

Notification No.: 549/2023

Date of Award: 16/11/2023

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Topic of Research: Representation of Disability in Women in Hindi Cinema Since 1970

### Findings

This dissertation is an attempt to challenge a collective representation of disability in Hindi films, specifically of disabled women, exposing its exclusionary and oppressive nature. A disabled woman's body could be viewed as a political site understood and experienced due to discursive productions of what is normal and desirable, a site to delineate the oppression that exists due to unequal social arrangements. It becomes a site to interrogate the appearance and representation of a disabled female body. A study of disability makes one aware of how films frequently create and curate the normative female body as one with high cheekbones, even skin tone, a voluptuous body, and the absence of fat, wrinkles, physical disabilities, and deformities. These narrow representations of the perfect body and beauty impact what the larger society believes about the body; therefore, it becomes important to read these discourses on disability portrayed through films that contribute to the definition of what is beautiful and desirable. Cultural messages that get propagated through films about how the body should look, be maintained, and be experienced contribute to the understanding of an ideal body. But this ideal body is often a far cry from real human bodies. There is a discrepancy between the actual and the expected body. The ideal expected body is a diaphanous mythopoetic body that side-steps the omnipresence of weakness and limitation. The egoism of ability rejects any sort of bodily weakness and dependence, thus leading to the creation of binaries of abled and disabled. This thesis attempts to locate the unrecognized patterns of representation of disability in cinematic texts. The cinematic representations revolve around the binary of ability and disability based predominantly on the personal tragedy theory that sees disability as an individual problem, which makes it necessary to bring back normalcy towards the end, either by curing a disability or by overcoming a disability. A non-disabled imaginary sees disability as something tragic and therefore, its rectification would mean a happy ending for the non-disabled audience. Bombay Hindi cinema reflects the thoughts, aspirations, and attitudes of millions of Indians. Films have

larger outreach than any other medium. Therefore, a medium so strong leads to the absorption of images that are circulated and are, thereafter, internalized by the non-disabled and the disabled too. One is presented with a need to analyze what is getting produced and by whom, along with who has access to media viewing and who is authoring texts or directing cameras. Representation of women with disabilities in Hindi cinema becomes a site of contestation because they are represented through an ableist as well as a patriarchal gaze. The role of films in the dissemination of ideas has been extremely important and has been instrumental in adding to the discrimination against persons with disabilities. It reinforces the creation and use of disabled stereotypes. It perpetuates the medical model of disability that perceives disability as an individual's problem and institutionalizes and pathologizes a disabled person.

The chapters focus on visible and sensory disabilities as it is the visibility of a disability or impairment that contributes toward defining someone's status as a disabled person. In his study of stigma, Goffman suggested that the visibility of a particular stigma will be crucial in determining its effect on an individual. It is the extent to which it is evident, the extent to which it is known, its obtrusiveness, and its perceived focus, that decides the extent of the stigma that an individual faces. The extent of stigmatization will also vary according to specific circumstances and the obtrusiveness of certain disabilities. In some situations, one particular disability may draw more attention and be more discomforting to others than another. Every disability would have a different level of stigma related to it and a more noticeable disability would face greater discrimination as compared to a lesser noticeable disability where a person may pass as a non-disabled person. Even the norms of femininity or masculinity are also likely to influence whether, and the extent to which, an individual is stigmatized by their impairment (Lonsdale 40). Recognizing that research in this area is relatively new and that this thesis cannot claim to be comprehensive or conclusive, an attempt is made to address questions of broad significance in four different chapters. It would be an injustice to universalize the experience of disability for each woman discussed in the four chapters, but a sincere attempt has been made to give it a structure by looking at disabled women's experiences in the areas of sexuality, family, friendship, community, and politics. Each woman has her economic, social, and psychological circumstances that create further intersectionality apart from gender and disability in a sexist and disability-phobic society. Though the chapters analyze disabled women characters, a retreat from a metaphorical reading that is provided by feminist discourses is maintained, and the chapters venture into a reading facilitated by Critical Disability Studies which is aware of the inequities present in

the global South where disability intersects with race, gender, class, and sexuality in ways that influence wider power relations and personal experiences. Disability is an umbrella that comprises all sorts of bodily impairments which gets represented as an opposite of able-bodiedness generically as an affliction and misfortune. The intention behind such a division of chapters is to locate and acknowledge that different disabilities have their histories, each defined by their unique trajectories. Therefore, women with disabilities will have common historiographies but at the same time, the difference in their embodiment will create their specific ambit vis-a-vis their specific disability.