

**PORTRAYAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY IN THE FILMS: 'ANGRY INDIAN GODDESSES' AND 'SHUBHMANGAL ZYADA SAVDHAN'.**

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**Abstract:**

Bollywood (Hindi film industry) is one of the major impactful media in Indian society. So things depicted through this medium will affect many ways in society. In Indian society the LGBTQ community is always one of the neglected and marginalized communities. The presentation of this community is an important topic of the study. In earlier films the LGBTQ character was most of the time shown stereotypically, but the current scenario is changing and people are trying to accept LGBTQ and see them as 'we' and not as 'they'. In the present paper, the researcher tries to depict the portrayal of the LGBTQ community in the Hindi films 'Angry Indian Goddesses' and 'ShubhMangal Zyada Savdhan'. In the movie 'Angry Indian Goddesses' which was released in 2015 the lesbian couple, women troubles, and women relationship is depicted, whereas the film released in 2020, 'Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhan' gay couple and their conflict with family and society are depicted. Both movies are critically acclaimed for their theme, plot, and characters. With this, I tried to take an overview of the LGBTQ community in the Hindi film industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Key Words:** LGBTQ, Hindi Films, Social Depiction of Lesbian and Gay.

**Background:** Queer is the umbrella term that shows all traits like lesbian, gay, transgender, and others. It shows differentness in sexuality or differences in sexual orientation. Some of them are homosexual or changed their gender on their instinct. In earlier times the subject was not digestible for people. 1990 onwards study of the LGBTQ increased. Before that gay and lesbian movements were separate, but after 1990 it became a branch that leads all the differentness and uniqueness. Even in India, we can see the prejudices about the LGBTQ community. This community is always neglected and rejected on various plains. Society sees them in a very different way; society does not want to give them any independence not only regarding sexuality but also even in a financial and social phenomenon.

**Introduction:** We can see Tritiyapanthi and an Ardhnarineshwar picture in our scriptures, the important thing is that we can find the glorious or good portrayal of these pictures in the traditional scriptures; still, society is very rigid to this community. The question is why

society behaves in this way. After the colonization, we have so many foreign influences so we forget our tradition and reject the identity of the LGBTQ community. In the period of British people, they criminalized Homosexual activities as ‘against the order of nature, under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which applied from 1861. After that we have only a book published related to a gay relationship by Shakuntaladevi in 1977, afterwards, we do not have any literary work related to the LGBTQ community till 2006.

As we say, literature is the mirror of life, in some way we can say movies, films are also the mirror of life, it is not only a mirror but it is a very effective medium to impose different views on society. It is a tool to show and convince people unconsciously. In India Hindi or Bollywood film industry is one of the biggest influences on the people, there are several examples of people who try to imitate everything from the movies. So the depiction of the LGBTQ community is one of the important aspects of the study.

**Overview of the films:** There are some movies like Dostana, Student of the Year (part One and Two), Bolbacchan, and many more films we can see the LGBTQ community is always caricatured. This community is always shown in a feminine way, someone trying to molest them or through this character director shows some cringe content, these characters shown as comic relief in the movie, even these characters are called by some derogatory terms, but we can see a ray of hope in the film industry too. Nowadays some TV shows are based on transgender and some are showing a gay couple, taking into account those shows are not too appealing to the masses or not classic once, but we can find that society is changing towards the community. In the same way, we can see several movies which are really great and realistically depicted the LGBTQ community, for example, Umbaratha(Marathi,1982), Fire (1996), My Brother...Nikhil (2005), Margarita With A Straw (2014), Kapoor& Sons (2015), Angry Indian Goddesses(2015), Aligarh (2016) EkLadkiKoDekhaTohAisaLaga (2019) ShubhMangalZyadaSaavdhan (2020).

In Fire by Deepa Mehta, she tries to show a lesbian relationship between two women trapped in loveless arranged marriages. Even when homosexuality wasn't widely accepted in Indian culture, this film featured an honest and significant representation of LGBT characters.

In the movie ‘My Brother...Nikhil’ two taboo topics are brilliantly handled, the first is homosexuality and the second is AIDS. The love between Nikhil and Nigel is shown in the movie. Nikhil is diagnosed with AIDS, still, as a lover, Nigel stands with Nikhil, and they both face society together. ‘Kapoor and sons’ is a different movie, because earlier movies are done as an experiment whereas this movie is a big-budget film and big production and made for commercial success, this film is about two brothers and one of them is gay, but no one

from family knows about it, later everyone comes to know about it. 'Margarita with a Straw' is a film by Shonali Bose; Kalki plays a role of a teenager with cerebral palsy who eventually loves a blind Pakistani woman. Another thing is that the character of Kalki realizes her bisexuality while balancing her relationship with her mother. 'Aligarh' movie is based on a gay relationship, this movie is based on the real-life tragic story of Prof. Ramchandra Siras from Aligarh Muslim University whose life was turned upside down when a video of him having sexual relations with another man went viral. The film was shrouded in controversy and even banned in the city of Aligarh. In the movie 'EkLadkiKoDekhaTohAisaLaga' lesbian relationship and the journey of loneliness, shame, and their conflict with society are shown. This is the movie where Bollywood start to normalize the LGBTQ community.

