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FEMINISM -A COMMERCIAL TOOL IN ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

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Abstract: The entertainment industry has traditionally used women's bodies and sexuality as a means of increasing revenue and sales. Nonetheless, the perspective used to portray women's bodies and sexuality has evolved over time. In the past, women's bodies were commercialized and utilized as an instrument of drawing attention and boosting sales for movies and products. However, the idea of the abusive exploitation and sexual objectification of the female body in films and advertisements has been criticized as a result of the recent emphasis on women's equality and emancipation. As a result, a new era of commodity feminism, or femvertising, has begun. The objective of this research paper is to study a few Indian films from the beginning of this century made with feminist characters and agendas at its core, in order to investigate the efficacy and motivations behind the use of feminism as a marketing technique.

Index Terms – FEMINISM,COMMERCIAL TOOL,MOVIES,ADVERTISEMENT

Everything can be marketed using the appropriate tactics at the appropriate moment in this age of marketing, advertising, and capitalism. Nowadays, being a feminist is trendy, despite whether you truly support women's equality. Feminism is the buzzword of the day. Although feminism is a hot topic right now, the advertising and entertainment sectors have tried to turn important facets of the campaign into semiotic indicators in order to make money. Even large political movements like feminism, which have real issues at their heart, have been seized by the entertainment industry in the age of capitalism and commercialization to promote its revenues and goods through commercials and movies that sell under the guise of women's equality and freedom.

In the entertainment industry, women's bodies and sexuality are always the means to increase revenue and sales. However, the perspective adopted for illustrating women's bodies and sexuality has evolved over time. In the past, women's bodies were transformed and used as a way of gaining attention and promoting sales for movies and products. But in the past few years, there has been an emphasis on women's equality and independence, which provoked criticism of the idea of the sexual objectification of the female body and its abusive use in films and advertisements. As a result, a new era of commodity feminism, or femvertising, has begun.

In order to examine the motivations behind and efficacy of utilizing feminism as a marketing technique, the current research article will examine a few Indian films from the twenty-first century that were made with feminist themes and characters at their core. "Feminism" seems to be the popular topic these days, from Tollywood to Hollywood. In the 1920s, feminism started as a movement in Europe that sought to free and equalize women. It later developed into the well-known three waves of feminism. Originally intended to address the important job of women's emancipation, the movement has since been adapted to further the male-dominated capitalist goals of the film industry. In the capitalistic economy of today, everything is for sale. Regretfully, feminism is also an increasingly significant cause in the entertainment sector.

The term "feminism" is being conspicuously misused and abused in the film business today. The purpose of this study is not to challenge the feminist ideals emphasized in our films, but rather to examine the entire purpose and drive behind showcasing and voicing their opinions and concerns either prior to a film's premiere or for financial benefit by providing us with inspiring sayings and anecdotes about women's empowerment.

Because of the film industry's selective attitude to women's issues, feminism appears to be nothing more than a promotional tool for the motion picture business. The same movie stars speak sexist speech and groove to sexist songs after the promotions. When it comes to practical usefulness, feminism is losing its appeal in a field where sexual misconduct is common and pay differences is a major problem. According to Katie Martell's 2017 book *The Problem with Femvertising*, there is still a troubling feminism-related trend in the marketing industry "that is moving us in the wrong direction" (114). In an attempt to profit off something that had a clear goal of women's emancipation, the entertainment industry is actually undermining it.

Without a doubt, more and more films that raise awareness of women and other sexual minorities are needed. However, this very monetization of feminism is what we as a movement need to be tired of. The hardships of our forefathers must not be minimized to a publicity stunt, billboard hoarding for commercials, movies, clothing, bags, and other items for consumption alone.

Instead, we should concentrate on spreading knowledge and understanding of the movement, involving as many people as possible, and fighting for equality while opposing the system. Feminism must not just stay mainstream but also reach the whole public. In her book "Why

I Am Not A Feminist," Jessa Crispin critiques popular feminism. As she correctly points out, "identifying as a unicorn does not imply that you are one." The same is true of feminism (4). Women's emancipation is a significant subject that requires careful consideration.

It is necessary to note that feminism has become more popular in India in the twenty-first century, as the current study project examines it as a marketing strategy in Indian films. As the idea and movement of feminism gained popularity, feminists in India began criticizing and attacking Hindi films from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s that depict women or female leads as sex objects, participate in hypersexual dance routines, or are presented as victims.

Up until the 20th century, the male leads have traditionally portrayed the "heroic" and main characters; the female leads only serve to fill in the blanks and amuse the audience with their attractiveness and erotic dance routines. According to the Hindi film business, there are films called *Mother India* and *Sita aur Gita*, for instance, in which women are the primary characters.

However, if you see *Mother India* via a "feminist" lens, you will discover that Nargis, the main female character, represents the role of a mother within "traditional cultural" norms, one who will stop at nothing to keep her family safe. Sociologists Emile Durkheim and Pierre Bourdieu have emphasized that the principles of the "modern industrial society," where women have the right to enjoy the sun in their bikinis in addition to economic empowerment, are the antithesis of "traditional cultural" standards. Such cultures have been referred to as "cold societies" by anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (256). Back in the 1990s, women in India stood for the honor of the family. Despite having absolutely no actual power, female characters were supposed to give their lives in order to protect their families.

