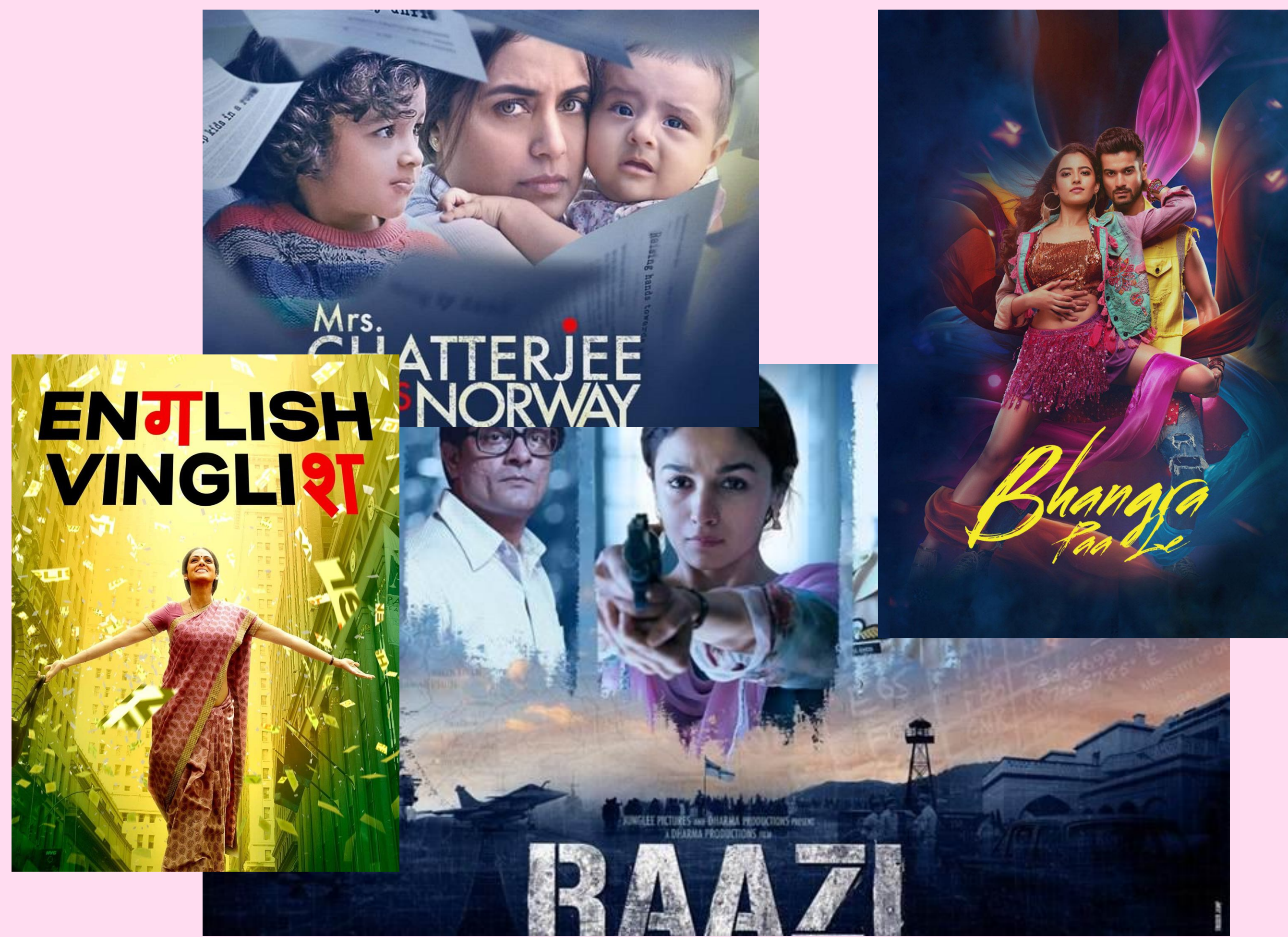


# Impacts of Female Directors on Women's Representation in Bollywood Films

Alexandra Odom and Dr. Rebecca Peters

## Introduction

- Bollywood films are highly popular throughout India and much of the rest of Asia. They are known for their complicated plot points and vivid storytelling.
- Bollywood has a long history of prioritizing male-dominated movies and not considering women, leading to them being underrepresented.
- This is especially prominent in older films, while the modern era has seen an increase in female leads, with the portrayal of characters being strong women becoming more prevalent.
- However, many of these films still are not as progressive as they could be.
- Something worthy of notation is that it is important to consider that Bollywood films are more often showing expectations of an ideal societal norm rather than what is actually happening in real life.
- Aim: To analyze to what extent female directors in Bollywood are affecting the accuracy of the women portrayed in Hindi films in order to gain a better understanding of how gender stereotypes are being used within the context of Indian culture.**



## Methods

- The subjects of the study are the women within the films that were watched, particularly women that have speaking roles.
- In order to accurately perform this research, individuals were trained in the coding of the surveys that would be using to record data.
- Coders then measured and recorded different aspects in relation to the female characters, including but not limited to considerations such as if they were LGBTQ+, if they displayed traditional feminine attributes or a lack thereof, or what kind of clothing they wore and how modest it was.
- This study was conducted by each coder watching, analyzing, and recording elements of female-directed Bollywood films before completing surveys about the information gained.
- Results were compared through peer review via weekly meetings and correcting any mistakes as agreed upon by all parties.
- Once completed, coders edited any surveys that needed alterations and continued this process with the next movie of choice from the remaining options that met the chosen criteria.