### **Discussion of the select Films:**

If we discuss the 'Angry Indian Goddesses' and 'ShubhMangalZyadaSavdhan' we can find so many differences in these respected movies. On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court said that the application of Section 377 to consensual homosexual sex between adults was unconstitutional, "irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary", but that Section 377 remains in force relating to sex with minors, non-consensual sexual acts, and bestiality.

The film 'Angry Indian Goddesses' was released before 2018, so lesbian relationship was a crime by law at that time, so it is really hard to depict such a situation in a better manner, which will touch people's hearts. In the movie, Freida is the name of the protagonist, she is a fashion photographer and she invites a group of friends to her farmhouse in Goa for her marriage. The group consists of Madhurita, Pamela Jaswal, Suranjana, and Joanna, Nargis. In that farmhouse, all of them share their secrets but the biggest secret for them is, 'to whom Frieda is marrying', they are enjoying her bachelor party. Later they all come to know that Nargis and Frieda love each other, Frieda's father is against this relationship even at that time it is legal crime to be a homosexual or to marry a same-sex person. The important thing is all friends accept their decision and don't find anything wrong or bad in that story, we can see through this the conflict between the new generation and old generation on the lesbian relationship. Another thing is that it is not only focusing on homosexuality but the struggles of women's life. This movie does not have any hero, So all characters are women and related to each other, performing different roles in society such as housewife, actor, singer, fashion photographer, maid, and activist, With this depression, societal pressure, patriarchy, women harassment are the themes depicted in the movie. In the movie women's desires, dreams and fears are portrayed. At last, all the friends stand together

and said that “I kill the rapist”. So sympathy towards the same sex and revolutionary mind-set is shown in the movie. So I feel this is an important discourse in the study of LGBTQ and feminism. This is a critically acclaimed but not commercial hit film. In 2020 people watching the movie and enjoying it, but in 2015, when the movie was released very few wanted to watch this film, but society is changing and accepting the LGBTQ. The question is ‘how’. That’s why I select my second movie that is ‘Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhan’.

‘*Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhan*’ movie released in 2020 by Hitesh Kewalya and Rohit Sharma released in 2020. I can say this is a milestone in the Hindi film industry for the LGBTQ community because this movie is not experimental but commercial and starring big stars. The plot is about the love of a gay couple. Aman is an advertiser and belongs to a simple conservative middle-class family. Aman belongs to a joint family; in this movie, the Indian middle-class family is beautifully sketched. Here Aman loves Kartik, and when they are going for a marriage Aman’s father sees a kiss between them. Here the struggle starts, after this, another thing happened in the marriage of Aman’s sister, at that time, Aman’s dad wants to separate the two but opposing him they kiss each other in the marriage hall. Doing anything like this in public is taboo in our society, even this is a social offense for a normal couple, and here the director shows the gay couple doing this, so this is a different thing for an Indian society to see. Another thing is ‘acceptance’, in the movie no one wants to accept the ‘sexuality’ of Aman and want that he should marry a girl then everything will be alright, everyone thinks that he needs a doctor to make him ‘normal’ and later they come to know that, this is not a disease but an inborn instinct of sexuality. Only Aman’s sister knows about his sexuality and has accepted it since childhood. But by knowing this fact the groom’s family cancels this marriage because this is hard for them to digest that the brother of our ‘Bahu’ is gay. From this, we can again see the nature or behavior of people in society. Later the family force Aman to marry a girl, who eventually runs with the jewelry and Kartik in disguise take place of her, at last everyone come to know that this is Kartik in disguise. He again confesses his love in front of all family, again family refuses and the police come to arrest both because in the timeline it is illegal to be and live with a homosexual. But at last, the family realizes that being with the wrong partner, or being with a partner half-heartedly is of no use, it is good to be with a person of ‘once’ own choice. So the transition takes place and family permits them to live with each other. Another important scene of the film is both are waiting for the decision of the Supreme Court and then the Supreme Court decriminalizes homosexuality, and then both reconcile with the family. I feel this is a milestone in the LGBTQ film, because, this film does not show any extraordinary thing or any exaggeration.

It even doesn't want to be an experimental film. This film is just like other films which show successful love stories, with pleasant scenery, beautiful dialogues. . This film does both the jobs 'to teach' and 'to delight'.

I select these two movies focusing on both genders masculine and feminine. Even if we see the film industry most probably the gay couple are shown whereas lesbian couples are very rare in the film canon. With this, another difference is that one film is before the Supreme Court decriminalizes homosexuality and another is after it. Both have some similarities and some differences still those are great and important films for the LGBTQ community. But we need many more films like these films which show normality and not caricatured characters to normalize the LGBTQ community.

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