

Abstract: - For centuries, marginalisation has affected the niches and nooks of the world on a different level. Identities like caste, creed, religion, language, race and gender have been practiced with a hierarchy and hegemony. Women are one of the largest marginalized communities along with LGBTQIA+. OTT platform plays a crucial role in displaying voices from the margins in order to showcase socio-cultural inequality and inhumanity. The present paper deals with the Indian patriarchal mindset that refuses to accept women as a major contributor and creator of society. Accepting all weak gender identities as a part of the main stream is almost like mission impossible. Desmond Tutu’s ‘rainbow colour society’ is a far reaching-goal in India. Thanks to social media of the 21st century for transmitting these minority voices to the public’s attention and awareness. The media of the 21st century has aided a lot in conditioning society’s mindset into accepting an egalitarian society. The present paper deals with marginalized married Indian women’s voices from a film called The Great Indian Kitchen on OTT and a television series based on Manju Kapoor’s novel Married Woman and Jhumpa Lahiri’s novel, Namesake. The house wives have been portrayed as searching for identities and are rebellious against the stereotypical roles. The issues of identities of the women protagonists have been powerfully depicted through these channels. The research is based upon qualitative and quantitative data analysis with statistical evidence wherever necessary. The paper is divided into four parts, namely the role of media in the 21st century, issues of identities as a theoretical background, application of the identity issues of Ashima, protagonist of book, Namesake Nimisha, the protagonist, in the film The Great Indian Kitchen and in the tele-series The Married Woman and last but not the least conclusions. This is a study and critique to highlight how the media aids in re-conceptualization of societal norms and traditions for the queer and female community to gain their self-esteem and dignity with special reference to GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure).

Keywords: Women and LGBT, identities, women marginalisation, mass media, awareness, Gender Empowerment Measure, The Great Indian Kitchen, The Married Woman etc.

INTRODUCTION

The media has emerged as an inseparable part of our lives during and after COVID 19 pandemic. It was an outburst of imagination and creativity, during the pandemic. Social media is a powerful medium of communication through which one can reach out to the public with one’s plea. The present paper is a humble attempt to describe the identity issues of the marginalized protagonists whose anguish has been transmitted on various media platforms. OTT, over-the-top technology, started delivering streamed content over the internet. It provides television and film content to suit the customer’s requirements. Indian women have been portrayed in print and non-print media, as serving and surrendering themselves to their family from ages. Ancient epics have been written by men, so the women depicted in the epics are the imagination of the patriarchal mindset. Manusmriti is the oldest book of the Hindu religion in which the role of women is defined as a possession of her father in her childhood, of her husband in her youth and son in her old-age. The tale of Sita from The Ramayana and Draupadi from The Mahabharata is a tale of life-long suffering due to marginalization on all fronts. Her individual identity has been systematically erased by her male counterparts. The status of Indian women from ancient to modern has been improved from kitchen chores to being a working woman. Formal education has played a key role in empowering women, but socially, they are discriminated against their male counterparts as meek and docile creatures. This paper gives a brief definition of what the media is and what the effects of the media on society using gender, identity and media theories. The present research tries to find out the impact of the media in changing the stereotypical mindset of Indian society. The protagonists or the characters that have been portrayed on different media platforms, such as OTT, Blog, Radio Channel related to LGBTQ, and a podcast depict identity issues. Non-print media have always transmitted content that deals with the issues of the marginalized in all walks of life.

Today the media is helping the marginalized to come out of the closet in this hetero-normative society. The media is commonly seen as a potential means of influence, control, and innovation in society. As a result, few significant social issues are addressed without consideration of the role of the mass media. Gender issues are no exception, as illustrated by the following statement, ‘The media has a role to play in the struggle for gender transformation and in saluting the achievements of women in society, in order to inspire others, like them. The media can be perceived as a major source of definitions and images of social reality. McQuail(1967) defines media’s role in changing perception of the society, ‘the media is also the place where the changing culture and values of societies and groups are constructed and most visibly expressed’. The media is the main pillar of ultra-modern society. It
facilitates knowledge and entertainment. Gamson (Gamson 1995: 85) has rightly interpreted the media’s role, ‘The mass media is only one arena for public discourse, but it is the central one for social movements because it is the only site that provides a potentially shared public discourse’). This paper gives a brief definition of what the media is and what are the effects of the media on society with respect to gender equality. During the course of this literature, various types of impacts of the media on the individual, his family and society are highlighted.

**A Role of Mass Media:** Mass media is the diverse range of media, that reaches a large audience via mass communication. Its impact can be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, positive or negative, short-term or long-term. Impact, from a broader perspective, isn’t often just the effects of a given action or program but, rather the result of multiple causes. The presence and intensity of media influences television, radio, music, computers, films, videos, and the internet are increasingly recognized as an important part of the social ecology of children and youth, and these influences have become more visible and volatile in recent decades. The perception of young people concerning Bollywood & Hollywood movies is of great importance in the overall development of the nation.

Using mass media, people’s attitudes and habits can be changed. The media was the only source to provide information related to the spread of the virus and prevention measures during COVID 19. The government has been using the media for social awareness. It has helped make people aware of the myths of various diseases like leprosy or HIV/AIDS. One home-one toilet campaign, cleanliness campaign and polio vaccination campaign are a few examples where mass media played a key role in eradicating social evil. Change would also mean things for the better. The concept of development of a country is when old practices and equipment are changed and new, better and more efficient means are being used. The ultimate use of the media is done by the Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi for telecasting his speeches through Man Ki Baat program(Doordarshan,2018). Me too(Twitter,2015) was one such campaign on social media that provided a platform for women all over the world who were sexually abused. The mass media plays a crucial role for the wider dissemination of ideas, issues and actions, because it allows new ideas and issues to be discussed as part of the public agenda, as opposed to in more closed circles. The role of media can be better analysed through statistical data.

