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Trans Portrayals - Examining the Representation of Transgender People in Popular Media

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Abstract:

The transgender population is made up of a wide range of people whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. To comprehend the lived experiences of transgender and transsexual people, transgender theory is an emerging theoretical perspective on the nature of gender and gender identity. It stands out for highlighting how crucial bodily embodiment is to gender and sexual identity. The purpose of this summary is to give a broad perspective of the difficulties transgender people encounter, their tenacity, and their continued advocacy work. Transgender people confront a variety of difficulties, such as prejudice from society, a lack of legal safeguards, and insufficient access to healthcare. The portrayal of transgender people in popular media is developing, with efforts to be more truthful and respectful, yet issues remain. This study is in sync with Maa Rama Devi's beliefs about empowerment, wherein the empowerment of women, without sharing intellectual, financial and material resources, is not possible. The way transgender individuals are portrayed in popular culture is largely problematic. Historically, transgender characters have been portrayed negatively and stereotypically in fictional television shows, which does not truly reflect the experiences that transgender individuals have. Transgender characters are typically shown as being apart from the viewer, evoking feelings of terror, pity, and derision. Certain narrative tropes and visual symbols are used to achieve this distancing.

According to the study's findings, transgender people are stereotyped in Bollywood films. They are characterized as dancers, beggars, sex workers, and criminals. The transgender community, however, wants an end to the stigma and false beliefs surrounding them. There is a considerable gap in the representation of Transgenders in the films. Representation is an essential component of the cultural process of developing and spreading meaning among its participants; it is the way through which people of a culture connect. The gap in presenting trans characters is handled differently in both films, despite Hollywood films displaying more representation than Bollywood films. Trans individuals have the right and choice to enter the cinema and fulfill their needs and dreams. The difference is that, while Hollywood films depict transgenders as real and in a true way, Hindi films portray them as negative and less represented.

Keywords: LGBTQ community, Transgender, Representation, Popular Media, Bollywood, Hollywood, Gender Stereotype



1. Introduction:

In India, the transgender has been a part of the subcontinent for about as long as civilization has with a recorded history of over 4 thousand years and being mentioned in ancient texts, the transgender community is a testament to the sexual diversity that is integral yet often forgotten in Indian culture. While [Indian law](#)¹ recognizes 'transgender' people as a third gender other South Asian Countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan have only recognized "Hijras" as a third gender. Various terms were used in the Western medicals and psychological sciences before the mid-20th century to identify the persons and named them as transsexual and later on it changed from mid-20 onwards into the term called Transgender. It was imported from Germany and modeled after [German transsexualism \(coined in 1923\)](#)². The English term 'transsexual' has been accepted internationally but though the number of transgenders was increasing and were preferred over the transsexuals, the word transgender got its umbrella term in the year 1990s. However, the term 'Transgenderism'³ didn't exist until 1965, it was coined by the psychiatrist John. F. Oliven from Columbia University in his work, 'Sexual Hygiene and Pathology', which deals with the transgender in the broadest sense including third gender and another gender variant behavior including ancient or modern precursors from the historical record.

In India, art and literature have a special position from ancient times. It has a long history that reflects the cultural and social norms of different periods of time. Trans individuals have a rich history and unique place in Hindu culture and play an important role in Hindu Mythology, rituals, and ceremonies. Furthermore, the Trans women contain spiritual powers and are revered as deities in some parts of the country. The Trans identities can be traced in Indian art, through the evidence of ancient religious texts and classical literature. The identities have been portrayed in various art forms across different mediums. Robert Goldman, a distinguished professor of Sanskrit notes, "Few cultures have given this phenomenon such a prominent place in the realms of mythology and religion as traditional India has.", which explores the historic representation of Transgender community in art, mythology, and literature.

