

The depiction of Romance in Popular Film-Media in India

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Abstract

This project is about how Bollywood has been depicting romance over four decades, that is from the 80s to 2010s. To know the evolution of portraying romance in Bollywood, A small interview was conducted as primary research and watching Bollywood romantic movies from the 80s to 2010s has been followed. From primary Research, Some of the insights are positive and some of are negative as well. But most people have spoken negatively about the portrayal of romance in Bollywood. From the Secondary research, this report has very much of insights of problematic, negative, And the positive part of Bollywood romance.

Keywords

Romance in Indian Films, Stereotypes in Bollywood, Romantic Films

Introduction

Motivation

I have grown up at home by listening to Old Bollywood songs as my mother loves listening to them. I have always heard from her that portrayal of love and romance were really different during her time. I used to wonder how can this be different from one decade to another as it is a universal thing. As Bollywood movies are very popular for the "Romance" portrayed in their plot, I watched a few Romantic movies from the '80s to till today, there was a drastic change of portrayal of Romance in Bollywood. The more the framing of romance has evolved in Bollywood the more women are objectified and the quality of portraying quality romance in romantic films has been reduced.

Objective

The objective of this project is to analyze the romantic movies from the decade 80s to 2010s generation to know the difference.

Background

Primary Research

For primary research, I conducted a small interview to know what people think about romance in Bollywood. Different people from different have a different perspective on it.

What do u think how romance has been depicted in Bollywood from past decades to present times?

Abhishikta

In past 70s it was all about new budding love n tragedy e.g Anand or Amar Akbar Anthony....in the 80s it's been shown as young love with lots of songs and the teasing between hero n heroine...e.g Mr. India or Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak....in the 90s it was seen as teen love stories with involvement of families...e.g DDLJ or Karan arjun....after 2000 new era of love stories began such as Dil Chahta h Kuch Kuch Hota h.....in present era new type of movies is being made where both the characters are shown strong and independent and mostly confused about their feelings.....

Shivani

Romance means a feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love. There are certain feelings which are still presented since old cinema, that is the conversation. Before the conversation was in the form of daydreaming, face to face, telephones there was a lot more suspense and excitement to know someone. Today, Indian cinema has taken the big leap, with movies like Band Baja Baarat, Befikre the casualties or the casual behavior has been pointed out. There is no clarity but more of confusion. People think more of breakups than commitments. Love stories in Hindi cinema for a large part of the 1950s and 1960s were sub-plots of main stories which were mostly drama films with a large amount of social commentary in them. With changing period various social issues like casteism, religions, poverty etc were been included in drama. Love stories today have become far less complex and real with the focus being on more to shock than telling a truly nuanced sexual tale. Being confused, noncommittal, selfish or stupid are personality traits that have nothing to do with the location of a person. Today young generation wants romance but not like Laila Majnu romance.

Anushka

Basically, it is highly sexist and disgusting. Where women are used as an object. You can see take any movie, you can see women are objectified.

Moumita

It's get seasoned. I will quote with u an example. Ishq Visuq movie.... featuring Shahid Kapoor n Amrita Rao. In the end, Amrita Rao accepted shahid irrespective of his behavior. And see the queen movie. Kangana didn't accept his fiance. So that is the reality....no girl today will accept any kind of shitty behavior of any man.

Sonia

Compared to old times skinship is more
Which is normal but obviously that India was not open-minded enough
Old Bollywood romance was slow steady and complications were mostly family rivalries
Now it's more like confused love or no strings attached kind of romance.

Sid

Affecting your culture
Youth get inspired or motivated by watching the movies.
Indians are shifting towards Western culture
And losing its own identity.

Riyan

Consent thing has evolved
They earlier used to show
That a guy would try hard to impress a girl
But the girl won't pay any heed
So the guy would do all cheap things
Like touch, the girl etc in a horrible song and by the end the girl will get convinced
'No' doesn't mean convince me"
Also with Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga
LGBTQ romance has also entered the arena.

Nandini

Initially, it was very male-dominated...like boys literally forcing the girl to like ...or rich/powerful boy and girl in distress
Now quite relaxed movies come
Earlier guy used to flirt
Only the guy
Now slowly even girls are shown to be flirting.