**Statistics of the Use of Mass Media:**

The following information has been gathered from the internet survey and searches

- a) 96.2% of India’s digital population is accessing an entertainment website or mobile app, as per a report (ComScore 2022)
- b) 20 million people in India go to watch movies every day, which equates to nearly 2% of the entire population. (Before the lockdown)
- c) 50% of the youth is affected by what they watch as compared to what they see in real life.
- d) Studies have found that 91% of movies on television show concepts that are perceived to be “negative”.
- e) As per the PwC report, India is poised to be the 3rd largest cinema market in the world.

As established, media have the power to make or break the world, an entertainment mass media can act as a strong medium for bringing significant changes in society. The best use of this should be made such that the youth absorb all the positive and negative things from it. Let’s find out the positive side of social media. Movies such as ‘Bhaag Milkha Bhaag(2013)’, ‘Neerja(2016)’, ‘Raziai(2018)’ etc. Brought a sense of patriotism and motivation. Movies such as ‘Dangal(2016)’, ‘Mary Kom(2013)’, etc. encouraged girls to participate in sports activities and helped to discourage gender inequality. The series like “A Married Woman( OTT 2021)” , “Sex Education(OTT, 2019)” promote acceptance of the other gender. Many autobiographies have been made, through which a lot can be learned about our culture and history. The negative impact can be seen through movies that portray fights, violence, vulgarity, smoking, taking drugs, etc. It all depends upon individual perceptions of what one decides to take out of films. In short, if the positive things are taken into consideration, media can act as a source of social awareness as well as motivation for achieving goals.

**Literature Review:** The present research is based on qualitative and quantitative data that includes relevant scholarly research articles, books, theses and internet sources for developing a research statement. The secondary data has been analysed, synthesized and critically evaluated to identify the facts and the findings. The data that has been used to understand the impact of media is as follows. It also refers to The Great Indian Kitchen (O. T. T.2020) and The Married Woman ( OTT 2021.) as a primary source in order to analyse identity issues of the female protagonists.

The review of the results of relevant studies that are conducted in different countries by various researchers is used to understand the role of media. Shalom Schwartz(2004), stated that the media can play its significant role in providing information about fashion, design, beauty and body satisfaction. It may also be influential and beneficial for adults that provide positive images for the development of their social system so that they may emerge and develop their sense of identity and about their fashion ingredients. Researchers have empirically proved that most films appeal to the emotions of their viewers and ultimately affect their worldview. Because of the developing emotions of adolescents, films can have a huge effect on their lives. In a study of the retention rate of film details between different age groups, Dr. Harold Rosen,(1971) found out that both children and adults
remember best, materials that have high emotional appeal that they easily understand and are concerned with the movie plot. The materials that youths will emotionally relate with differ from that of adults and children.

Youths are most likely to become emotionally interested in the situations that concern their changing views of the world and growing status in society. These issues include identity formation, college life, moving away from home, driving and cutting out parental control. Barbara Bello, (2011) this is not to say that films are completely negative.

Huesman and Morse (1998) noted that films are the media of choice for many adolescents. It shows them some interaction and experiences which they may have encountered or will encounter later in their development.

Olaleye (2007) also added that while wrong films give youth wrong ideas, watching films does benefit youth’s cognitive development.

The research has shown that human beings begin imitating other humans at a very early age, and the observation of the behaviour of others is the likely source of many young children’s social skills Bandura, (1977)

Media effects studies have examined the negative effects that result from the vicarious capacity, such as the learning of aggressive behaviour through viewing film violence. When carried worst extreme, the modelling of such behaviour has linked to violence and brutal “copycat” Olaleye (2007)

According to Meltzoff and Moore (1977), heavy exposure to television is supposed to be one of the causes of aggressive behaviour, crime, and violence in the society

Taylor, (2004) defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and any their capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of that society. This means that culture is learnt, acquired, experienced, and transferred from one place to another through various ways. One of the, most influential means is the mass media and this is where films play important roles in the transitions of culture,

Mittal, N. (2013) The study was based on Indian movies, specifically Bollywood movies promoting foreign destinations such as Europe, New Zealand, Scotland, Spain, London and USA. The research paper also talked about the increase in outbound tourism among Indians. With the showcase of foreign destinations in Bollywood movies, there have been a higher number of tourist arrivals to these countries. Bollywood movies influence viewers to a great extent. The research also specially refers to the movie ‘Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara ’ where the European country, Spain has been beautifully featured and the huge success of this movie led to a greater number of Indians travelling to Spain to visit the destinations showcased in the movie. The findings of the research also indicate that a greater number of Indians prefer travelling to foreign destinations than to domestic destinations and this trend has increased over the past few years. The research article depicts the importance of film tourism and the role played by Bollywood movies in attracting tourists to undertake travel abroad.

Wiley, J.(2010) The study was based on identifying the impact of movies on perception of viewers from different countries. For this experiment, the movie chosen was Motorcycle Diaries in which South America was featured. The respondents were made to watch the movie and a study was conducted on their perception after watching the movie. The respondents were from different countries and they showed a strong desire to travel to South America after watching the movie. An analysis was also done to find out the factors that attracted the viewers towards the place. The findings from the study indicated that the governments in South America were not putting enough effort into promoting their destinations, when compared to other places, such as New Zealand, through the movie The Lord of the Rings and Australia through the movie Australia.

Josiam, M., B., & Spears, D. (2014) The study was based on finding out the popularity of European destinations through their showcase in Bollywood movies. The findings of the study indicated that there has been a strong influence by Bollywood movies in choosing Europe as a preferred holiday destination. A survey was carried out among 670 respondents as a part of data collection. The top movies representing European destinations were identified. After watching the Bollywood movies, the most sought-after destinations were identified through the survey. It was also acknowledged that the tourist arrivals to certain destinations increased after these destinations were showcased in the movies

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1) To study and understand the power of the media on the minds of the Indian population
2) To analyse & study the effect and impact of mass media on society about gender equality.
3) To understand identity issues of women through the selected audio-visual material
4) This paper will attempt to explore the various aspects and perceptions associated with the impact of Mass Media on the Indian Society.
5) Analyse the broadened perspective of people
6) The researchers are sure that if the findings and suggestions given are examined along with putting an effort into a personal life, it will ensure a less anxious and equal society. The ways suggested to balance the impact can help create a distinction in young minds between reel life and real life thereby helping them live a less complicated life with a more positive, open-minded and realistic approach.