The term 'Hijra', is used to describe the culture and traditions of third gender identity in South Asia particularly in India and Pakistan. They played crucial roles in the Royal courts during the time of the Ottoman and Mughal Empires. They were trusted as political advisors, administrators, generals, and guardians of the harems. Most importantly they played a significant role during the

¹ Sharma, P. (2012). Historical background and legal status of third gender in Indian society. *International Journal of Research in Economics & Social Sciences*, 2(12), 64-71.

² Janssen, D. F. (2020). Transgenderism before gender: nosology from the sixteenth through mid-twentieth century. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49(5), 1415-1425.

³ Pickett, B. L. (2024). *The Transgender Encyclopedia*. Rowman & Littlefield.



Mughal time as part of the politics of empire-building, depicted in Mughal paintings that show them in courtly activities in the presence of the emperor, not only this but their intelligence and loyalty make them different from others in the society. These depictions show the position and the prominent roles of hijras in court and society during the era. The topic of transgenders was discussed in the media as long as the 1930s. As the media is a source of reality, it also shows the way transgenders are portrayed in the media. It has been a significant topic for the community and also for the society. Transgender representation in media is evolving, with efforts to be more realistic and respectful, yet challenges persist. This study looks into the history and contemporary difficulties with the depiction of transgender individuals in various media venues. This study supports Maa Rama Devi's beliefs on empowerment, that women cannot be empowered without sharing intellectual, financial, and material resources. This study attempts to empower transgender people through representation in popular media.

Allows the visibility of individuals through various forms of media such as television, advertising, literature, digital platforms, etc. The most effective media that appears in the minds of a large number of people is the portrayal through films. The cinematic representation of transgender presents the reality of their lives and how they have lived and suffered throughout their life. The film becomes the most powerful tool to examine the pains and challenges that the community faces and shows the true story based on them. Not only the perceptions and ideas of the society are presented but also the challenges and stereotypes that they face because the society is well defined through a movie. Transgender persons rarely find themselves in the director's chair on big-budget film productions because of systematic discrimination. The films that are produced on trans women are directed for a cis audience and are produced from the standpoint of cis people. There are aspects of other people's experiences that people fail to truly comprehend and experience. This is not to suggest that cis people can't make excellent films about trans people; rather, it is to state that films directed by trans women provide incredibly significant and unique viewpoints.

2. Review of Literature:

2.1 Trans Representation in Hollywood and Bollywood Films:

In the past, transgender characters in Hollywood movies were frequently portrayed with negative stereotypes, including villains, targets of mockery, or tragic figures. These representations fueled misconceptions and unfavorable opinions about transgender people. Casting cisgender actors in transgender roles is a major problem in trans portrayal. This approach has drawn criticism for maintaining exclusion and depriving transgender performers of roles that accurately represent their personal experiences.



There have been some noteworthy examples of positive trans depiction in Hollywood films, despite obstacles. Acclaim has been bestowed upon films such as "The Danish Girl," "A Fantastic Woman," and "Dallas Buyers Club" for their nuanced depictions of transgender people and their narratives. There has been an increasing need for transgender performers to play transgender characters in order to promote accurate portrayal. This method guarantees transgender experiences are authentically portrayed while also giving transgender performers a platform to display their skills and support a variety of narratives. The significance of an inclusive narrative that faithfully captures the range of human experiences—including gender identity—is becoming increasingly apparent. Hollywood filmmakers are presenting transgender people and stories in their productions more frequently, which helps raise awareness of and understanding of transgender concerns.

