

## An Analysis of Romantic Harassment in Contemporary Tamil Movies

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### Abstract

Cinema is a reflection of society, and it evolved a great way as a recreational entertainment platform around the world. The popular Kollywood industry has grown in early 20<sup>th</sup> century and established a strong global presence in contemporary period. This communication helps to educate society with facts, information, and moral values. Cinemas connect different cultures around different society through fictions or reality-based fictionalised stories. Many world, national and regional films talk about the social violence based on targeting a particular gender in the manner of comedy, romantic and emotional.

In South Indian movies, the portrayal of women chased and harassed by ignored ‘so-called’ lover who stalks around her is not in right path to lead the audience. Urging things will continuously stay and it affects the film industry and reality. The glorifying thing is that it is ultimately accepted, normalised and encouraged by the movie goers.

The contemporary Tamil movies *Love Today*, *Remo*, *Tharamani*, *Kaatru Veliyidai*, *Iraivi*, *Paruthi Veeran*, *Kavan*, *Idharkku thanea Aasaipattai Balakumara* are challenging, and they offer analytical part to understand the social problems and cultural changes in the society.

The Cognitive theory is used to identify the social problem of the movies and analyse the basic human needs. The descriptive study analyses the movie concepts in the name of modernity which affects and forgets the traditional relationships and abuses the characters

through cool and sarcastic comedies. Present filmmakers have to learn lessons from the elders to explore the gender equality without spoiling a character's dignity and relationship values.

**Keywords:** Cinema, Tamil Movies, Culture, Romance, Harassment, Society.

## **Introduction**

Cinema is all about an illusion which is the filmic narrative to explore the 'reality' through selected visuals and audios, which is used as a medium to express different aspects of life in society. It indirectly serves as a means for the uplift of a society by setting aside all its defects and drawbacks by the development of scientific technology and skills involved in it and made changes from periods of time. The creative caption, the attractive theme, the excellence of the action, part of actors and actresses, the dialogue, the songs and music, and the photography, etc., inspire the mass audience without any caste, colour, and creed and language disparities. The cinema helps us to educate and entertain the audience. Prominently communication process is used for the evolution of Indian cinema.

The third decade of the twenty-first century has an opportunity to explore the different themes and emerging new trends within Tamil cinema. Tamil cinema faces many criticism because the controversies and the dominance, identity of transformations to determine the impact of tremendous changes in film industry. The earliest forms of structural and societal problems like class, caste, gender, urban and rural, locality, regional and national, political affiliation and ethnicity were the stereotypes in Tamil Cinema (Selvaraj Velayutham and Vijay Devadas 2021).

The contemporary films portray the modern adaptations and offer significant values about social, cultural, and political trends which happen surrounding us. The Classic adaptation of Universal value mirrors the Desire to be identified. The gender adaptation is one of the Classic adaptations in the present world. The feminisation and male protagonists always play a safe and ideal fanciness with his own customs of female counterpart. The contemporary movie displaces the myths of sexual equality and asexuality. In the filmy text masculinisation represents powerful, wild, rule and threatening. Ambiguity - double meaning a term used for film analysis is also applied for characterization, narrative, types of shorts, space, and time. (Susan Hayward, 2002)

## **Cinema Not Only Reflects Culture, It Also Shapes Culture**

The Indian cinema industry focuses on modernisation, urbanization, secularisation, Pan-Indianism, westernisation, etc. The impact of fashion in cinema reflects politics, social and cultural values. The sexuality is conveyed through signs and symbols in the art form of dance and songs. Along with glamour is another undertone of film makers. The huge part of sentiment is a significant aspect of attracting the audience in Indian cinema. (K. Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake, Dr. Ranjith Krishnan KR, 1998)

The survey said 90% of film director are men and a few of them were in women. The Indian cinema portraits very much bad role played by women more than good ones. The best

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roles for women include a mother, wife, daughter and sister, the modern cinema breaks the stereotypes of women and portrays them as sentimental, caring, honesty and lovable. In another part of morality, it shows the bad roles of women as single, widowed, Westernized, aggressive (gender equality), and independent. etc. The habit of smoking and drinking are always projected as a characteristic of bad women in Tamil film industry. (Urivashi Butalia, 1984)

## **Review of Literature**

The form of Tamil cinema constructed through production and music brought in new directors. And the new story telling takes us into the next level of Kollywood industry. The realistic movies reflect the social problem of class, caste, and politics in present world. (Stephen Putnam Hughes, 2010)