A mother raises her three children in *Mother India* in spite of adversity. She will inevitably carry out the same household customs as her grandmother and mother did. The life that patriarchal society had long prescribed for women was the one she had to lead. Looking back, the image of the "ideal mother" or "mother India," as it is portrayed in the film, appears to be extremely limited. Compared to female characters in movies from the twenty-first century, these female characters stand out.

Female-centric films have been produced and are popular in recent years, in which women not only play the lead role but are also shown as strong, independent women who defend their rights and claim their identities. The audience gave the 2012 Sridevi film *English Vinglish* a lot of praise. Women who have never attended school and who sacrifice all to provide their kids with an education for a better future are central to the narrative. This is how many Indian houses actually operate. The children, on the other hand, feel embarrassed of their mother for her lack of fluency in English when they acquire the language. Sridevi's spouse makes fun of her in the movie because she can't speak English. She chooses to enroll in an English language course in order to demonstrate her abilities and win back her family's respect, even though she comes from a well-

educated middle-class family. The idea that being able to speak and understand English may make one feel proud and gain respect in her family shows our colonial hangover, despite the film's attempt to teach that we shouldn't undervalue anyone's abilities.

In B-Town, the 2014 film *Queen* generated a lot of hype. It was hailed as a "coming-of-age" film by many feminists. The film tells the tale of a young, traditional woman whose betrothed cancels their wedding because his feelings for her have evolved over time. Heartbroken, she chooses to travel alone to Paris and Amsterdam for their prearranged honeymoon. The movie's portrayal of Kangana Ranaut normalizes the idea of a girl engaging in still-disrespectful activities like dancing, gambling, and solo travel. Furthermore, a lot of people assert that the film successfully emphasizes that being gregarious, lively, and outgoing is perfectly acceptable. Kangana's portrayal in the film was a startling yet popular image of a woman taking charge of her life and refusing to let marriage be her sole fate.

Taking into account the 2022 release of the Tollywood film *Yashoda*, Samantha Ruthrabhu played a police officer in *Undercover*, which depicts the criminal mafia's exploitation of women at the expense of womanhood. She portrayed regular commercial characters with skinshows and danced to the hottest songs in her recent films.

A new wave of Indian feminist films, including *Padman*, *Arudati*, *Pink*, *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, *Aruvi* and *Ik Ladki ko Dekha*, started after that. Notably, they are all hundred crore blockbusters, proving that feminism as a concept is popular. The advertising business, which was previously determined to sell us sex, is now using feminism to market its goods and ideologies. The more acceptable form of femvertising, or feminism as a tool for songs, movies, or commercial, is hashtag feminism in the modern period.

The entertainment business had to adapt its marketing tactics to the needs of the audience and the times as feminism as a social and cultural movement grew in popularity in the twenty-first century. As a result, the entertainment business developed the concept of leveraging the popular trend of feminism as a marketing weapon.

Femvertising is being pursued by the advertising and entertainment industries alike. Just take a look at Dove's advertisement, for example. Since beginning the "Campaign for Real Beauty," the business has been garnering cash-register receipts, marketing awards, and headlines. On their website, Statista Research Branch reports that between 2016 and 2021, dove sales increased from \$5.1 billion to \$2 billion. In addition, Janet Kestin and Nancy Vonk, the creatives behind Dove's well-received campaign, are set to release a book titled "Darling You Can't Do Both: And Other Noise to Ignore on Your Way Up."

For instance, Sheryl Sandberg, the COO of Facebook, just marked her 71st week on the New York Times Best Sellers list with her book "Lean In," which examines women's advancement in leadership positions. By collaborating with stock picture behemoth Getty on an image collection that dispels misconceptions of women, her nonprofit LeanIn.org is combating institutional misogyny.

Under Emma Watson's leadership, #HeForShe has transformed major themes—such as the McKinsey Global Institute's analysis that "there is \$28 trillion missing from the global economy because we don't have gender equality"—into a social media-based solidarity movement (48).

Overall, it indicates that there will be greater efforts to promote young women's empowerment through programs or individual companies. These days, discussing feminism and women's empowerment is trendy. It appears that everyone has an idea on how a lady should and could live her life. The newest arenas for gender conflict are social media, political agendas, and classroom discussions. According to a variety of feminists, men can be given an equal place in society by acting like their male partners or engaging in activities like them. This is demonstrated in the Pep Scooty commercial with the tagline, "why should boys have all the fun?" Men have been framed within a specific paradigm of masculinity, which is the subject of another debate.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study paper is not to disparage or ignore films with a feminist theme or that have strong female leads. The goal is to examine commodity feminism as a marketing tactic, which has typically been examined in relation to brand ads. It is simpler to identify when a business is using feminism to market a product for financial advantage, but since films are selling ideas rather than tangible goods, the consumerist motive that lies behind the feminist tagline is not made clear.

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