## Trauma and How It Is Identified

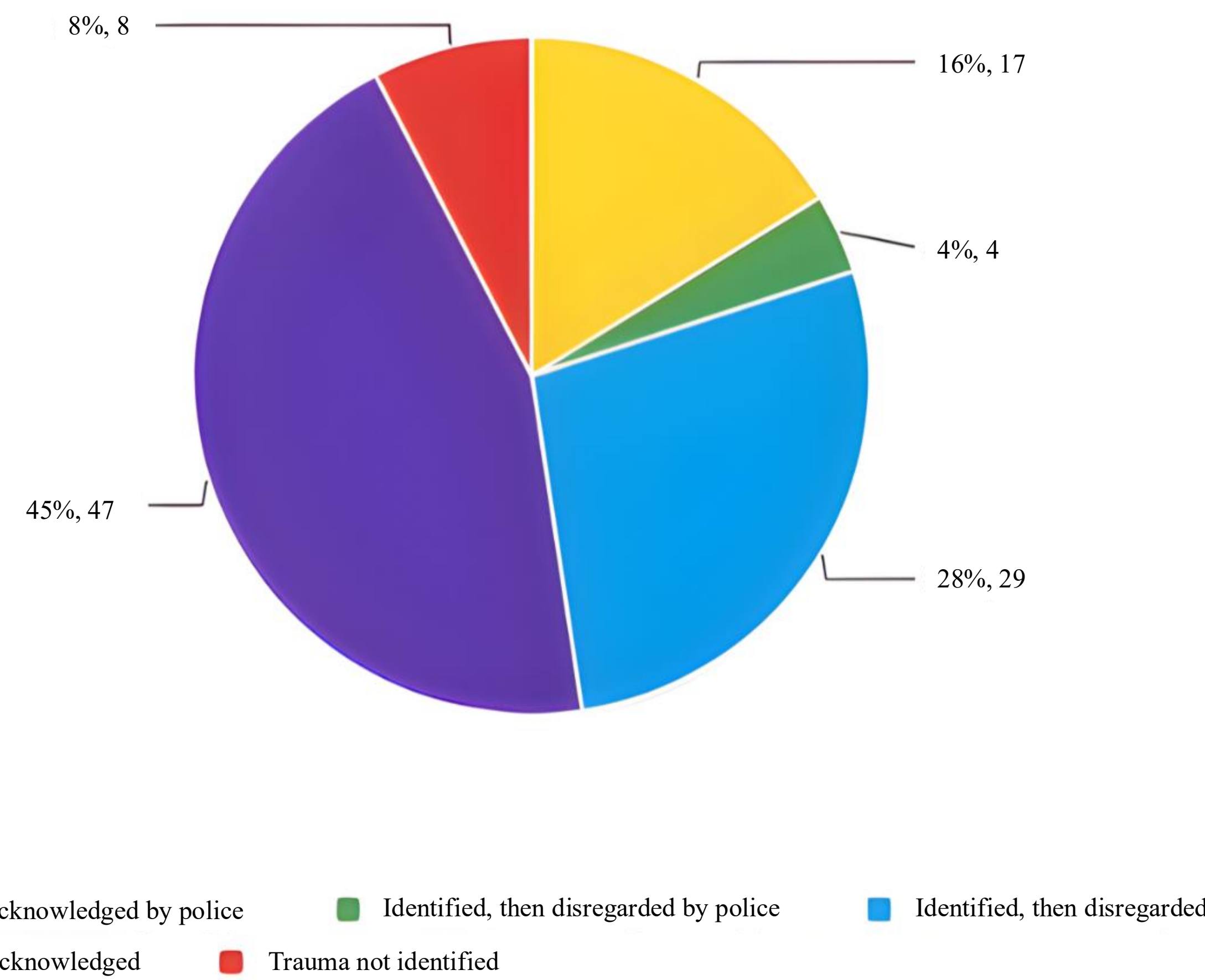
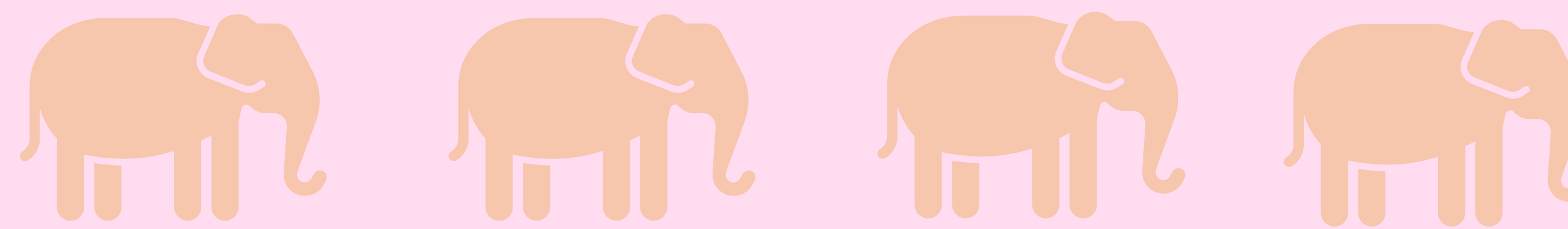


Figure 1 highlights how and when a female character suffers trauma.



To the left is a collage of some of the women-directed Bollywood films that have been watched for this study.

