

**BEHIND THE SCREENS: A STUDY OF THE FILMS
OF THREE INDIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS**

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Abstract

Indian films, even after 76 years of independence and 105 years of Indian Cinema, are a predominantly male domain. The percentage of women film makers, in the industry, is a mere 9.1%. Despite this, the films directed by women have compelled audiences to take notice, because of the wide spectrum of issues they have touched upon. Three women directors, whose movies have left an indelible mark on the audiences, include Tanuja Chandra, Meghna Gulzar and Gauri Shinde. This paper analyses the work of these three women directors, for the uniqueness of their themes and the characters they have sketched, and attempts to find out, what has led to their films being etched deeply, into the consciousness of their audience. This will be analysed against the backdrop of the realities of the society from which these films emerge, and as a reflection of the gender dynamics existing in Indian society.

Keywords: Indian cinema, women, themes, characters, uniqueness

1. Introduction

Men have sight, women insight.

- Victor Hugo

Victor Hugo's observation, penned down in his memoirs, might be an apt point to begin with, when one reflects upon films made by Indian women filmmakers. Despite films forming a very important facet of the Indian society and the fact that India completed 105 years of cinema, this year, the number of women making films in India is very small. In fact, as is evident from a study released by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, in 2016, women filmmakers constituted a mere 9.1% in the Indian filmmaking industry. This disparity also leaves an impact on the art, in the form of films that are made and the representation of both issues and characters, in these films. Despite this, with a larger number of women gradually donning the hat of directors, the landscape of the art has witnessed a change and is thereby also offering, not just alternative and never before explored perspectives, but is also enriching the fabric of cinema in India. Also, since films are an important subject of

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discussion, debate, influence, trends, fashions and fads in India, this alternative outlook, offered by women filmmakers is gradually influencing the society, in many ways and stirring discussions on topics, never brought up before.

Among women directors, three filmmakers whose work has left an indelible mark, on Indian cinema are Tanuja Chandra, Meghna Gulzar and Gauri Shinde. My paper will analyse the films made by these women directors for the themes, characterisations and perspectives they offer. In all, 19 films have been studied in this project and except one film by Tanuja Chandra, (*Hope and a Little Sugar*), all the other films are made in Hindi. The stories that these women have written, for other films, or the stories that they have adapted for other media, like television, have not been included, in this research.

2. *The Choice of Themes and their Presentation*

The first area of focus is the varied themes that these women filmmakers have captured through their medium.

2.1 *Despondency of the System*

What emerges as the first strong characteristic of the films made by these three women directors is their choice of subjects. Tanuja Chandra who has been making films since 1998, has chosen a wide spectrum of issues for her films. Her directorial debut *Dushman* (1998) captures the struggles of a young girl, trying to seek justice for her twin sister, killed by a psychopath and sadist, who traps young women and murders them. Let down by the system, the girl seeks revenge, by preparing herself to face the enemy and trapping and killing the psychopath. The failure of the system and an individual's struggle against this reality is often a trope that one sees in Chandra's films. Not that this trope is absent from other films made by male directors, but these lack the power that Chandra's film encompasses. In fact, Rajkumar Santoshi's *Damini* (1993), which captures a woman's struggle, against the law and order machinery, also speaks about the battle of a young woman, trying to seek justice for her domestic help, who is raped by the protagonist's brother in law. But the melodrama, the exaggerated stock characters and the heavy reliance on men, to save the day and bring order is absent in Chandra's *Dushman*. In *Damini*, one comes across a despondent woman, heavily dependent on men to empower her, begging for justice, whereas in *Dushman*, the protagonist, supported and trained by a visually challenged army officer, prepares herself for war against her sister's psychopath killer to defeat him, at his own game. Paradoxically, 'Damini' means lightning, but the character of the protagonist – Damini, for most part in the film revels in victimisation. As against this portrayal, Chandra's protagonist picks herself up and chooses to face her enemy (*Dushman*) and take the reins of her fate in her own hands.