Bollywood's portrayal of the trans community has been, at best, careless, and at worst, problematic and damaging. It is rife with false preconceptions that cast the community in the most deplorable light. Almost never are transgender actors cast in leading roles on screen; instead, casting directors use cisgender performers dressed in drag. The stereotypes of trans people in mainstream Bollywood films appear to be limited to two options: the dreadful antagonist or the laughing stock. Examples of these stereotypes are Ms. Saxena, played by [Rakhi Sawant in Masti \(2004\)](#)⁴, and Lajja Shankar Pandey's role in [Sangharsh \(1999\)](#)⁵, respectively. The community is increasingly marginalized as a result of these representations, and we end up with one-dimensional sidekicks that don't actually contribute anything to the conversation about transgender lives. In the film Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui, transgender actress Vaani Kapoor portrays Maanvi Brar, a transgender woman who falls in love with Manvinder Munjal, a cis-gender macho man played by Ayushmann Khurrana. Although this portrayal is not as horrible as others overall, Kapoor's character is nevertheless overly sexualized when Khurrana's character thinks she is a "regular woman," and he becomes furious when she tells him she is transgender and feels like he has been "duped." In the end, Vaani Kapoor and director Abhishek Kapoor both received intense criticism for casting a cis-gender actor in a transgender role. Nonetheless, a sizable portion of the populace remained content that Bollywood was, at last, making little progress in the correct manner by showcasing a new kind of love story, the likes of which we have not seen before, even with a trans character being portrayed by a cis-woman. In contrast, the lead role in Laxmii, a cis-gender man possessed by a female ghost, is portrayed by Akshay Kumar. Despite not being a horror comedy, the film is intended to be both. In fact, the film's crude and simplistic depiction of transgender identity may be its most disturbing element. Kumar starts acting effeminate as soon

⁴ Dev, N. HIJRA: BEING THIRD SEX IN INDIA.

⁵ Chowdhury, A. (2021). Gender minority and its changing portrayal in Bollywood films.



as he becomes possessed, which gives the spectator the false impression that a trans woman is just a guy dressed like a woman. Additionally, the film used Laxmii to portray violent acts such as kidnapping and murder, reinforcing the scare tactics Bollywood has been using for decades against marginalized groups.

But that's just Bollywood. The South Indian film industry is becoming more and more well-known for its delicate depictions of transgender identities. This was seen most recently in the Tamil skit *Super Deluxe*, which was released in 2019. Actor Vijay Sethupathy, who is cisgender, received praise for his portrayal of the trans character Shilpa. Bollywood stereotypes are avoided in the portrayal, and the woman is given the respect and decency she is due. Additional movies that succeed in presenting a positive image of transgender identity are *Thangam*, which was featured in the 2020 Netflix anthology *Paava Kadhaigal*, and the Malayalam movie [Njan Mary Kutti \(2018\)](#)⁶.

2.2 About the Transgender, Gay, Lesbian and Eunuchs:

The transgender, gay, lesbian, and eunuchs are the people who come under the group of sexual minorities or alternative sexuality. This focus on the comparison of the portrayal of sexual minorities in mainstream and alternative Hindi cinema ([Sabharwal SK et.al. \(2012\)](#)⁷ including the perceptions, interpretations, and representations of transgender identity in the Indian cinema. It is hard for the transgender community to face the continuation of unabashed stereotypes ([Mrs Banu AP et.al. \(2020\)](#)⁸; The Trans representation in the films has been a focus in many previous studies even also in Hollywood, they face a lot of challenges and prejudices in the media and the way people joke at transgender people misrepresent them and show them in a negative way ([Jobe JN \(2013\)](#)⁹; Hollywood films named *Tomboy* ([Sciamma, 2011](#))¹⁰ and *Romeos* ([Bernardi, 2011](#))¹¹ that deal with the alternatives to traditional transgender character representations and the issues in Hollywood films ([Saunders K \(2014\)](#))¹².

⁶ Kuriakose, A. (2020). Construction and contestation of identity and politics: Transgender people in contemporary Malayalam cinema. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 18(3), 283-289.

⁷ Sabharwal, S.K., & Sen, R. (2012). PORTRAYAL OF SEXUAL MINORITIES IN HINDI FILMS. *Global Media Journal: Indian Edition*, 3(1).

⁸ Banu, A.P., & Women, T. (2020). History of Transgender Portrayal in Indian Cinema. *IJRAR-International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)*, 7(1), 206-209.

⁹ Jobe, J. N. (2013). Transgender representation in the media.

