CONCLUSION:

EMERGING PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD
Perhaps a journey never ends. In a way, it only begins—in terms of newer dimensions and perspectives and viewpoints and outlook. The horizon is always out there—so near yet so far—unattainable! But one has to conclude somewhere. Look back. Take stalk, reflect and analyse. And then again surge ahead with renewed energy and vigour for a far more challenging venture, to newer, greener horizon.

It is time for me also to conclude my present research endeavour and look back and reflect on my findings in the course of my study spread over the three substantial chapters. In the second and last part of my discussion, I focus on the contemporary trends in terms of recent publication and print media which perhaps can pinpoint newer avenues and domains of further future research.

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**The Findings: Looking Back And Reflecting**

It is obvious that there is a biological classification of sexes. And this difference also has some kind of impact on male and female features. But then, with the development of sociological sensitivity, the perception is that biology cannot be the entire destiny. And that forms the basis of the distinction between sex and gender in sociology, the former having its roots in biology and the latter being culturally constituted. The differences also get hierarchised with masculinity being regarded as a superior quality associated with reason, objectivity, science, strength compared to femininity. The rise of feminism has posed a serious and severe challenge to this patriarchal stereotype. In a way, it can be pointed out that this intense debate on gender construction provoked the birth of masculinity studies.

And as is evident over the last few years, there has been a surge of interest in the study of men and masculinity. Men are starting to respond to the challenges of feminism. Fresh definitions of ‘masculinity’ abound, affirming old myths in attempts to create new males. From the ‘wounded male’ to the ‘new man’, images of reconstructed men appear on advertising bill-boards and television and in magazines.
and newspapers and films. These responses to feminism not only attempt to 'unwrap masculinity' but also to reassert male prerogatives. Perhaps 'what has changed is not male power as such, but its form, the presentation and the packaging'.

Now, as in the past, the term 'men' is used as an unmarked universal category to stand for humanity in general. Over the last two decades, feminists have challenged the ideological and material entailments of such implicit male bias. It is ironic that the logic of feminism as a political position has often required the notion of 'men' as a single, oppositional category. Founding their position on the assertion that 'the personal is the political', feminists have consistently raised awkward questions about the status quo in both the community and the academy. More recently, however, the feminist political project has faced a number of theoretical and methodological challenges from within. Several of these challenges have had a direct bearing on the genesis of this research endeavour.

Three basic steps are intrinsic to the present research strategies to view the world more reflexively (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994, 2-10). The first is to try to dismantle the conventional categories which dominate thinking on a particular subject. Thus anthropologists may ask themselves what they mean by their use of the terms 'man' or 'woman' and to what extent their own notions of gender are likely to intrude in their attempts to understand gender relations among others. Or they may start with a notion such as 'masculinity' on which everyone seems to agree. By looking in detail at everyday usage and the contexts in which people talk of masculinity, its complexity soon becomes apparent.

The second step is comparative. Comparative enquiries rely on detailed descriptions of social interactions and how social labels are used in different social contexts. By examining the difficulties of translating particular meanings of masculinity from one social setting into another, anthropologists challenge the existence of any apparently straightforward universal category and raise questions about the social contexts in which such categories are used.

The third step occurs when anthropologists draw on the insights of ethnographic studies to examine their own preconceptions. Here, through
ethnography, we ask to what extent the familiar oppositions – male/female, man/woman and masculinity/femininity – are everywhere belied by a much more complex social reality. Much of this complexity hinges on the way people understand the relation between gender and power.

If unquestioned, a cultural premise that associates men with power amounts to a mystification, benefiting some people and disadvantaging most others. It is useful to think of those ideologies which privilege some men (and women) by associating them with particular forms of power as ‘hegemonic masculinities’. Hegemonic masculinities define successful ways of ‘being a man’; in so doing, they define other masculine styles as inadequate or inferior. We call these related masculinities ‘subordinate variants’. As we shall see, one reason why the rhetoric of hegemonic versions of masculinity is so compelling is that it rests on an apparent certainty: that ‘a man is a man’ everywhere, and this means the same thing everywhere.

Essentialist interpretations of the male/female dichotomy are a major problem in comparative studies of gender. In any given setting, gender differences are often presented and perceived as absolute and dichotomous. Moreover, such gender differences, when viewed from a historical or cross-cultural perspective, often appear stable or repeat themselves as variations on a single theme. However, essentialist explanations cannot explain variation and the fact that cultural forms are never replicated exactly. An essentialist male/female dichotomy cannot account for the ways people are gendered in different places at different times. Once comparative studies expose a diversity of meanings, the idea of ‘being a man’ can no longer be treated as fixed or universal.

This present research has a long history, which goes back as far as Freud. From the beginning of the twentieth century, psychoanalytic research has shown how adult personality, including one’s sexual orientation and sense of identity, is constructed via conflict-ridden processes of development in which the gender dynamics of families are central. Psychoanalytic case studies showed men’s character structures to be internally divided, even contradictory; and showed both masculinity and femininity as the product of psychological compromises, often tense and unstable.
Some researchers – most famously, the Frankfurt School, in its studies of the ‘authoritarian personality’ – grafted a social analysis onto the psychoanalytic base. This work began to trace alternative paths of masculine development and to debate their role as underpinnings of democracy and fascism. In due course, feminist psychoanalysis picked up this form of argument, though focussing on patriarchy rather than class as the structural background.

Psychoanalysis, however, was regarded with suspicion by many in the social sciences. Around the mid-century a different framework became more influential. The concept of ‘social role’, which developed in anthropology in the 1930s, became immensely popular as a common language for the social sciences. A social-psychological version of the role theory was applied to gender, producing the idea of ‘sex roles’.

Sex roles were understood as patterns of social expectation, norms for the behaviour of men and women, which were transmitted to youth in a process of ‘socialisation’. In effect, social behaviour was explained as a massive display of conformity – which somehow seemed appropriate in the 1950s. Nevertheless the idea of a ‘male role’ also led to some intelligent studies of changing gender expectations for men, and difficulties faced by men and boys in conforming to the norms.

In the 1970s the ‘sex role’ idea was radicalised by feminism. The idea of gender-as-conformity became an object of dismay rather than celebration. Feminist analysis of how women’s sex role oppressed women soon led to a discussion, among both feminist women and pro-feminist men, of the way men’s sex role oppressed men also.

This idea underpinned a burst of writing, even a small social movement, on the theme of men’s liberation as a parallel endeavour to women’s liberation. But it led to little new research beyond the existing conventions of paper-and-pencil masculinity/femininity scales. A vague concept of ‘the male role’ or ‘men’s role’ persists in much recent talk and writing, but means little more than stereotypes or norms or even just sex differences.
In the 1980s a third approach to the gender of men matured, sometimes called social constructionism. Its main academic base is in sociology but there are vigorous branches in anthropology, history and media studies. Key intellectual underpinnings are the feminist analysis of gender as a structure of social relations, especially a structure of power relations; sociological concerns with subcultures and issues of marginalisation and resistance; and post-structuralist analysis of the making of identities in discourse, and the interplay of gender with race, sexuality, class and nationality.

With ethnographic and life-history methods as key research techniques, in the last two decades there has been a cascade of studies of the social construction of masculinity in particular times and places. We might think of this as the 'ethnographic moment' in masculinity research, in which the specific and the local is in focus. The ethnographic moment brought a much-needed gust of realism to debates on men and masculinity, a corrective to the abstractions of role theory. This social research moved in a very different direction from the trend in popular culture at the same time, where vague discussions of men's sex roles were giving way to the mystical generalities of the 'mythopoetic' movement and the extreme simplifications of religious revivalism. Though the rich details of individual historical and field studies defy easy summary, certain empirical conclusions emerge from this body of research as a whole, which have more than local significance (Connell, 2000, 6-14).

It is clear from the new social research as a whole that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. We need to speak of 'masculinities', not masculinity. Different cultures, and different periods of history, construct gender differently. There is now massive proof of this fact in comparative studies, especially ethnographies. We might therefore expect that in multicultural societies there will be multiple definitions and dynamics of masculinity. Diversity is not just a matter of difference between communities. Diversity also exists within a given setting. Within the one school, or workplace, or ethnic group, there will be different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using a male body.
Different masculinities do not sit side-by-side. There are definite social relations between them. Especially, there are relations of hierarchy, for some masculinities are dominant while others are subordinated or marginalised. In most of the situations that have been closely studied, there is some hegemonic form of masculinity present – the most honoured or desired.

The patterns of conduct in our society defined as masculine may be seen in the lives of individuals, but they also have an existence beyond the individual. Masculinities are defined collectively in culture, and are sustained in institutions. Institutions may construct multiple masculinities and define relationships between them.