The mode of realistic spectatorship is associated with the social group of filmic form. The gender desires are debateable, when it changes into film form that became contradictory. The film realism is holding on to different equalization by the film makers and audience. Which is 'real' or 'unreal' which is the argument among viewers about the experience of reality portrayed in the movie. (Constantine V Massive, Melanie A Dean, 2007)

From mid 2000s, the Kollywood industry has been changed into a next level in narration, thematic, content, tone, masala formula and zero centric movies. Since 2011 the commercial movie was strongly placed, and it attracted the audience. Masculinity is shown to be the powerful filmic content and visual style. (Vasugi Kailasam, 2017)

The post-Dravidian movement has a Tamil new wave and a code which is hegemonic Tamil masculinity. (Sreeram Gopalkrishnan, 2019). In the language of Dravidianist politics, gender equality and identity play an important role. Women played a central role and are shown to be politically courageous. Thus, strong identity is placed for women in contemporary Tamil cinema. (Constantine V Nakassis, 2015)

This present study explores the sexual violence in Tamil movies, identifies the themes of sexual violence, stalking, rape, comedy and blurring lines between sexual violence and pre-marital sex. Another form of sexual violence is part of courtship. Sometimes, rape is showed as comedy scenes; the meaning of portrayal here is different from both. However, this is indeed debatable. The relationship values are identified through their love, care, intimacy, sexual desire, protective, trust and understanding, but the way the respect is shown on their partner should be comfortable and is necessary in a relationship of values. (Premalatha Karupiah, Sundramoorthy Pathmanathan, Bala Raju Nikku, 2022)

The justification of Misogyny is related to sexism which provides that men are naturally superior to women. In Tamil cinema, the misogyny in break-up songs explore the women are cheaters, hurters, and selfish which all heroic lines. Misogyny has received very limited discussion of movie songs against women among the scholars. There are three themes about Mistrust of women: women's body is a sexual object, friendship vs love, vilifying all women. In every film the hyper masculinity of Misogyny is most attractive form of gender

because women would eventually fall in love with the 'good' man. (Premalatha Karupiah, 2020)

The Audience plays a vital role of Indian cinema, and the film makers understand audience expectation of emotion, love, actions, fights, and songs. All these help them in a different way. Particularly Indian cinema explores the language, politics, religion and culture, these were made in entertainment stands as well as controversial aspects. The cinema adopts every situation on contemporary lifestyles and some films may or may not be accepted by the people in their perception (Danny Bowes, 2013).

## **Methodology**

**This section explores a detailed description about the research methods, techniques, and analysis.**

Tamil movies are represented as realistic cinemas that portray the society with a wide variety by using different techniques and modes. Mainly this research discusses the contemporary Tamil movies in terms of Romantic Harassment which creates an impact on audience. This qualitative study is used to identify the descriptive analysis which relates to the area of research.

## **Objective**

- To understand the concepts of contemporary Tamil movies.
- To analyse the relationship values portrayed in Tamil cinema.
- To examine the relationship harassment in Tamil cinema.
- To analyse the future cinema and the audience.

## **Research Question**

- How the movies visualise the social and cultural changes through characterisation?
- What are the factors that arouse in the concept of relationship harassment?
- How the movies affect the audience by the heroism?
- What are the socially relevant issues the film discusses?

## **Hypothesis**

- H1- The entertainment of movie changed the mind of the audience and their personal life.
- H2- Cinema is one of the keys to increase the crime rates.
- H3- The audience does not have the knowledge about the criminal laws against stalking, offensive words, etc.
- H4- Cinema influences the audience into a dramatic world.

## **Theoretical Framework**

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Cognitive research tradition of film theory originates in 1980's. The theory focuses on experience and reaction of audience with the relationship of film content and viewing experience, which closely connects with cognitive science and analytic philosophy. The mental activity of audience's brain takes place within particular central objects. The criticism is one of the cognitive perceptions which include a constructive process for developing cognitive conclusion.

## **Research Design**

The study deals with the research design in which the secondary data are collected from the subject matter. The present study is descriptive analytical research that helps to gather already available information, source factors and discuss the subject of critical evaluation. The movies were taken for the analysis and discussed about the theme of the research.