¹⁰ Saunders, K. (2014). Gender-defined spaces, places, and tropes: Contemporary transgender representation in *Tomboy* and *Romeos*. *Journal of European Popular Culture*, 5(2), 181-193.

¹¹ Saunders, K. (2014). Gender-defined spaces, places, and tropes: Contemporary transgender representation in *Tomboy* and *Romeos*. *Journal of European Popular Culture*, 5(2), 181-193.

¹² Saunders, K. (2014). Gender-defined spaces, places, and tropes: Contemporary transgender representation in *Tomboy* and *Romeos*. *Journal of European Popular Culture*, 5(2), 181-193.



3. Objective of the Study:

To study the transgender representation in both Hollywood and Bollywood films.

4. Methodology of the Study:

4.1 Sampling and Data Collection Techniques:

The simple random sampling method became the appropriate random sampling during the collection method. Sampling allows researchers to use a small group from a larger population to make observations and determinations. Researchers may get an effective size from each stratum independently as if it were a distinct study, thanks to the sampling technique. As a result, the distinctions between the groups become visible, and samples from underrepresented or minority populations can be obtained. In order to guarantee sample representativeness and improve the generalizability of study findings to a broader population, random sampling is employed. The simple random is beneficial for everyone as it has an equal and fair chance of getting chosen. Because each participant is given an equal opportunity to be selected, the final sample is impartial and unaffected by the study team.

A sample of 10 movies was selected from the American cinematic industry (Hollywood) and the Indian cinematic industry (Bollywood), through a simple random sampling method based on the presence of transgender characters. The criteria for inclusion were that each movie has some significant role for trans individuals in the movie, and the movie should be based on their life as a major part. Therefore, the role of secondary data and random sampling helps in enhancing the rigor and robustness of research studies across various disciplines. The research methodology's use of random sampling to gather secondary data gives readers a thorough grasp of the techniques used to gather and examine secondary data.

4.2 Analysis of Collected Data:

This Study is based on the method called content analysis. The "content analysis" method serves as the foundation for this paper. A research technique called content analysis is used to examine documents and communication artefacts, such as text in a variety of forms, images, audio, or video. For this paper, I have done the content analysis by taking the portrayal of transgender individuals in Bollywood and Hollywood films. The secondary sources became the suitable technique for the study's objective. The sources are used for analyzing the films portraying the transgender characters in them. The descriptive method was used to explore the study more deeply. The secondary sources are a sort of collection that needs a deep study of the subject matter. It is important for the inquiry of the films because it needs to understand the workings



done through the existing sources. It is important to follow the structured methodology to ensure the reliability, validity, and relevance of the information gathered.

5. Analysis of Collected Data, Findings and Interpretations:

The findings are focused on transgender portrayals of how they are seen in cinemas. From the dawn of films, transgenders have been prominently included in narratives. A key component of the cultural process of meaning, creation and transmission among its members is representation. There is a huge disparity in the representation of transgenders as seen in Hollywood and Bollywood films and the impact the movies have on society and on people's minds. The depiction of transgenders in the films gives the idea about the reality of their community, through the way they are portrayed in both Hollywood and Bollywood. The film depicts many instances of the pains and struggles they suffered throughout their life. The varied cultural biases of Bollywood and Hollywood have an impact on how they represent transgender characters. Hollywood frequently examines the hardships and victories of transgender people within the framework of Western society, but it also has a tendency to concentrate on individualized storylines. Bollywood, on the other hand, may represent the socio-cultural environment of India by incorporating more conventional cultural values and conventions into its portrayal of transgender people.

While visibility and diversity are major concerns for both Bollywood and Hollywood, there may be differences in the two sectors' societal acceptance of transgender people. Hollywood portrayals of transgender characters have been impacted by the increasing acceptance and knowledge of transgender rights in many Western nations. Bollywood's depiction of transgender people on screen may be influenced by the substantial societal stigma and discrimination that transgender people still experience in India. Therefore, though transgender people have been portrayed in movies by both Bollywood and Hollywood, there are still notable variations in the approaches due to social, cultural, and legal considerations.