It can be noted that men’s bodies do not determine the patterns of masculinity, as biological essentialism and pop psychology would have it. Men’s bodies are addressed, defined and disciplined and given outlets and pleasures, by the gender order of society. But men’s bodies are not blank slates. The enactment of masculinity reaches certain limits, for instance in the destruction of the industrial worker’s body. Masculine conduct combined with a female body is felt to be anomalous or transgressive, like feminine conduct combined with a male body. Research on gender crossing shows that a lot of work must be done to sustain an anomalous gender. Gender is the way bodies are drawn into history; bodies are arenas for the making of gender patterns. This was a point underplayed by ‘male role’ discussions, and is underplayed even in some of the more recent research. It is important, then, to register the importance of such processes as violence and body culture in the construction and politics of masculinities.¹

Men appear to be missing from much gender and development policy. The change of terminology from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) represented a shift towards recognising the need to analyse social relationships between men and women and to be more aware of factors such as class, age and personal agency in these. Despite this shift in emphasis, in much development policy there remains little recognition of the need to analyse and understand the lives of men as well as women.² This idea stems from the recurrent
themes in the current literature available on men and masculinity in gender and development discourse. 3

The main theoretical approaches to the study of masculinity are the positivist/modernist approach, psychoanalytic approach and post-modern approach. The positivist approach identified masculinity with reason which played a central role in western concepts of modernity and the forms of social theory and philosophy. In the psychoanalytic approach, it follows from Freud's writings that adult masculinity, as an organisation of character around sexual desire, must be complex, and in some precarious, developmental construction. The issues of complexity, ambiguity and fluidity are central themes in post-structuralist and post-modernist theories of gender and especially that of masculinity. In a way, post-modern approaches attempt to deconstruct false dualisms of mind/body, culture/nature, man/woman, modern/primitive, reason/emotion, subject/object, and so forth.

In a way, this brings us to the discussion of masculinities and globalisation. It has always been recognised that some issues go beyond the local. What happens in localities is affected by the history of the whole country, but what happens in countries is affected by the history of the whole world. Locally situated lives are now (indeed have long been) powerfully influenced by geopolitical struggles, global markets, multinational corporations, labour migration, and transnational media. To understand local masculinities, then, we must think in global terms. Connell offers a framework for thinking about masculinities as a feature of world society, and for thinking about men's gender practices in terms of the global structure and dynamics of gender. To understand the masculinities on a world scale, first we must have a concept of the globalisation of gender. World gender-order can be defined as the structure of relationships that connect the gender regimes of institutions, and the gender-orders of local society, on a world scale. Modern global society was historically produced by the economic and political expansion of European states from the fifteenth century on, leading to the creation of colonial empires. It is in this process that we find the roots of the modern world gender-order.4 The colonial and post-colonial world has tended to break down purdah systems of patriarchy in the name of modernisation, if not of women's emancipation. At the same time, large-scale organisations have appeared, notably the state and corporations, which, with few
exceptions, are culturally masculinised and controlled by men. In post-colonial capitalism the power of local elites depends on their relations with the metropolitan powers. So the hegemonic masculinities of neocolonial societies are uneasily poised between local and global cultures. The positioning of men and the making of masculinities may be analysed at any of the levels at which gender practice is configured, including the body, personal life or collective social practice. At each level we need to consider how globalisation influences configurations of gender. The impact of global forces on personal life can be seen in individual life histories. Sometimes the link is indirect. At the level of collective practice, masculinities are involved in the cultural remaking of gender meanings under globalisation; they are also affected by a rather different process, the reshaping of the institutional contexts of practice. The growth of global mass media, especially electronic media, is an obvious vector for the globalisation of gender. Popular entertainment circulates stereotyped gender images, deliberately made attractive for marketing purposes. International news media are also controlled or strongly influenced from the metropole, and circulate Western definitions of authoritative masculinity, criminality, desirable femininity, etc. But there are limits to the power of global mass communications. Some local centres of mass entertainment differ from the Hollywood model; for example, the Indian popular film industry centred in Mumbai. Further, media research shows that audiences are highly selective in their reception of media messages. More important than cultural standardisation is a process that began long before electronic media existed – the export of institutions. Gendered institutions not only circulate definitions of masculinity and femininity. Gendered institutions, creating specific conditions for social practice, call into existence-specific patterns of practice.5

Recognising global society as an arena where masculinities are formed allows us to pose new questions about the politics of masculinity. The gradual creation of a world gender order has meant many local instabilities of gender. These range from the disruption of men’s local cultural dominance as women move into the public realm and higher education, through the disruption of sexual identities that produced ‘queer’ politics in the metropole, to the shifts in the urban intelligentsia that produced ‘the new sensitive man’ and other images of gender change. One response to such
instabilities, on the part of groups whose power is challenged but still dominant, is to reaffirm local gender hierarchies. A masculine fundamentalism is, accordingly, a common response in gender politics at present. Transnational business masculinity is not completely homogeneous. Variations are embedded in different parts of the world system, which may not be completely compatible. Compared with the concentration of institutional power in multinational businesses, these initiatives remain small-scale and dispersed. They are, nevertheless, important in potential. The global gender order contains, necessarily, a greater diversity of forms than any local gender order. This must reinforce the consciousness that masculinity is not one fixed form. The plurality of masculinities at least symbolically prefigures the variety and creativity of a democratic gender order.

From the globalised perspective, let me dwell now on the Indian context. The average Indian male will grow up with a fixation at the stage of primary narcissism, the characteristic of the first few months of life; a fixation at the stage of exclusive love for the mother, which follows in the next few months; and a relatively weak repression of the anal eroticism of about the same period. The relevance of studying the various archetypes, namely, Krishna, Shiva and Rama in terms of the broad framework of Indian masculinity construct cannot be doubted. Rama is seen as the epitome of dramatic persona; Shiva as a provocative persona; and lastly, the imagery of Rama denoting complex inner-conflict and self-contradiction in terms of their respective masculinity constructs. But there has been new dimensions as well to the masculinity discourse in terms of redefinitions as proposed by the Mystic Tradition, the Bhakti Cult and the Gandhian discourse. The discussions on the Indian context perhaps are incomplete without mentioning issues regarding gender and environment and those concerning the Hindutva masculinities. In a way, these two form important agendas concerning the relevance of the present research.

The Indian case is thus interwoven by the complexities of, on the one hand, modernisation-as-development, and the transformation in social relations demanded by this process; and on the other, by the adoption of a political system that enshrines the rights of individuals over communities even, as it acknowledges the rights of communities to safeguard their 'Cultures'. In practice then, even as the Westminster model of liberal democracy, with its ideological roots in individualism, was adopted
as the form of postcolonial government by the newly independent nation, the rights of individuals remained tangled in the issue of community rights. These are frequently, vehemently and violently maintained as communities adjust, among other things, to the reconstruction of the public-private dichotomy, for instance, and the realignments in gender relations, in the carrying out of the 'national mission' of development. While gender is becoming an increasingly important consideration in planning and policy-making, as Saskia Wieringa notes rather despairingly of the concept of gender, it is used in such a watered down version [in present-day development literature] that women's issues have become depoliticised, that sexual oppression has been rendered invisible and that concern for women's issues has been reduced to the socio-economic component of women's lives' (Wieringa, 1998,5). There can be little doubt that this is fundamentally because the dominant understanding of development-as-modernisation has been and remains instrumentalist and economistic, without taking account of the social, economic and cultural history of that model of modernisation, nor of the corresponding histories of its target contexts. Yet it is this model that most newly liberated nations and their states, like India, aspire to as ideal in their developmental programmes. We continue to live with the long-term consequences of this silent privileging of the masculine. And this takes us to the question of what our understanding of masculinity is, in this immense silence or gender. 8

So I can state quite clearly that masculinities with their universality and diversities are being represented in different mediums of popular culture, especially in popular Hindi cinema. And these representations are sociologically worth examining. In this context, the discussions can begin with a brief history of Hindi cinema which can unravel the path traversed by this medium especially the popular genre. Next, deliberations on the so-called rules of grammar and normative codes which perhaps guide the popular Hindi cinema. It can be noted that right from its birth, popular Hindi cinema has been a heavily male-dominated genre with all the people connected with making of a film being mostly men with rare exceptions, that too in restricted fields of expertise. This in a way lends the film from a largely men's perspective with "women being looked at". The notion of the "hero" in popular Hindi cinema is always larger-than-life. In a way, his omnipotence stems from the influence of mythological stories from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. More importantly the masculinity
construct or constructs which each hero represents does not only depend on the on-screen imagery but many a time essentially on the off-screen image as projected in film magazines, gossip columns, popular press and so on. In a way, they contribute to formation of myths about stars where myth and reality get blurred and many a time even merge. But one may as well wish to focus on the insiders' perspective on the representation of masculinity. In a way this brings the complex relationship between popular Hindi cinema as a mass cultural product and the social structure and cultural practices prevalent in our society. In other words, concentrating on the sociology of the producers of popular Hindi cinema which we as audience consume in terms of their gender construction especially views on the masculinity construct.

I selected six representative popular commercially successful films for my research. Rigorous and thorough textual analysis of each of the six films was undertaken to locate the representation of masculinities in them. In the process, I provided detailed filmography; narrative of the film; analysis of each scene of the film in a linear progression; and analysis of the masculinity construct of the dominant male character in terms of the network of relationships in his life.