Insights from Primary Research

1. Bollywood is affecting the behavior of youngsters.
From the primary research, it analysed that youngsters are adopting the behaviors of Bollywood styles to get any girl convinced for a relationship. Bollywood has affected so much to the youngsters who tend to elope with their partners as Bollywood has always shown that love is blind.
2. Earlier in the films, it was shown that society is patriarchal.
On the basis of primary research, it gets to know that society is patriarchal. There were a lot of movies where the man is forgiven for their unforgivable mistakes. And the movies from the 90s are mostly shown as the males in a society are important than females. There have been lots of partialities taken place between the men and women in Bollywood.
3. Homosexuality was stigmatized earlier but now it's changing.
There is a film called "Fire" when it was released it had created a big controversy in Indian society and this movie had got banned. After this movie, there was a film called Girlfriend in Bollywood which has framed homosexuality as a curse and homosexual people are not good. But now after the section 377 has got scrapped, Bollywood has taken a historic step by making a movie namely "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga" as a mainstream. It seems that Indian society is gradually changing its mindset for LGBT.
4. It has affected Indian culture and it is following the western culture.
From the primary research, it is getting to know that the more the Bollywood is heading to its future the more it is adopting the western culture. For example, showing more nudity in the films to be the center of attention of the public.

Secondary Research

The secondary research is primarily based on watching movies from the '80s to 2010s.

When we talk about popular Hindi cinema, variably we refer to Bollywood, that is the term adopted at the global level by now. In the course of its long history, it has gone through a constant evolution from the day it has started. And Romance is a very famous plot in Bollywood movies. The depiction of romance has taken place in romantic movies in different ways. Love, at first sight, has been given immense importance in almost all Bollywood movies.

The 80s



Figure 1. Prem Rog (1982)

In the 80s the Romantic movies were made to break the stereotypes of the society that love sees no caste. It is assumed that society at that time was very orthodox. For example, Prem Rog (Figure 1.), This is one of the excellent movies of the 80s in this genre. In this film, it is shown that the people from the lower caste can't marry or love from the upper caste family. There was a

scene where a guy from the village has an affair with a widow was stigmatized in front of the whole village but Rishi Kapoor who happened to be an educated person who stands against and it is supported by Bade Raja Thakur who is from the richest family of the village. But when it came to Padmini Kolhapure and Rishi Kapoor, Bade Raja Thakur denies for the because Rishi Kapoor was not rich and also from the lower caste and Padmini happens to be a widow. But eventually, they end up marrying each other.



Figure.2 Sparsh (1980)



Figure.3 Sadma (1983)

The couples from 80's romantic films used to be totally different from each other. For example Sparsh (Figure.2) and Sadma (Figure.3). Sparsh is another movie which was made to break the stereotypes because a handicapped person has been always treated as pity of object in our society. There was another film "Kaabil" from 2017, though it is not a romantic film, in this film, the couple was different from other movies. In the 80's movie, the nudity content was lesser relatively today's movies. Sadma (Figure.3) is a beautiful film which was originally made in Tamil than in Hindi. In this movie, Sridevi, who has lost her memory in an accident and Kamal Hassan rescues Sridevi from a prostitution organization, the romance has shown that time spent with the loved one is called Romance. Again the couple here in this film were also different from each other but the film didn't end with a happy ending like general movies end up living together. In the 80s film, the films were not only about the couples, but there were also other characters in the film like the role of friend and family. The romance part of the film Sparsh shown as they spend enough time with each other, they get to know each other also they marry each other. The importance of marriage decisions has been taken a lot of time, unlike today's romantic movies. After 1985 films came with the villain in the films among the young couples.

The 90s

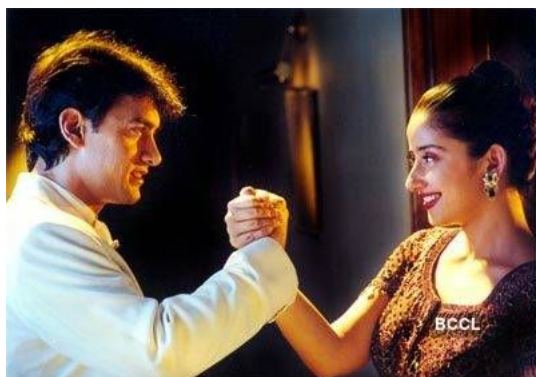


Figure.4 Mann (1999)

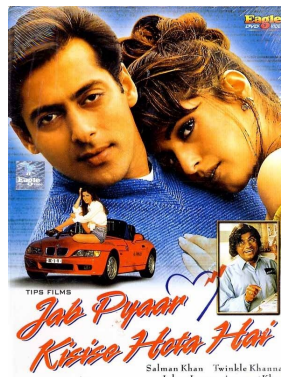


Figure.4 Jab Kisise Pyar Hota Hai (1998)

In the 90's film, Bollywood Romantic films came in divers. And mostly the couples have met in college, A rich young brat son of rich father happens to be a playboy who has affairs with numerous girls and a heroine who changes the hero from being a playboy to a good person. It seems that guys are forgiven for all their mistakes. For example, the movies Mann (Figure 2) and

Jab Kisise Pyar Hota Hai (Figure 3), These two movies have a bit similar storyline but the concept is the same. Like Amir Khan in the film, Mann in which he is forgiven for his mistakes and Manisha Koirala falls in love even after knowing that Amir Khan is a rich brat playboy. Similarly, Salman Khan from the film Jab Kisise Pyar Hota Hai is a brat rich playboy who plays with his best friend's feelings as well and has a kid which he came to know about it when he falls in love with heroin. He keeps his kid in secret and when he confides to the heroin, he was forgiven for this mistake. Apart from these, the love and romance have been shown through the bunch of songs in movies. Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak is different from these above films which tell the love of young couples and the journey how they succeed their love. In this decade the nudity gradually started showing like small intimacy (Kissing scene). In the film Akele hum and Akele tum, It is shown that no matter what situation is a woman is supposed to take care of home and if needed the woman has to sacrifices all her dreams for her husband's happiness.