Speaking about taking on the system, another recent film *Talvar* (2015) directed by Meghna Gulzar deals with this theme. Based on the Aarushi Talvar murder case, which shook the nation, *Talvar* captures how life comes crashing down, on a very ordinary family, after their 14 year daughter is found murdered in her room. Worse still, before the parents can recover from this shock, they find themselves being held accountable, for the murder of not just their daughter, but also of the live-in male domestic help. The film captures the callousness and total lack of seriousness shown by the police and the power games of the investigating authorities. A combination of these turns out to be the nemesis of the couple in question, Shruti's parents in the film. The breakdown of the system has again been a main or a sub theme in many Indian movies. In fact, many clichés like 'kanoon andha hain', the fact that the

law mechanism in the wake of being unbiased is blind, even to dispensing justice, has been overused in countless Hindi films. The courtroom with its clichéd metaphors like ‘andha kanoon’, ‘insaaf ka traazu’ (the scale of justice) have conjured a dollhouse like drama of their own, such that when one actually enters an Indian courtroom, it looks far from what gets portrayed in films. In fact, as a Senior Advocate in the District and Sessions Court, Mr. Akhileshwar Dayal opines, in an interview to *The Telegraph* that, “Hindi cinema is far removed from reality when it comes to depicting courtroom scenes.” Doing away with exaggerated portrayals and the overused metaphor, of justice being blind, Meghna Gulzar comes up with a different metaphor, on which she bases her film *Talvar*. Through a conversation between two investigating officers, she reveals that what many people do not realise is that the statue of justice also holds a sword, a ‘talvar’, in one of her hands. There is a need to pay attention to this sword and prevent it from rusting. It is notable that *Talvar* is the first movie, in so many years of filmmaking, showcasing courtroom dramas, which even talks about this metaphor. Moreover, these films also stand out, in that they turn their focus to deliberate on the journey of their characters within, which brings us to another important theme - that of concentrating on the quest for identity.

2.2 *Quest for Identity*

Moving from the macrocosmic worldview of loopholes in the system, to a more microcosmic view of the individuals, who make society, another theme that underlines the work of Tanuja Chandra and Gauri Shinde is the search of an individual for his/her identity.

India has had an awkward history, as regards constructing a woman’s identity. Whether in mythology or in epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the focus has always been on men, who are brave and duty bound, whereas even strong women like Sita and Draupadi get relegated to the background. In fact, it is only recently, with alternative subaltern voices gaining significance, that alternative narratives have emerged from writers like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and others, which highlight the happenings from the point of view of a woman. Even in films, from the earliest popular Indian film, *Mother India*, the focus has always been on showcasing women in roles that produce either positive historical accounts of the position of women or then “expounding the past or potential glories of Indian womanhood.” (Leslie, 2005, Web). As Madhu Kishwar opines in *In Search of Answers: Indian Women's Voices from Manushi*,

“The pervasive popular cultural ideal of womanhood has become a death trap for too many of us. It is woman as a selfless giver, someone who gives and gives endlessly, gracefully, smilingly, whatever the demand, however unreasonable and however harmful to herself.” (1984: 6)

This idea of a woman who sacrifices herself, her desires and wishes for the well being of her family and who denies her identity is another popular trope used in Hindi films. As against this portrayal, whether it is Tanuja Chandra’s *Yeh Zindagi ka Safar* (2001), *Film Star* (2005) or *Sur* (2002) or Gauri Shinde’s *Oh Man!* (2001), *English Vinglish* (2012) and *Dear Zindagi* (2016), each film tries to probe deeper into the quest of a woman for her identity. It is interesting to note that in all these movies, the protagonists are women, who are not homemakers. In fact, even in *English Vinglish*, which speaks about how learning English empowers the protagonist Shashi to face and communicate with the world, which finally empowers her, Shashi is shown as an entrepreneur who operates from home, by making her signature ladoos and delivering them across the city. While all these women are independent financially, they are bound by social systems and their family, which is the irony that Tanuja

Chandra's and Gauri Shinde's films capture. In India, irrespective of whether one is successful as a professional, people still judge women by their ability to take care of their families. Cooking, laundry, managing children are still considered to be chores, predominantly handled by women. It is only recently with popular ad campaigns like 'share the load', with its emphasis on men sharing the responsibility, for doing the laundry, that one sees the beginning of a movement towards some amount of equality on the home front. Even women like Indra Nooyi, CEO, Pepsico have gone on record saying in the context of maintaining the balance between work and home, stating that "women can't have it all" and they need to co-opt to make their identity in the workplace and break the proverbial glass ceiling.