To me, Shree 420 is a study in the self-contradictory mode of masculinity in the backdrop of post-independent Nehruvian India. The softness, vulnerability, and the inner-conflict add to the complexity of the character of Raju played by Raj Kapoor. Again, Raju in full control of the whole situation, also point to the Krishna archetype as a comparative model of analysis. Perhaps the most interesting aspect is the presence of multiple masculinities in the lone single masculinity construct of Raju which is perhaps the essence and core of this analysis.

Junglee is a study of the wild, exuberant, triumphant masculinity construct in the backdrop of the swinging 60s. The transformative dimension, of the character of Sekhar, played by Shammi Kapoor, from being bully, dry, cold, non-expressive, abusive, excessively formal, non-caring, non-loving to wild, ecstatic, happy, mad, loving, caring, protective, strategic, poetic, lies in the core of the analysis.

Kati Patang is a study of the soft, caring, protective masculinity construct in the backdrop of the early 70s. Perhaps the phase which defines the character of Kamal
played by Rajesh Khanna is ‘tender is the knight’. Masculinity as a saviour of femininity is brought about through various twists and turns in the film.

Deewaar is a study of contrasting masculinities of intense anger against the system and ploy of destiny vis-à-vis duty-based responsibility and conviction in the backdrop of the mid 70s. But even the sense of responsibility is deconstructed in the film in terms of the contrasting masculinities of the two brothers, Vijay, played by Amitabh Bachchan and Ravi, played by Shashi Kapoor. In a way, duty and responsibility towards what/when – society, family, job, morality, self stands central to the masculinity construct. This question haunts the basic foundation of the two contrasting masculinities in the film.

Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak is a study of the soft but determined, iron-willed, masculinity construct in the backdrop of the late 80s. In a way, throughout the film there is an overwhelming, suffocating, all pervasive, dominating, sweeping presence of feudal patriarchy which ensures culture of silence especially from the matriarchal domain. Amidst this, the freshness of the character Raj, played by Aamir Khan, stands out, proclaiming ‘tenderness is strength’ which is the defining core of the masculinity construct in the film.

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge is a study of the colourful, frivolous, happy-go-lucky, all-rounder masculinity construct in the backdrop of the mid 90s. The character of Raj played by Shah Rukh Khan has a rainbow self which is very addictive and infectious. He has an amazing magic of spreading sunshine everywhere. But perhaps the characteristics that define the masculinity construct of Raj in the film is his amazing self-confidence and convincing power.

So in a way the journey of masculinity or rather masculinities in the domain of popular Hindi cinema from the 1950s onwards has been varied and multi-layered. The 50s were dominated by mostly three male stars – namely, Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand and Dilip Kumar who demonstrated a range of masculinity constructs from self-contradictory, soft, androgynous, simple and rural, Nehruvian idealism, socialist, tragic, loving, caring, torn to buoyant, youthful, Western. The 60s comparatively signalled a fun-filled and relaxing time with the rise of Shammi
Kapoor with his brand of urban, Western happy-go-lucky, easygoing, romantic, wild, free, peaceful, pleasant, lovingly physical masculinity construct. This was true of other male stars of the decade, namely Rajendra Kumar, Sunil Dutt, Manoj Kumar (the two were even called ‘chocolate heroes’), Joy Mukherjee, Jeetendra, Shatrughan Sinha, Sanjay Khan, Biswajeet, and a few others. The seventies started with “love” reigning supreme and Rajesh Khanna as the epitome of freshness, style and talent. His masculinity construct was a natural successor to the Dilip Kumar brand who was always vulnerable, gentle, sensitive and charming in joy and sorrow, victory or defeat, life or death. The changing mood of the mid 70s signalled the emergence of the towering shadow of the fierce, intense lover, the ‘angry young man’ Amitabh Bachchan and the era of violence, revenge and vendetta which continued almost till the mid 80s. His masculinity construct can be summed as a “complete anti-hero”. His contemporaries like Vinod Khanna suffered the onslaught of his larger-than-life persona. Interestingly, those male stars who co-starred with him benefited in the long run like Dharmendra, Sanjeev Kumar, Shashi Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor. The only male star who was somewhat successful in the early 80s was Mithun Chakravartty, with hit films like Disco Dancer, Pyar Jhukta Nahin, was interestingly known as “poor-man’s Amitabh Bachchan”. The other male star in the 80s who had a mix baggage of hit (like Tezaab, Ram Lakhan) and flop films, Anil Kapoor was known as “Angry Young Man-II. Love as obsession and destroying passion swept the late 80s with the coming of Aamir Khan who was intensely romantic and fresh. His masculinity construct combined an almost tangible tenderness with an over toughness. His “method acting” as part of the over-all performance gave him an edge over his contemporaries like Govinda or Chunkey Pandey. The 90s belonged to three Khans – Aamir, Salman and Shah Rukh amidst the mass entry of private and international networks into the television market and the proliferation of private cable networks. But it was Shah Rukh Khan who effected a final, absolute repudiation of the conventional hero with his twin triumphs as the evil force in Baazigar (1993) and Darr (1993). To segue from these disturbed and disturbing characters to the button-cute, purely romantic Raj of Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayange (1995), was a stretch for any actor but Shah Rukh showed an extraordinary talent for expressing extreme sensitivity without making it seem like an indulgence. The self-amplification comes with Shah Rukhs’s projected
personality. But instead of seeming abrasive, it usually evokes an indulgent response which is characteristic of his masculinity construct.

In this flow and journey of masculinity in the realm of popular Hindi cinema, what comes loud and clear is the representation of multiple masculinities rather than one single hegemonic masculinity construct which is largely true for the Western masculinity mode. In a way, the Indian masculinity construct seems to be far more varied and multi-layered as compared to the Western discourse as clearly represented in the arena of popular Hindi cinema. But perhaps the more interesting observation is that there seems to be even layers and shades (perhaps of grey as well) and colours in each of these masculinity constructs individually. In other words, there are multiple masculinities even in a single masculinity construct represented in the persona of all the major male stars of the popular Hindi film genre. It is akin to an onion. So I conclude my discussions on the section of findings by proclaiming that perhaps the representation of masculinity in popular Hindi cinema can best be termed as the archetype of an "onion construct" of masculinity. Usually the reward of peeling the layers of an onion is tears and obviously not always of joy. But in the case of peeling off the multiple layers of onion construct of masculinity representation of popular Hindi cinema, hero can be rewarding intellectually as well as aesthetically, not to forget, sociologically. And the tears accompanied can be of pure bliss and emancipation.

[II]

Contemporary Trends as Seen Through Recent Publications And Print Media

The last section of the concluding discussions points to the contemporary trends both in the arena of men and masculinities and popular Hindi films as seen through recent publications and print media. In a way, this present section can pinpoint some of the avenues to further future research in both the fields separately as well as in the form of interface or dialogue like the present research endeavour.

The focus is on the new image of the Indian male in media and across popular culture. The Indian male of this century wears a different face – even body – for each medium, be it television, movies, advertising, world of modelling, the page three
types culminating in the *avtaar* of the 'metrosexual man', the 'pomo-man' (post-modern man), the 'try-sexual man'. He has split personalities.

- On television one can see the Fair and Lovely young man: if he has biceps, they are likely to be hidden under his branded shirt. And he never takes his shirt off on the tube. Actually, he tends to be a bit of a goody-goody sort. The Indian soap opera man is likely to be the bloke-next-door, the kind one brings home to mama and marry because he has the right job, the right house, and the right lineage – he blends everything. The angry man in him is domesticated. And most important: he is not larger than life.

- In the movies he does take his shirt off, exposing on occasion more cleavage than his heroine. He is larger than life. And he’s dark and dangerous when he is not being fair and lovely and moony. This bicep-ed biped flexes his muscles, not his brain. He turns macho – and yes, dark is beautiful on the big screen. The angry young man still lives there. His graph goes from caveman to mama’s boy and back. And macho increasingly means patriotic. In *Gadar: A Love Story*, Sunny Deol takes on the entire Pakistani army.

- In advertising...well, something is happening here. The Indian male seems to have finally grown up. Nothing typifies the mature young man as much as the Raymonds man: he’s the perfect and caring son, lover, husband, and increasingly, father. Television ads for cars (Maruti particularly), insurance, banks, household appliances bring out the nurturing side of the Indian male. If not his feminine side. Mothers and sons are making room for fathers and daughters: the busy corporate, good-looking honcho takes time out to share a sandwich with his little daughter. Alas, there’s a flip side: the Indian male as stud, the one who preens about in his underwear, the one who has displaced the nubile nymphet as the latest object of desire.

- In the world of modelling, the descent has begun. In a recent newspaper survey, the male models ceded defeat. One of them actually said that men were the "second sex" in the world of modelling. Accessories or arm candy – that’s his fate. What makes it worse for the ordinary Indian male is the fact that not only is
he playing second fiddle to the women; he's been upstaged by celebrities. The admen prefer stars and sportsmen. The day belongs to the Amitabh Bachchans, Hrithik Roshans and the Sachin Tendulkars. And, of course, to the women – both the celebrities and the mortals.

