

## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN INDIAN CINEMA: ANALYSIS OF ITEM SONGS

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As we raise a toast to Indian cinema that's 100 years old, it is important for social scientists to analyse the gains and losses during its journey. Soon after India's independence, the winds of change in the political scenario leading to social and economic changes gave Indian cinema a fresh breath of air with film makers questioning issues like poverty, illiteracy and gender inequality in the society. Here we intend to examine whether these issues have been dealt with utter sensitivity and sensibility or not. And to analyze this, we take up one of such issues i.e. women representation. Mainstream Indian cinema has restricted itself to define sketches of womanhood dominated by patriarchy. But real depiction of Indian women of different shades is yet to achieve agenda for this 100 years old industry. Therefore, it is important to understand what are the notions of Indian women and how are they represented in Indian Cinema. Many movies have "Item Songs" in the name of entertainment. An item number or an item song, in Indian cinema, is a musical performance that holds little or no relevance at all to the film in which it features. It appears in a film to present beautiful dancing women in revealing and exposing clothes. On one hand, some consider these songs as objectionable as they commodify women and sell their bodies for money making. That is why there is a gradual increase in numbers for item songs in Indian films. On the other hand, there are those who believe Item Songs as freedom of expression where a woman dances to her own will. Whether Item Songs are actually objectionable or have they just become an easy target, is the central point of inquiry of the paper.

In the above background this paper intends to take into account the impact of emerging trend of diffusion of music and rhythm, clothing and fashion and global spread of mass media and advertising in globally interconnected world. The paper also attempts to highlight the gradual increase in demand for item songs in Hindi film and to examine as to why such forms of oppressions against women depicted in a movie are not questioned.

**Keywords:** Narrative, Aestheticize, Sensitivity, Item songs, Advertising.

### Introduction

India has the multi-lingual and biggest Film Industry in terms of ticket sale better known as Bollywood which is almost a religion for the people here. Dagnaud and Feigelson (2007) explain about Indian entertainment industry as "Ranking number first in the world for the film production, being part of the top group of the cinema enthusiast nations, endowed with T.V. channels and with a music industry full of dynamism, India has thus developed an entertainment industry of large size, movies playing the role of a launching pad." This comprises of the Indian cinemas too. Currently, India is the 14th largest

Entertainment and Media in the world with Entertainment and Media industry revenues contributing about 1% of its GDP (TRAI, 2013). Indian cinema has completed 100 years of a successful journey and is the biggest industry in the world. The Indian film industry has been performing exceedingly well in the past four years, having grown by 17% in the period 2004-2007 (FICCI, 2008).

### **The Hindi Film Industry**

The Hindi film industry, based in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), is the largest branch of cinema. Hindi film industry is often called 'Bollywood', close to the name 'Hollywood'. The word "Bollywood" is sometimes applied to Indian cinema as a whole, especially outside South Asia, but this usage is incorrect. Other Indian regional movies are distinctively different to Bollywood (Hindi) movies. Bollywood does not incorporate all of Indian cinema, contributing only about 20% of the total film output of India, which is the largest in the world and which predates Bollywood (Ganti, 2004). As the stories and themes of the movie portray the culture of the region, most Bollywood movies nowadays are greatly influenced by western culture. Though Bollywood can be considered to be largest in terms of viewers, it is believed that almost all of the Indian Population watches Bollywood. Enrik Parker (2009) says, 'The Indian movie business is the largest and most popular in the world. Over 1000 films are released annually, the bulk of which are filmed in Hindi. It is the Hindi-language industry that has come to affectionately be known as 'Bollywood'.

### **The Music as a Symbol in Hindi Films**

Film songs are now globally accepted as the component of Bollywood. These are important cultural and commercial item from their earliest days. According to Indu Mehrani (2012), 'Music, of course, is what many unfamiliar viewers associate as the defining characteristic of Bollywood films, and it is certainly what has fed the industry through all the years. The music is as much a part of the film as costumes'. Further she divides the era of Hindi Cinema music in three parts viz. - The Studio's Era, The Music Director Era and The Transition Era.

### **Item Songs in Bollywood**

Songs sequences are carved in the film to push forward the story. But there are songs which are basically used for attracting more and more audience where women in revealing clothes, loud lyrics and suggestively dance. These are called ITEM NUMBERS. These item numbers are most of the time a sudden sequence which may or may not be helpful in the progress of the plot.

