CHAPTER 6

FILM ANALYSIS:

THE 2000s

The new millennium saw an emergence of new themes and new plots in the Hindi film industry. A twist in the tale happened when there was a resurgence of the parallel cinema, a genre that was thought to have reached its extinction in the previous decade.


Hindi movies became globally known and making their entries in various International Film Festivals have now became a common trend. *Lagaan* (2001) was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 74th Academy Awards and won the Audience Award at the Locarno International Film Festival. Similarly, *Devdas* (2002) and *Rang De Basanti* (2006) were nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

New entries of a fresh batch of actors, both male and female, came pouring into the Hindi film industry including Kangana Ranaut, Hritik Roshan, Ranbir Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, Abhishek Bachchan, Amisha Patel, Abhay Deol, Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone, Sonam Kapoor, and Anushka Sharma.

Global cinema was calling onto the Hindi cinema to join hands. After several decades mainstream Hindi cinema caught the fancy of International audience. Global markets were now demanding Hindi movies to be distributed in over 90 countries. So much so that *Road Movie* (2010) by Dev Benegal was sold for international distribution before it was even sold in India.
The quality of filmmaking improved immensely in terms of acting, editing, lighting, special effects, cinematography, storyline, and content. Earlier the movies were made by keeping in mind the Indian audience but now filmmakers were also thinking about the international markets and their prospective foreign audiences.

Many old production studios including Yash Raj Films and Dharma Productions gave themselves a makeover to fit into the new and young cinema goers’ preferences. Many foreign companies either set up their offices in India or entered into partnerships with the existing production houses of India including Time Warner, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, Fox Searchlight, and Disney.

**Film Analysis**

**MONSOON WEDDING**

Mira Nair’s *Monsoon Wedding* was released in 2001 and just like the monsoon rains that temper Delhi’s summer heat, the movie also gives subtle surprises throughout. Though the movie holds a wedding as the main event, small episodes of events related to the lives of all the family members came to the fore every now and then.

This movie is a comedy of manners but in an Indian style. The movie is an interplay between tradition and modern culture. It subtly portrayed the differences between the North Indians and Bengali culture by showing the families coming together to evolve into a completely new relationship. However, the movie was started with a few caricatures that could be seen around our daily life with cartoony strokes to them but gradually they evolved into the real people that one can easily relate with.

Moreover, the technique of the handheld camerawork adds a layer of realism to the movie that easily connects the viewer to the family. Thus, the five intertwined love stories that ended with a wedding amid the monsoon are dealt with unbelievable skill.

The setting of a wedding with all its functions and decorations were quite realistic. The characters of a father worrying about the expenditure in the wedding, Lalit Verma (Naseeruddin Shah) and the anxiously nervous mother who tried to make everyone comfortable as a host, Pimmi Verma (Lillete Dubey) were seen as the people one usually sees around the neighbourhood. They were such a realistic couple that from the very first scene in the movie the audience got connected to them.
The cousin of the bride, Ria (Shefali Shah) was an unmarried girl and the relatives were often concerned for her as the bride, Aditi (Vasundhara Das) was a few years younger to her and the ladies of the family wanted Ria to get married soon before she is past her marriageable age. During the engagement ceremony of Aditi, a female relative asked Ria, “Tumhara mann nahi karta shadi karne ko?” exhibiting the typical mind set of people thinking that a woman is not complete without a husband and that there is a particular age up to which a girl must get married.

Another startling dialogue of the movie that showed how Indian society looks at women was the one when Lalit confided in one of his friends that he was having some monetary issues and another friend simply spoke, “Haan bhaiyya, beti ki shaadi mein aisa hi hota hai” and the other one exclaimed, “Thank God I don’t have any daughters yaar, nahim to meri to band baji jaati.”

The director depicted how is the mentality of people regarding daughters. They look at them as some kind of a burden and their wedding is regarded as a strained responsibility put on the parents. This is also one of the major reasons why female foeticide is higher in our country. And it is not only prominent in the lower classes but also in the middle and upper classes as well. In the movie, Lalit Verma was a respected member of the society who belonged to the upper middle class, had lakhs of money to spend on his daughter’s wedding and played golf with his friends. But still his friends had a mentality that showed they preferred boys over girls when it came to their children.