In fact, Gauri Shinde comments on the glass ceiling pertaining to the filmmaking profession, in *Dear Zindagi*, where the protagonist, who is a cinematographer, struggles to both find and make her identity, in a male dominated industry, trying to convince people that she wants to make a film of her own someday. One sees the protagonist's frustration, against an industry that is so dependent on the talent of the 'other' gender, but wants to be at the forefront and call the shots, and not let a woman take that role. In fact, even within the Indian film fraternity, certain jobs such as film technicians, lighting artists and makeup artists are still male dominated terrain, as an article in *Quartz India* states.

Moreover, in this quest for identity portrayed in these films, one also witnesses women helping other women discover and make their identity, rather than being mute spectators, waiting for life to happen. This is a welcome change from most other films, where mothers-in-law are pitted against daughters-in-law and women, even within the family, vie for the attention of the men. In Tanuja Chandra's *Film Star*, one observes how a film star leverages her position in the society to help another woman, who is sentenced to death for murdering her abusive husband. The task is not easy for the film star, as she faces a lot of flak, for bringing the truth to light. In the end her effort for seeking justice for the woman in question, bears fruit. Similarly, in Chandra's *Yeh Zindagi ka Safar*, a successful singer, who realises by accident that she is adopted, helps her biological mother to face the person who raped her. She also gives her the courage of conviction, to breathe and live for herself, in society and not hide behind the walls of the cloister, where she has been confining herself and teaching music to the church choir in a small town. The singer, in fact undertakes the journey of searching for her mother, out of a curiosity to learn why she abandoned her. And after she learns how tragically her mother was raped, she is determined to make her mother feel empowered and not ashamed, for the fault was not hers at all.

2.3 Social Issues not spoken of before

This sense of togetherness, in fact, this world view where things are not necessarily presented as Manichean opposites, is what the movies made by these filmmakers capture. Meghna Gulzar's directorial debut *Filhaal* (2002), where she deals with the issue of surrogacy, is also a tale of friendship between two women, one of whom decides to become the surrogate mother of her best friend's child, because the friend is declared medically unfit to bear a child. Speaking about such issues, way back in 2002, where surrogacy was not so openly discussed as it is today, was a bold step in itself. This, in fact, poses a stark contrast to the Mustan Burmawalla directed *Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* (2001), with its overtones in the title itself, which means keeping things under wraps. A haphazard take on surrogacy, *Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* talks about how a couple takes the help of a prostitute to serve as the surrogate mother of their child and how this ends, in a love triangle of sorts. As against this, the dynamics between the two friends in *Filhaal*, the natural dilemmas and questions that

occur to a woman, who is not able to bear a child and the changing dynamics between the two best friends and the spouse are captured without any melodrama or exaggeration. Till recently, when three popular Bollywood stars adopted children through surrogacy, the issue was not too talked about in the Indian context, and even when it was talked about there was a great deal of secrecy and confidentiality maintained about the identity of the surrogate mothers. Definitely, way back in 2002, making a film on the issue of surrogacy was revolutionary in itself. More importantly, the film also captures how different sections of the society view surrogacy. Apart from men, some women professionals are seen scoffing at this action in the film, thus highlighting the position of women as being twice marginalised, once through patriarchal structures and second by members of their own gender. Other than this depiction it is also necessary to focus on the portrayal of women in the films made by these women directors.

3. *Portrayal of women*

As regards the portrayal of women in films, there are different issues that need to be deliberated upon.

3.1 *Strong Women with a Difference*

Apart from the themes of these films, one also needs to focus on the portrayal of their characters. Many Indian films like *Mardaani* (2014), *Tejasvini* (1994) and *Jai Gangaajal* (2016), to name a few, capture women in strong roles, like that of a cop. The irony is that this portrayal is again more macho, or akin to capturing the language, heart and feelings of a man, in the body of a woman. However, this portrayal needs to be understood against the backdrop of the perception and depiction of women, in Indian culture, art and society.