To my understanding, most of the audience in India come to watch movies because of two reasons. Firstly, some movies are starkly similar to people's lives so they give the feeling of Purgation which further gives mental relaxation. Secondly, some are starkly different from the real life, so to come face to face with it. But at the end, it is entertainment that becomes the base. Many movies would also have an "item song" for the same reason as discussed above. According to Barrett Grant (2006), 'An item number or an item song, in Indian cinema, is a musical performance that holds little or no relevance at all to the film in which it features. It appears in a film to present beautiful dancing women in revealing and exposing clothes.' These songs have little to do with the plot of the movie. The role of the song would be to make the movie popular and attract audience to the movie. In almost all circumstances, the picturization would consist of a scantily dressed girl performing a sexually provocative and suggestive dance. The ultimate role of an "item song" would be to generate publicity and ensure commercial success. The origin of the term "item number" is not sure, but it was first used for the song 'UP Bihar Lootne' in the movie 'Shool' in 1999. Shilpa Shetty was termed as the Item Girl for the first time. It is likely that the

word 'Item' has derived its meaning from objectification of sexually attractive women. This is because item in filmy Mumbai slang is a sexy woman (Morey, Peter; Alex Tickell, 2005). Though the success of the movie cannot be attributed to these songs alone but they play a major role in creating space amongst the Indian movie goers.

According to Chakravarty (2012) "The Indian film scenario, especially of the last three decades, raises several complex questions about the nature of Indian cinema and the different responses to it. The course of the Indian cinema during the last three decades has been decisively determined by the phase of globalisation that India as a nation and society entered in the mid-eighties. The new world economic order that was thrust on India by domestic and international political and economic forces worked heavily on the film industry, which, while dealing with a globalised world, altered the basic spirit of the domestic audience that was its fundamental support base. In other words, obeying the laws of finance capital of the dominant capitalist order of the West, the Indian film industry transformed its aesthetics and thematic preoccupations. The laws of the capitalist world redefined the form and content of Indian cinema. One of the huge manifestations of this change was the emergence of super budget films. It was not just the crores of rupees spent on the production of films that we need to understand in this context. More importantly, and tragically, it altered the very sensibility of the Indian audience and almost wiped out films made on very modest financial and technical resources and erased themes that dealt with the lives of millions of Indians who belonged to the middle class and the lower-middle class. The poor, the marginalised and the oppressed, of course, have been entirely liquidated'.

Taking it from Chakravarty, we can say that the change of temperament of the Indian film industry is because of the coming of Neo-Liberalism, which led to focussing only on the multiplex audience. Capitalism led to the policy of attracting more audience and leading to more money making. In this stage Cinema had to think of a way out to attract more audience. It started featuring songs which were out of the context of the movie but had women dancing suggestively on loud lyrics and in exposing clothes. These were termed as Item Numbers and the women were Item Girls. Only beautiful and nice bodied females dance as item girls on songs with extremely suggestive meaning and gestures. As stated by Barrett and Grant, these are made to bring in more audiences. Now, there are many debates regarding the presence of item songs in the Indian Film Industry. Some consider it as objectionable as it commodifies a woman and sells her body but at the same time there are many empowerment debate related to these. There are those who believe Item Songs as freedom of expression.

Aniruddha Dutta (2009) says, 'Film song composition has largely been a centralised and studio-bred art without a corresponding amateur sector (quoted in Manuel 1993). One may understand these contrary tendencies of centralisation and decentralisation as analogous to the way Hindi films and their songs have appealed and catered to diverse cross-regional audiences and yet seek to construct overarching national narratives (quoted in Manuel 1993, Arnold 1988). Just as films have mediated post-colonial nation-building – often seeking to construct a coherent idea of national subjectivity vis-à-vis the tension-ridden dynamics of gender relations, or sectarian/religious and class/caste differences – film songs too can be located in terms of their strategies to narrativize and aestheticize the nation (and its subjects) in the face of these fissures.'

