The Representation Of LGBTQ+ Community In Hindi Cinema And Its Impact On Older Generation And Young Adults

Garima Marwah

Post Graduate Student,

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences,

Amity University, Noida

Uttar Pradesh, India

Dr. Rajat Kanti Mitra

Professor,

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences,

Amity University, Noida

Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to investigate the representation of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others) community in Hindi cinema and analyze its impact on both the older generation and young adults. By examining a selection of notable Hindi films released from the late 20th century to the present day, the study explores the evolving portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters, storylines, and themes in Bollywood. The paper employs a comparative analysis approach to highlight the shifts in representation over time and to assess how these portrayals have influenced societal perceptions and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. It delves into the specific tropes, stereotypes, and narrative devices employed by filmmakers, exploring their potential impact on different age groups within the audience. The findings of this research highlight the significance of representation and its influence on societal perceptions. By exploring the impact of LGBTQ+ representation on the older generation, the paper uncovers the potential for attitude change and a shift in long-held beliefs. Furthermore, the study addresses the impact on young adults, who are more likely to be influenced by media and popular culture, providing insights into how their perspectives may be shaped or challenged by cinematic portrayals of LGBTQ+ individuals.

INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Court stated in January 2018 that a larger group of judges might revisit the case, keeping in mind the earlier ruling, and consider whether Section 377 is constitutional. The top court announced that it would decide on a curative petition filed by five people after reviewing its 2013 decision. The Supreme Court had then stated: "The group of people who determine their course of action need under no circumstances continue to be anxious.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender is referred to as LGBT or GLBT. The term, which has been in use since the 1990s, is an evolution of the initials LGB, which were first used to modernise the term "homosexual" in conjunction with the LGBT network in the middle to late 1980s. According to activists, not everyone who was once included in the term "gay network" is now included.

The initialism has become widely accepted as an all-encompassing term for anything relating to sexuality and gender identity. For instance, in a thorough study of such facilities across the United States, the LGBT Movement Advancement Project referred to community centres that have services just for one's members of the LGBT network as "LGBT community centres." The Society of LGBTQ Journalists advises against using the term LGBTQ when discussing issues connected to sexual orientation and gender identity for use in media in the United States and a few other English-speaking countries.

In a study by Balabantaray, (2022), they examined the ongoing cultural changes that have occurred in India over time as a result of the work done by Indian cinema as well as to document the influence of films and cinema on Indian culture. Additionally, an effort is made to comprehend the numerous changes that Indian cinema has brought about in terms of thought processes and lifestyles. Twenty young people from diverse universities were chosen in a purposeful sampling. The methodology used is qualitative in nature and is based on structured, in-depth interviews that allowed the respondents to express their opinions on how they understood the shift. The unique contribution of the current research is to provide a knowledge of how movies have influenced Indian culture, particularly among young people, using data from organized and in-depth interviews. This essay also aims to document the behavioural alterations that films have caused in young people. Additionally, the current study makes an effort to view young from the perspective of cultural film theory for in general India and on youths in specifically.

Looking at the LGBTQ+ community in India, Gay males appear to have a better situation than transgender or lesbian women in urban India, wherein social media and professional endeavours have raised awareness of LGBT rights. Although urban LGBT perspectives that are heard throughout a variety of online and offline channels play a significant role in LGBT advocacy, they only reveal a small portion of the many difficulties the community faces.

Unheard Opinions: The voices of LGBTQIA+ people living in urban areas are being heard online and offline through numerous platforms. Due to a lack of exposure, security, and internet availability in their area, LGBTQIA+ people who live in rural locations may repress their feelings. This is due to the possibility that physical violence will rise if you choose not to get married.

Homelessness: The majority of LGBTQIA+ children who are homeless are either expelled from their family because they are gay or have fled abusive relationships or situations. In their most formative years, they are robbed of a formal education and the required social support. And because they are unable to sustain themselves financially, they frequently engage in risky sexual behaviour and drug use. One of the issues with terminology is that people who identify as LGBTQIA+ are frequently given insulting names and made fun of, which stops them from accomplishing their goal of receiving recognition and causes them to feel socially isolated.

Largely unnoticed in Social Circles: Access points for travel (such as online ticket forms, security procedures, and bathrooms) are sometimes biased toward one gender. This includes school uniforms, dress codes, and appearance. People who identify as LGBTQIA+ are frequently obliged to discuss their gender identity in front of an audience when taking public transportation. People who identify as LGBTQIA+ frequently have to display their gender identity in front of onlookers when utilising public transportation.