The 2000s

In the Bollywood films of decade 2000s, the romantic films came with love happened with a very short span and a bit more love story with an open mindset, for example, In the film, Rehna Hai Tera Dil Me (2001) love happened between the hero and heroin within 5 days. This movie has shown that a guy who never had an affair with any girl deserves a girl who never had affair with any guy in her entire life. Also at the end, Saif Ali Khan says that Madhavan has won Zia as if The heroin was an object. And they both were animes in the college again they got another opportunity to be enemy again because of Zia. Through the film Swadesh, Bollywood has tried to tell the importance of our India and Its culture. Hum Tum is a film from the 2000s where the teasing the heroine is promoted again and Saif Ali Khan had multiple affairs till the end of the story and he left all this womanizer thing when he got the right love for himself. But here this movie has given a good perspective that a widow woman can also start another love life. The concept of the hero being a playboy and then he is changed by heroin to a good person is been used over many times in Bollywood movies.

The 2010s

In the 2010s Bollywood romantic movies, The films came with the more bold scene showing nudity as content and Full of Item songs. The story content did not have good stories and Women are Objectified with item songs. Movies came with the content of romance as showing nudity in films and showing casualty in a relationship, for example, Befikre (2016) is a film where the storyline is not so good and love and Romance has been portrayed as casual. A film like Ae Dil Hai Mushkil where the protagonist is confused with love feelings. But from past few years, Bollywood is coming with good stories Like film October(2018), Bareilly Ki Barfi (2017), Dum Laga Ke Haisha(2015) and Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga (2019). Bollywood has taken a historic Step by releasing the movie "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga" as mainstream.

Movies Analysed for each Decade

The 1980s	The 1990s	The 2000s	The 2010s
Sparsh (1980)	Andaz Apna Apna (1994)	Swades (2004)	Bareilly ki barfi (2017)
Arth (1982)	Akele Hum Akele tum (1995)	Rehna hai tere dil me (2001)	Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani (2013)
Sadma (1983)	Jab Pyar Kisi Se Hota Hai (1998)	Hum Tum (2004)	Ek Ladki Ko Dekha to Aisa Laga (2019)
Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak (1988)	Mann (1999)	Jane-e-Mann (2006)	Befikare (2016)
Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro (1983)	Roja (1992)	Kal ho Na No (2003)	October (2018)
	Fire (1996)	Bachna ae Haseeno (2008)	2 states (2014)
	Dil to Pagal (1997 o	Dil Hai Tumhara (2003)	Vicky Donor (2012)

Learning

From this project report, I learned that a quality film can be done without showing nudity. And women are not supposed to be objectified. I tried to understand the grammar of Bollywood romantic movie. As the Bollywood has repeated the same and similar concept of love stories. A good film does not affect youngsters. I learned about the storytelling and learned about short breakdown and storyboard.

Potential Future

This project is been taken forward as a part of academic project 3. P3 topic is about dating which specifies Gay dating world and the social stigma they face to date someone from the LGBT community. During the secondary research of this project, Movies like Fire, Girlfriend and Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga are been watched. And Apart from this there films like Call Me By Your Name and I Can't Think Straight has been watched parallelly.

Conclusion

The objective of this project is to analyze the romantic movies from the decade 80s to 2010s generation to know the difference. For this project, an informal minor primary research had conducted, in which some people are interviewed. From that research, It is getting to know that there are mostly negative views about romantic movies in Bollywood like following the girl and teasing her till she gets convinced for a relationship. The 80s romantic films were against social issues like casteism and other stereotypes and discrimination against the disability of a person. Gradually the concept of love stories came in different storylines. With respect to time, Bollywood came with more varieties and some repeated concept of love stories. One of the common and popular ways of showing romance in Bollywood is with songs. In secondary research, the popular romantic film has been watched from the decade 80s to 2010s, from that it seems that the evolution of romance in Bollywood gradually turned to a different level as the nudity has been associated in most of the romantic Bollywood movies. from a couple of the year, Bollywood is coming with good romantic movies like October and Bareilly ki barfi. From this project, There were a lot of learnings, for example, comprehension of the grammar of romantic films, film dialogue and shot break down of the film.

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