### **Obscenity in the Indian Cinema: The Contradiction of Opinions**

Although, the debate over the acceptability of obscenity in the Indian cinema is not new, and during the last decade there has been a significant increase in frequency and contradiction of opinion in the debate over vulgar and indecent representations of women in Indian films. In 1993, "CholiKePeechhey Kya Hai?", a hit song from the film 'Khalnayak' starring Madhuri Dixit because of erotic verses and alluring dance moves became the focus of public attention and legal controversy on its vehement opposition by Shiv Sena and AkhilBhartiyaVidyarthiParishad (ABVP). The case filed for the deletion of the song from the film was rejected by the trial court and on appeal by the Delhi High Court on the ground that film viewing is a matter of choice with no compulsion involved and that the alleged vulgarity was acceptable

to society in keeping with 'latest developments' in the film world. Although the case was a failure in legal terms but it was unquestionably successful in rousing public opinion around the controversy as a result of which the Censor Board grew much more stringent in granting censor certificate. Subsequent songs like 'Sexy, Sexy, Sexy Mujhe' from Khuddar (1993) and 'Meri Pant Bhi Sexy...' from Dulaara (1993) raised similar controversies. The CBFC directed to substitute the word 'sexy' for 'fancy' in Dulaara the words 'sexy sexysexy' were substituted by 'baby baby bay.' (thelawgix.com, 2012).

It further adds, 'The Shekhar Kapoor's 'Bandit Queen', the first film to show frontal nudity besides 250 filthy abuses aroused angered opposition so much so that not only CBFC demanded a series of cuts but that separate writ petitions were filed by Phoolan Devi herself (on whose life the film was based) and so also by a member of the Gujjar community (the caste to which the bandits in the film belong) opposing the release of the film. The issue of screening of the film went upto the Supreme Court where the main issues were as to whether the scenes in question were obscene and whether the depiction and projection of the members of caste Gujjars as bandits in the film was far from being real were fictitiously foul. The release of the film was allowed only after the removal of the obscene scenes. Supreme Court's judgment gives important insights and even lays down law on what constitutes obscenity. Then Deepa Mehta's "Fire" propelled the issue of homosexuality into the forefront of public debate and not only its release was vehemently opposed in the year 2000 in Mumbai, Delhi, Surat, Jaipur and Nagpur but that even its shooting was protested in 1998. It was felt that the depiction of sexual and emotional relationship between two women is impious & profane and falls outside the purview of prevailing cultural and sexual norms, and that this film has been made from a western gaze with the sole purpose of marketing an exotic India for the consumption of westernized Indians and western viewers under the garb of portraying the women's issues. The intensity of the opposition can be imagined by the fact that the Union Ministry for Information and Broadcasting had to refer the film back to the CBFC (Central Board of Film Censor) for re-examination and a petition had to be filed in the Supreme Court by Deepa Mehta for seeking judicial intervention for peaceful screening of the film and the incidents related to this film were raised and discussed even in Lok Sabha. The films like Jism, Road, Dum and Kanta, stirred the debate in the Parliament where it was opined by M.P. SarojDubey that they "have crossed all limits of obscenity and vulgarity" and that such films are responsible for "the increasing incidents of sexual exploitation".

Women are one of the important subjects of the nation as well as the cinema, and so it is important to discuss what are the things that are considered as correct and what are considered as incorrect representations. And to take up this tough task, as read in the earlier paragraph, we have Censorship. But the question arises that whether this responsibility are properly carried forward or not. Brinda Bose (2006) says, 'So what, then, is the role of censorship in the contexts of women and cinema in India in this new millennium? The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986 that made punishable by law the 'depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent or of being derogatory or denigrating women or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure public morality or morals' sparked a significant feminist anti-censorship movement.' So can it be taken as if there is no skin show, the morality of India would be uncorrupted? As Flavia Agnes (2006) argued cogently, the definitions of 'obscenity', 'indecenty' and 'morality' in the bill were questionable, inferring that female sexuality was not to be recognized or represented, and that 'upholding the dignity of women' meant reducing them to asexual beings.

Brinda Bose further adds, 'those who advocate a 'reasonable' censorship of sexualized representations believe that the purity – and thereby, the safety – of women may be protected by an erasure of such images from the public domain. For those of us who are opposed to censorship of any kind for the adult, consenting viewer, the protection of an inviolate female chastity lies on a continuum with the oppression of women into silent, acquiescent, domestic roles that satisfy the hungering for that very domination that we are looking to eradicate.' True but the question is, are not we oscillating in between two extremes. Women have every right to express and enjoy their sexuality but why do we need to name them for their boldness.

On the commodification of women, Rituporno Chatterjee feels that though Item is an extremely derogatory word, women are in one way or the other objectified in Hindi cinema.