Scope of Study
1) To study marginalization of women and to ask for an unbiased, equal society
2) To understand a role of the media and its impact on people.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY:**
Researching and writing a paper on the impact of media on society will offer several significant benefits and contributions to both academic understanding and practical applications. Here are some key points highlighting the significance of this study:

1. **Knowledge Expansion:** Conducting a comprehensive study will allow researchers to delve deep into the complex relationship between media and society. This process uncovers nuanced insights that will contribute to a broader understanding of how media influences various aspects of societal life.

2. **Critical Thinking Development:** Researching the impact of media requires critical analysis of sources, data, and methodologies. Engaging in this process sharpens critical thinking skills and encourages the ability to evaluate information objectively.

3. **Informing Policy and Regulation:** The findings of this research can inform policy makers and regulatory bodies about potential benefits and risks associated with media consumption. This can lead to more effective regulations that safeguard societal interests.

4. **Media Literacy Promotion:** This research paper contributes to media literacy efforts by raising awareness about the effects of media on individuals and society. This knowledge empowers people to make informed media choices and navigate the media landscape more effectively.

5. **Social and Cultural Awareness:** By studying media's influence, researchers contribute to understanding the evolving cultural and social dynamics. This awareness helps societies adapt to changing norms and values driven by media exposure.

6. **Educational Value:** Research papers serve as educational resources for students, educators, and the general public. It provides well-researched insights that can be used for academic purposes and as references for further exploration.

7. **Identification of Trends and Patterns:** This research allows for the identification of trends and patterns in media consumption and its effects over time. This can be valuable for understanding how media's influence evolves in response to technological advancements and societal changes.

8. **Informed Media Production:** Media professionals can benefit from this research paper by gaining insights into audience behaviours, preferences, and reactions. This knowledge can guide content creation and distribution strategies.

9. **Behavioural Insights:** Studying the impact of media on behaviour provides valuable insights into how individuals and groups respond to media messages. This knowledge can be applied in areas such as marketing, advertising, and public health campaigns.

10. **Interdisciplinary Connections:** This study of media's impact bridges various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, communication studies, political science, and more. This interdisciplinary approach enriches the understanding of media's multifaceted effects on society.

In essence, the research paper contributes to the advancement of knowledge, informs decision-making, and fosters critical thinking. By exploring the complexities of media's influence, researchers contribute to the betterment of society and the responsible use of media technologies.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**
The research is of both, quantitative and qualitative. It is an investigative and analytical research based on library data and online resources. It is experimental in nature as the questionnaire has been made to get the result. Data has been gathered with an appropriate mix of primary and secondary sources. (Owing to the relative and subjective nature of the area under study, it would be impudent to not include insights from extensive previous work in this field. However, the use of such insights is for greater understanding and aid rather than as a source of concrete opinions.)

**MODE OF A COLLECTION OF THE DATA:**

1) Questionnaire (Sample survey size = 82 respondents)
2) Polls survey (Sample survey size = 60 participants)
3) Articles, Research papers, online data & book citations. The data and information for this paper have been collected through the following ways and sources:
4) Primary data for the purpose of the study has been collected through a self-administered questionnaire. A structured blend of 8 open and close-ended questionnaire format was used to collect data from the respondents which was analysed by the administration using simple data analysis and square testing. The aim behind conducting this survey was to understand the different perspective, ideologies, connection and insight people have on the gender equality and impact on the Indian Society.

Convenience Sampling: Considering the situation during the period of conducting the study and the whole nature of participants available, convenience-based sampling was therefore considered as one of the
methods to go with. With this method, excess data for reference and comparison of interpretations has been collected through conducting unfiltered and raw conversation with a total of 12 samples from different age groups, designations and state of minds to analyse the purpose of this study.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY
1) The study was conducted over a short course of time and thus is not protracted, albeit it was thorough and consistent.  
2) The sample collected is limited to a certain number of people (n=80) that does not allow us to be sure of all findings as the opinions put forward to us hold different perceptions.  
3) A large number of people filling the survey had different opinions of what can be considered as positive and what may be considered as negative, hence it was difficult to come to a concrete conclusion with respect to the impact of films on different people.  
4) The survey along with youngsters (from the age of 12-30) was filled by people above the age of 30 (not considered in the age bracket of youngsters), hence perspectives on the same topics may seem very different.  
5) Since this paper is mainly based on human behaviour and psychology, it was difficult to come to a concrete conclusion as all minds do not think similar

Data Analysis and Interpretation:
Social communication Questionnaire: The data collected from the Social Communication Questionnaire has been translated to comprehensive charts and percentages for the benefit of cross comparison between closely dependent factors. Some questions of the SCQ have personal opinions and perceptions and the answers of which have hence been used only for study and understanding of the subject (ref 22)

Q1. Which types of media do you regularly consume?

Fig 1

Interpretation:
Above chart shows that 42% of the population consume the Streaming Services, while 21% watch television. 28% people like podcasts and only 9% people still read newspapers.

Q2. Do you think your media consumption has increased or decreased over the past few years?

Fig 2

Interpretation:
The above chart shows that 64% people think there is a drastic increase. While 25% think the consumption has decreased and only 11% think it has stayed the same.
Q3. How often do you watch movies/series?

**Fig 3**

**Interpretation:**
Above chart shows that of the 82 respondents, representing 72 (87.80%) of the respondents watch Movies and only 10 (12.19%) do not watch movie.

Q4. What kind of movies/series do you like to watch?