A typical nature of a mother is projected through Pimmi’s character where she was showing sarees and other things to her husband declaring that she was collecting all
those things since her daughter’s childhood to one day give all of them as a dowry at her wedding.

The characters were woven in such a realistic manner that we could easily identify people from around us that resembled them.

There was another character of Varun Verma (Ishaan Nair) who was the younger brother of Aditi and wanted to become a chef. Lalit was unhappy of his choice and was keen on sending him to a boarding school because according to him he behaved in a feminine manner by wanting to cook and happily dancing in weddings. He thought that in a boarding school boys of his age would inspire him to make more masculine choices in life.

It showed how certain professions and activities are labelled as masculine and the others as feminine. Now when we are in the twenty first century still we are holding to an age old mentality where we do not look at both the genders on the same plain rather we judge others on the basis of their choices and often condemn them as well. Lalit was not satisfied with his son who did not behave like a conventional boy who would play sports and dream of becoming a doctor or an engineer. For Varun, what gave him pleasure was what all he wanted to do in life.

Moreover, Aditi was also somewhat like her brother when it comes to making choices. Though she was in love with a married man, she chose to marry Hemant (Parvin Dabas) because she could not wait any longer for his lover to divorce his wife. It was only a convenient choice that she made by choosing to have an arranged marriage. And though it was a foolish act of hers that she did not break up with her lover at first, it was still a bold enough step for her to tell the truth to Hemant in order to start a relationship with truth and honesty. A positive character was clearly depicted through this action.

The movie was not only about love, lies, and weddings it also dealt with some of the serious issues our society is facing like child abuse. It showed how courageous a woman can be when it comes to the safety of others. Ria was being molested in her childhood and did not speak about it to anyone but when she saw that her uncle Tej (Rajat Kapoor) had taken hold of his new victim, Aliya (Kemaya Kidwai) who was just in her early teens, she could not stop herself from taking off Tej’s humanitarian mask from his face revealing the ugly soul that was hidden within. Her courage
saved a young girl’s life and made her confident to face the world with new inspiration.

Family is not about blood relations and performing the duties to fulfil each other’s basic needs, it is much more than that. Family is about loving, caring, and forgiving each other. Family is about supporting in bad times and keeping secrets of one another. Family is about boosting one’s morale and being there in hard times. The movie clearly depicted all these nuances through the characterisation of all the cast of the movie.

**PHIR MILENGE**

Revathi made a movie *Phir Milenge* (2004) that dealt with a serious topic of AIDS. The movie had a female protagonist *Tamanna Sahni* (Shilpa Shetty) who was shown to be working in a popular advertising agency. She was not only a dedicated worker at the company but was also one of the most famous one as well.

The movie depicted a successful woman who was good at her job and her personal life both. *Tamanna’s sister Tanya* (Kamalinee Mukherjee) was seen as a popular radio jockey. Hence, the movie focused on not one but two empowered women.

![Tamanna and Tanya](image)

The director did not only showed the love life or the romances of the women in the film, in fact the film dealt with a very serious topic of AIDS in the film. This was one of the earliest films in Hindi cinema that dealt with the subject of AIDS.

Though the movie had commercial actors playing the lead roles still the treatment of the movie was more of a parallel one. The movie had dialogues in Hindi and English both. However, after the 90s the term parallel cinema was hardly used for Hindi
movies, it was more talked about as an off-beat film. Hence, *Phir Milenge* was an off-beat film that had the traits of both a commercial and a parallel movie.

Actor Salman Khan who played the role of Rohit in the movie said the film was a mixture of both parallel and commercial Hindi cinema that had a message and star value attached to the movie. He further added, “This film is like a slap on the face of those who think that parallel cinema and commercial cinema are different, that parallel cinema is something that nobody watches. This film is a commercial film of that genre, which is brilliant. If you want to give a message your theatres should be full, if you want to make money then also your theatres should be full. This film has done both.”

The storyline dealt with how *Tamanna* became an HIV positive patient and then how unjustly her employer fired her from the job stating that she was incompetent in her work when on the contrary the reason was only because of her medical condition.

She hired a lawyer *Tarun Anand* (Abhishek Bachchan) who had the typical misconceptions about the disease that were clarified in the movie itself only spread awareness to the audience.