5.1 Hollywood films:

Some selected Hollywood movies such as, 'The Danish Girl', 'Dallas Buyers Club', 'A Fantastic Woman', 'Boys Don't Cry' and 'Transamerica', explore trans characters in a real way. Hollywood films are more focused on the reality and problems of trans individuals' lives.

(1) The Danish Girl (2015):

One of the earliest patients of sex reassignment surgery, Lili Elbe, is depicted in "The Danish Girl" and her journey. Reviews of Eddie Redmayne's Lili were conflicted; he was praised for the depth



of passion in the role but criticized for using a cisgender actress. As it explores Lili's issues with gender identification and social expectations, the movie raises questions regarding transgender representation and Hollywood casting decisions. Although it illuminates transsexual realities, criticism is leveled at its historical accuracy and idealized depiction. Though not without criticism, "The Danish Girl" is generally regarded as essential for bringing transsexual stories to broad audiences.

(2) Dallas Buyers Club (2013):

The transgender character Rayon, played by Jared Leto in "Dallas Buyers Club," is shown as a nuanced and compassionate person. Although Rayon's portrayal was praised for its genuineness and humanity, it was criticized for using a cisgender actor in the part. The movie looks at Rayon's battles with prejudice, addiction, and her search for acceptance and dignity. Although there has been debate regarding casting, Rayon's character is widely seen as a move in the right direction for transgender representation in mainstream movies, igniting conversations about the need for more inclusivity and authenticity in transgender role casting.

(3) A Fantastic Woman (2017):

Daniela Vega portrays Marina, a transsexual character in "A Fantastic Woman," with nuance and compassion. The movie chronicles Marina's struggle through bereavement, prejudice, and discrimination from society after her spouse passes away. The story revolves around Marina's fortitude, dignity, and humanity, which dispel myths and provide a complex picture of transgender identity. Widespread praise for Daniela Vega's performance underscored the significance of using transgender performers in transgender roles. "A Fantastic Woman" has received praise for its accurate portrayal of transgender experiences as well as for helping to increase transgender acceptance and exposure in the film industry.

(4) Boys Don't Cry (1999):

In "Boys Don't Cry," Hilary Swank's transgender character Brandon Teena navigates his gender identification in a tiny Nebraska community while dealing with severe obstacles and persecution. The movie is based on the true tale of transgender man Brandon Teena, who experiences discrimination and violence after it is revealed what his gender identification is. Swank's performance was praised by critics for its genuineness and unadulterated emotion. "Boys Don't Cry" highlights the difficult circumstances that transgender people must deal with, igniting conversations about gender identity, prejudice, and the value of acceptance and understanding.



(5) Transamerica (2005):

Felicity Huffman plays Bree in the film "Transamerica," a transgender character who is about to have gender confirmation surgery and finds out she is pregnant by surprise. The movie centers on Bree and her kid as they travel across the nation, facing their pasts and developing a close relationship. Huffman's portrayal garnered appreciation for its genuineness and empathy, even if it was criticized for using a cisgender actor in the part. "Transamerica" defies clichés and provides a nuanced picture of transgender life as it examines themes of identity, family, and acceptance. The movie adds to larger discussions regarding gender identity difficulties and transgender portrayal in the media.

Overall, the above movies are known as the best among all for expressing transgender individuals in the most effective way. In general, these movies ask viewers to examine their own prejudices and presumptions about gender while also acting as crucial reminders of the range and complexity of transgender identities and experiences. They encourage empathy, understanding, and conversation through their potent stories and riveting performances, which eventually help to raise public awareness and acceptance for transgender people.

5.2 Bollywood films:

Some selected Bollywood movies such as 'Sadak', 'Tamanna', 'Gangubai Kathiawadi', 'Laxmi Bomb', and 'Chandigarh Kare Aashique', which dealt with different thoughts about trans individuals. Somehow Bollywood movies portray trans characters in different ways.