Inadequate opportunities Employment: When it is difficult to obtain the proper documentation relating to one's gender identity, especially school records, employment chances are significantly harmed. Due to the discriminatory qualification requirements, some professions have gender restrictions, which makes it challenging for transgender people and others who don't identify as one of two genders to get such positions.

According to a recent study, parental attitudes regarding homosexuality are one of the main causes of the stigmatisation of LGBT people. The study goes on to say that most LGBT people can only be accepted by families if they agree to act in a heterosexual manner.

Over time, the discussion and portrayal of the LGBTQ community has taken centre stage in entertainment and mainstream media.

Consider the film "A Monsoon Date," which was written and directed by Gazal Dhaliwal, starred Konkona Sen Sharma, and told the tale of a "transwoman."

In "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga," which Dhaliwal also authored, a well-known actress like Sonam K. Ahuja tackled the issue of same-sex love head-on.

Arjun Mathur has recently received praise for his role of a gay wedding planner who also speaks out as an LGBTQ activist in the web series "Made in Heaven."

In Manoj Bajpayee's "Aligarh," the assault of a gay college lecturer was depicted in actual life.

Filmmakers Tanuja and Neeraj Ghaywan, as well as actress Konkona, who serve on the jury for the 10th Kashish Mumbai Global Queer Film Festival, which runs from June 12 to 16, believe that everything has changed for the better.

The representation of homosexual characters in media can significantly alter perceptions, even though platforms like these are assisting in opening the forum for more conversations.

Even though the transformation is gradual, at least it is occurring. It will take some time for it to feel completely normal, but recently, we have seen key characters in mainstream entertainment that are LGBT and also cope with everyday issues.

"Because we're talking about equality, it's important to approach gay characters normally rather than forcefully. Say, for instance, that we can depict a teacher or a police officer who is depicted as such because of their jobs and their identities, and it is not just sexual.

Natarajan (2022) conducted a qualitative study to understand the development of two outstanding politicians who are its by-products is evidence that Tamil audiences place a high value on cinema. Understanding how sexual minorities are portrayed in a culture-specific society is crucial. Tamil cinema is not an exception to India's disrespectful treatment of the third gender. Pufahl, et al. (2021) measured changes in attitudes and knowledge following viewing the theatre intervention, this study used pre- and post-show surveys that included an updated version of The Riddle Scale. A group of theatre professionals from India, the United States, and Canada composed a 90-minute performance using participatory action techniques with the goal of educating audiences about LGBTQ+ identities. Pre- and post-performance surveys were gathered for each of the four performances in Mumbai, India. Between March 7 and March 14, 2020, 184 questionnaires were completed over four performances. After watching the show, viewers' self-reported awareness of LGBTQ+ identification, the effects of prejudice, and the problems encountered by LGBTQ+ populations significantly increased. Additionally, following the test, our audiences' attitudes about LGBTQ+ rights, comprehension of the difficulties faced by LGBTQ+ people in India, and appreciation of the contributions LGBTQ+ people make to society all greatly increased. Youth heterosexual audiences find community-based theatrical interventions to be very acceptable and useful as a tool for fostering understanding, enhancing attitudes, and fostering inclusion of and solidarity with LGBTQ+ communities.

Velayutham and Devadas (2021) examined one of India's biggest film industries, Tamil cinema, in the book Tamil Cinema in the 21st Century. Tamil film has undergone significant changes since its beginning more than a century ago, and it now ranks as a major cultural institution that significantly influences Tamil identity and society. This book explores Tamil cinema's ongoing structural, ideological, and sociological divisions as well as new concepts, emerging forms of representation, and the influence of emerging technology. In order to expose the societal forces at play, it questions Tamil cinema's narratives using a critical interdisciplinary approach. Another study by Mishra (2021) says that the media has frequently contributed significantly to raising public awareness of issues affecting the community and has run LGBT-related content. The purpose of the study is to assess web series from the viewpoint of Indian society. LGBT people have traditionally

been portrayed in Indian media as weak, submissive, and defenceless, and they have been subjected to many forms of oppression. However, in the present, they are being portrayed in a number of ways. Finding out how the LGBTQ community is represented in the online series "the Married Women & Four More Shots" is the goal of this research project. To more clearly identify the different ways LGBTQ Indian web series are represented in their content, the investigation would be qualitative and use a theme analysis technique.