*Tamanna* was seen as a determined woman who had decided to fight for her right and thus was ready not to lose hope in life. She had seen death from a very close sight and still only because of her younger sister she thought to live just like before and make her life normal like it was earlier.

She was a workaholic by choice because as she said in the movie, “*My professional life was my personal life. That was my only life.*”

A strong headed character who was willing to fight with her employer to get justice and to show the world that she was not weak to forego all that she had struggled for in her life just like that. Of course there were some men in her life who helped her as well, one of them was *Advocate Anand* but it was only *Tamanna’s* will power that kept her going even only after having such a traumatic experience with her disease.

The movie depicted the hypocritical work culture in the Indian scenario. *Phir Milenge* was not only a sensitive handling of such a delicate subject but was also a milestone in the Hindi cinema that not only aware the audiences about such an

important issue but showed an empowered woman in the Indian culture and how her struggle inspired so many of the Indian female audiences.

Such a strong female character that was set up in the Indian work culture was rarely seen in the Hindi movies before this film. Shilpa Shetty had done justice to the role of Tamanna and she was critically appreciated and applauded for her realistic depiction of the character who did not fall apart because of the social stigma related to the disease she was suffering with.

**15 PARK AVENUE**

Aparna Sen’s *15 Park Avenue* (2005) dealt with a story of two sisters, Anjali or Anu (Shabana Azmi) and Mitali or Meethi (Konkona Sen Sharma) and their struggle to survive through realistic and delusional support respectively.

While Anu was shown to be a professor of physics and a practical woman, soon after a few minutes one could see the paradox in her character. She was emotionally attached to her younger sister Meethi who was a schizophrenic and lived in the home. Their ageing mother Mrs. Gupta (Waheeda Rehman) was also seen disturbed by the condition of both her daughters as one was suffering from a psychological illness and the other was deprived of happiness because all she could think was about her sister and her well-being. Though there were many commercial Hindi films that focused on the psychological illnesses of humans in the past several years that included Rakesh Roshan’s *Koi...Mil Gaya* (2003), Harry Baweja’s *Main Aisa Hi Hoon* (2005), and Priyadarshan’s *Kyon Ki?* (2005) but Sen’s idea of depicting a movie on illness was not mended around a few songs or wanted the audience to have pity for the sufferer. Rather it demanded the audience to empathise with Meethi and vicariously undergo the emotional stress that Anu was going through. And the movie beautifully and artfully achieved what it was meant for.
Though it was explained in the movie that Meethi was a loner during her childhood as well, it was only during her 20s when she got an assignment at work that led her to be gang raped by some political goons that worsened her condition and pushed her into her schizophrenic world forever.

Meethi had completely lost her connection to the real world after the traumatic incident. It was even aggravated when her fiancé Joydeep (Rahul Bose) left her because he was unable to deal with her condition anymore. In response to all the misfortunes she had face, she created an imaginary world of her own where she was married to Joydeep whom she dearly called Jojo, had five children, and lived at 15 Park Avenue, Kolkata. She was living in a delusion that her family was holding her back and did not want her to live with her family.

Though Meethi was suffering from an illness, she was determined to unite back with her family someday. This hope was her inspiration to carry on her life forward otherwise perhaps she would have succumbed to severe depression or even death for that matter.

The movie portrayed male chauvinism at its worst by depicting the incident where male goons raped an innocent girl and once a loving boyfriend abandoned her fiancé because he did not want to have a relationship with a psychologically ailing patient. But still the director never radically announced in the film that all men came under the shadows of these handful of characters. She beautifully showed the objectivity and non-judgmental portrayal of the shortcomings of a few men depicted through some of the characters in the movie.

The director also played with the emotion of guilt through depicting almost all the characters suffering from it. Anu, Joydeep, and Mrs. Gupta all were having guilt for one reason or the other in the movie. It was a predominant emotion that lingered throughout the background of the movie. Another scenario that could be seen in the background of the movie was the tale of reality, illusion, and the thin line between these two.

When Anu once explained Meethi that she was only imagining things, Meethi retorted back by saying, “How would you like if I told you’re not a professor only imagining it?” the thought was further carried on into discussions between the
characters that explored the differences between what was reality and what was only an illusion.

