsh words and immoral activities. Emotional violence against women occupied 2,579 seconds in movies that show the high amount of violence shown in Pakistani movies.

The analysis of verbal violence in movies involves psychological violence that is mostly represented in movies. The total scenes of psychological violence are 16 and their duration is 1,074 seconds in selected movies. Josh includes 6.25% scenes of 44 seconds duration; movie involves the psychological violence done by men in form of threatening and gaining control over women by kidnapping them. The movie portrays the harassed and fearful women due to terror of men. Anjuman shows 31.25% of emotional violence that has 350 seconds duration; movie represents the main character of women being tainted and humiliated by boys in her college. They make her video without her permission and threaten her by releasing it in college campus. It is the high quality form of psychological violence portrayed in movie. ZindaBhaag represents 37.5% of emotionally violent scenes of duration 344 seconds. The movie involves the disgraceful remarks accusing and maltreatment with women by controlling them. The most common form of psychological violence against women that is

forced marriage is depicted in the movie. Armaan includes 25% of emotional violence in 336 seconds of movie. The movie involves the yelling and screaming over women, abortion threats and mistreatment. The analysis shows that the amount of psychological violence is high in all selected movies and the women are represented under the control of men and being abused.

CONCLUSION

The reason behind is the good production and versatile stories. Media is a powerful and effective tool for making mindset of audience according to the content. The use of inappropriate language, teasing, sarcasm, threatening and physical violence in movies would create aggression in audience as proved by researches. On the contrary the use of emotional violence against women is analyzed to be in large amount according to calculated scenes and duration. The image of the women displayed in the movies is exaggerated in terms of verbal, physical violence in the movies. The eve-teasing relates to the real life issues of the women but the psychological and emotional violence is far more exaggerated in the movies. In case of physical violence the battering has the higher amount than the murder and sexual violence against women.

The study shows that the movie representation was humiliating and degrading for women and the reason was entirely the cheap perception of producers about women. When we discuss the bold and vulgar dances of women, this trend has somewhat decreased in recent movies. The recent movies didn't use women for dancing and glamour, instead the women were shown in simple characters. The manifestation of the women in movies of 2013 interprets the true social and domestic status of women. The previous study of Pakistani movies didn't represent the problems of the women and made the negative image of women in viewer's mind.

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