- And then one has the PTMS (page three men). Outfitted by designers, often sporting designer smiles, gym-boned bodies and well-coifed hair, they come and go through salons –preferably those with the paparazzi in attendance – talking about which party they have come from and where they are going next. Need one say more?

The year 2003 marked the coming up of a new trend or terminology: The Metrosexual Man.10 “The Indian metropolitan man is rediscovering his masculinity. He is refined, reformed and softer. He has always been family-focused, but now he is acquiring feminine attributes. The old gender-boundaries are being crossed. And he isn’t threatened by his woman,” says Radhika Chopra. The November 16, 2003 issue of The Week comes up with a cover story on Metrosexual (popularly MS) Man which notes: Strangely, the term has nothing to do with sexuality, as in bi-, hetero-, homo-. The definition of the metrosexual goes thus: a dandyish narcissist in love with not only himself, but with his urban lifestyle as well; a straight man who is in touch with his feminine side. The evolved male understands far more than that: he no longer underestimates the woman’s contribution to the family kitty and is not cowed down by a female boss. Instead of cribbing over women taking over the home and the workplace, he finds his pleasure exploring an alien world: from under a mud pack at the savvy salon or while mastering the slippery art of bathing a baby. Even Bollywood is turning MS, what with Abhishek Bachchan’s kohl-lined eyes in Mumbai Se Aaya Mera Dost, Bachchan Sr doing a role-reversal karva chauth in Baghban or Shah Rukh Khan’s sequinned jacket in Kal Ho Na Ho. SRK’s roles in Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai and Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, which rubbed the ‘boys don’t cry’ attitude, have done a fair bit in gaining acceptance for the MS male.11

The exclusive sex survey published by India Today, September 20, 2004 in the form of a cover-story What Men Want: Exploring the libido of the Indian male
Men want sex. Even when they are in love and sometimes to the exclusion of romance. Supposedly, this truism explains everything about male sexuality. So why a survey? Because only a study could reveal that what men want may not necessarily be what they need. If there is one visual metaphor that explains this survey, it is that of a vast battlefield where a lost war is being fought. The unlikely warriors are the everyday babus, clerks, professors, doctors, salesmen and executives who like gladiators are valiantly fighting to defend conservatism. If one thinks that bare-bodied women with fire in their bodies and erotic fantasies on their minds unleashed male libido, he/she should think again. Sure, the average Indian man wants sex. After all, 89 per cent men rate it as important to very important. But they say they want sex with coy, virginal, beautiful, sari-clad women who should then become their wives. And once wedded, these women should neither fantasise in bed, nor ask for oral sex or deny sex to their husbands, whether they like sex or not.

Last year, in *India Today*'s similar study of women, conflict defined their sexual freedom. Women hid the real face of their desire behind don’t know/can’t say choices. Men haven’t chosen don’t know/can’t say options but they too have placed chastity on a pedestal. Most agree that pleasure should be equal for men and women but only 9 per cent would always give oral sex to their mates. A majority of them say that they find intelligent women attractive and that they don’t judge women by their clothes or sexual consent, but even a greater number think that sex is a marital right. Aishwarya Rai may be a global goddess, but for the Indian man his wife or lover is his fantasy woman. Quite unpredictably, men appear more guarded than women. So much so that 44 per cent say that they have never ever masturbated.

In 2004, when freedom is a buzzword, Indian men seem shackled by myths of manhood. They are defined by appearance and aggression, money and achievement, silence and brooding, swagger, flexed biceps and surefootedness. But not by their emotions. Their confusion is seen either as a testosterone surge or as the scars of poor mothering. What passes off as the essence of masculinity is so basic that it can be extracted, bottled and sold back to them. Literally, like Viagra. In India, male sexuality is understood through four stereotypes. Boyfriends whose first fumbles betray the stirrings of machismo. Husbands who insist on sex as a right. Browsing
voyeurs who buy sexual release in sleaze bars. And rapists who silence women's emotions forever. But where is the discourse for the thinking, sensitive lover?

Sometimes the only value a father passes on to his son is power. And the mother tells him to wear manhood like an armour, not feel it as a searing emotion. So when the son has to father his own liberation, he realises that the breastplate is fused with his soul. Ripping it off may cause unimaginable hurt. Conservatism is less painful. But the consequence of safe choices is a huge sense of loss for both men and women. The rest of the survey proves this as marital sex comes out as a dispassionate chore, not a simmering, evolving flame.

So does this study tell us what men want? It actually does. It suggests that men are not just a sum total of their instinctual drives. Let's not forget that they have written the most romantic poetry, the most erotic texts, painted the most sensual pictures even as they can take their lovers on wild rollercoasters of ecstasy. Ironic, that in the land of the virile Shiva, the flirtatious Krishna and the incorrigible Vatsayana, today's Indian man willingly suffers the label of the prude. In India, sexuality remains a cause in search of a rebel.

Popular sex surveys are often biased in favour of heterosexuality which is regarded as normal. This can hinder understanding. For instance, 20 per cent men have admitted to a homosexual experience. But it is difficult to assume whether they are men having sex with men, homosexuals or bisexuals. Also, whether their responses are based on personal experience or stereotypical heterosexual images. Reduction of sexuality to an “act” or equating it with reproductive biology too is debatable.

Every person has a unique initiation into sexuality – accidental, playful, exploratory, pornographic or through abuse. For some the only context is marriage. This study includes relevant issues like monogamy, safe sex, sexual commitment in relationships, recognition of affirmative female sexuality and reduction of sexual aggression. It also addresses some problematic issues like heterosexuality as the norm, homophobia and patriarchy only from the periphery. Some disturbing trends do emerge. Sex as a marital right or a male prerogative is a huge problem because it
creates the ground for domestic violence, marital rape, besides commodifying women. This is represented in fantasies: transposing a fantasy woman onto one's real partner and other pornographic images. The relationship of these with realities such as affairs, sexual aggression and the organised sex industry is a matter of concern. Ultimately it has to do with masculinity, which ideally must be a natural state reached as a spontaneous unfolding rather than a precarious one, anxiously achieved through sexual coercion or conquest. However, often it is not. Because sexuality is treated as an abnormal extension and relegated to the back alleys and bylanes instead of mainstream public debate and consciousness. These processes rob sexuality of the inherent joyousness and celebration that it possesses.

Now let us briefly focus on the arena of popular Hindi films. And here categorically the focus is on the sections of the print media which otherwise do not usually exclusively deal with the film genre. The May 2003 issue of Seminar is devoted to a symposium on the place of cinema in India titled “Unsettling Cinema”.

One asks: What sort of an object is cinema in India? This articulation has become much harder to make. Present-day heroes, unlike their predecessors, move not from the village or the feudal haveli to the pleasures and dangers of 'big city' Bombay, but negotiate a 'return' after studying in America, starting a big business in London and dancing on location in the Swiss Alps. The vigilante stakes himself, not for the neighbourhood but for the boundaries of an entire nation against the more ambiguous threat of 'terrorism', a la Sunny Deol. The mafiosi coordinates the contours of his 'company' on a cellphone with its branch offices in Hong Kong, Nigeria and Dubai. Homes become soft-focussed saccharine, with expensive furniture and in-house gyms.

Bollywood gone (neo-liberal) global? A 'new' Indian modernity? Well perhaps, but then again, may be not. Let us look more carefully at each of the terms in circulation here (cinema, global/local, 'Indian modernity') because it is possible that they elide as much as they tell us. In fact, there are much more cataclysmic and tectonic shifts at work here in the nature of the 'popular'.

365
The object that Nandy, even till as recently as 1995, could refer to as ‘cinema’ has completely changed in its shape, form and mode of dispersal. Take the case of a recent film, Kabhie Khushi Kabhie Ghum (K3G). Alongside his transnational presence in the film, Shah Rukh Khan flows uninterrupted and simultaneous into a Pepsi ad on Star Plus, a rerun of Baazigar on Sony TV into an Ericsson ad in The Times of India, only to reappear on the upper left corner of MSN Hotmail India screensaver. Amitabh Bachchan plays an ageing corporate scion (getting over the failure of ABCL?) and benevolently distributes money and a few minutes of fame to the Indian middle class on Kaun Banega Crorepati. K3G, the film itself appears in only a fraction of the cinema halls in any of the big Indian cities on the day of its release, simultaneously screened with a shaky and uncertain print on TV by various cable operators, flooding various electronic bazaars soon after as an easily copied VCD, its songs long-since released (and ‘pirated’) on cassettes and CDs.

However, despite its seeming hyper-visibility, the importance of a film such as K3G might in itself be deeply undercut by the fact that references to the popular (bourgeois-Hindu) joint family are often not even made with respect to ‘cinema’ as such anymore, instead of invoking serials on Star Plus such as Kyonki Saas Bhi Kabhie Bahu Thi and Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki. In a word, ‘cinema’ has become radically dispersed.