Mrs. Gupta was however dealing with her ageing and the loss of control over everything while coping with Meethi’s situation. And Anu, though mature enough to take control of her own life, was determined to be able to take full responsibility of her ailing sister and old mother. She even rejected a proposal made to her by her colleague Sanjeev (Kanwaljit Singh) because she was well aware of the fact that her life was full of commas and full stops at various positions and she would not be able to escape leaving all of this behind her only to please herself or even to take a break from this tiresome life.

The ending of the movie, however, was something that was completely unexpected. The desperation of Meethi for finding her imaginary world was at its peak and she finally found her home and went towards it leaving the real world and its people forever. The director though left the challenge to the audience to make up the ending themselves, but it was more confusing than interesting. It could well be comprehended in a way that Meethi was lost in her delusions and was either dead or killed finally reaching her destination of the parallel world she had made up for herself and left the actual world confused and guilty just as the humans have always been.

**DOR**

Nagesh Kukunoor’s *Dor* (2006) which was set in a Rajasthani backdrop, was an inspiration for all those women who are trapped in meaningless traditions of the society. The two protagonists of the movie, *Meera* (Ayesha Takia) and *Zeenat* (Gul
were juxtaposed to one another with Zeenat being a confident and independent woman, courageous enough to challenge her fate and Meera being the other extreme who seemed to have accepted her destiny living like a lifeless woman with no colours of joy in her life.

The movie basically dealt with a story comprising of two women and their different lives. Though both the lives were somehow linked still they were completely different from one another.

Meera, a widow stuck in the age-old customs of the society, lived confined to the premises of her house, deprived of all the joys and happiness, with her only outlet a daily visit to the temple. The character was a true representation of many women in the Indian society who neither have voices of their own nor are they supposed to have opinions. A woman lives initially by the rules of her father and brothers, then by the dictates of a husband and in the last phase of her life according to the will of her son.

In Meera’s case, the purpose of her life – her husband was dead. This was enough to make her undeserving of even the little joys of life – a dress of her choice, food of her choice, or stepping out of the house at will. Meera is just like the majority of the women in our country, bound by societal rules and trapped in one’s own emotional restrictions. An interface with an independent woman like Zeenat, however, made Meera realize her true worth.

Meera bonding with Zeenat

Zeenat was seen as a rebel who got married without the consent of her parents and lived with her husband independently. She was seen as the exact opposite of Meera. She was a woman who lived by her own rules, not letting others dictate to her. She
did not just come across as an inspiration to *Meera* but to women of the country as well, who formed the audience of the acclaimed film.

It not only focused the culture of a particular region but also showed how it treated its women when she did not have a male companion. *Meera’s* father-in-law was seen as the head of the family and after the death of *Meera’s* husband he treated her not more than an object in his house. So much so that he traded her honour for the sake of his mansion without even consulting with any of the females in his house.

It simply showed how males of a family never consider females to be their equal and could easily decide their fates thinking themselves to be responsible enough to take care of everything related to their property that includes women as well.

Our society needs women who can take control of their own fates, who can be independent enough to fight for their love. When it comes to the differences in behaviour, cognition, and personality, it is observed that males and females are more alike than different. The differences are mainly due to the socialisation rather than innate biological (for example, genes, hormones) influences.

*Zeenat* influenced *Meera* in a positive way. She made her feel how a woman must enjoy her life that is given to her only once and the pointlessness of patriarchal customs that treat women as dispensable and less than human. Though the movie showed how *Meera* was holding the string (*Dor*) of *Zeenat’s* hope still *Zeenat* did not back out and her belief in love and friendship gave her the eternal happiness and a friend for life, that is, *Meera*.

The movie ends with a hope of a once suppressed woman risen up to challenge the obsolete norms of society. What *Meera* went through was the liberation of mind and psychology. The psychological well-being is mainly challenged when we live by controlling our just desires.

The filmmaker gave total liberty on the screen to its female protagonists. They had more dialogues than any of the male characters of the film. Though the subject of the storyline was the freedom of a male but the movie was further proceeded with the involvement of females only.
DIL CHAHTA HAI

Farhan Akhtar made his directorial debut with the fresh urban setting comedy drama film *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001). The movie talked about three friends Akash (Amir Khan), Sameer (Saif Ali Khan), and Siddharth aka Sid (Akshaye Khanna) and their ups and downs in life.