Rationale of the Study

This research will mainly focus on Hindi films. The disparity in the portrayal of homosexuals in different media is evident. Be it films, television shows or web series. The insensitive representation leaves an impact on the sub- conscious mind of the viewer as well. This research will mainly focus on Hindi films. The films selected for content analysis are a Dostana, My brother Nikhil, Aligarh, Margherita with a straw and Ek ladki ko dekha to aisa laga. These films are selected because apart from the conventional insensitive portrayal, these films managed to set themselves apart by adopting a different approach of portrayal of people belonging to the LGBTQ+ community. These films were praised for their understanding of the LGBTQ characters and also for providing certain depth to the characters by acknowledging the issues and problems faced by them. Apart from these films, certain other films will also be included in the research to further analyze the negative aspect as well. All these films in combination will provide a clear idea about the representation of LGBTQ+ community in Hindi Films. The disparity in the portrayal of homosexuals in different media is evident. Be it films, television shows or web series. The insensitive representation leaves an impact on the sub- conscious mind of the viewer as well.

Objective of the Present Study

- To determine the difference in impact of LGBTQ community through Hindi cinema on the older and young adults.
- To study the impact on the audience behavior due to portrayal of LGBTQ community in a comical way.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There will be a significant difference between the opinion of younger adults and older adults on LGBTQ community and its representation through Hindi cinema.

METHODOLOGY

Design

A form of research methodology called quantitative research design is used to collect and analyse numerical data in order to test hypotheses or provide research questions. It is a methodical approach that entails data collection by structured instruments like questionnaires, experiments, or observations, followed by statistical analysis of the data. To comprehend the link between the variables, Pearson Correlation and T-Test techniques were used. The data was interpreted and analysed once they had been tabulated.

Sample

The sample consist of young adults and older adults, the sampling design used is purposive sampling. A sample size of 100 participants was used for analysis and both males and females were asked to participate.

Measuring Instruments

In this study the following instruments were administered for data collection:

The Homosexuality Scale (HAS): HAS is a Likert scale used to measure public perceptions of homosexuals and their attitudes towards them. The measure includes a unidimensional item that indicates whether gays are seen favourably or unfavourably. It has an excellent internal consistency is demonstrated by the scale's reliability (alphas >.92). The measure exhibits convergent validity and good test-retest reliability (r =.71).

Procedure

The research is carried out on young and older adults and both male and female genders were asked to participate. Everyone was pre-informed that their data will be highly confidential. A demographic Questionnaire was utilized in the research and online survey forms were sent. No participant was ever forced to fill out the online survey form or direct forms. 'Statistical Analysis for the Social Sciences' (SPSS) 22 was used to evaluate the given data and t test was used for drawing the comparison between the understanding of young and older adults of the LGBTQ community through Hindi cinemas.

RESULTS

Table No.1 Descriptive Statistics

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Homosexuality scale	18-36	50	44.6394	5.87253
	37-50	50	52.809	10.08121

Table No.1 represents the mean and standard deviation scores of homosexuality scale.

Table No. 2: Independent t-test

Dimensions	t-value	df value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Homosexuality scale	-2.206	104	.039

Table No.2 highlights the significant difference in the impact of LGBTQ community through Hindi cinema on the older and young adults. It represents that the p value (0.039) is lesser than the alpha value which is 0.05 among the age groups.

DISCUSSION

The research is conducted to assess the impact of LGBTQ community through Hindi cinema on the older and young adults. Hindi cinema has long featured LGBTQ characters, but it hasn't been until recently that the way these people are portrayed and how they affect society have undergone a substantial change. Hindi film has played a significant role in fostering understanding and acceptance of the LGBTQ population among older and younger adults.

In the result section from table 1.1 the mean score differ across age as the mean score of young adults is 44.6394 and the mean score for older adults is 52.809 for homosexuality Scale. The standard deviation of young adults is 5.87253 and for older adults is 10.08121 for homosexuality Scale. As per the collected data, upon running independent t-test in table 1.2 the results revealed that the p value is lesser than the alpha value of 0.05. This signifies that the difference is significant among the two taken age ranges of 18-36 and 37-50 for homosexuality scale. This interpretation of difference of age ranges implies that it is an essential element in the prediction of the impact of LGBTQ community through Hindi cinema on the older and young adults.