**Fig 4**

**Interpretation:**
On the frequency of watching movies, 20 (24.39%) watch its “Comedy” and “Love Story” 38 (46.34%) watch movies “Horror” 15 (18.29%) watches it and 09 (10.98%) watch it other type of movies. This shows that greater percentage of the Peoples watch Comedy movies on regular basis.

Q5. Do you tend to copy the lifestyle and dress of your favourite characters?

**Fig 5**

**Interpretation:**
The table above shows that of the 82 respondents, 15 (18.29%) respondents said “NO”, 39 (47.57%) respondents said “Yes”, 17 (20.73%) respondents said movies can affect behaviour and dressing “Always” and 11 (13.41%) said it can affect “Sometimes”.

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Q6. Do you think Movie makers have a role to play in exporting a Gender equality and bring about social change?

Interpretation:
Of the 82 respondents, 70 (85.36%) said “Yes” to the question on whether the stakeholder, writers, producer, directors, actors/actresses, marketers and sponsors have a role to play in movies for good production, while 12 (14.64%) respondents endorsed “No” on the same question.

Q7. Does media representation promote diverse and balanced gender roles?

Interpretation:
From the above chart we can see that 64% of people think only sometimes media promotes balanced gender roles. 25% think that media does promote and only 11% think that media does not promote diverse and balanced gender roles.

Q8. Does media contribute to challenging and changing societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals?

Interpretation:
From the above chart we can see that 48% think that media does help challenge and change societal attitudes, 29% believe not, 13% think only sometimes and 11% are not sure.

Q9. Does media portray positive role models challenging gender norms and promoting equality?

Interpretation:
From the above chart we can see that 48% think that media does help challenge and change societal attitudes, 29% believe not, 13% think only sometimes and 11% are not sure.
Interpretation:
From the above chart we can see that, 48% think media portrays positive role models, 29% think not, 13% think only sometimes and 11% are not sure.

Q10. Does media encourage all genders to pursue any career path equally?

![Fig 10](image)

Interpretation:
From the above chart we can say that 64% respondents think yes to pursue any career path equally, 25% think not and only 11% think sometimes.

Q11. What do you think people can learn from the movies?

![Fig 11](image)

Interpretation:
On whether respondents people think that young people learn from movies, 28 (34.14%) respondents endorsed “Attitudes”, 15 (18.29%) respondents said “Culture Type” while 30 (36.85%) respondents said it happens “Ethics & Social value” and 9 (10.72%) were of the view that it “Other”.

• Findings:
1. The responses showed that 72 (87.80%) of the sample watched movies and series
2. Against the much-touted use of the movies to promote cultural values, social good and sound morals, more than 68 (82.92%) of the sample maintained that movies do this. Only 14 (17.08%) of them say that the movies actively do not do this.
3. 30 (36.86%) respondents learn ethics and social values from movies, as the young generation tends more towards social responsibilities.
4. From the survey we have found that 32 (39.02%) respondents sometimes get negatively effective and that will lead to changes in attitudes and behaviour of youth.
5. From the survey, we also found that media consumption, especially of OTT platforms, has increased more than other entertainment media platforms.

• Chi Square Testing:
Chi-square testing, also known as the chi-square test, is a statistical method used to determine whether there is a significant association or relationship between two categorical variables in a sample of data. It’s particularly useful when you want to assess whether observed frequencies in different categories differ significantly from what you would expect under a null hypothesis of no association. Chi-square testing is commonly used in various fields, including social sciences, biology, market research, and more, to analyse relationships between categorical variables and assess the independence or dependence of these variables.

Movies are also a great part of entertainment mass media.(ref 6), shows that youth is impacted by the audiovisuals.
This test was done to understand whether the likeliness of watching films by people has any relationship with the impact it has on them. By finding out the relationship, we can understand whether people liking to or disliking to watch films has anything to do with impacting them positively or negatively. This testing proves that it doesn't matter whether a person likes watching films or dislikes it. Either way, movies have a significant impact on them. This impact may be positive or negative, but it’s there. The testing thus proves an impact of an entertainment mass media on the population.

**Social Media Polls Survey:**

In order to understand the unfiltered perception of people about the media, this online poll survey through Instagram stories was conducted by giving examples to the audience for better understanding of the questions. Total Participants of these polls: 50

Note: These polls were conducted on the Instagram page of @akanksha_kharse. Since the majority of the followers are the youth of India, this analysis was thoroughly done to understand the current generation’s youth perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe Media on sensitive topics actually impact people in the long run or are they temporary ignitions of believing in a cause?</td>
<td>Yes, for impact</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Yes, for temporary</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever convinced yourself to do something unconventional after seeing it in a movie and hoping the same outcome as in the movie for you in real life? (E.g., something like taking a trip to Switzerland in the hope of finding your senorita)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think movies have broadened our perspective on patriarchal gender roles ? (e.g., arjun Kapoor playing a house husband in movie Ki and Ka)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you be willing to have such a relationship with your partner?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can media contribute to challenging and changing societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals?</td>
<td>Yes, through accurate representation</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>No, through avoiding the topic</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think mass media has helped us gain a welcoming perspective about the LGBTQIA+ community (web series like A Married Woman)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you be willing to be in the same social circle as theirs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This polls survey interprets the different perceptions of the mind. It also shows how media strongly impact the younger generation. The effect of the impact may be different on different people but its surely there. Through this survey, it is also understood that social media is a great way to understand the young generation. With tools like polls where people are not aware of the responses of others, they are open to giving unbiased and unfiltered responses. Social Media platforms like Instagram where this survey was conducted are also great mediums to bring the community of like-minded people together. Hence through this survey, if a community of like-minded people who are heavily impacted by mass media is formed, a lot of discussions and debates on co-related subjects can be conducted. Such communities can also help each other to fight certain negative repercussions The findings of the polls survey suggest that most of the population is impacted by films in a more progressive way.

