

The Relationship Between Gender Identity and Film Production: A Look at Female Bollywood Directors



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Abstract:

Around the world occupational gender inequalities are persistent, from differences in pay, choice of occupation, complexity of work, and career opportunities. When looking at gender inequalities in the workforce among different countries, they are often the consequence of societal factors like gender segregation and the underlying social structure which make certain inequalities hard to overcome. Specifically in the cultural discipline of cinema, gender inequalities are very prevalent and complex.

In the Indian cinematic world of Bollywood, gender roles are apparent in both the workforce and the films themselves. India has a history of social stratification which makes it increasingly difficult for women with no prior links to Bollywood to enter the film industry. There are few female directors in India, yet these individuals continue to push the boundaries of gender roles in cinema, and fight against the masculinization of the industry. Despite the growing social awareness and activism against gender inequalities around the world, these directors continue to struggle finding opportunities for their movies to be made, and finding peers who they can trust and will support them in their journey.

Through interviewing these directors, their individual stories will be compared through the program NVivo to manage, analyze, and visualize data. This project looks at the relationship between gender identity, and film production among female directors in Bollywood by transcribing and qualitatively analyzing personal interviews.

Introduction:

In Indian film industry the gender ratio is **6.2 Men** to every **1 Women**

- Only **9.1%** of Indian Directors are Female
 - Only **12%** of Indian Writers are Female
 - Only **15%** of Indian Producers are Female
- } Less than Global Average

Female characters in Indian films comprise only 25% of the total

- In the top 10 highest grossing films in 2014 none of them featured a female lead or co-lead
- Fewer than **15%** of all roles in Indian cinema depict women as business executives, political figures, or STEM professionals



Alankrita Shrivastava



Leena Yadav



Nandita Das



Tannishtha Chatterjee



Tanuja Chandra



Veena Bakshi

Methods:

Female directors in India were interviewed in-person and virtually to gain information on their perspectives of the film industry in India (Bollywood), and possible gender inequalities that they may have faced throughout their career, and the current challenges they face today. These interviews were recorded on-site or over Zoom, to be transcribed later.

AI Transcription Tool

The program “**Revoldiv**” is an AI tool which automatically recognizes the language of an audio file and transcribes it into a digital text file. This program was used to create an initial transcript for each interview.

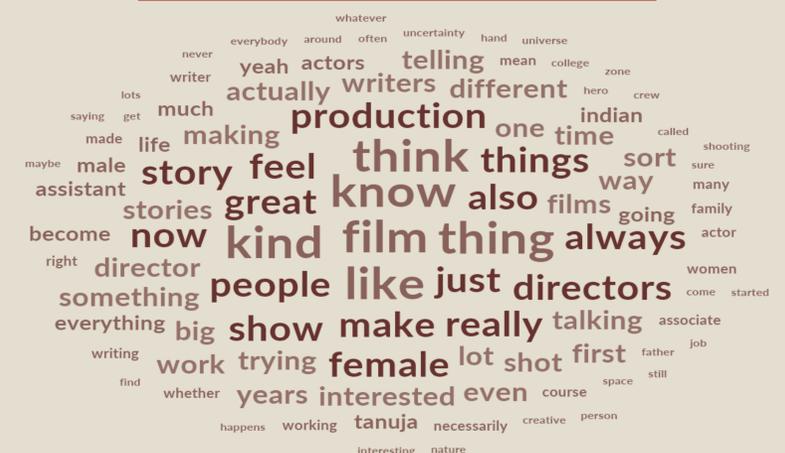
- The interviews were recorded in English with occasional Hindi. The program accurately transcribed and distinguished between the two languages, even when used in conjunction
- The transcribed interviews were then fully reviewed and edited to remove errors, correct grammar, and often fix names of Bollywood films, producers, actors, writers, and staff referenced by the interviewee
- This tool made transcription much more efficient, trimming the time required to transcribe each interview by 2x or more
- A total of 6 Indian female directors' interviews were transcribed

NVivo Analysis

Once transcription was completed, the interviews were inputted into the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. NVivo is useful for deductive analysis of the data

- In this program, certain attributes were created such as gender, type of interview, country of work and age group.
- The interviews were then individually auto-coded to find codes which could be grouped into more general themes such as: challenges, education, family, inspiration, writers, types of stories, production, entrance into the industry, streaming platforms, and types of films.
- Data can then be run through different queries such as word frequency, contextual query, or intersecting patterns between coding themes and defined demographic attributes.
- These queries can be used to create visual aids such as word clouds, tree maps, and cluster analysis diagrams.

Expected Results:



This word cloud was created using transcribed interviews from female Indian directors. The largest, centermost words are used most frequently by the interviewees. Some central words such as: think, feel, and know suggests that female directors reference their passion and intuition when asked about their filmmaking process and background

Inductive analysis of the interviews finds that female directors value emotion of characters, cultural accuracy, and truthfulness to audience in their filmmaking. Results are preliminary and research is ongoing.

The strengths of this project are the narrative details of the Indian film industry from the female perspective while the weakness is a lack of definitive quantitative data.

Acknowledgements:

Rebecca Peters for guiding me through this project as my mentor, providing me with the opportunity and resources to take part in research at Florida State University. The Indian directors who were open and honest in their responses.

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