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1. Introduction

Indian cinema's portrayal of women has always followed set traditions and reaffirmed the norms of feminine ideal 'demeanour.' The subliminal argument is that this is the key to domestic bliss, and deviation leads to violence 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 genre influence the social conduct and with it, the associated decision about 'placing' women in the domestic real?
- How does cinema construct a domestic ideal and bliss around the feminine figures; with such constructions as a mother-figure and the spatial attributes to her, beyond that of the confines of a single narrative?



1950s

View 1: Film still showing female Protagonist's typical attire from the 50's where she almost dissolves with spatial elements such as curtains, drapes and ornaments. (Image from 1953 photoshoot of film, *Pakeezah*)



1960s



View 2: In 1960's, the female protagonist is slightly focused in the camera frames but such focus is only confined in domestic spaces. (Image from 1961 film *Hum Dono*).



View 3: By 1970's, the image of female protagonist completely reflects the global image but her interaction with the domestic spaces is also omitted. This immediately implied that a modern woman cannot be good in domestic spaces. (Image from 1978 film *Shalimar*).

1970s

1980s



View 3: In 80's, the female protagonist again takes charge of domestic spaces and that too along with her modern avatar but almost always faces doom. (Image from 1989 film *Chandni*).

2. Transformation this research brings:

This research spells out the construction of the "woman" in cinema, her confinement in space and geography, and the use of such elements such as doors, windows, thresholds—and how this has changed in the last fifty years.

Popular cinema both reflects the social reality and structures it, especially imagination. Changes in the construction of the feminine ideal also changes actual social milieu and can be a liberation for women.

This research asserts that cinema's impact on actual social spaces and geography is far more pervasive than is noted. And even as the persona of the feminine ideal is reworked out in cinema, so are the spaces, spatial elements and geography. The research then looks minutely at the significance of these small elements—doors, windows, plates, mirrors.

Thereby, another impact of this research is in the design, use and perception of spaces and structures. In studying both representation and construction of the world, this research has the possibility to engineer actual changes in the world.

Change of AGE Change the IMAGE

Bringing forth the Transformation
of an *Ideal* Woman in
Indian Cinema

2000s

View 3: Starting with globalisation of Indian economy, the female protagonist's image is reinvented and this time she is portrayed to reject the ideal of domestic. (Image from 2008 film, *Dostana*)



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