How do we move away from this set of problems? Here is an initial suggestion: we shift ‘cinema’ from its conception as a purely textual object to being a socially embedded set of practices. This is a shift away from the fictionality of cinema as a formal ‘text’ towards its fictive quality, its being ‘made up’ as a form on the terrain of life, labour and language. Here we hold these various terms in tension (local/global, Bollywood/regional, popular/parallel, highbrow/lwbrow, hit/flop), concentrating instead on the social contexts within which such categorisations are produced and the says in which they circulate and travel.  

An interesting observation as far as the masculinity construct of the popular Hindi film hero is concerned is noted by the following report: Bollywood’s mama’s boys seem to be turning into papa’s boys. They pine for papa or a father figure. As for mama: she has been relegated to the background. It seems as if we are seeing the
return of the patriarch: authority's wearing boots again. Perhaps, it has to do with the awesome return of Amitabh Bachchan: the living legend's finally found his born-again screen persona: the forbidding, unforgiving father in Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham and Ek Rishtaa-Ek Bond, the sour father figure in Mohabbatein. The Shah Rukh Khans and Akshay Kumars are like putty in front of him. His return also bodes well for evil. In Aks, Aankhen and Kaante, when this guy is bad, he is really, really bad. There are no excuses for his nastiness: the lame excuse of schizophrenia in Aankhen doesn't wash: his screen persona is no John Nash, there is no beautiful mind at work here, Bachchan plays a robber in both Ankhen and Kaante.

The angry young men are now the villains: the ones with fire in their bellies. It's long gone out in the bellies of our heroes. Notice the long descent from the four angry young men in Ankush to Dil Chahta Hai (popularly DCH): the three male protagonists in DCH may be loveable but they inhabit a yuppy world in which nobody has to worry about money, society, and the world around them. The parents provide it all. It's more about ennui and style in this narcissist milieu. Not even passion is in full throttle here.

Style certainly makes the Indian man in the world of advertising. He looks good, slick and caring, when he is not being narcissist and childish. One has basically two kinds of men. There is the less macho, more mature male: the caring father and husband one can trust. The one who can whip up a meal if need be. He is loving to his daughter, and can tackle his son who is far from being an Einstein. Strangely enough, mama often goes missing when these twosomes are around.

One also has the flip side: the stud who follows an undress code and is increasingly the object of female desire. In one of the print ads for jeans, the lipstick is more than on his collar: it's all over his torso. Underwear ads are bringing out the inner man: you have the Rivolta man who goes to work in his underwear. Yet another struts on to his balcony clad only in his designer briefs, and unaware that two young women with binoculars are stalking him. Peeping Janes are at work here.

These beautiful men can verge on the androgynous: just like the men on the catwalks and in the music videos and movies. The camera now caresses his body as
does hers. In *Kabhi Khushi*... the camera lovingly lingers over Shah Rukh Khan’s body, especially his see-through turquoise shirt. Kajol isn’t half as sensual.

However, it could all be an illusion, a sleight of image. Has this new male really abdicated control? Or, does he use a remote? Dipankar Gupta believes that this Indian male still takes all the major decisions, whether it is in the films or in the ads. In all those caring ads about insurance and investment policies he is actually taking on the role of the protector.

Here I wish to mention countless reports, articles, features that point to the celebration of the popular Hindi film medium and idiom and industry trying to attain and reach global shores and hieghts.\(^{13}\)

Speaking of global shores and obviously Hollywood, one feels tempted to refer to the highly commercially successful *Spider-Man 2*, released in 2004 and its review in July 25, 2004 edition of *The Times of India* and posit it vis-à-vis with two reports subsequently to bring the perspective of Indian masculinities in the present context as an interface with celluloid imagery. Sociologists and film theorists have already written reams on how *Spidey 2* is a post 9/11 hero unlike that all-American symbol of heroism, Superman. According to them, post September 11, the broad-shouldered, unconflicted, virtually indestructible Superman has become the kind of hero America wants to idolise; while the self-doubting, introspective, easily injured Spiderman is who they actually are. Heroic, yet human.\(^{14}\) Quite similarly, the 2003 superhit film *Koi...Mil Gaya*, (an Indian version of Hollywood hit *ET*), has Child-man Hrithik, is a milestone for Bollywood. In this film, he cries easily and is a complete antithesis of the brawny hero who slapped the world into shape and submission. Clearly, the new-age hero has arrived. One, who even with a handicap, is more Everyman, and therefore more identifiable, than the muscled wonders of a conventional Bollywood caper. A report claims men are melting everywhere. They are washing clothes after playing impromptu football with their wives/significant others, weeping copiously dignified tears into the phone because they are separated from their wives of 40 years, and stepping into a parlour to do their nails immediately after falling in love like Saif Ali Khan in *Kal Ho Naa Ho*. Exit heavy breathing, enter hand-holding. Bye, bye *testosterone man*. Say hello to the *touchy-feely man*. It can be that the new man may
just be a fantasy that women, in for more influential positions in the film industry, are inflicting on audiences. Perhaps men do not have a choice. They are being carried along by filmmakers, weaned on gender-sensitive global cinema, not traditional literature. This is myth or reality – future research can pinpoint. Meanwhile this present research can end by pointing to these emerging interesting developments and trends.

I wish to end or rather begin this on-going journey with the following words:

I was here from the moment of the
Beginning, and here I am still...

.....I roamed the infinite sky, and
Soared in the ideal world, and
Floated through the firmament, But
Here I am, prisoner of measurement.

.....Yet here am I, existing with ignorance
And heresy.

.....Yet here I am, prisoner of bewilderment.

.....Yet my earlier teachings showed the
Weakness and sorrow of those achievements.

.....Yet, I am still seeking the truth.

.....I heard all that can be heard
Yet, my heart is deaf and blind.

.....Yet, I still possess some inner power
With which I struggle to greet each day.
My mind is filled, but my heart is empty'
My body is old, but my heart is an infant.

.....And I shall remain here until the end
of The world, for there is no
Ending to my grief-stricken being.

(Gibran, 2002, 467-468)
The new sociology of the body, influenced by Foucault as well as by Feminism, has developed a sophisticated account of the way bodies are drawn into social and historical processes. Through social institutions and discourses, bodies are given social meaning. Society has a range of ‘body practices’ which address, sort and modify bodies. These practices range from deportment and dress to sexuality, surgery and sport. The new sociology of the body thus gives us social explanations of facts and experiences which, in conservative ideology, have been taken as proof of the natural hierarchy of male and female bodies. There is, however, a persistent difficulty in the new sociology of the body. Partly because of the influence of Foucault, researchers have tended to see bodies as the passive bearers of cultural imprints. Bodies are the blank pages on which meanings and stories are ‘inscribed’.

Very recently, this tendency has been criticised by researchers in a variety of fields, including sexuality and disability. Their arguments emphasise the body’s agency in social practice, and the importance of the material diversity of bodies. This point is nowhere more important than in relation to gender. Gender is, fundamentally, a way in which social practice is ordered. In gender processes, the everyday conduct of life is ordered in relation to a reproductive arena. This arena includes sexual arousal and intercourse, childbirth and infant care, bodily sex difference and similarity. It is thus constituted by the materiality of bodies. The crucial point, however, is that this arena is an arena of social practice; it is not a ‘biological base’ prior to the social. As we learn from the sociology of the body, bodies are in history, not outside. Human life does not occur on any other terms. The embodiment of gender is from the start a social embodiment. Body-reflexive practices like all practices, are governed by, and constitute, social structures. They are not necessarily homogeneous and may indeed be internally contradictory.

Each of the large-scale structures of the gender order – the structures of power relations, production relations, relations of cathexis, and symbolism – is thus linked to the reproductive arena via body-reflexive practices such as labour, violence, sexuality and self-interpretation. These practices enter chains of interaction which are not only face-to-face local interactions, but may (and often do) involve large-scale institutions and long-distance communications. The materiality of male bodies matters, not as a template for social masculinities, but as a referent for the configuration of social practices defined as masculinity. Male bodies are what these practices refer to, imply or address. The social embodiment of masculinity can be analysed in relation to each of the four structures of gender, namely, power; production and the division of labour; cathexis; and symbolisation.

Power impacts on bodies most directly in the form of violence. The violence of the police and prison systems is mostly directed on men’s bodies. What is unquestionable is the growth in power of large-scale businesses operating internationally, and the power of the men who control them. The embodiment of transnational business masculinity has yet to be studied in detail. However, two points leap to the eye. The first is the immense augmentation of bodily powers by technology (air transport, computers, telecommunications), making this, to a certain extent, a ‘cyborg’ masculinity. The second is the extent to which international business men’s bodily pleasures escape the social controls of local gender orders, as their business operations tend to escape the control of the national state.

Capitalism as a social system separates a masculinised sphere of production and circulation from a feminised sphere of consumption and domestic labour. Most men are defined in this system as ‘breadwinners’, and one of the most important dynamics in the creation of a global market society is the transformation of growing numbers of men around the world into wage labourers.