In Indian mythology, art, films, and even media like advertising, women are often portrayed either as goddesses or as vamps. The male identity is a fixed point around which the female identity assumes definition. Men have a distinct identity, which defines their existence and women's identity gets more or less defined by the role they play, either as a daughter, sister, mother, wife etc. These extremes have always existed in the Indian society, and consequently exist even in cinema. The contradiction also continues in the interpretation of values. Ambition as a trait is hailed when possessed by men, but is despised as a trait in women. Ambitious women still bear the brunt, in both the professional and personal space. In the professional space, they are labeled as exploitative or strict bosses and in the personal space, they are criticised for having ignored their families, and not struck a work-home balance, unlike other homemakers who sacrifice their careers, for the well-being of their families. Sacrificing one's life and identity for one's family is considered to be a hallmark of the Indian woman. Thus, the Indian ethos, per se, is a complicated mix of numerous contradictory dynamics and interpreting the meaning of a woman's identity can be quite a challenge in life itself, let alone in any form of art. In film as an art form, for instance, one has witnessed the struggle faced by movies like Deepa Mehta's *Fire* (1996) or the more recent film *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2016), which dealt explicitly with women's exploration of their sexuality. It was only after much debate, discussions and controversies that these films were finally released with numerous cuts by the Censor Board.

Thus, against this backdrop, one can very well understand that portrayal of strong women in films has been quite a challenge. However, one of the ways this has been interpreted or negotiated by certain filmmakers is by portraying strong women who are almost like men. For example, in *Mardaani*, which means 'like a man', the protagonist Shivani Shivaji Roy is seen

mouthed expletives and walking the talk of a hardened male cop. This portrayal of a woman in a strong role poses a stark contrast to Tanuja Chandra's portrayal of a lady investigating officer in *Sangharsh* (1999), trying to get to the root of the kidnappings of several children, at the hands of a psychopath. Whether it is the protagonist's dilemmas, her weaknesses, her struggle with the men in the system or her vulnerabilities, the portrayal is very realistic. In fact, it is interesting to note, that a simple search on Google with the key words 'female cop in Indian films' throws up three out of seven articles bearing the title 'Hottest female cops in Bollywood movies' and the adjective 'tough' is mentioned in only one article. This outlook of making the cop look more glamorous is what one finds in most other movies like *Dhoom 2* (2006) and *Dus* (2005). The only exception is Robby Grewal's *Samay* (2003) where the filmmaker focuses more on the woman cop solving the mystery, and on depicting how she is at the top of her game. Here the focus is strictly on the story line; no glamour, no objectifying, no song and dance sequences are at work.

3.2 Breaking the stereotype

This glamorous portrayal of women is also seen at play, when directors have tried to portray them as spies and Meghna Gulzar's *Raazi* (2018) makes a mark, in painting a different picture, with the same canvas and colours that others pursuing her art have been using. Juxtapose the portrayal of Sehmat in *Raazi* with women spies in movies like *The Hero: Love Story of a Spy* (2003), *Ek Tha Tiger* (2012) and *Agent Vinod* (2012), one observes that the women in these three movies are playing second fiddle. Also since *Raazi* is set in the India and Pakistan of 1971, there is no scope in the narrative for women wearing military pants, low cut vests and high leather boots, like in most other Bollywood spy movies. The protagonist Sehmat is at work most of the time in a grey burkha, delivering codes to ordinary and mundane looking grocers and vendors, who then communicate them to the Indian side. In an instant Sehmat changes to the more petite and demure wife and daughter-in-law, in her Pakistani household, such that no one can suspect that her heart beats for her nation, which is across the border and she is willing to sacrifice anything and anybody, for the safety of her country. Unlike the women spies in most other action movies, who kill guiltlessly, as if pulling the trigger in a video game, one sees the tender Sehmat's conscience pricking her, when she has to kill the oldest serving domestic help in the house and pick up the courage to eliminate her own brother-in-law, who is close to discovering her identity.