(1) Sadak (1991):

Mahesh Bhatt's 1991 Bollywood film "Sadak" was directed by him. The main plot of the movie is the romance between a cab driver and a prostitute. A transgender character isn't explicitly portrayed in "Sadak." As a result, the movie's representation of transgender people isn't specifically summarized. Rather, themes of love, atonement, and societal concerns about sex work predominate, with transgender representation not serving as a central motif.

(2) Tamanna (1997):

Mahesh Bhatt's 1997 Bollywood film "Tamanna" was directed by him. In the movie, a young eunuch named Tamanna experiences discrimination and adversity as she makes her way through life on the periphery of society after being abandoned by her family. In "Tamanna," Paresh Rawal's portrayal of Tamanna delves into the challenges experienced by transgender people in Indian society, including prejudice, rejection from society, and the quest for acceptance and a sense of belonging. The movie explores issues of gender, identity, and human dignity while emphasizing



Tamanna's fortitude and humanism in the face of life's obstacles. "Tamanna" is noteworthy for its attempt to highlight the lives of transgender people and the injustices they encounter, even though it stars a cisgender actress. The movie raises awareness of the need for empathy and tolerance for underrepresented people while also contributing to larger discussions regarding gender identity and social acceptability.

(3) Gangubai Kathiawadi (2022):

In 2022, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Bollywood film "Gangubai Kathiawadi" was released. The movie tells the true story of Gangubai Kothewali, a notorious brothel owner and influential person in Kamathipura, Mumbai's red-light district. A minor transgender character called Ramnik plays a devoted associate of Gangubai in the movie. Ramnik is portrayed as a friend and confidant of Gangubai's inner circle who is there to assist and counsel the main character. But Ramnik's description is only skimmed over and doesn't go into great detail about their personality or past experiences. Overall, even though "Gangubai Kathiawadi" has a transgender character, their portrayal is less important than the main plot of Gangubai's ascent to power and doesn't offer much insight into transgender issues.

(4) Laxmi Bomb (2019):

Laxmii" (formerly titled "Laxmii Bomb") is a 2020 Bollywood film directed by Raghava Lawrence. This horror-comedy film, which is a remake of the Tamil film "Kanchana," tells the tale of a man who becomes possessed by the vengeful ghost of Laxmii, a transgender woman. The transgender character Laxmii, portrayed by Akshay Kumar in the film "Laxmii," has drawn criticism for being disrespectful and for reinforcing stereotypes. The character is portrayed as a violent, vengeful ghost seeking payback, which feeds into the harmful notion that people who identify as transgender are dangerous or bad. The film's flawed portrayal of transgender identity and its use of the transgender character as a story device for humor and horror drew criticism from the transgender community and campaigners. Critics contended that by focusing on sensationalism and exploitation, the movie squandered the chance to represent transgender characters with honor and respect. Reviews of "Laxmii"'s depiction of transgender identity were mostly divided; some critiqued the film for stereotyping and insensitivity toward transgender people. The movie draws attention to the continuous struggles that the transgender community in Bollywood faces, as well as the need for more respectful and genuine representation in the media.

(5) Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui (2021):

"Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui" is a love drama film from Bollywood that was directed by Abhishek Kapoor and released in 2021. The main plot of the movie is the romance between Vaani Kapoor's character Maanvi, a trans woman, and Ayushmann Khurrana's character Manu, a fitness



instructor. The transgender woman Maanvi is portrayed in the movie in a generally pleasant and nuanced way. Maanvi's character is portrayed as self-assured, self-reliant, and committed to living her life on her terms in spite of the prejudice and societal stigma associated with her gender identification. Maanvi's path of self-acceptance, self-discovery, and love is explored in the movie, dispelling biases and misconceptions along the way. The endeavour to humanize and empathetically depict the realities of transgender people in Indian culture makes "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui" noteworthy. The movie promotes greater tolerance and understanding for transgender persons while addressing significant issues like acceptance, love, and identity. All things considered, the way Maanvi is portrayed in "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui" adds to the larger discussions over transgender representation in Bollywood and emphasizes how crucial it is to represent transgender characters in mainstream media in an authentic and respectful manner.

