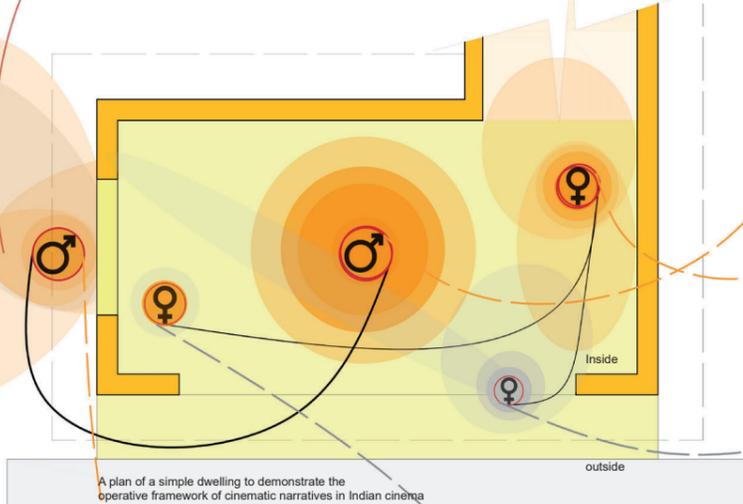


1. Research Statement and Questions

Indian cinema's portrayal of women has always followed set traditions and reaffirmed the norms of feminine 'demeanour.' The subliminal argument is that this is the key to domestic bliss, and deviation leads to violence, rape and tragedy. Conversely, **domesticity is the core of Indian cinema's narrative**, and this ideal prescribes "the correct place" of women (At home) within this domestic milieu. Even within the domestic milieu there is a gendered geography. Kitchen is for women and the living room is for men and misogyny is established in ways such as the values embodied by the "good" mother. Therefore, the central questions of this research are:

- How does the defined script of female characters in Indian movies influence the social conduct and with it, the associated decision about **'placing' women in the domestic realm?**
- How does cinema construct a domestic ideal and bliss around the feminine figures such as that of a mother-figure and the spatial attributes to her, beyond that of narrative?



A plan of a simple dwelling to demonstrate the operative framework of cinematic narratives in Indian cinema



View 1- 3D visualization of plan 1 showing the spatial syntax of ideal home according to the gender of Characters (Images are from 1943 film, Kismet)

With the changes position, the woman lost her domestic bliss



Fig. 1. Position Not-Home: Film still from 1962 film *Mai Chup Rahungi*. Spatial elements (like door frame in this case) becomes the key agency in operating the situation around the deviated position of woman from ideal of domesticity.

At Home or Not-at-Home

Portrayal of Social Conduct and Domesticity in Indian Cinema

2. Methodology

This research maps and documents the most important locales or topos of Indian cinema and its **gendered geography** using close observational and empirical evaluation of films from 1950s to 2000s. Here to note, especially the "extent" allowed to women, and the relation of these various topos with that of the domestic one (Plan 1). Thus to take the basis of division done by Indian cinema of categorizing spaces as 'At Home' and 'Not at Home' and records how the **fate of female characters is decided in these spaces** (Figure 1 and 2).

There are some startling results already observed. Although there is a prescribed bounds given to women in the patriarchy of cinema, there is no bounds for the geography of rape.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

The research is first discursive—to exhibit the gendered nature of Indian cinema and its geography. **It aims also to bring this dialog of gendered spaces to Indian spatial discourses.** Indian society remains still patriarchal, where even now 65% men believe that women should even be willing to endure domestic violence and abuse for the sake of family. In society women remain subservient, in work spaces they are paid 40% less and are prone to sexual assault. The Nirbhaya case that shook India was also explained this way: jeans, boy-friends, moving beyond the physical bonds set for women.

The geography set by cinema for women, the gendering space laced by it is still all pervasive.



Fig. 2. Position Not-Home: Film still from 1964 film *Charulata*. The Projected despair is directly connected with the bounds of window and the character looking outward of domesticity.

A man is still *Home*ly even with the change in demeanour and position



Fig. 3. Position At-Home: Film still from 1943 film *Kismet*. There is no nuance or changed fate to male character's changed position.

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All the graphics are constructed by the student and hereby declares the originality. The film images are credited to as follows-

a.) View One and Figure 3- Bombay Talkies, 1943, *Kismet*. (Further, this is a public domain image and is free of Copyright).

b.) Fig. 1- AVM Productions, 1962, *Main Chup Rahungi*.

c.) Fig. 2- Edward Harrison (USA), 1964, *Charulata*.