This painting of characters with their vulnerabilities and flaws is what makes them human and relatable. Another such portrayal is in Gauri Shinde's *Dear Zindagi*. The movie revolves around Kaira who experiences insomnia, due to the turmoil in both her personal and professional life and visits a psychologist, who uses unconventional ways to treat her. Kaira is portrayed as a bunch of nerves but she does not display quirks or peculiar habits that have defined the characters of movies like *Krazzy 4* (2004), *Hasee Toh Phasee* (2014) or *Ghajini* (2008), which has made the portrayal of these characters almost comical. Despite looking perfectly normal, within, Kaira's world is in chaos. This is another first in Hindi cinema. Moreover, the portrayal of the psychologist treating Kaira is also unique. Till date, the portrayal of psychologists or counselors, in Indian cinema has been anything but realistic. In fact, Girish Banwari observes how popular movies like *Banaras* (2006), *Bhoot* (2003), *Darling* (2007), *Hawa* (2003), *Hum Tum Aur Ghost* (2010), *I See You* (2006), *Naina* (2005), *Phoonk* (2008) and *Talaash* (2012) have contributed to painting an "unflattering image of the psychiatrist" and more often than not, "supernatural happenings and witchcraft almost always are shown to supersede the psychiatrist's rationality" (2014, Web article). He further laments that "psychiatrists are seen in a negative light by the community, and popular cinema's caricatured portrayal may only perpetuate the prevalent negative perceptions" (Banwari,

2014, Web article). *Dear Zindagi* is a very bold exception, in that it also portrays how seeking help from a counselor helps Kaira put things in perspective, and, in fact, drives home the point about the value of counselors in ‘reel’ life, let alone real life.

Gauri Shinde’s film *Dear Zindagi* is also significant, in that it offers a lot of food for thought, in the matter it presents in its conclusion. Kaira, the protagonist, finally lives her dream by making her first film on Dona Maria, the first ever woman sergeant in the Portuguese army to fight a war. Although this character is fictional, it bears resemblance to the real life Dorothy Lawrence, an English reporter who fought in World War I, dressed as a man. Although Dona Maria’s story is not focused upon in the narrative of the film, when this researcher tried to find out about the real life inspiration behind this sequence, sadly there was only one blog which had a mention of Dorothy Lawrence. By telling the story of Dona Maria, even if it is told in passing, Shinde draws our attention to the fact that, apart from the role models that have been captured, both in literature and history, we do not know and even attempt to know strong women like Dorothy Parker.

In fact, this resonates what Ira Mukhoty speaks about, in her book *Heroines: Powerful Indian Women of Myth and History*. In this book, Mukhoty discusses the lack of Indian women role models, as also the disparity in representation of facts, related to the existing ones, in historical and mythological accounts as: “History, where it is written, is naturally that of the victor.....it is suspect and filled with prejudice” (Mukhoty, 2017: xxxiii). What Mukhoty also points out in her book is the fact that, although “Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, that most faultless of modern heroines... has been called an ‘Indian Joan of Arc’, there are only a few novels, plays and biographies” (Mukhoty, 2017: xxi) which capture her story. On the other hand, as Mukhoty points out, “Joan of Arc has inspired over twelve thousand volumes in French alone, not to mention a long list in English, and it is said to be the most written-about individual of the fifteenth century” (Mukhoty, 2017: xxii). Moreover, one also needs to discuss, how women have been captured in their personal spaces in films and the next section would be crucial in bringing that to the fore.

4. Portrayal of Family Structures

Zooming out from the larger dynamics of women in history and zooming in, to capture the more subtler dynamics of portraying family structures, the films of Tanuja Chandra, in particular, are in complete contrast to filmmakers who showcase the big Indian family and consequently big fat Indian weddings, ceremonies, etc. Indian is well known for its joint family structure, where one witnesses grandparents, sometimes great grandparents, siblings and their families staying under one roof. However, although in some communities, this is still prevalent, one has witnessed a steady movement towards a nuclear family structure. Also, unlike before, divorces are more frequent and single motherhood or fatherhood has also become more acceptable. This finds its reflection even in cinema. Be it movies like *Dushman*, *Sangharsh*, *Sur* or *Zindaggi Rocks*, the family structure is diametrically different. Single mothers, widows, grandmothers, working sisters who strive to earn their livelihood occupy centre stage. Men are supporting characters in her films. The same sentiment echoes even in the films of Gauri Shinde and Meghna Gulzar. Gauri Shinde’s *English Vinglish*, although showcases the journey of Shashi, the central character, against the backdrop of her niece’s wedding, Shashi’s story remains in focus and does not get relegated to being a subtheme. The wedding preparations and other festivities remain as a backdrop, till the end of the film.