RitupornoChatterjee(2012) says, 'The etymology is perhaps unclear but no other word commodifies women like the word 'item' does. A variant of it is perhaps 'maal' which roughly translates to property in English. Both have been used countless times in songs. When Govinda lip synched to 'Main tohladkighumarahatha' to Kumar Sanu's hit number in the 1995 film Coolie No. 1, it started a rage of songs with unsubtle allusion to women as objects to be flaunted and 'taken around'. Director David Dhawan set out to make a series of similar films that thrived on slapstick and innuendos. Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt systematically bullied a cowering Karisma Kapoor in 'Chal Mere Bhai'. To this we can cite Dasgupta and Hedge (1988) who say, 'The central components of the female existence are defined and controlled by him and by a world order that is patriarchal. Thus, it is only natural that the male view will perceive the two worlds of male and female to be complementary sets, with the positive element portioned out to him, while suffering and sacrifice become vital to her being.'

Shohini Ghosh(2006) explains it and says, 'Certainly, the eruption of sexual images on the film screen and in other media such as television and print over the last two decades has crystallized feminist battles around sexuality.' Explaining the reason and benefit of globalization, holding it as the reason for the above, she says, 'There can be little doubt that economic liberalization, and the onslaught of (a much overworked) globalization, have had their explicit as well as insidious effects upon imaging in the country, both indigenously as well as through foreign programmes flying across open skies. This has also resulted in the creation of new anxieties around the efficacy of censorship in the light of other options by which the censored images may be accessed'.

But for social activist and actress ShabanaAzmi at Jaipur Literature Festival (Zee News Report,2013) also said "Voyeuristic camera angles and vulgar lyrics don't celebrate a woman's body, they simply commodify her. I want to plead to our heroines to make an informed choice. I have seen many actresses say that why should we not do such acts when we have a beautiful body. Just because a man is throwing off his shirt to show his six pack abs does not mean that the heroine too has to follow the same path." She understands that it has to be their responsibility too to represent women in the true and dignified manner. Also Bindu Nair(2002) says, 'In these songs, the styling in terms of make-up and costumes, and the cinematic elements of lighting and shot taking, i.e. the way the body is arranged with respect to the camera and hence the eye of the audience, the movements of the body, all add up in turning the woman into a spectacle. The gaze is invited to certain parts of the body selectively considered sexual- the eyes, the lips, the breasts, the naval, the buttocks and the legs.'

### **Changing Scenario of Women and Item Songs in Bollywood: From Vamps to Heroines**

Over the years, item numbers have moved beyond the vamps. Today, mainstream actresses dance to numbers that are meant to be crowd-pullers. Item songs are now such an integral part. Whatever said and done, now every actress, be it established or new comers, has to perform an item song to achieve that high point in their career. They are considered as complete package only if they have one or more item songs in their kitty. It is important to know the journey of these songs from first being something of a vamp's kitty to something of present time actresses' compulsion. Bindu Nair(2009) says, 'Women's specially constituted role as spectacle, as the subject of the Look, is especially evident in the song and dance numbers which are such an important part of the publicity and the selling of the film. In fact there is an entire genre of songs, called 'Item Numbers' in industry parlance, which generally have a show girl or dancer performing, and a predominantly male audience watching, that are deliberately inserted into the film, often without any direct connection with the rest of the film, to attract audiences. Sometimes the one item song ends up making a film a hit, such as "ChhammaChhamma' from the film China Gate.'

An item number, in its earliest avatar, wasn't endorsed by leading ladies. Only vamps or dancers making special appearances graced these tracks until a decade or two ago. The first major dancing star was Cuckoo who ruled the cabaret scene in the Forties and Fifties. She was the undisputed Queen of it at the time. Till the beginning of 80s, she was the only one to carry forward this new trend.

Cuckoo's mantle was taken up by her protégé, Helen, who went on to become the undisputedly most successful in the field of cabaret. The very jovial MeraNaam Chin Chin Chu (Howrah Bridge, 1958) was Helen's runway to Bollywood. An instant crowd puller, a Helen sequence in a movie guaranteed full house it was a phenomenon unseen for any vamp preceding or succeeding her.