## Positive Effects

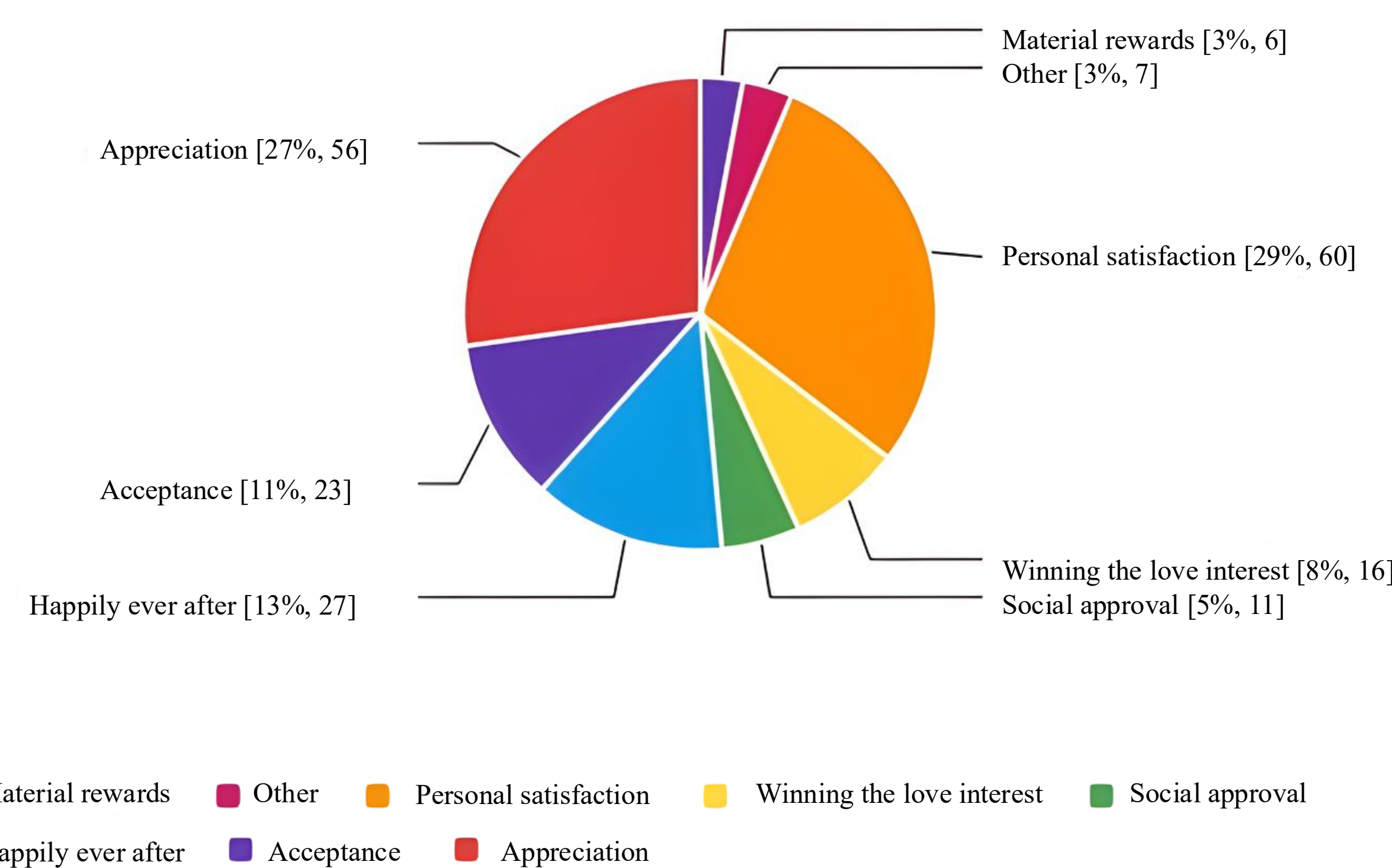


Figure 2 highlights what kind of positive effects female characters received.

## Results

- Data collected suggests that an increase in popularity and success of female-directed Bollywood films has positively impacted the representation of female characters.
- Presence of important female characters and even female leads suggests a more progressive outlook.
- Most films demonstrated an improvement in the perception of women through their films, portraying them in stronger roles.
- Results show that in female characters who experienced trauma, 61% of those who did had their trauma acknowledged in some way.
- Of female characters who received some form of positive effect, 29% of those who did received it in the form of personal satisfaction, with appreciation being at a close 27%, neither of these relying solely on men.
- This research still continues to analyze woman-directed Bollywood films as more are released that meet our criteria. Thus far, the way that women have been portrayed in the movies that have been analyzed have shown great improvement in societal views about women.

## Discussion/Conclusion

- Data represents only a part of a multitude of female-directed movies. There are no conclusive results because research is still ongoing.
- However, there does seem to be a correlation between a woman being a director and how a woman in a movie is being portrayed.
- Female characters are thus being included in a positive way that does not always adhere to what might be considered as typical behavior for women in India.
- Future analyzation of more movies as they are created will be required to see if the observed trends continue.
- Future research could possibly entail comparing the differences between female characters that are observed in male and female-directed films. This could prove to be, however, much more difficult due to a majority of Bollywood films being directed by men. An alternative could be studying how these female-directed movies are influencing modern-day perceptions of women in real life.

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