## **Analysis**

This section deals with the competence of technical elements, and underlying meaning of movie concepts about romantic harassment. Understanding the movie concepts determines the reflection of an individual lifestyle in day-to-day life and social changes in contemporary period. The technical elements of dialogue, storytelling and song lyrics are all focused in the study.

## **Stalker as a Hero**

In Indian cinema stalking is a casual and common thing to the audience. In Kollywood movies, the next level of stalking is a romantic deed and is explored in the positive way. From the beginning the stalker-hero decides to follow heroine without her concern which is the starting stage of a relationship. Not only in movies but also in reality, women faced many difficulties through the stalking. The biggest platform of social media is also one of the easy ways of stalking to approach her and torture her. This happened from early cinema but now it takes into the next stage of heroism.

Some of the contemporary movies are taken up for the analysis and discussions.

The movie *Idharkuthane Aasaipattai Balakumara* (2013) is one of the funniest and entertaining movies in recent days. The director Gokul created some weird scenes and unusual characters with strange attitude. This study focuses on the main character Hero Kumaravel who falls in love with Kumudha. The hero's one-sided love was continuously rejected by the heroine. In this movie Hero's relationship is portrayed as a torture. It might be a humorous entertaining movie, but Hero's behaviour about drinking and stalking behind heroine Kumudha is the worst thing in the movie. Most importantly the song lyrics *Pray panuven* fully written against lover Kumudha does not have a life anymore because she rejects him. Finally, the heroine accepts his love which is creating a huge impact on audience mind and the audience also may follow and apply the dramatic movie concept in their personal life.

In *Rajinimurugan* (2016), some selected dialogues are targeted on a woman who is not accepting a hero's love. Some cheap words and insults on women characters are used in the comedy manner. Another movie *Sattai* (2012) is about young school going student who faced problems through a classmate. He tortures her through stalking, and touching without her permission, and irritates her in the name of love.

In *Vinnai Thandi Varuvaya* (2010), a stalking hero follows a girl, who is not interested in relationship. The movie talks about these kinds of scenes and influences audience with romantic heroism. In *Three (3)* (2012), teenage school going students are attracted by love. A boy attracted by a girl is a normal thing but if continuously follows her and tries to force her to accept his love is not a good manner for school going students.

These kinds of movies create impact on many school going students' mind. They feel these things are enjoyable and pleasurable in their particular age. *Manam Koththi Paravai* (2012) movie creates a false love story, kidnapping her to marry without her permission. *Oru Kal Oru Kannadi* (2012) Stalker hero forces his friend to accept his love and insults women in the manner of body shaming through the comedy.

### **Women as a Sexual Object**

In Tamil cinema the portrayal of women (Mother, Sister, Lover, Wife, Friend, Daughter, etc.) are always presented in the positive way like kind, polite, respect, pure and virgin. The negative role of women represents strong and bold characters like prostitute, widow and single women who are characterised by their desire of sex. The cinema always projects a woman as a sexual object. The glamour songs show heroine's beauty of her structure body which the audience likes. In reality, the reflection of cinema always influences the audience.

The director KV Anand's movie *Kavan* (2017) is one of the Masala movies. It talks about the media and business. Another engaging part of the movie is filled with hero Thilak and heroine Malar relationship. The movie visualises criminal deeds. Hero kisses and hugs another woman intensively in front of his girlfriend, which is a cool and normal thing in male's perspective, but this emotionally and mentally hurts a woman. The value of relationship is always the trust and honesty. Here these kinds of scenes create a big impact on the audience. Is it cheating? Or women can be projected as a sexual object?

In the present days, cheating has become a common thing in the relationship. People should understand the difference between cheating and honesty in love. The modern culture teaches the fake relationship and gives more pleasure than true one which spoils the true bonds. The cinema easily spreads these kinds of activities among audience which spoils all the society's customs.

*Adithya Varma* (2019) is a romantic abuse movie, and it shows the difference between sex and love. The hero rejected by the lover gets addicted into alcoholic and enjoys the pleasure of sex with another girl who forgets his past love. *Trisha Illana Nayanthara* (2015) visualizes the love exploration through comedy and romantic manner. A hero with two

heroine and centric problem of sex is the main concept in the movie. An adult film explores the concept of breakup which does not result in ending life, but the characters are ready for next love. Modern society teaches this to the audience. The movie song *En bittu padam di* objectifies women porn, which sung openly about a girl.