Jerry Pinto(2006) says, 'If transformation was an art, Helen perfected it. She could be the sexy siren calling for her lover in PiyaTu Ab TohAaja(Caravan, 1971), the avenging angel in YehMeraDil(Don, 1978) or the gorgeous gypsy queen shimmying unabashedly to Mehboobain Sholay(1975) — all with equal ease.

With her seductive semblance and alluring adaa, Helen played high on male fancy. Her performances filled the fantasy void that the pristine leading ladies of that era could have never attempted. Dressed in a deep-cut blouse and Koli fisherwoman-styled low waist sari, she enticed men sitting in a ratty bar (Mungda, in Inkaar, 1977) with as much élan as she did the cigar smoking firangswith her embellished eyes, fanciful feathers and sequined skin-tight dress in Aa JaaneJaainIntequam(1969). Never shy to experiment, Helen's dramatic eye makeup, flashy ensembles and outlandish props accentuated the feel of her songs.' Helen's songs gave Bollywood a real taste of pleasure-seeking, and Bindu and ArunaIrani's tracks took it to the next level. Each of these dancing queens heightened the songs with their unique specialties so much so that they became the need to achieve the desired result.

Long before India's economic liberalisation, it hit the sensibilities of the Indian filmmakers, actors, and, in the process, the average cine goer. With the 1980s arrived a new breed of sirens cavorting in their boldest best. Sexy, sassy and at par with the dancing divas, this brigade has been recruiting ever since says PragyamMohanty(2010).

This was also the time when right of expression in movie making was explored the most. Now not just Vamps but also Heroines were performing on these songs. Mohanty says, 'The trend of heroines appearing in masaledaartracks that began with the likes of ZeenatAman (Qurbaniin 1980, Shalimar in 1978), ParveenBabi (Shaanin 1980, NamakHalaalin 1982) and Rekha (Jaanbaazin 1986) was taken forward by Madhuri Dixit (Khalnayakin 1993,Shailaabin 1990), Urmila Matondkar (China Gate in 1998, Lajjain 2001), RaveenaTandon (Rakshakin 1996,Ghaathin 2000) and SonaliBendre (Bombay, 1995) in the next generation.'

This phenomenon was so dominant that every major and minor actress gracing the silver screen had to have a special performance, which is now known as item number, in her kitty. Even now, this trend is roaring. Right from KoenaMitra(a new comerat that time) to Katrina Kaif, Shilpa Shetty to Kareena Kapoor) established at the time of their item songs), each one of them has succumbed to the lure of an item number

But there is a difference between the two time periods. Mohanty concludes by saying, 'Sure, there's loads of gloss being introduced but with the sheer number taking over, the one thing that has gone missing is soul. Most of these item songs and item girls enter into the picture for no rhyme and rhythm. Agreed the songs are peppy; the energy is infectious and the girls are fabulous to look at, but very few have a timeless feel to them.

Rarely does one find a theatrical Aaj Ki Raat Koi AaneKo Hai(Anamika, 1973) with tales interwoven to it, or the mysterious undertones ofOh HaseenaZulfonWaali(TeesriManzil, 1966), or the looming helplessness aHusnKeLaakhon Rang(Johnny MeraNaam, 1970) displays, when Padma Khanna performs a striptease. Each of these dance numbers were sizzlers of the top order with the most scintillating women appearing in them - yet with a sense of reason. And that, perhaps, made all the difference.'

These kinds of songs were always oppression. Initially these were songs somewhere fitted in the movie. They were popular but not compulsory. But with the changing political and social scenarios which have also influenced the overall level of awareness, shockingly these songs are part and parcel of almost every movie be it regional or Bollywood. So is what we see on screen a celebration of a woman's sensuality or a "commodification" of her body? Where do we draw the line when it comes to portrayal of women in cinema? Are filmmakers at fault, is it a desperate attempt by actors to grab eyeballs or is Item song simply an easy target?