This worldview of letting women tell their stories, and not let men dominate their narrative, brings to mind what Virginia Woolf once said about the paradox of a woman’s life, in *A Room*

of *One's Own* – “Men need her, love her, worship her and write about her. But they do so in relation to their own selves” (Woolf, 1989: 41). More often than not, women’s stories become important not for their own sake, but in the way their stories affect men. And like stated earlier in this paper, even the stories of Draupadi and Sita, characters from Indian epics, have been told from their own perspectives only recently.

In fact, this issue of women being relegated to the background, also percolates in advertisements or posters which popularise women oriented films like *Pink* (2016) or *Dangal* (2016). As a researcher on Gender Studies and Literature, Dr. Preeti Shirodkar, once pointed out in a talk on representation of women in the media, that the male characters in these two films occupy centre stage, even in the posters and hoardings of these films, while women surround them, as if being relegated to the backdrop, in their own story. Moreover, there are also some significant differences in the way certain other elements like song and dance sequences (which are quite integral to Indian films) are handled in the films made by women directors.

5. Conspicuous Absence of Means of Objectification

Apart from the themes and characterisation, one more important point of difference in the movies made by Tanuja Chandra, Meghna Gulzar and Gauri Shinde is the absence of what have been popularly termed ‘item numbers’ in their movies. An ‘item number’ is a term used to refer to songs, which mostly aim at objectifying women. This generally gets manifested in the form of a song, where a woman is portrayed as the seductress, trying to lure a male audience, usually shown drooling greedily over her beauty. Such sequences have become a very popular feature in Hindi films and many a times they have lyrics that aim to reduce women to objects of desire and equate them with objects like ‘adhesives’ and pain relieving balms. They also become the point of origin of a number of lewd adjectives like ²‘Chikni Chameli’, ‘Chamma Challo’, ‘Bijli’, ‘Baby Doll’, to name a few, by which countless women are addressed and harassed in real life, with due thanks to the popularity of these songs. However, in none of the 19 movies studied in this intervention was there an ‘item number’. In fact, even in movies like *Zindaggi Rocks* and *Sur*, which revolve around music and dance, none of the songs have lyrics that in any way objectify women. In fact, many films like *Agneepath* (2012), *Ra One* (2011), *Dabangg* (2010) and *Dabangg 2* (2012) etc. have worked on the box office, merely on the popularity of these ‘item numbers’, despite actually lacking in a powerful story line.

6. Conclusion

Competing with films that claim success by sheer number crunching, at the box office, the films made by women directors are gaining prominence and winning accolades, the world over. Inspired by the reception that the films of women directors have received, the craft is now being pursued gradually, by other young women filmmakers, too. In fact, even as regards number crunching Meghna Gulzar’s *Raazi*, as of September 2018, stands fifth in its worldwide box office collection. Other than the number game, filmmakers like Nandita Das, who have starred in films with bold subjects, are continuing to don the director’s hat and make movies like the September 2018 released biopic *Manto*, which has been very well received in film festivals like the Toronto Film Festival and will be soon be screened at the BFI London Festival and Singapore South Asian Film Festival. Moreover, women directors

² ‘Chikni Chameli’, ‘Chamma Challo’, ‘Bijli’, ‘Baby Doll’ are all adjectives which roughly translate to a woman who is a seductress and who is physically desirable.

are also adapting to the digital format. Tanuja Chandra's *Silvat* was released on Zee5 in September 2018 and Zoya Akhtar's film was released on Amazon Prime, as a part of the *Lust Stories* collection in June 2018. Working behind the screens, these women directors are definitely carving a niche, not just for themselves, but are lighting up the screens with alternative narratives; narratives which have so far remained untold.

Moreover, gradually, more women are taking up not just direction, but also entering the filmmaking arena as lyricists, editors, producers and screenplay writers. This is also bound to have an impact on not just the evolution of the craft, but also the content that gets generated and the perspectives it takes. Additionally, the portrayal of people and issues is also undergoing waves of change, through its influence from other media like advertisements, or movies that are released online. This, too, is bound to influence the medium of filmmaking, in the years to come, and is bound to be a space to watch out, for avid researchers from varied fields of study.