**Media and Identity theory:**

From the above quantitative research, we observed that entertainment mass media has very significant impact in shaping our personality. Let us have a look at the qualitative analysis. In the 2008 update to “Media, Gender and Identity”, David Gauntlett, a British Sociologist argued “our heavy exposure to the media could hardly fail to affect our own way of conducting ourselves and our expectations of other people’s behaviour” A Fluid identity is an identity that is constantly changing or is constantly evolving. Both cultural identity and cultural experiences affect how individuals perceive their world, their beliefs and values.(ref 18)
Gauntlett commented on the changing representation of men and women in mainstream media. The depiction of the passive housewife throughout the twentieth century was increasingly being replaced by images of assertive women taking control of their lives, epitomised by the “girl power” endorsed by the Spice Girls.

**Constructed Identity:**
Judith Butler (Gender Trouble, 1990) has stated long ago that gender is a social construction. Simon DE Beauvoir (Second Sex, 1949) has supported it by saying that one is not born a woman, but becomes one. Although, the representation of femininity and masculinity might be shifting away from the old binary definitions, they will still offer a variety of cues we can use in the meaningful construction of our identity. The magazines we read or the films we watch all provide information about ways of living which we purposely and knowingly integrate into our own relationships and lifestyles. For instance, we value the ideas expressed by the contemporary opinion leaders who dominate our social media feeds.(Ref 18) If an influencer on Instagram or TikTok suggests we should visit a particular shop or buy a certain brand, we act on that advice. The representation of characters in a sitcom or a film could help us discover our own identity.

This concept of the constructed identity is similar to the symbolic modelling in Albert Bandura’s social learning theory (1977) which argues children learn behaviour from the role models they see on television. There are no doubt children copy the language and actions of the people they see on YouTube.

**Ashima’s Constructed Identity:**
In Jhumpa Lahiri's novel “The Namesake,(2003)” the character Ashima Ganguli embodies the concept of constructed identity, particularly as it pertains to women in a cultural context. Ashima's journey as an immigrant wife and mother, her evolving roles, and her impact on women's experiences can be analysed through the lens of constructed identity. Ashima’s experiences as an immigrant Bengali wife and mother in the United States illustrate the complexity of her constructed identity:

Cultural Identity of Ashima is deeply tied to her Bengali heritage. She faces the challenge of preserving her cultural identity while adapting to a new environment.(ref 13) Her constructed identity as an immigrant woman shapes her perspectives, values, and interactions with the world around her. As a wife, Ashima's identity is intertwined with her role as a partner to Ashoke. Her arranged marriage is a manifestation of cultural traditions, and her journey as a wife highlights the expectations and sacrifices, she navigates as part of her constructed identity. Ashima's identity evolves further when she becomes a mother. Her role as a mother is central to her identity, and she is responsible for imparting cultural values to her children. This role also demonstrates the intergenerational impact of constructed identities, as she tries to pass down her heritage to the next generation. Over time, Ashima seeks to balance her constructed identity as a traditional Bengali woman with her growing independence and adaptation to American culture. Her struggles to adapt to the new environment while retaining elements of her original identity resonate with women who navigate similar challenges.

The impact of this on women was Ashima's adherence to cultural traditions reflects the experiences of many immigrant women who are expected to maintain their heritage in a foreign land. Her experiences shed light on the challenges and conflicts women face when bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. Ashima's arranged marriage underscores the societal expectations placed on women in terms of marital roles. Her journey as a wife showcases the adjustments, she makes to fit into her husband's family and the compromises she makes to maintain familial harmony.(ref 13 ) Her role as a mother highlights the significance of motherhood in women's identities. Her efforts to pass on cultural values to her children reflect the intergenerational transmission of constructed identities and the weight of responsibility women often carry in shaping their family's cultural legacy. The struggle to balance her individuality with cultural adaptation resonates with women who experience the tension between their personal desires and societal expectations. Her journey prompts discussions about the challenges of carving out one's identity while adhering to cultural norms.

Ashima's constructed identity as an immigrant wife, mother, and cultural preserver provides a lens through which to examine the complexities that women encounter in navigating their roles and aspirations within cultural frameworks. Her story serves as a testament to the resilience, adaptability, and multifaceted nature of women's identities as they navigate the intersections of tradition, modernity, and personal growth.

**Negotiated Identity:**
The media can help us establish our own identity no matter which texts we choose to consume, there will certain representations of gender that will appeal to our own sensibilities.(ref 18) A negotiated identity is a balance between our own desires and meeting the expectations of others. Sigmund Freud in his theory of personality, has given three layers of mind, ‘Ed, Ego and Superego’ (The Ego and Id, 1923) that is a kind of negotiation among the three layers of mind. We start negotiating with our own self and act accordingly to achieve our goals. It deals with behavioural confirmation and self-verification.

**Ashima’s Negotiated Identity:**
A classic example of negotiated identity can be seen in the short LGBTQIA+ friendly web series A Married Woman(OTT , 2021). Astha, an educated, upper middle class, working woman from Delhi, is the protagonist in this series. The name of the protagonist is symbolic, as in Hindu culture, Astha means hope. The protagonist hopes for a better communication with the partner, hopes for sexual compatibility and emotional dependence from the
partner which she is unable to receive. As a married lady, Aastha, the heroine, grows into a devoted wife and mother. This denies her self-fulfilment and leads to the breakdown of the marriage institution. Her dissatisfaction leads to rebellion and restlessness. Her worry, discomfort, loneliness, and isolation make it difficult for her to speak up. She is suffocated by her family’s rising needs and “constantly adjusting to everyone’s wants.” She believes that a married woman must possess “a willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet during the day, and an obedient mouth”. As she struggles to find her place in a patriarchal environment, the series offers fascinating peeks into the workings of a woman's psyche. An upper-middle-class educated woman who is still adjusting to life in the rapidly changing Indian culture represents Aastha's personality. To find her individuality, Aastha, a married lady, confronted with the accepted standards. Aastha, who was raised in a traditional and protective household, finds herself in the most chaotic circumstances in her life. The majority of Aastha’s assertion of identity was shown through her choice of companions. Being with Rohan during her adolescence gave her a taste of independence. She tries to express herself through poetry, but they were also scrutinized by Hemant. Hemant brushed aside Aastha’s poems, which she used to express her sentiments. The character of Hemant, is that of a negligible chauvinist husband. (ref 20) He pictures woman as a mere commodity, to do household work and please the society. Aastha’s writing expresses the inner tension that Hemant would not recognize. Hemant despised Aastha’s engagement with Manch and attempted to manipulate her emotionally in the guise of children and familial obligations. Here we can see the superiority complex of Hemant, where he does not like his wife, a woman to have a voice or an opinion and to be a mere follower. Even her mother-in-law frowned and reminded her that a woman’s place is in the home, not on the streets, and that politics is not a sphere in which a woman should participate. Her mother-in-law gave her a stern look. ‘It is not a woman’s business to worry about such things,’ she stated emphatically. Aastha became more determined as a result of their wickedness. Aastha asserts herself by refusing to give in to her husband’s demands and even by gaining financial independence. Astha is seen negotiating between her desires and of her families in a very tactful way. (ref 20) She is the perfect daughter-in-law fulfilling all her duties and in college she is the liberal professor wanting to bring the change in the society. This division helps the audience understand balance and negotiate desires according to the situation. Most Indian women have no choice but to live with and accept the horrors perpetrated by their husbands since they have no other means of surviving their separation.