Globalisation both sustains massive differences in income, and provides the technology for rapid movement around the world. Thus it creates the conditions for sex tourism. Research inspired by the HIV/AIDS pandemic has documented the global circulation of Western gender forms. A very complex hybridisation with local gender regimes and sexual cultures has occurred, with some new gender configurations springing from the encounter.

With the global circulation of gender images in US-dominated mass communications, a similar effect appears. These images are increasingly reproduced in other parts of the world. At a more profound level, the use of commercial competitive sport as the dominant symbol of hegemonic masculinity
appears to be on the rise globally, helped by media overkill on the World Cup and the Olympic Games. However, hybridisation occurs as well as displacement. Local narratives of military heroism, or civil endurance, remain as exemplars of masculinity alongside the global media images. So at the symbolic level there is not a simple homogenisation of masculine embodiment. Rather there is a patchwork of increasing complexity, as more and more forms of masculinity are brought into contact, and some of them interact.

2 A number (sometimes contradictory) of arguments have been made for the need to pay specific attention to men and masculinities in development. These are derived from ongoing GAD debates, from field research and practice and from the masculinities literature (Cleaver, 2002, 2-5).

Gender Equality and Social Justice: Approaches to gender that argue for gender equality and social justice avoid seeing gender concerns as simply instrumental in securing the more effective delivery of development. Rather, they recognise that men as well as women may be disadvantaged by social and economic structures and that all have the right to a life free from poverty and oppression. Batiwala (1994, 127-138) suggests that through empowerment processes both men and women can be liberated from the confines of stereotyping, resulting in beneficial outcomes for both genders.

Gendered Vulnerabilities: Changing gendered divisions of labour, social practices and concepts of masculinity can disadvantage as well as benefit men. While recognising that women in general may face greater social and economic disadvantages than most men, evidence from several studies suggests that men are not always the ‘winners’ and that ignoring their situation risks overlooking gender-specific inequities and vulnerabilities.

The Crisis of Masculinity: Increasing evidence suggests that changes in the economy, in social structures and in household composition are resulting in ‘crises of masculinity’ in many parts of the world. When economic changes (for example, through structural adjustment) occur which make this difficult, men’s fundamental identity is called into question. The crisis, then, is partly derived from the lack of alternative meaningful roles for men, sometimes resulting in dysfunctional and anti-social behaviour.

Negotiated Gender Roles and Relations: There is evidence for the highly contested nature of gender identities and the inter-relationships between private negotiations and public roles (White 1999). Additionally, research suggests that men may play significant roles in women-only projects, in women’s groups and in institutions designed to further the involvement of women and that the scope and nature of men’s activities should be better understood.

Strategic gender partnerships: There is a strong argument that empowerment, social justice and progressive gender change can best be achieved through strategic partnerships, including gender partnerships. Men are needed to ensure that they do not become obstacles to development, because they can provide access to valuable resources and because, through solidarity and co-operation, more can be achieved for both men and women. Men are needed as partners to overcome the excessive labour burden of women (Sweetman 1998). Men are needed as partners in responsibility for the family and the raising of children (Engle, 1997, 31-40; SCF, 1999b; Unicef, 1997). Men are needed as partners in political movements and in development organisations to ensure that gender issues are not marginalised and under funded. Such mainstreaming is currently fashionably advocated but recent studies show that specialist gender units and concerns in development organisations commonly remain isolated and that the perception persists that gender is about ‘women’s issues’ (Cleaver and Kessler 1998; Roche, 2000, 11-15).

3 In the current literature available on men and masculinities in gender and development, a number of themes occur repeatedly. The following sections outline some of the most commonly occurring themes (Cleaver, 2002, 5-12).

Dilution of Feminist Gains?: There is considerable anxiety among many GAD analysts that a focus on men and masculinities will distract attention from women’s inequalities. There is debate about whether GAD frameworks can be used in a way which does not necessarily privilege women over men, or whether a specific men and development (MAD) approach is required.
Sex or Gender: The subject of masculinities reflects the difficulty of being very precise in defining just what constitutes 'gender relations', as distinct from all other forms of social interaction. Considerable debate occurs around definitions of 'gender', the differences between sex and gender as classificatory categories that are commonly elided (MacInnes, 1998; el Bushra, 2000, 55-62).

Hegemonic Masculinities: Further questioning of dichotomous thinking arises when trying to understand power relations and hierarchies based on gender identities, both between men and women and between men and other men. Recently, writers have pointed to the need to understand different cultural concepts of manliness and to be aware of the variety and complexity of ways of 'being a man', also the dynamic creation of masculinity through gendered practices (Connell, 2000).

Gender Analysis and Development Practice: Several writers note the difficulty gender analysis poses to development practice when it strays into the 'private' realm. Indeed, it is claimed that development agencies prefer to tackle the less contentious and public dimensions of gender (promoting women's involvement and so on) rather than becoming embroiled in the personal politics of intimate relationships.

Empowerment: There is general recognition of the importance of the wider social and economic structures of society and the ways in which these can oppress both men and women. This raises questions of the limitations of development projects and their ability to promote empowerment.

Personal, Sexual and Family Issues: This is perhaps the area in which the most relevant practical experience is available through projects that explicitly target men as a way of reducing domestic violence, promoting sexual and reproductive health and improving family welfare (Unicef, 1997; Maxwell, 1997). The importance of an awareness of changing needs and priorities over life courses is strongly emphasised here. As with much development activity there is a strong concentration on the lives of young people and adults in the reproducitively and economically active group. Projects and research show the common perception of the importance of men's roles in relation to employment and the ability to provide for families. This has become an area of crisis as the structural reform of economies results in the widespread loss of formal-sector jobs. The inability to fulfil such a role may lead to considerable insecurity and frustration, often translated into violence. Economic integration is strongly linked in the literature with the ability to be a good father. Engle (1997) suggests that there are three dimensions of fatherhood: biological, economic and social. Sex and sexuality play a large part in discussions of men and masculinity. Greig (in White 1999) has pointed out that masculinity is deeply implicated in the harm men experience in their own lives and cause in the lives of others. This observation is particularly relevant in the area of HIV transmission.

Imperialism was, from the start, a gendered process. Its first phase, colonial conquest and settlement, was carried out by gender-segregated forces and resulted in massive disruption of indigenous gender orders. In its second phase, the stabilisation of colonial societies, new gender divisions of labour were produced in plantation economies and colonial cities, while gender ideologies were linked with racial hierarchies and the cultural defence of empire. The third phase, marked by political decolonisation, economic neo-colonialism, and the current growth of world markets and systems of financial control, has seen gender divisions of labour remade on a massive scale in the 'global factory', as well as the spread of gendered violence alongside Western military technology. The result of this history is a partially integrated, highly unequal, and turbulent world society, in which gender relations are unevenly linked on a global scale.

The colonial and post-colonial world saw the installation, on a very large scale, of institutions on the North Atlantic model: armies, states, bureaucracies, corporations, capital markets, labour markets, schools, law courts, transport systems. These are gendered institutions, and their functioning has directly reconstituted masculinities in the periphery. This is not necessarily by direct modelling or copying of the gender patterns themselves; it can also occur indirectly, as a result of pressures for change which are inherent in the institutional form. To the extent particular institutions become dominant in world society, the patterns of masculinity embedded in them may become global standards. Masculine dress is an interesting indicator. Almost
every political leader in the world now wears the uniform of the Western business executive. The more
common pattern, however, is not the complete displacement of local patterns but an articulation
between the local gender order and the gender regime of the new institutions.

The world gender order is patriarchal, in the sense that it privileges men over women. There is a
'patriarchal dividend' for men arising from unequal wages, unequal labour-force participation, and a
highly unequal structure of ownership, as well as cultural and sexual privileging.

The conditions of globalisation, which involve the interaction of many local gender orders, multiply the
forms of masculinity in the global gender order. At the same time, the specific shape of globalisation,
concentrating economic and cultural power on an unprecedented scale, provide new resources for
dominance by particular groups of men.

This dominance may become institutionalised in a pattern of masculinity which becomes, to some
degree, standardised across localities. It is among globalising masculinities, rather than narrowly
within the metropole, that we are likely to find candidates for hegemony in the world gender order.

6 The Indian context can be enumerated with an analysis of the scenario concerning gender and
environment. The analysis of Vandana Shiva (1999, 39-71) is a statement of her celebrated
'ecofeminism' critique of development in the context of government policy on forests. Her argument is
that through movements like Chipko, what is reflected is a struggle in Indian society between two
fundamentally different world-views. On the one hand is the life destroying and masculinist perspective
of the commercial forestry system, which treats forests as a resource to be exploited for its monetary
value, and which sets up private property in forest wealth. This perspective has the backing of agencies
of the state, and has also colonised, 'cognitively, economically and politically', the local men. On the
other hand is the feminine life-conserving principle embodied in seeing the forest as a diverse and self-
reproducing system, shared as a commons by a diversity of social groups.