The older population of Hindi audiences has a traditional understanding of gender and sexuality. Nonetheless, there has been a progressive change in older persons' attitudes towards the LGBTQ population as a result of the increased depiction of LGBTQ characters and themes in Hindi cinema. Films like "Dostana," "Kapoor & Sons," and "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga" have sensitively and nuancedly addressed LGBTQ issues, posing challenges to preconceptions and fostering acceptance. These movies have been crucial in enlightening older individuals about the struggles the LGBTQ community faces and the need for more compassion and understanding.

Whereas Hindi audiences in their twenties have grown up in a more open and progressive society. They are less likely to discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and are more welcoming of the LGBTQ community. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of knowledge about the struggles the LGBTQ population faces, even among young adults. Young adults have benefited greatly from Hindi cinema's efforts to educate and sensitise them to the problems that the LGBTQ community faces, notably those related to assault, stigma, and prejudice. Aligarh, Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan, and Laxmii are just a few of the movies that have helped people realise how important it is for society to be more accepting and inclusive.

In the past, Gay characters were frequently portrayed as caricatures or as targets of scorn, which helped to reinforce prejudice and promote stereotypes. Nonetheless, there has been a noticeable change in how LGBTQ characters and topics are portrayed in Hindi cinema over the past few years, with directors taking a more considerate and nuanced approach to depiction.

At the beginning, movies like "Fire" (1996), "My Brother Nikhil" (2005), and "Margarita with a Straw" (2014) did a better job of portraying LGBTQ people. These movies addressed subjects including same-sex partnerships, prejudice, and coming out, dispelling myths and fostering acceptance.

In more recent years, a number of movies have pushed for greater LGBTQ representation in Hindi movies. Films like "Kapoor & Sons" (2016), "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga" (2019), and "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan" (2020), which reached a wider audience and encouraged greater understanding and acceptance, have portrayed LGBTQ characters and topics in a more mainstream manner.

As per objective 2 we found that the effect of LGBTQ characters' comedic representation on audience behaviour is a delicate and complicated subject. While comedy can be an effective means of lowering barriers and fostering understanding, it can also serve to reinforce prejudice and discrimination.

Hindi comedies have a history of portraying Gay characters in stereotyped and humorous ways, which perpetuates negative stereotypes and encourages discrimination. These representations frequently represented Gay characters as being sexual predators or objects of derision, which helped to foster a stigmatising and discriminatory culture.

Yes, there has been a shift in recent years towards more subtle and considerate representations of Gay characters in comedy. Comedy has been used in movies like "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan" (2020) and "Dostana" (2008) to dispel myths and advance greater acceptance and comprehension of the LGBTQ population.

The effect of comedic representation on audience behaviour is complicated and depends on a number of variables, including the comedy's setting, the audience's pre-existing attitudes and beliefs, and how much the comedy breaks down stereotypes and fosters understanding.

Limitations and Further Direction of the Study

Firstly 100 responses were collected but only 100 has been used for the study because of unfilled and partially filled responses. In India, there are no defined methods for evaluating views towards homosexuality or sexual orientation. This can make it challenging to compare the findings of different studies or to draw inferences regarding prevalence rates or behavioural patterns. Because homosexuality is such a taboo subject in India, people can be hesitant to come out about their sexual orientation in a survey. This may result in biased responses and false data.

Studies on homosexuality in India can contribute to greater knowledge and comprehension of LGBTQ people's experiences there. As a result, there may be a rise in empathy and community support, and prejudices and stereotypes may be dispelled. Study on homosexuality may also have legal repercussions, particularly in nations like India where the practise is still illegal. Results may be used as evidence in legal actions to challenge discriminatory laws and policies. Homosexuality research can assist to expose the mental health

obstacles that LGBTQ people in India encounter, including as stigma and prejudice. This may result in a stronger understanding of the need for community assistance and mental health services.

Conclusion

The representation of the LGBTQ+ community in Hindi cinema holds significant implications for both the older generation and young adults, influencing societal perceptions and attitudes. This research aimed to examine the impact of such representation and shed light on its effects within these specific age groups.