Overall, while some movies, like "Tamanna" and "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui," aim for true representation and compassion for transgender characters, others, like "Laxmi Bomb," fall short and reinforce prejudices and insensitivity. The complicated and dynamic topic of transgender character representation in Indian cinema emphasizes the need for more inclusive and compassionate portrayals. While some movies, such as "Tamanna" and "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui," make an effort to show transgender individuals with nuance and compassion, other movies, such as "Laxmi Bomb," have drawn criticism for their flawed and clichéd portrayals. The topic of how transgender characters are portrayed in Indian cinema is still complicated and dynamic, underscoring the need for more respectful and genuine representation in popular culture.

6. Discussions:

Transgender individuals face a lot of challenges in the film industry. It becomes difficult for them to upgrade themselves from a character to professional actor. Still, they hope and try to have a position in the films as an actor for which they have to suffer a lot.

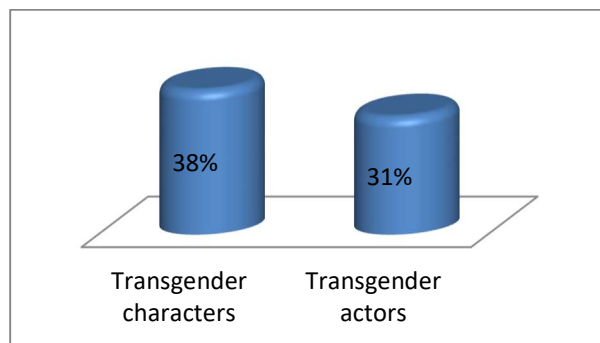


Figure-1: Display of transgender actors and transgender characters in the film

Source: Calculation by Researcher



The above figure represents how it is difficult to have their place in the industry also it shows the numbers that actors are less than the characters just because they don't get the opportunity to present themselves in cinema. It is not easy for them to play an important role or play the main role in the film. They have to suffer and face a lot of challenges to come to the mainstream. Still there are films in which they are treated as a character rather than giving them an important actor role.

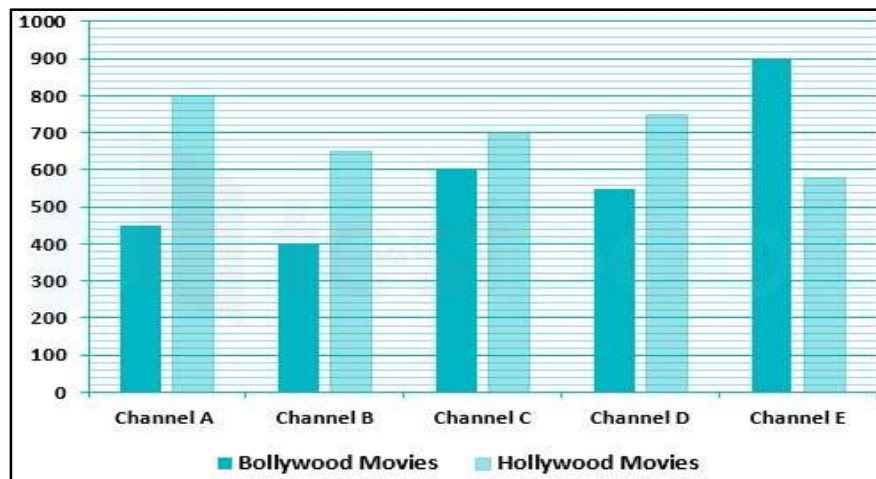


Figure-2: Display of transgender in Hollywood and Bollywood films

Source: Calculation by Researcher

The representation of transgender in the media, particularly in films is a crucial part. Both in Bollywood and Hollywood movies present trans individuals in different way. Trans representation in films not only shows entertainment but shows the reality that how much they are included in the films. The above figure shows the comparison of Bollywood and Hollywood films and how much trans individuals are represented in both films.