Gabriel Dietrich, (1999,72-95) from her perspective as a political activist in a women's group in
Madurai for fifteen years, takes this argument forward, suggesting that we need to think both in terms
of ecology and culture, and of how these two aspects are linked in terms of feminist politics. The
question then is both to create a mode of production which does not depend on the exploitation of
nature but works in harmony with it, as well as to create a counter-culture which 'arrests both the trends
towards uniformity and towards fragmentation'. While drawing upon the work of Shiva which
establishes the connection between ecological destruction and capitalist growth as a patriarchal project,
Dietrich is troubled by its silence on two crucial questions of culture.

One, Shiva tends to unproblematically take the 'feminine principle' as expressed in upper caste Hindu
terms, which leaves open the question of what this can mean for non-Hindu and lower-caste world-
views. Moreover, given the communalisation of the polity in recent times, Dietrich points to the
possibility of the appropriation of this notion by the Hindu Right.

Two, Shiva is blind caste as a mediating factor in the relationship of class and patriarchy. Dietrich
argues that an ecologically sustaining system is perfectly compatible with a hierarchical and patriarchal
society based on caste division of labour, and that this is in fact what obtained in pre-capitalist Indian
society.

Bina Agarwal's (1999, 96-142) critique of Shiva's analysis points both to its essentialising of 'women'
which bypasses the question of the material rooting of the relationship of men and women to nature,
and to its focus on Western science as the epistemological underpinning of colonialism which is
supposed to have destroyed hitherto democratic forms of community. Agarwal holds that this view
misses out on the pre-colonial forms of power and property relations which were unequal and unjust,
and suggests an alternative framework, which she calls environmental feminism.

7 Vijayan (2002,28-51) sets out the relations between these phenomena in the historical dovetailing of
patriarchal and developmentalist agendas in the post-Independence Indian state. He presents a
distinction between patriarchy as masculine hegemony, and the individual hegemonic forms of
masculinity that constitute that patriarchy. He argues that the rise of Hindutva owes a large debt to
transformations within a general condition of patriarchy as masculine hegemony governing society and culture. These transformations realigned the configuration, and the social and cultural compositions, of local hegemonic masculinities negotiating for dominance in the Indian context.

Significantly, these transformations appear to be predicated upon a socio-philosophical construction by which an (elusive) ultimate form of Hindu hegemonic masculinity is continuously desired, but never quite fully realised. The projection of the Hindu nation as desirable in the utopic sense then validates the notion of struggle, which in turn attempts to justify Hindutva violence (from Brinda, 2002, 82-105).

The transformations in the masculinity of the multiple hegemonies articulated by Hindutva are thus evident in the types of ideal masculinity that are called on to govern each kind of hegemonic exercise. The process of modernisation that should have delegitimised personal laws served, instead, to reinforce them and sanction their gendering. Through the processes of Sanskritisation that it induced and catalysed, modernisation actually served to strengthen masculinist biases, even as it demanded their reorganisation into different but articulated masculine hegemonies, through the deployment of different hegemonic types of masculinity.

It is now possible to see Hindu nationalism as negotiating 'masculinity' in a range between (at least) two registers: the type of the virile warrior addresses the external limits of Hindutva masculinity, while the ideal of the ascetic, stressing control and reticence, addressed internal differences. But it is significant that, in either case, masculinity is always to be acquired since, by definition, the acquiring of one ideal inevitably threatens and negates the other; yet a masculinity, however conceived, is always to be the defining quality of the ideal to be obtained. Even if the emergent social groups of the last two decades did not necessarily project their claims to power in a strident rhetoric of masculinisation, it was not because they were less 'masculinised' (in the sense of less patriarchal) in their claims to power. Rather, it was because they were laying claim to power as a community, as opposed to Hindutva's manoeuvrings aimed at maintaining and reinforcing its existing but threatened patriarchal hegemony. The attempted erasure of the feminine in Hindutva's manoeuvrings – except as a polemical metaphor for unrealised maleness, and even in the face of an aggressive martialisation of women within its more institutional orders – is carefully tailored not to encourage questioning of the existing gender divisions of labour, and to maintain, in practice, the subjection of women to male authority within the community. It indicates precisely the hegemonic nature of the masculinities of Hindutva – as operating through consent as much as through force – as well as highlights the extent to which the specific conception of masculinity here is addressed to the whole community, including its women, rather than to its men alone. In fact, the martialisation of its women seems to serve, if anything, to enhance the masculinity of the men they consent to subject themselves to.

Hindu nationalism's projection of the Hindu nation as Utopia (rather than as differently or partially realised with each gain in political power) at one level dovetails innocuously with the existing hegemonic discourses of development and the desire for progress. Its deeper and longer-term exertions, however, are towards the deliberate insertion of its own agendas within this developmentalist framework of discourses and policies, as the agendas of and for the nation, and desired by the nation. It is this that allows real and pressing issues of governance and redistribution to be compromised in favour of projecting issues such as 'political stability' and nuclearisation as crying needs, and religious conversions as a pressing crisis, and therefore demanding of precedence. Welfare programmes, particularly those affecting rural development such as the subsidised public distribution system, were, and are, being rolled back with a vengeance, resulting in an already perceptible increase in overall income level disparities. There has nevertheless been a concomitant increase in the social display of wealth, and of conspicuous consumption, and not just in urban areas. This consumption becomes an index both for social power and for 'progress' and advancement. The desire for personal satisfaction through consumption is thus mapped on to the desire for the future, advanced nation, the signs of which are ceaselessly generated and displayed by the advertising industry that incites much of this desire in the first place. In such disparate conditions of access to the market, it is very easy for generated 'needs' to solicit consent to and investment in the new imaginary of the nation, and more importantly in the economic policies that promise to deliver it. This further expands the hegemonic power of Hindutva's brand of 'swadeshi', along with the idea of stability, and its effectiveness as an instrument against dissent or resistance to Hindutva's political hegemony. The masculine 'loaded dice' of this phenomenon are not so difficult to identify.
Here I focus on contemporary trends as seen in the print media. The 2001 *Outlook* on Indian men point out and question: Why do Indian Men make lousy lovers? He’s an ogler, he’s a Neanderthal, He’s a mama’s boy, he’s a cheat – and he’s got a problem in his head. He sleeps like a baby. The cover story further points out an odd admixture of mama – fixation and macho-posturing makes the Indian male a lousy lover. The Indian man thinks love is sex, and sex only. He is insecure about women he loves or seeks. According to a harried housewife, the Indian male is a sexual lover. Prtitsh Nandy points out that like sexual performance, marital performance also improves with a touch of insouciance and a lot more of laughter.

The 2001 *Gentleman* undertakes an intellectual journey towards Understanding Indian Masculinity with contributions from Mangesh Kulkarni, Vijay Nagaswami, Sudhir Kakar, Minoo Gracias and Ashley Tellis in the arenas of reconstructing Indian masculinities, male empowerment from thinking to feeling, the maternal-feminine in Indian psychoanalysis, case notes from a therapist’s diary and being gay in India. The interesting interface concerns on crisis of masculinity and pointers are: Men are now really at the crossroads. Patriarchy has not been completely overthrown. But its justification is in disarray. Men are being seen as emotionally crippled and biologically redundant. With women able to do everything men can do, the masculine role as provider has been seriously undermined. There’s no doubt the phallic man is going to die. Sooner or later. The question is who is going to take his place? Gender is a category that is used quite freely by academicians nowadays but it is a category that came out of feminist studies. These categories did not emerge out of a void. They emerged out of the women’s movement. Now, fantasies concerning breasts and wrestlers’ bodies have been written about. But basically these things revolve around the idea of creativity, love and power. Now, are these getting mixed up? There’s a whole complex world where the man might actually enjoy being brow-beaten and playing that role in the family and the woman might actually enjoy playing the role that she’s even unconsciously playing in the family. In any creative individual involved in the intellectual life, in women especially, there is a process of degendering which they go through. If there is any definition of masculinity, then it would need to take into account historical materiality. At a certain point in time there was a certain kind of men’s ideals. Many people think that gender is a kind of performance. Because if a man behaves in a feminine way it’s a man behaving in a feminine way, likewise in the case of a woman. But could we, for a moment, think in terms of a masculine tendency. How does a person react? An essentialist construction of feminine identity is very problematic and a lot of feminists have argued against it and critiqued it. Can it be imagined that a man would feel a sense of achievement and success by simply being a good parent or father, simply by being there for his wife’s emotions, being there as a container for her emotions and whatever else he can contribute to her life, to his children’s life? Can that be the end-all of his sense of measure of achieving success?

*Outlook* revisits its search in its special bumper issue in 2002 on the Indian Male. Men believe they are hung without a fair trial and that these are somewhat lopsided views – for men are just as multifaceted, vulnerable, frightened and complicated as their female counterparts. Clearly, it’s not easy to shed centuries of hegemony and transform overnight into the kind of men women seek.

The struggle is on as men strive to deal with the challenges and complexities of 21st century living, within a unique Indian idiom. To understand men is to first understand the meaning of power, for the notion of power and vocation are the central metaphors dominating male psyche. Every kind of power that they seek – political, financial, sexual or intellectual – is what they describe as their definitive characteristic, their reason for existence. Men readily agree they feel masculine only when they are seen to have the ability to make things happen or when they are seen as being in charge, exerting control over society, events and of course, women.