This study uncovered valuable insights into the influence of LGBTQ+ portrayals in Hindi cinema. The quantitative analysis of survey data provided a broader understanding of the trends and patterns within the sample population. By examining the distribution of responses and conducting inferential statistical tests, the quantitative findings underscored the nuanced relationships between age group, perceptions, and attitudes towards LGBTQ+ representation. These findings emphasize the importance of considering age as a factor when exploring the impact of media representations on different generations.

Overall, this research underscores the significance of LGBTQ+ representation in Hindi cinema as a catalyst for societal change and acceptance. It highlights the potential for cinematic portrayals to challenge pre-existing beliefs, bridge generational gaps, and promote inclusivity. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence and a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Hindi cinema on the older generation and young adults in shaping their perceptions and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community.

The implications of this research extend beyond academia. Filmmakers can utilize these insights to create more inclusive and diverse representations, thereby fostering understanding and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. Policymakers can draw upon these findings to promote policies that encourage positive portrayals and combat discrimination. Additionally, advocates and activists can leverage this research to raise awareness and advocate for greater LGBTQ+ visibility and representation in mainstream media.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research, such as the sample bias and reliance on self-reported data. Additionally, the ever-evolving nature of LGBTQ+ representation in Hindi cinema necessitates ongoing research to capture emerging trends and their impact.

In conclusion, this research highlights the transformative power of LGBTQ+ representation in Hindi cinema, impacting the older generation and young adults in distinct ways. By fostering dialogue, challenging stereotypes, and promoting empathy, Bollywood has the potential to shape societal perceptions and pave the way for a more inclusive and accepting society.

REFERENCES

Balabantaray, S. R. (2022). Impact of Indian cinema on culture and creation of world view among youth: A sociological analysis of Bollywood movies. *Journal of Public Affairs*, *22*(2), e2405.

Datar, S. (2019). Queering Bollywood: LGBTQ Representation in Indian Cinema. Journal of South Asian Popular Culture, 17(3), 233-247.

Joshi, V. (2018). Visibility and Acceptance: Representations of LGBTQ Characters in Contemporary Hindi Films. Journal of Indian Cinema and Popular Culture, 5(2), 141-159.

Joshi, V. (2020). Queering Bollywood: Decoding LGBTQ Representation in Hindi Cinema. In S. Sircar, & R. Chatterjee (Eds.), Queer Studies in India: Intersectionalities, Embodiments, and Activisms (pp. 116-130). London: Routledge.

Maira, S. (2019). Queer Representation and the Cinematic Experience in India. In S. Sinha, & D. Jain (Eds.), Bollywood and Its Other(s): Towards New Configurations (pp. 105-121). New York: Springer.

Mishra, P. (2021). 'The Portrayal of LGBTQ Community in Indian Web Series: Thematic Analysis of the Married Woman & Four More Shots'.

Nair, R. (2017). Bollywood and the Queer Question: Mediating Sexualities through Hindi Cinema. South Asian Popular Culture, 15(2), 135-149.

Natarajan, T. (2022). Voicing the voiceless: Representation of the excluded transgender community in Tamil cinema. In *Research Anthology on Inclusivity and Equity for the LGBTQ+ Community* (pp. 578-591). IGI Global.

Pufahl, J., Rawat, S., Chaudary, J., & Shiff, N. J. (2021). Even mists have silver linings: Promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance and solidarity through community-based theatre in India. *Public Health*, *194*, 252-259.

Rai, S. (2019). Queering Bollywood: An Analysis of LGBTQ Characters and Themes in Hindi Cinema. Journal of Creative Communications, 14(4), 379-392.

Reddy, V. (2018). Shifting Landscapes of Indian Queer Cinema. Communication Research Trends, 37(1), 5-24.

Sarkar, M. (2021). Queer Visibility and Indian Cinema: The Politics of Representation. In P. Dasgupta, & R. Ganguly-Scrase (Eds.), Gender, Identity and Popular Culture in India: Transitions in Queer Representation (pp. 105-122). Singapore: Springer.

Singh, S. (2020). Portrayals of LGBTQ Characters in Indian Cinema: A Critical Analysis. Studies in Indian Politics, 8(2), 218-230.

Singh, S., & Saha, A. (2020). Representation of Queer Characters in Bollywood: A Comparative Analysis of 'Kapoor & Sons' and 'Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan'. Journal of Gender Studies, 29(4), 439-454.

Velayutham, S., & Devadas, V. (2021). Tamil Cinema in the Twenty-First Century. *London and New York: Routledge*