The series was released on the OTT platform on the occasion of Woman’s day, 8th March 2021 and was positively received by the new-age audience. It reached more audiences in just a span of a few months, which on the other hand, took the book years. The book was only critically acclaimed, whereas the series was universally accepted by the masses, unlike in 2003 the protagonist, Astha is a very relatable character to today’s homosexual community. She is the perfect example of negotiated identity, wherein she is constantly stuck in a puddle of doing everything according to patriarchal society and acknowledging her needs. This 6.5 star rated series with reviews such as “relatable”, “free from stereotypes” tell us how much the audience has liked the series and mirror with Astha’s negotiated identity.

One of the reviews from Imdb reads, ‘fails to do justice to the plot’, when investigated, it shows that Astha who identified herself connected to Pipee sexually and emotionally leaves her and chose her patriarch husband in the end, hence the review. This shows us how far we have come as a society. It is now acceptable and understood by most to leave a relationship if it concurrent with our happiness. People are now being vocal about it and unafraid to speak they’re in mind, thanks to the media. According to Imdb(2023), the rating per episode and there is quite a drop for the last episode, reason being its conventional ending. Decades of crying for acceptance of homosexuality and awareness through various mediums of media have led to people freely voicing their opinions and outwardly showing full support. This is how far we have come and how the media has affected our notions and emotional quotient.

**Collective Identity:**

In terms of media studies, collective identity refers to our sense of belonging to group, especially because there is shared interest or love for a media text described our desire for personal relationships as a key motivator for consuming the media. Fandoms are an excellent example of this cultural experience because they are such a strong influence on our identity.

Media texts shape our personal identity in lots of different ways. Following the ups and downs of characters in soap operas, such as “EastEnders(2015)” or “Coronation Street(2013)”, can provide us with ideas and solutions to our own problems in real life. We like to compare our lives, good and bad, with the content filling our social media feeds. Lifestyle magazines deliver advice on fashion, weddings, romance, fitness, food, drink, tattoos and everything else that can be commodified in our lives. Problem pages offer reassurance for even the most bizarre of situations. In other words, we can see ourselves reflected on glossy pages, television screens, mobile devices, laptops or any other black mirror.

The ideologies and values encoded in the media can reinforce our own opinions and attitudes; they can also offer an alternative perspective. The perfect example of this is the critically acclaimed movie The Great Indian Kitchen’ is originally a Malayalam film, released in 2021 on the Amazon OTT platform. Directed by Jio Baby, is a brilliant tale of a silent middle class woman sufferer called who is crushed under the chariot wheel of a patriarchal Indian
kitchen household. She is portrayed as the one who has to live and die in the kitchen in preparing food for her family.

Hamlet (William Shakespeare, 1603) blames all females, when he is disappointed by the behaviour of his mother, ‘Frailty thy name is woman’. This quote of 16th century has been in practice even today, when women are not trusted, and are described as weaker than men. If we go back to Manu Sanhita (Manu, 1913) which is supposed to be the ancient book of the Hindu religion, that defines the role of a woman as she is a possession of her father in her childhood, her husband’s possession in adulthood and son’s possession in her old-age. She is placed next to the cattle in the society. Nimisha’s portrayal is frail if compared to her physically and mentally dominating husband. Being the lead female actor, she has done a wonderful job in playing a meek and docile educated home maker.

Nimisha’s Negotiated Identity: The Malayalam kitchen is the main protagonist of the movie because the movie revolves around the kitchen. Food-plates with the leftovers, messy dining table after meals, and chocked kitchen sink are the honest companions of Nimisha. The film not only showcases Malayalam culture, but also highlights the food habits of the Indians. She is completely occupied with preparing Indian-style food that needs a lot of ingredients. She is shown busy preparing food, cleaning the dirt on the dining table and cleaning the sink, she is living a monotonous routine life. She is portrayed as a dutiful wife and her husband stands exactly the opposite, as dominating and aggressive. The mother-in-law has sacrificed her life and paid the price of serving men, so she motivates her daughter-in-law to find a job in order to divert herself from the kitchen.

The Sabarimala Sree Ayyappan tradition and its consequences on women in the family have been powerfully portrayed in the movie. Women during the fertility age are not allowed to enter the temple because the god Ayyappan is a celibate. The religion is the main culprit in treating women as Simone de Beauvoir calls it ‘the second sex’. Women are supposed to prepare the material for pooja and the rituals but are not supposed to participate in customary practices and enter into the temple’s shrine. Men while taking the vow of Ayyappan tradition, are not supposed to touch women. Nimisha, being bride, gets completely isolated by the men in the family. She is busy preparing food, but, ironically, is not supposed to confront men.