Willy-nilly, then, men are condemned to measuring themselves by standards outside of themselves. It’s still a man’s world out there where acceptance, validation and respect from men who are seen as the wielders of power, the arbitrators of what is real, is what matters. Celebrating masculinity is one thing, living it another. And now here are men more caught in the crossfire than when dealing with women – the Indian woman....who has matured and flourished....who is demanding and vociferous....who now refuses to buckle to mother-in-law, father-in-law or society.
As men get caught between duty and desire, marriages become a microcosm of Indian society for within them one sees the trails and tribulations of generations past and present, all attempting to bridge differences in the quest for a more fulfilled existence. Subordinating one’s individual needs to the interests of family is a unique Indian virtue so men see no hypocrisy in the fact that while they date, jive and party till the wee hours, they marry the girl carefully screened by Mom.

But men are also changing – too slowly for most, but changing just the same. As traditional macho role models become unacceptable, men themselves seek to express their manhood in more practical, down-to-earth ways. Nowhere is it more obvious than in the way they interact with their children. Media reflects these changes too. So however much one tries, men keep trying to find ways to guard their preserve, to maintain in some measure their status quo. How then can men survive in this changing social order? Is there an agenda that will make them less sexist and more real men – men who share in a more equitable society? There is today no doubt a dynamism, an openness that celebrates life and the liberties that a changing world has brought. But confronting change requires maturity, embracing it courage. To make these transitions, it requires a man to become a prodigal seeking himself.

These transformations are particularly difficult for Indian men, by definition seen as being Parmeshwar. To have the scriptures and the Manu Smriti, which put him only next to divinity, questioned must be tough. It must also be hard to accept that they are neither biologically more intelligent nor stronger than women; that male superiority was just a myth after all. Given all this, who would want to be a man in today’s world?

Maybe, but change they must or become mere masculine caricatures. Compromises are being made, albeit small – one less sabzi on the dinner table, a little more communication, a wee bit more attention when an opinion is expressed. It’s early days yet. Indian men are still in the nursery classes of learning to be men. Any paths they travel have to be journeys of self-discovery, painful maybe, but liberating as they try to unravel the social processes that influence our lives. So will we ever be in a position to understand men?

10 July 20, 2003 The Times of India proclaims: Beckham’s boys are right here. Boys and men moisturise your masculinity. The urban man is going all out to exhibit his softer, more feminine side. He’s shopping for glow-packs, face-scrubs, jewellery, embroidered kurtis and sarongs. And he’s happy changing nappies and cooking pasta for his wife. The metrosexual man has arrived in India: soft, stylish and sexy. Here’s how machoism is getting manicured. David Beckham, the ultimate metrosexual icon who has defied manly expectations like what men should wear and how they should behave, is rewriting the rules for the Indian man as well. The coronation continues in 23 July, 2003. The Times of India report which noted “All Hail The Metrosexual”. 5 September, 2003 The Times of India reports and profiles “Delhi’s Most-Wanted Metrosexuals” and defines: If he is crazy about games, gadgets and girls, he also cares about food, fashion and flowers. The gender lines are blurring and its suddenly become not just acceptable, but stylish, for men to wield the cooking ladle, the pack of exfoliating cream and, yes, let the tears flow in public. Delhi Times gets up, close and personal with a few good metrosexual men, who are suave without being sissy. “The attitudinal shift in society allows men to do what they want today,” says fashion designer Rohit Bal, who is often called ‘the ultimate metrosexual’. Like sporting sindoor, you wonder. Bal had his models sport sindoor and kajal at the Lakme India Fashion Week.

11 But the first overt exploration of metrosexuality on the silver screen happened in Mango Souffle, claims director Mahesh Dattani. “It is the natural outcome of the post-feminist era,” says Dattani. “Gender equations have become more fluid. Today you don’t have to sport trousers or short hair to show you are feminist. You can be married, wear saris and still be a feminist.” Dattani feels metrosexuality will also evolve in a similar way.

12 To begin with we might make a distinction here: ‘cinema’, as a form of public culture, is not necessarily the same thing as ‘film’ (since a cinema-hall is now only one of several places where a film or its fragments might manifest themselves). The question of ‘film’ opens out in three intimately
related directions: as a technology, as a commodity and lastly, as implicated within diverse modes of sociality. The first two nodes can be said to have a certain logic to them, while the last as a form of experience is perhaps the hardest to grasp. Each has its own politics.

A different set of problems confronts us as we move to the third opening within the 'personal' that I want to outline here, approaching what Michel Foucault has called 'techniques of the self'. There is a peculiar problem when we approach the sublime, almost inexpressible dimension of 'experience', since inasmuch as 'cinema' is the object of investigation here, we are equally exploring ourselves.

In the context of this emergent approach, let us reiterate the kind of move that is being addressed i.e., the 'problem' we are trying to pose for writing on cinema in India. While drawing upon forms of analysis which consider questions of 'textual' address and relational/possible subject positions (in terms of a 'look' or a 'gaze') there is a somewhat different impetus here in trying to move away from the purely interpretative stance that those engagements invariably involve. Instead of revelling purely in the mastery of the film writer as an adept 'reader' of cinematic 'texts', we hope to multiply and alter the set of questions as anthropological/historical (or philosophical?) ones in order to ask: how have people spoken about and lived with the cinema? Since inasmuch as people produce cinema, a cinema can produce them. And this is perhaps the most crucial question of all in understanding the place of cinema in India.

In addressing the complexities of these various circulations we might also learn from people 'within' the apparatus of film, broadly conceived, in order to understand the kinds of knowledge they generate and draw upon in their diverse localities and positions. It is within these subjective perspectives that we might be able to trace a deeper relationship between the cinematic and the social.

13 The March/April 2003 issue of Spain has a cover story on Bollywood Meets Hollywood written by Mahesh Bhatt. The May 12, 2003 issue of Outlook boasts of a cover story entitled The Bollywood Special covering surveys on the top ten Hindi films, the sexiest heroine, best actor, favourite villain, best actress, worst ever actor, funniest style, whether Govinda is a genius. May 12, 2003 issue of India Today heralds Aishwarya Rai as Global Goddess in the cover proclaiming that the Bollywood beauty looks set to be the first crossover star. September 28, 2003 issue of The Week comes up a cover story on Bold New Breed noting that urban India is being seduced by a passionate crop of young actors and directors. September 29, 2003 issue of India Today heralds Brave New Bollywood on its cover signalling a new generation of actors, directors and producers who redefines Hindi Cinema with niche audiences and many new multiplex screens. Aroon Purie in his editorial column to the 2004 Bollywood Special issue of India Today writes: Like the country, Bollywood too is turning young. Youth have emerged as the new power as the air of experimentation gains ground. Multiplexes have multiplied and with them so have small budget movies. The net result: opportunities are coming the way of newcomers faster than ever before. A whole new generation of actors, directors and writers is being born. These are first generation Bollywoodians, from outside Mumbai, from the world of glamour, advertising, sometimes even marketing. If films are like any other industry, these young men and women are the worker bees. Only, their responsibility has increased tenfold. Their movies, thanks to the media explosion, now have a broader impact – on social attitudes, fashion, what we listen to, what we say. Films find their way into social discourse and into political debate. What makes these youngsters tap into the zeitgeist? What makes them create entertainment that resonates with people of this varied country? Guest columnist Amitabh Bachchan says, “It is very easy to succumb to the enthusiasm of this young breed.” September 3, 2004 edition of The Times of India reports: Bollystan: The Brits have launched a new magazine celebrating Bollywood’s global appeal. Aishwarya adorns the cover of the glossy that promises to lift the covers off this newly-networked nationless state. Delhi Times defines this culture without a country, this nation-in-the-heart. ...
Spidey, in this sequel, is not actually the old-fashioned hero. He is losing his power. High rises. His skyscraper swings end in debacle and he even ends up trashing his spider suit.

A fact that is established from the very first who would deliver a pizza, despite his spiderman act, and is fired from his job as a pizza delivery driver. That’s just the beginning of his woes. He is threatened by his slumlord, lives in a crappy apartment with a common bathroom, is chewed out by his physics professor and discarded by his girlfriend Mary Jane (Kirsten Dunst) for a dashing astronaut. And if that’s not enough, he washes his clothes at the laundromat and the colours run. Enough! Shrugs Parker and turns his back to his Spiderman

he wants is to lead a normal life, with girlfriend MJ and Aunt May...

Not so easy, buddy. The world needs a hero. Specially when a scientist turns megalomaniac and wants to rule the universe with his four mechanical tentacles. Yup, Doc Ock (Alfred Molina) manages to transform Peter Parker into Spider-man again. But the film, despite its dramatic encounters isn’t actually a conflict between hero and bad guy. It is a great coming-of-age movie where the message is simple: you gotta give up something to be good, great and noble.