### **Misogynist**

In the society, the women's dominance is a debatable topic, and a man wants her girl like a toy. A man hates her freedom, respects, dream, desires which all a common thing to a human. But some people treat a woman as an animal, and she was controlled by a man in the name of caring and protection. Some movies discussed the topics in different themes and characterisation. In the director's perspective a woman character should be created in the positive or negative way. Here the movies are discussed a misogynist hero's relationship with heroine and different aspects of different director's perspective.

*Kaatru veliyidai* (2017) is one of Mani Ratnam's finest romantic and stylish movies in Tamil cinema. The movie talks about the respects of partner's feeling. The hero VC insults heroine in front of his friends and physically attacked her, push her down and belittles. She tolerates everything and stays with him to the end. A hero's abusive brutal action is called misogynist. The screenplay and narration talk about the relationship of mutual respect and values.

In *Natchaththiram Nagargirathu* (2022), the movie shows talking about love is political. In an uneasy conversation between lovers, they discuss about relationship. And the hero targets her as a person from the Dalit community; she gets anger and breaks up with him. In the relationship, mutual respect is needed from each other. The men's assumption of the stereotypical character of women should be carefully portrayed. They have no inherent right to talk about her feelings or express/discuss her emotions. The director beautifully explores the relationships in contemporary period. In *Katta Kushti* (2022), the movie explores a man's stereotypical character of women – women are always down below him in their education, health, wealth, etc. But the women are strong enough in wrestling and fight for their career.

### **Using Offensive Words and Brutality**

In Tamil cinema, using bad words and brutally hitting women are casual and normalized for man. In a relationship, both women and men may be cheated by their partners. In some relationships men and women get hurt physically by one another. The offensive words are used normally to a girl or boy outside the theatre, and this probably has influenced Tamil cinema.

*Ammu* (2022) is a girl's unsatisfied married life filled with lies and malice. Controlling cop-husband hit her brutally and after suffering for long, she decides to payback. *Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya hey* (2022) a male chauvinist, selfish person, short-tempered hero always shows violence on heroine; she suffers a lot because of her husband's violent action. Finally, she decides to fight back. *90ML* (2019), an adult comedy entertainer movie, explores

the women's liberation from shackles of society and irritable jokes of body shaming. The film *Amara Kaaviyam* (2014) teaches that true love is tolerating every violent act from the loved ones; but a wrong message is sent out to the audience. It is not a romantic movie, but the viewers understand that the concept of love is to be expressed and understandable. In the movie, finally the heroine was killed by the hero because of their misunderstandings. In *Valakku en 18/9* (2012) the concept of acid attack on girl is a criminal thing, when the movie exposes this kind of action encourages the audience and reminds hoe it hurts. The movie scenes influence the audience to hurt the girl who is not accepting the love. In *Vaanam* (2011), the song *Even di unna peththan* talks about the violence against women and conveys a man's anger on women through the song lines. The lyric sets audience perspective on women in the same way. In another movie *Mayakkam Enna* (2011), the movie song *Adida Avala* is also on violence against women. The hero expresses his anger through the song lyrics. In *Meesaya Moorukku* (2017) the song *Club le Mabbu le* talks about no smoking and no drinking as only applicable to women. The lyrics control a woman by a man's song. The freedom is common to all, and there should be no restriction.

### **Cheating Relationship**

Cheating is the worst thing in the relationships. In the modernized world accepting the concept of **Dating**, if a boy or girl does not a like their partner, they can choose another one for their money, wealth, or physical attraction. Cheating happens but cinema influences the audience into another level of modernized society which accepts cheating as common thing in the present world.

In *Nenjam Marapathillai* (2021), the movie talks about a man who cheats his wife because of his lust for another woman and sexually assaults and kills her. *Super Deluxe* (2019) explores a wife having extra marital relationship with her ex-boyfriend. The Tamil cinema always emphasizes that women should be pure and virgin to a man. That is what the Tamil cinema expected in all women characterization, but men have the power to change their roles -- it may negative or positive. But the Director Thiagarajan breaks the concepts -- women's desires are welcome and should be respected in the society. In *Iravin Nilal* (2022) which is a non-linear, single short film, a man's sad life cheated by different people surrounds him. In *Kannum Kannum Kollaiyadithaal* (2020), a woman cheating a man is the main concept of the movie. A thrilling movie in which a girl pretends to fall in love with the hero and she cheats him and takes his money and runs away from him. In *Kodi* (2016), the movie concept talks about the murder, vengeance and the political issues are triggering a person to kill their own partner by using the name of love. This movie creates a bad impact on the society about the relationship of love. *Chekka Sivanda Vaanam* (2018) talks about extramarital affair with two women (wife and lover).