The movie basically dealt the friendship and conflicts of the three protagonists of the movie. There are female characters as well in the movie but they do not have much role in the film. They are only used to support the main leads and throw light on the characterisation and development of the three male actors.

One of the vital observation is that the promotional posters and the DVD covers have mostly the male leads on it. The females are nowhere to be seen on them. And if there are any females on the cover, they are not given much space and importance on the posters. This can simply be seen as a male bias by highlighting the male protagonists for promotional techniques.

![Famous promotional posters of Dil Chahta Hai](image)

Many critics said the film was one of the most realistic depictions of today’s youth in the country and others said that it was the beginning of a new generation of Bollywood films. The narrative style of the movie was more of western kind but the
sensibilities were Indian, or to be precise – urban Indian. The setting of the movie was urban but to an extent quite realistic, upper class but relatable by the audiences.

But if we look closely into it, we could not see the female leads having been portrayed as a fresh new urban avatar like the male ones in the film. Shalini (Preity Zinta) was shown as smart, graceful, independent girl who travelled alone from India to Sydney to meet her uncle (Rajat Kapoor) and was confident enough to befriend Akash whom her fiancé Rohit (Ayub Khan) forbid to meet with.

Despite of all these facts, Shalini was seen as a traditional Indian girl who was ready to sacrifice all her happiness in order to repay the debt of Rohit’s family by marrying him even though she loved Akash. She was seen as a timid person in front of the aggressive Rohit. Her belonging to the upper class or being an educated girl had nothing to do with her personal decisions which is quite surprising.

Juxtaposition to her character, Akash was smarter and braver than her when it came to deciding for his future with Shalini. He confidently went to Rohit’s place and proposed to Shalini in front of more than 200 guests without thinking about the consequences. He was determined to marry the love of his life while Shalini on the other hand seemed helpless and dependent upon Rohit’s family’s decision till the end.

The character of Pooja was also weakly portrayed by showing her having a relationship with Subodh (Azad Dadarkar) who was simply a bore. She was not aware of what she had decided for herself before meeting Sameer. She did not have much of a screen time in the movie. Hers is the shortest part when compared to the other two female leads in the movie.

She did not make her decision to get married in the first place. Pooja was forced to meet Sameer by her parents though she was secretly seeing someone else. And once she ended her relationship with Subodh, it was Sameer who took their friendship to another level.

Then there was the divorcée Tara Jaiswal (Dimple Kapadia). She was the most mature female amongst the three of the female leads, probably because of her age or because of her painful life experience. She was an alcoholic and befriended Sid who was her neighbour. Little did she know that Sid was actually falling in love with her.
Though she was an independent interior designer who have her life in control, one thing that she was not able to control was Sid’s feelings for her. When she overheard him talking to his mother about his feelings for Tara, she forcibly shut him out of her life.

Though the tuning of Tara and Sid was really charming, the audience could simply wish for this relationship to work for some reason. But Tara was stuck up in the conventional traditions of the Indian society where older women are not meant to marry young men, especially when they are divorced and had a child. The same thought persisted in Tara’s mind and she asked Sid never to meet her again. However, she was the strongest of the two other female characters in the movie but one could simply see how it ended.

Hence, Farhan could have made some exceptions in his movie or could have made the female characters stronger as well just like the male characters in the movie but unfortunately this was not the case. To avoid any kind of a controversy in the commercial cinema he put his characters simpler and fresher only from a patriarchal point of view, never thinking about the females on the same line.

MUNNA BHAI MBBS

The movie Munna Bhai MBBS was the directorial debut of Rajkumar Hirani who made his mark in the foray of a new age satire in the Hindi film industry. This movie was basically a take on the medical system of our country and pointed out some of the major flaws in it. However, the movie was loosely inspired from Robin Williams starrer Patch Adams (1998) but the screenplay and treatment of the movie was completely new with regard to the Hindi cinema.