During her menses, she has been isolated from the household, considered being impure. Even today, natural body activities are considered impure in a traditional orthodox Indian family. Nimisha is asked to sleep on the floor. It’s like a solitary confinement for her.

The film truly spoke to the women community, a sense of belonging of the collective identity. The rating and critical acclamation of the film conveys without doubt that the film spoke to the marginalized, in-house women community who are constantly stuck between doing housework and doing something for themselves; (ref 19) The film helped in building a constructive identity of the audience. It highlights the fact how most women lead their day-to-day mundane life under the dominance of the male gaze, while the ending gave us hope to be able to break free from the shackles and rise like a phoenix.

Impact analysis:
The Qualitative and Quantitative sources have proved that, there is ascendency of mass media in shaping our lives. Let us now analyse this impact in a detailed manner. Movies and series are watched by everyone. We all enjoy them. From thrillers to adventures, comedy to horror, entertainment is part of everyday life and the industry is growing every single day. But let’s take a deep dive into how they affect the society.

Audiovisual input and output devices are in abundance these days and so are movies and films. The film industry is arguably one of the most impactful sectors in modern society. ‘Cathartic effects’ (Aristotle, 700 BC) have been there when we read controversial articles, they make us think, comedy films make us laugh, psychological thrillers help us see the world from an improved perspective, and historical films help us understand where we’ve come from as people. Every mass media reflects society and transforms opinions.

Influential Impact of Mass Media:
Perhaps the most influential ways in which entertainment mass media affect society is through giving individual people the opportunity to fantasize and inspire them about who they want to be. A good movie or series entertains, educates, and inspires the viewer in many ways. For example, songs have an impact on people, they make people think, be compassionate. They inspire people to help others and to do good to and for humanity.

Romantic movies, on the other hand, remind the audience why love is important and why it is worth fighting for. They make people cry and laugh at their own romantic flaws, consequently helping them understand their partners and family members more. They make life worth living and make people feel alive. That’s without forgetting how affordable transcription services have made it easy for people to watch and understand movies that teach meditation and mindfulness. There are many films whose plots give us reasons to rise up every morning and venture into the world with hope and optimism. They encourage us to conquer personal pains and to impact positively on other people’s lives. Let’s take an example of a Bollywood and Hollywood movies. Movies such as The Pursuit of Happiness (2006) and Munna Bhai MBBS (2003), for example, have inspired their viewers to work towards making the world better for everyone.

Although this might sound great, there are, as always, some negative sides to it. Take, for example, the five-time Oscar nominated, “The Wolf of Wall Street” (2013). In it is the character of Jordan Belfort: a sinister, self-centred,
arrogant, and egoistic millionaire. The movie is based on a real story and explores the life of this Wall Street broker. Throughout the movie, there are numerous scenes where the audience sees Jordan spending his money on ridiculous things, doing whatever he wants because he has money, behaving immorally, and actually enjoying his life. By seeing his extravagant lifestyle, viewers may want to be like him.

However, in that particular movie, the character feels absolutely no remorse when it comes to his actions. Jordan feels amazing while spending his money and, unlike most other films about greed, there is no lesson to learn from “Wolf of Wall Street”. At the end of the movie, Jordan does go to prison, but he states that he feels at peace there. He doesn’t learn from his mistakes that much and the movie isn’t apologetic about his greed. Someone watching that will see how great it is to be rich and arrogant and might subconsciously think that there are absolutely no downsides to that and may strive towards it. However, the positives of this one does probably outweigh the negatives.

Series like, A married woman, Romil and Jugal (OTT, 2022) tread onto the topic of LGBTQIA+ community in a very light-hearted and smooth manner. They have motivated the pride community to come out of the closet. They have shown the society that they are just like any other human being and deserve to be treated the same way.

Films and series inspire people to get in the industry and create dreams. Most actors, directors, cinematographers, etc. probably saw some film as children and were thus inspired to create something themselves. This is a very important aspect of how films affect society: they inspire. They inspire individuals to work towards their dreams and inspire them to get into the industry. Not only that, good movies teach valuable lessons. For example, the series Kota Factory (OTT 2016) show revolves around the lives and struggles of IIT aspirants who come to reside in Kota, Rajasthan to study for IIT-JEE. To describe the depressing and monotonous lives of Kota students, the show has been shot in black and white. During all the chaos and tension, they find solace in Jeetu Bhaiya, played by Jitendra Kumar, who provides solutions to their problems and inspires them to perform better. The aim of such series is to affect the viewer and to send a message, and so many individuals change their ideals and beliefs because of what they see in films and series. For example, famous actress Shraddha Kapoor was inspired to turn vegetarian after watching Leonardo DiCaprio’s “Cowspiracy(2014)” to do her share of saving animals from cruelty.

Media can create awareness of multiple aspects of life. They are not just for entertainment, because there are a lot of media which have a message in them. Some movies and series are based on social evils. They not only depict social problems but make people aware of painful experiences. People need to be reminded about the importance of formal education as well as co-curricular school activities such as art and sports. School-related media underlines this importance and give education stakeholders ideas on how to improve education systems in different parts of the world. Besides that, the Entertainment Mass media brings us to understand the negative effects of drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse. Crime and action movies and series shows also warn us about the dangers of criminal activities, terrorism, and war. It awakens the senses of empathy in people who have never experienced uncomfortable and horrific situations firsthand. They help us feel responsible for our brothers and sisters living in war-torn countries even as much as we’ve never been there ourselves. This is the awareness that has fuelled the growth of so many charity organizations and trust funds.

**Psychological effects of entertainment mass media:**
Most of us would agree that movies are a great conversation starter. We often resort to it when striking up a conversation with friends or even someone we have met recently. Movies are also a great to-go-to on a night-in with friends or alone. However, it’s a proven fact that, movies, series, books are not just entertainers, but also beneficial for overall health of individuals.