### **Impact of Possessiveness, Caring and Love**

In a relationship, love, care, understanding, respect, and possessiveness are needed. When it goes into extreme the relationships are in doubt, causes fights, misunderstanding and



breakups. The harassment happens in a relationship through several kinds of elements and the cinema glorifies these things in a relationship that influences the audience.

Love with sex is acceptable, but love without sex is debateable (*Pyaar Prema Kadhal* (2018)). The present society created dating concept more importantly physical touch like kissing, hugging, and having sex. These kill the marriage traditions of traditional culture.

### **Songs in Tamil Cinema**

Some movie songs represent women in cheap words and express the violence, love failure, cheating and some other problems in relationship.

*Vaanam* (2011) - *Even di unna peththan*, *Mayakkam Enna* (2011) - *Adida Avala*, *Meesaya Moorukku* (2017) - *Club le Mabbu le*, *Thiruchitrabalam* (2022)- *Thai kelavi*, *Idharkuthane Aasaipattai Balakumara* (2013) - *Pray panuven*, *Varuthapadatha valibar Sangam* (2013) - *Indha Ponungalea ipditha purinji pochi da*, *Romeo Juliet* (2015) - *Adiyea adiyea ivaley*, *Oru Kal Oru Kannadi* (2012) - *Venaam Machan venam indha ponunga Kadhal*, *Kazhugu* (2012) - *Aambalaikum Pombalaikum Avasaam*, *Ethir Neechal* (2013) - *Sathiyam nee enaku thevaiye ila*.

Item songs, hero feeling songs, beep songs, club songs are mostly express a girl's behaviour, her attitude, and characters. All these got top hits among the audience. The society always welcomes such things and enjoy the song lines.

### **Interpretation and Findings**

Tamil cinema frequently eroticized women's ordinary and natural things exaggerating the action and it creates massive impact towards men. The slow motion shot for heroine is always staple in Tamil cinema. The film makers like Bakkiya Raj and Gautam Menon have given more importance to the heroine shots. In Tamil cinema the representation of love and romance always are portrayed beautifully, and these simultaneously connect with harassment indirectly. All the discussions talk about Tamil cinema's glorification of violence against women and this is continuously propagated in Tamil movie industry.

The meaning of stalking in Tamil cinema refers about a girl from a far distance and a man following her and approaching her in the name of love. A blind belief of these continuous actions changes her mind and then she accepts the love. There is no surprise in Indian cinema that two characters fall in love, but South Indian Cinema takes it into next level of stalking. The image of harassment happens around workplace, public areas, school, colleges, etc. There is more frequent depiction of higher authority harassing women with their power, sophistication and wealth towards their working colleagues or students. Tamil Nadu has reported that many women and young girls are murdered in their homes, classrooms, and public areas for rejecting a man who have stalked them. Stalking is a main part of our Indian culture.

Theatre researcher Iswarya V reported and applied online petition against Tamil film industry to stop the rape, stalking culture in Tamil movies. The petition wanted more

signatures to attend her report. In another side they received some support from the film industry personalities. In the commercial aspects the cinema lost their reality and creates huge impacts and cultural changes in the society.

The audience must need to know about the laws and the blind acceptance of cinema is the worst culture. Cinema is a covered with knowledge and ideas regarding different culture and people.

## Conclusion

Heroism is one of the glorifying trending concepts among the audience. People are worshiping their favourite hero and follow them and accept their thoughts, action, and some other things to take into their personal life. Meanwhile the acceptance of movie characterization affects the audience mind and influences them to behave like a movie hero in the real life after they do the same things as stalking around a girl, torturing her and putting pressure on her to accept his love, even though she is not interested in him. There is lack of awareness about the stalking crime. People need more awareness and education about the crime against women and the society should start realising that it should not blame the victims.

Harassment is not only a physical abuse but also an emotional and mental pressure through using offensive words or action. In relationship, there is a lot more to discuss about the problems of sexual harassment, cheatings, and extra marital affairs, etc. The cinema is one of the best medium to educate and influence the audience to pursue such things.

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