The movie depicts the life and adventures of Murli Prasad Sharma aka Munna Bhai (Sanjay Dutt). He is a Mumbai goon and the movie showed how he went to a medical college to become a doctor in order to marry the girl his father had chosen for him. He was unaware of the fact that the same girl was working as a doctor in the medical college but he knew that the dean of the college was Dr. J. Asthana (Boman Irani) who was the father of the girl, Chinky (Gracy Singh).
The movie was a comic satire on the pitfall of the medical system in our country and how \textit{Munna Bhai} tried to solve certain problems with the help of his goon friends and uneducated mind.

\textit{Munna Bhai} did not know that \textit{Dr. Suman} who was working in the college was actually \textit{Chinky}, the girl he was determined to marry. \textit{Suman} took advantage of this fact and tried to change \textit{Munna's} mind so that her father could be relieved of thinking that one day a Mumbai thug would marry his daughter.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{munna_bhai_with_dr_suman}
\caption{Munna Bhai with Dr. Suman}
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In order to do that \textit{Suman} asked one of her friends (Neha Dubey) to pretend to be \textit{Chinky} and change \textit{Munna's} mind. \textit{Suman's} friend asked \textit{Munna} to meet at a night club where she was seen scantily dressed, drinking alcohol, and dancing with other boys with ease. \textit{Munna} though a hooligan dreamt of her wife to be a conventional Indian girl and thinking \textit{Suman's} friend to be \textit{Chinky} was more than disappointed.

This showed how men imagined their wives to be. \textit{Munna} wanted \textit{Chinky} to dress gracefully in covered clothing and could not imagine her drinking and dancing with strange men in a club.

It is automatically assumed that if a girl drinks alcohol, dances, and minglees with the opposite sex she must not be a good woman and would not have good values instilled. Unconsciously we still have the mentality that western culture is inferior to the Indian traditional culture. We can never admit that even if a girl has western values she could be a good wife.

The movie had many comic sequences and some serious episodes as well but it was completely focused on \textit{Munna Bhai} and \textit{Dr. Asthana}. \textit{Suman} was only included in
the movie for dramatic effect and for a romantic angle. She could easily have been absent from a scene and no one would miss her. Everyone was anxious to see what Munna would do next to infuriate Dr. Asthana.

Munna irritating Dr. Asthana

The movie was not at all derogatory to women but it did not give any kind of importance to the womankind as well. Suman was an independent woman working as a doctor in one of the most prestigious medical colleges of Mumbai still she was at first being told to marry the man his father had chosen for her and later on was told to shoo him away. No one, not even her father asked Suman if she wanted or not to get married to the person.

Even Munna’s mother Parvati (Rohini Hattangadi) was seen as a conventional Indian wife who was supposed to follow her husband Hari Prasad Sharma’s (Sunil Dutt) orders no matter what. She wanted to stay with her son but her husband asked her to leave and she blindly followed him.

Though the movie was a directorial venture of a new filmmaker in town who was 38 years at the time of the movie, it could well be expected to find some fresh and innovative filmmaking skills. The movie did not start any new trend in film making as such when it comes to the representation of females in Hindi cinema. Of course the movie gave us a refreshing story with some of the very good performances and forgettable characters, still when it comes to the portrayal of women in the movie it gave us the same old depiction where modern girls are seen as bad and traditional girls are looked upon as ideal for any Indian man.
OM SHANTI OM

Farah Khan’s *Om Shanti Om* (2007) was a huge hit at the box office and was one of the most successful films of 2007. Though the title of the movie was taken from a song of the 1980 film *Karz*, still it clearly suggests how the male protagonist is stealing the limelight by having his name twice in the title, that is, “Om”. The movie showed how a successful Hindi film actor was weak and submissive when it comes to her married life. Though she was a confident and professional woman but when in distress Om, a man, helped her out. The movie though directed by a woman, shows the age old concept of portraying a damsel in distress rescued by a dauntless hero.

The movie showed the injustice done to a woman by her husband and how a man got caught in the ominous circumstances along with her. *Shanti Priya* (Deepika Padukone) was a popular film actor and was secretly married to a film producer *Mukesh Mehra* (Arjun Rampal). Moreover, a junior artist *Om Prakash Makhija* (Shahrukh Khan) was head over heels in love with *Shanti* but knew that it would always remain a dream for him until one day on a film set *Om* bravely jumped into the fire and saved *Shanti’s* life. Another clichéd situation to depict a damsel in distress saved by the fearless and brave hero. After the incident, *Shanti* thought she was indebted to *Om* and stretched out her hand for friendship.