Cognitive neuroscience research demonstrates that some movies can exert considerable control over brain activity and eye movements, so besides the impact films have on the economy, society, politics, rationalism etc. It exerts a tremendous effect on people’s psychology. People are exposed to all kinds of emotions in cinema within a short span of 2 to 3 hours. Love, hatred, vengeance, savage violence, rape and many other undesirable activities are shown within such a short period of time.

Since childhood, people have proven that excessive screen time is detrimental to the brain structure and impacts one’s cognitive abilities such as memory and focus. However, as it turns out, the same is not the case with movies. Some studies show that watching movies can make people more productive and help them with mental well-being. A study conducted by researchers at University College London and Vue Cinema found that people who watched movies experienced improved mental focus and fixation on the movie. This focused watching (according to the study) helps to improve cognition and memory (LU 2011). Another study has also highlighted that liking trash films is linked to a high level of intellectual intelligence.

“To such viewers, trash films appear as an interesting and welcome deviation from the mainstream fare. We are dealing here with an audience with above-average education, which one could describe as ‘cultural omnivores’. Such viewers are interested in a broad spectrum of art and media across the traditional boundaries of high and popular culture.” (Keyvan Sarkhosh, Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, 2019)

Says has conducted similar studies and found that people who watch horror movies have above-average intelligence.
Effect of mass media on Gender Equality:

The Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) (ref 17) is a United Nations measure that assesses gender disparities in political and economic participation and decision-making. It is part of the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) used to evaluate gender equality and women’s empowerment in different countries. India was ranked at 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity – an improvement of eight places from last year, according to the annual Gender Gap Report, 2023 of the World Economic Forum (WEF). While the influence of mass media on the Gender Empowerment Index might vary depending on specific contexts and regions, there are several ways in which mass media could potentially contribute to improvements in gender empowerment. Mass media, including television, radio, newspapers, and digital platforms, can raise awareness about gender disparities and the importance of women's empowerment. By highlighting gender-related issues and inequalities, mass media can encourage public discussions and advocate for policy changes. Positive and diverse representations of women in mass media can serve as role models for women and girls, inspiring them to pursue education, careers, and leadership roles. Moreover, showcasing women in positions of power and influence in media can challenge stereotypes and traditional gender roles. Mass media has the potential to challenge harmful gender norms and attitudes that perpetuate inequality. By presenting alternative narratives and portraying men and women in non-stereotypical ways, media can help shift societal perceptions. Through investigative journalism and documentaries, mass media can shed light on gender inequalities in policies and institutions. This can pressure governments and organizations to adopt more gender-inclusive practices and policies. Mass media can amplify the voices of women’s rights activists and movements, leading to broader support and recognition of their demands for gender empowerment. Mass media can provide women and girls with access to information, including health, education, and employment opportunities, thus empowering them to make informed decisions about their lives. While mass media can have positive effects on gender empowerment, it’s important to recognize that media representation can also reinforce harmful stereotypes and perpetuate gender inequality. Therefore, it’s crucial for media outlets to be mindful of their content and strive for accurate, diverse, and equitable representations of all genders. It’s worth noting that the improvement in the Gender Empowerment Index is influenced by a multitude of factors, including government policies, legal frameworks, cultural norms, and societal attitudes. Mass media is just one of many factors that can contribute to progress in gender empowerment.

CONCLUSION:

We strongly believe in the transformative role media can play in achieving gender equality in societies. By creating gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content and breaking gender stereotypes. By challenging traditional social and cultural norms and attitudes regarding gender perceptions both in content and in the media houses. By showing women in leadership roles and as experts on a diversity of topics on a daily basis, not as an exception.

Even though it’s called ‘the seventh art’, media is surely the most influential art form. Most people don’t follow sculpture or architecture and don’t get affected by new sculptures or buildings. Entertainment Mass media such as films, adverts, songs, series etc., however, are everywhere. So many people see movies every day and the film industry are becoming bigger and more influential by the day. As per the findings of this research paper, we can conclude saying that movies and series can affect society in both positive and negative ways. They can help inspire individuals, broaden their perspective, become more open minded and expand our basic knowledge of the world around us. They can also create violence and bad habits, can make people greedier, and can send a bad message to the public. The effects that media have on society are numerous and two-fold. And as movies and series are such an impactful art form, production studios must be very careful in what they include in their productions, since even the smallest things can affect the viewer. Individuals must be careful about what they take from movies, since even the smallest thing can push them to do something bad or to become someone different.

It’s fairly clear that mass media affect society very much. Not only that, they shape the modern world we live in and help individuals develop a gender equal society. In the big picture, it might be too early to say in what way. All people can currently do is think critically and not allow films to entirely change who they are. One must limit their consumption of cinematic content in order to be more rational and at peace in their life. The impact a film has on one’s mind completely depends on their perception of good and bad. What may be good for one is something that can be bad for another. Thus, the impact media have on one’s life, whether positive or negative, is very personal to each human being.

They initiate discussions about gender equality and promoting awareness from a young age. It’s important to note that while films have the potential to promote gender equality, they can also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and reinforce gender inequality if not approached with care. Therefore, it is essential for filmmakers and the industry as a whole to be mindful of the messages they convey and strive for more inclusive and equitable representation on and off-screen.

At the end of the investigation into people perception of movies and series, it has been shown that the research was justified and necessary. It has equally accessed the rare areas of the mind. What youths, here represent think about what they watch on movies has been the central focus. Most people think that movies can affect the
behaviour and attitude of younger generation that tend to copy the lifestyle and dressing style of their favourite movie stars. The promotion of culture, morals, social values and sound morals depicted in movies with violence and strong language has effects on the minds of the audience. The stakeholders, writers, producer, directors, actors/actresses, marketers and sponsors must play a role in movies for good production. However, any consumed in excess is always considered negative for growth and development. Hence, one should consume cinematic content in limit and make a conscious effort towards differentiating between reels & real life. “Anything in excess is a poison.”— Quote by Theodore Levitt. These quotes rightly conclude the study of this paper as the impact of films on one’s mind can ultimately end up being negative as, anything consumed in excess is dangerous and can have unpredictable repercussions.

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