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- Agneepath.** Directed by Karan Malhotra, performances by Hrithik Roshan, Priyanka Chopra and Sanjay Dutt, Dharma Productions, 2012.
- Banaras.** Directed by Pankaj Parashar, performances by Urmila Matondkar, Ashmit Patel and Dimple Kapadia, Setu Creations, 2006.
- Bhoot.** Directed by Ram Gopal Varma, performances by Urmila Matondkar, Ajay Devgn, Nana Patekar and Rekha, Varma Corporation, 2003.
- ChoriChoriChupkeChupke.** Directed by Abbas Burmawalla, performances by Salman Khan, Rani Mukerji and PreityZinta, Eros Entertainment, 2001.
- Dabangg.** Directed by Abhinav Kashyap, performances by Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha and Arbaaz Khan, Arbaaz Khan Productions, 2010.
- Dabangg 2.** Directed by Arbaaz Khan, performances by Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha and Arbaaz Khan, Eros International, 2012.

Damini. Directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, performances by Meenakshi Sheshadri, Rishi Kapoor and Sunny Deol, Red Chillies Entertainment, 1993.

Dangal. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, performances by Aamir Khan, Sakshi Tanwar and Fatima Sana Shaikh, Aamir Khan Productions, 2016.

Darling. Directed by Ram Gopal Varma, performances by Fardeen Khan, Esha Deol and Isha Koppikar, Balaji Motion Pictures, 2007.

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Film Star. Directed by Tanuja Chandra, performances by Mahima Chaudhary, Priyanshu Chatterjee, Vasundhara Das, Aryan Vaid and Jatin Grewal, Sahara One Motion Pictures, 2005.

Fire. Directed by Deepa Mehta, performances by Nandita Das and Shabana Azmi, Kaleidoscope Entertainment, 1996.

Ghajini. Directed by A.R. Murugadoss, performances by Aamir Khan, Asin and Jiah Khan, Geetha Arts, 2008.

HaseTohPhasee. Directed by Vinil Mathew, performances by Sidharth Malhotra, Parineeti Chopra and Adah Sharma, Dharma Productions, 2014.

Hawa. Directed by Guddu Dhanoa, performances by Tabu, Shahbaaz Khan and Mukesh Tiwari, Jeet's Entertainment, 2003.

Hope and a Little Sugar. Directed by Tanuja Chandra, performances by Mahima Chaudhary, Anupam Kher, Vikram Chatwal and Suhasini Mulay, Front Row Filmed Entertainment, 2008.

Hum Tum aur Ghost. Directed by Kabeer Kaushik, performances by Arshad Warsi, Dia Mirza and Boman Irani, Movie Vision Entertainment, 2010.

I See You. Directed by Vivek Agrawal, performances by Arjun Rampal, Vipasha Agarwal and Chunky Pandey, Chasing Ganesha Films, 2006.

Jai Gangaajal. Directed by Prakash Jha, performances by Priyanka Chopra, Prakash Jha, Manav Kaul, Play Entertainment, 2016.

Just Married. Directed by Meghna Gulzar, performances by Esha Deol, Fardeen Khan and Neelima Azim, Pritish Nandy Communications, 2007.

Krazzy 4. Directed by Jaideep Sen, performances by Juhi Chawla, Irrfan Khan and Arshad Warsi, Yash Raj Films, 2008.

Lipstick Under My Burkha. Directed by Alankrita Shrivastava, performances by Ahana Kumra, Ratna Pathak Shah, Konkona Sen Sharma and Plabita Borthakur, Prakash Jha Productions, 2016.

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Ra. One. Directed by Anubhav Sinha, performances by Shah Rukh Khan, Arjun Rampal and Kareena Kapoor, Red Chillies Entertainment, 2011.

Raazi. Directed by Meghna Gulzar, performances by Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, Soni Razdan, Rajit Kapoor, Shishir Sharma and Ashwath Bhatt, Junglee Pictures, 2018.

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Samay. Directed by Robby Grewal, performances by Sushmita Sen, Lucy Bartholomew, Tushar Dalvi and Jackie Shroff, iDream Productions, 2003.

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