*Om rescuing Shanti from the fire*

*Om* was happy that at least in this way he could be close to *Shanti* but unfortunately *Mukesh* trapped her inside a film set and set it ablaze. Little did he knew that *Om* was watching all of it from a distance and immediately came to rescue *Shanti* once again from the fire. But unfortunately both succumbed to death and on the same night *Om* was reincarnated into a home of a wealthy and famous film actor *Rajesh Kapoor’s* (Javed Sheikh) family as his son *Om*. 
*Shanti* was shown as a naïve woman who did not know the tricks of her own husband and was easily fooled by his tactics. Another important female character shown in the movie was that of *Om’s* mother *Bela Makhija* (Kirron Kher). She was shown more as a caricature rather than a realistic mother. Though there were one or two scenes where she was seen talking heart to heart with her son when he was reincarnated, apart from that her dialogues were mainly kept for adding humour to the script.

After the reincarnation, *Om Kapoor* (Shahrukh Khan) was seen as a spoilt brat who was only concerned of her own desires and thought himself to be the best only because of his famous father. There were always two-three girls around *Om* to enhance his popularity and show how loved he was by his female fans. However, those girls were nothing but used for comic effect and humour. Not one single meaningful dialogue was given to any of those girls. Their presence made no difference to the script and perhaps their absence would also have not made any difference as such.

The scene where *Om* was taking auditions for the female lead of his film showed a number of females auditioning for the role. All of the girls were shown in a degrading way. Where an obese girl was using inhaler in between a one-sentence dialogue and another overly made up girl forgot the dialogue. It was only the second protagonist of the film, *Sandhya* (Sandy), who impressed *Om* and that too not on the basis of reciting the dialogues for the audition but only because she resembled *Shanti*.

The movie also popularizes a dialogue “Ek chutki sindoor ki keemat tum kya jaano Ramesh Babu. Ishwar ka aashirwad hota hai ek chutki sindoor, suhagan ke sarr ka taj hota hai ek chutki sindoor, har aurat ka khwab hota hai ek chutki sindoor.” The dialogue though presented in a light hearted manner in the movie subtly gave the importance to the husband of a woman. It exhibited how a woman is complete only when she had a husband and how being married is a blessing of God.
The movie had a storyline of revenge from a reincarnated person from the killer of his previous birth but the importance was always given to the males in the movie. Though women were there in the film still they had no active role in planning or executing of the plan that was made for the villain of the film. It was only Om who plans the strategy and compelled everyone to follow his orders.

The movie was completely male oriented where the males were seen fighting and the females were either the spectators, the helpers, or the pawns in the movie. Where Shanti was seen begging Mukes for accepting her as a wife in front of the whole world and thought herself to be helpless without him, Sandhya on the other hand was just an actor who did not know the whole truth about the plan but kept on rehearsing dialogues only because she had a crush on Om Kapoor the actor.

**DABANGG**

In another famous movie *Dabangg* (2010), directed by Abhinav Kashyap, the main role was given to the cop Chulbul Pandey (Salman Khan) and the whole story revolves around his character, personality, and psyche. The movie does not have any space for a female character but still they were unreasonably put in the scenes for some relaxation from the continuous fighting sequences.

Movies are meant for entertainment in most of the countries and in India, most of the theatre going audience consists of males. Even if a film’s script does not require a female character, she is still put in them to lure the audience and to entertain their phallocentric feelings.

*Dabangg* was not unlike those kinds of films. Chulbul Pandey was seen as an honest police officer and he was one of the bravest and fearless man in town. His relationship with his step father, Prajapati Pandey (Vinod Khanna) was rough since his childhood and even his step brother was not emotionally close to him, apparently for the reason that Makkhi (Arbaaz Khan) was a coward who could easily be coaxed into doing illegal and wrong activities.

The movie was focused on the life of Chulbul Pandey and how he was continuing his struggle to live a simple life even by being an honest and loyal person, which was not normal in his profession.
Of course this led him to make more enemies than friends. One of those enemies was a corrupt political leader Chedi Singh (Sonu Sood). The movie showed how Chulbul and Chedi Singh tried to win over the other, more or less like the age old theme of good and evil fighting to overcome one another.