## The Gendered Objection

There have been many hue and cries relating this issue. The first one was CholiKePeechhe Kya Hai (Khalnayak, 1993). Bose says that it was 1990s, when BJP and Shiv Sena objected anything they considered to be unethical. And their easiest target became the Hindi Film Industry. They objected this song because it talked about the female body that had to be kept under covers. But after reading Monika Mehta, we see that though the song was criticized for its lyrics, the male version was not seen with any kind of negativity. Mehta(2006) analyzes the long pre-film release publicity campaign for the film that includes the release of this song on audio-cassette, which contributes to both the fuelling of desire as well as a marketable controversy around the effects of its overtly-suggestive lyrics; the fact that the controversy was focused on the first rendition of the song in the film when it was sung/enacted by female singers/characters, Ganga and her dancing partner (Madhuri Dixit and Neena Gupta) – as opposed to its second rendition, when it was reproduced by Ballu, the male villain, and his gang – problematises it as ‘both the repression of female sexuality and the commodification of female sexuality in the name of Indian tradition – and what needs to be explored further is the possibility of women’s sexual agency’. Mehta further sees the failure of the men to perform as ‘good’ lures as well as Ganga’s failure to be a ‘good’ voyeur as the performance of social convention supporting a patriarchal status quo, in which only women can be (sexually) alluring, while men remain desiring subjects who cannot be sexual objects. Ours is a bias society which is in favour of men and oppresses women. But this analysis shows that even the objections put forward are gendered. If something is wrong for a woman how can it is not wrong for a man. If men can sing songs about body parts of women why cannot women themselves talk about these?CholikePeechhe was not directly an Item song, but it was one song that for the first time talked about woman sexuality openly.

## The Debate Continues

To many Item songs have never shown women being forced to dance, they dance with their consent and enjoy themselves. But Rahul Bose (2013) in an interview to Rummana Ahmed said, ‘First of all, it is disrespectful to the filmmaker. The filmmaker says that at this point of time I know you don’t want to watch my film, so I am quickly going to shove in a half-naked girl to dance, so that you will watch my film. So I think it is a deeper self-admission of a filmmaker that he or she has failed.’ It is true because if a film maker puts an item song in a movie to fetch in more audience, it means that either he knows that his movie does not carry a substance or else that patriarchy is deep rooted. When we see item songs being put out of nowhere in the movie, it is easy to understand that it’s a fish trap to get more audience and so more money. Taking a close look we can understand why item songs increase more number of audiences. When a woman dances on an item song, she tries to please the men. She wears skimpy clothes, dances suggestively, has loud and vulgar lyrics and is surrounded by men who continuously put some sexual poses or dance steps throughout. This is because women are perceived to be objects to please men. This is patriarchy in the field of Cinema.

According to Ganti (2004), Bombay film industry is a male-dominated industry. Women pursuing careers within the industry are primarily either actresses or playback singers. This trend has changed in recent years with women making their mark as choreographers, costume designers, editors and screenwriters but their numbers are still much smaller in comparison to their male counterparts. Very few women are lyricists or composers. While a handful of them have ventured into direction, they have not achieved the commercial success their male counterparts have. Women are thus very sparse in number behind the scenes of this film industry. In an industry with so few women working within it, it seems fair to assume that the portrayal of women onscreen by male directors and other male professionals will have gender biases and constraints and may not necessarily explore women’s world views, perceptions and subjective realities. What roles women play onscreen is more often than not, the male director’s notion of what roles women ought to be playing. This notion is based on the director’s beliefs, attitudes and values,

combined with what the director thinks viewers want to see. What viewers want to watch is something that conforms to their beliefs, attitudes and values, which come from the social framework within which they live, which is the same social framework in which directors, live. There has to be a consistency in the beliefs, attitudes and values of all those 3 involved. This is Milton Rokeach's beliefs, attitudes and values theory from 1968, in action.'

## Conclusion

There has been an upward movement in the demand of Item Songs in the recent era. It is important to know why these kind of sexual songs are being liked by the people. Since there is a huge demand of these kinds of songs, is it good that the media are encouraging them. Film makers put these songs in their movies to ensure success. But there is a confusion regarding the media's role as of building blocks of the society. Many say that these songs must be encouraged as they provide freedom of expression to women. But some put up the question that are these songs actually meant to be a platform of freedom of expressions or a medium to please the male gaze. The media swings between many more questions like- How does one understand the gaze? Are not these songs misinterpreting women as a commodity, as a piece of flesh and nothing else? Also in another vein, why the focus is on the obscenity of the Item Songs? What about the other deliberately or un-deliberately present forms of oppressions? Thus I find it important to study these in my research as a whole topic of female representation. Also there is a gap in the literature about Women representation and Item songs in Hindi Cinema which is needed to be covered. I have not chosen a fixed time span. Instead, I have subdivided my criteria of selection of songs and for those, have randomly selected songs which fit in.

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