There is a significant disparity in the representation of transgenders based on these factors. There are films in which transgenders are highlighted and also there are films where they are given the side roles. It is difficult for them to play the role of the main character in the film. However, in the case of a Hollywood film, representation is liberal for the transgenders. Both Hollywood and Bollywood present transgenders in different way. This study supports Maa Rama Devi's beliefs on empowerment, which include that women cannot be empowered without sharing intellectual, financial, and material resources. This study attempts to empower transgender people through representation in popular media. The above study shows that Bollywood presents transgenders as negative, funny, and for entertainment purposes or gives them less importance in the films on the other hand Hollywood has more trans representation in the films, and portrays them as real and shows the reality of trans individuals in the society.



7. Conclusion and Way Forward:

This succinct analysis helped shed light on how transgenders are portrayed in the media. People of all ages are significantly impacted by the modern media, especially movies. The purpose of the study was to compare the representation of transgenders in Bollywood and Hollywood movies. Since the dawn of cinema, transgenders have been often portrayed in movies. It more closely reflects the dynamic culture of humanity.

Based on the results, there is a notable difference in the representation of transgenders in Hollywood and Bollywood films. A crucial component of the cultural process of creating and distributing meaning among its participants is representation. It is a way for people who belong to the same culture to interact with one another. The way that the transgenders is portrayed in Hindi films differs greatly from how it is portrayed in American cinema. In Hindi cinema, transgenders are portrayed in minor characters, given the side roles also portrayed as negative and shown in a movie such as they are fully different from the society, and the situation in American movies is the exact opposite of what happens in Bollywood. The difference persisted in the representation, with transgender characters treated differently in both movies, even if Hollywood showed more equitable but rare negative characters in the films. In both the movies, there are chances for the transgender entry in the industry but they have to struggle a lot to achieve the position as equal to the other normal actors.

The topic of transgender representation in Hollywood and Bollywood has generated a lot of debate and investigation. Although there have been improvements in both industries' representation of transgender people, there are still large discrepancies and room for growth.

The appearance of transgender characters and narratives in Bollywood and Hollywood movies signifies a dramatic change in the direction of more inclusivity and diversity in mainstream cinema. These movies have been extremely important in dispelling myths, fostering acceptance and understanding, and increasing public knowledge of transgender issues. Hollywood productions such as "The Danish Girl" and "Dallas Buyers Club" have won praise from critics and expanded the audience for transgender stories. These films have emphasized the resiliency and humanity of transgender people while also highlighting the challenges they confront. Similar to this, Bollywood has seen a rise in movies like "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui" and "Laxmi" which deal with transgender themes. While transgender characters in Bollywood have frequently been sensationalized or stereotyped in the past, recent films have made efforts to portray more nuanced and authentic portrayals.

More transgender voices behind the camera as writers, directors, and producers are needed, as transgender actors are still underrepresented in the industry. Furthermore, we must make sure



transgender tales are presented authentically and sensitively, staying away from damaging preconceptions and exploitative stories. All things considered, transgender representation in Bollywood and Hollywood movies is a big step toward advancing diversity and creating a more accepting and understanding community for transgender people. Authentic representation must be given top priority as the film business develops, and transgender talent should be given opportunities to work in front of and behind the camera.

Still, there are issues in both sectors. Transgender performers still face obstacles to entry and opportunities for meaningful parts, and transgender characters are frequently tokenized or ignored. More diverse stories that highlight the experiences of transgender people of color, persons with disabilities, and people from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds are also needed in the field of transgender representation.

In conclusion, even though transgender representation in Bollywood and Hollywood has improved, much work has to be done. Realistic storytelling must be given top priority in both fields, transgender performers must play transgender characters and stigma and misconceptions related to transgender identities must be vigorously combated. Then and only can media landscapes become truly inclusive and representative.

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