In the midst of all the hullabaloo came Rajjo (Sonakshi Sinha). Chulbul immediately fell for her and started making moves on her not to impress her but to actually own her. He openly offered her to either accept his money with love or accept a thappad (slap). This was not only rude but also degrading for a woman whom one openly declares one has fallen in love with. This was not a sign of a fearless (dabang) person but of the one who wanted to force down his obsession, whom he thought to be as love, to the subject of his obsession.

Chulbul Pandey forcing Rajjo to take money or else

Rajjo was also shown as a brave woman who was taking care of her alcoholic father Haria (Mahesh Manjrarakar) and therefore, rejected Chulbul’s proposal in the fear of not being there to help her father because she would be then supposed to leave her home and shift to her husband’s home.

Traditions of a society were made to ease out the problems faced by the people. But there are certain traditions that are made mandatory for people to follow even if the situations demand otherwise. In Rajjo’s case, she could easily tell Chulbul to take her father with her after marriage or have had asked him to live with her after marriage. But in our society, a girl is supposed to leave her family and this is regarded as an honourable act but if a boy leaves his home and starts living with the girl’s family in her home it is considered to be an act of a spineless man who is controlled by his wife.
Such two faced ideologies that are different for man and woman must be condemned and voiced for. What one could do the other could also easily do, then why are there two different rules for both? On one hand we call ourselves a developing nation where we openly accept the western traditions and values and are proud to be called as modern. Then why is that certain traditions that are not favourable for women are still kept intact in our society and we are not even trying to change the system for the betterment of the women in our society?

Rajjo when rejected Chulbul’s proposal, Haria thought it would be better to die for the sake of his daughter’s good future than ruin her present. He happily committed suicide in order to make Rajjo accept Chulbul’s proposal and marry him without having the guilt of leaving her father. Such an extreme step taken by someone who was a part of the society is not only appalling but also shameful. He could have given support to her daughter’s decision of staying with her father and asked Chulbul instead to join them in their home after marriage. Rather Haria took the easy way out and ended his life only to make things easy for his daughter as well.

Though the love angle of Chulbul and Rajjo were sidelined by the director, the main plot only revolved around the enmity of Chulbul and Chedi Singh and how Makkhi was also involved in their personal battle.

Between all the action sequences and overly dramatic portrayal of Chulbul Pandey came an item song ‘Munni badnaam hui’ that was being picturised on Malaika Arora Khan who was scantily dressed and provocatively danced with a room full of men.

The song though highly popular with the audience was no more than a tactic to lure more people into the cinema theatre and make a commercial profit out of the movie. The song was put into the movie as a refreshing bite with all the action going around but was highly derogatory for any woman. The lyrics and dance steps of the song could only be enjoyed by the people who have a patriarchal mind set. Such
demeaning songs are responsible in making the female actors an object rather than a subject in the commercial movies.

Changing trends in the Hindi cinema can be seen from decade to decade. This decade was not only the initiation of the new millennium but also the beginning of meaningful cinema where the amalgamation of parallel and commercial could be easily seen.

Movies like Monsoon Wedding and Phir Milenge can be easily considered to be those from the commercial genre but still the treatment of the movie was inspired from the parallel cinema. Stories of both the movies were revolving around the females of the film and their importance were enhanced.

On the other hand a trend setting movie, Dil Chahta Hai, was seen which inspired the youth of the new generation. The lifestyle, the attitude towards people, the costumes, the family relations, everything was dealt with precision and accuracy. Yet, the females of the movie were having the age old concept of love, marriage, and were seen docile and dependent on the males around them.

This decade also produced Dabangg where a small town girl was seen confident and smart but again somehow dependent on her father. The idea was new yet the values instilled in the characters were old and clichéd.

Hence, where the parallel cinema saw its resurgence, new and innovative ideas kept emerging in this genre but as far as commercial cinema is concerned, even though there were unique conceptions still the representation of females in the movies were limited to the parameters of the traditional values and customs that were set by the society – and by the society it means the patriarchal society – from time immemorial.