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FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY: PERCEPTION AND PORTRAYALIN FANTASY FILMS

Dr. M. Anuradha	Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Periyar University, Salem.
R. Vidya	Assistant Professor, Department of Film Studies, Faculty of Media Studies, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Tirur, Kerala.

ABSTRACT The society ascribes certain behavioural attributes to men and women. This societal expectation is projected in their perception of masculinity and femininity. Yet, their individuality is reflected in the variation from the conventional behaviour. Movies as socializing agents endorse the prescribed masculine and feminine indicators. Quantitative and qualitative methods which involved a survey among college students and content analysis of selected characters from fantasy films were adopted to identify the attributes considered as masculine and feminine by boys and girls, thereby analysing the portrayal of characters in fantasy films pertaining to these qualities. Results revealed differences in qualities deemed as feminine by boys and girls and the qualities they found in themselves. In fantasy films, while all male characters were portrayed as masculine, the depiction of femininity was highly influenced by the virtuousness or wickedness in female characters. Female protagonists were portrayed as feminine whereas female antagonists were shown to possess masculine characteristics.

The conceptual understanding of the term gender has been debated much over the last few decades. This has stimulated several discussions and generated a multitude of theories. The familiarity of these concepts goes beyond the research realm even to people who are not introduced into the scholarship of gender(Morawski, 1985). There is a general understanding of masculinity, femininity and gender roles which has been constantly reinforced by society, culture and media (Steinke, 2005; Smith & Cook, 2008). Though there has been some changes in the gender roles, the overall perception of these concepts remain unchanged in the society.

Men and women are ascribed certain qualities by the society and culture. The society prescribes a man to be bold. He should be protective of the women and children around him, giving them moral support and is allowed to be aggressive. Indian society allows man to be ambitious about hiscareer but forbids woman to be so. Women are expected to be beautiful, gentle and caring. The society wishes women to be wearing the signifiers of femininity in terms of dress and accessories.

Media reinforce the traditional feminine and masculine qualities promoted by the society. Although the portrayal of women has been improved, the stereotypical images still reign the silverscreen. This stereotyping can be seen in a variety of media including advertisements, video games, sitcoms and movies. Movies being a vibrant and powerful medium exercise the creation and reinforcement of stereotypical gender portrayal. Even fantasy films which employ a lot of visual effects and creativity in constructing an imaginary world, also stereotype female and male portrayal.In this context the present study tries to analyse how masculinity and femininity are portrayed in fantasy films. It also includes a survey among college students to find out their perception of the qualities associated with masculinity and femininity.

Literature Review

Being male or female is different from being masculine or feminine chiefly because the former is biological and the latter is behavioural. The correlation of physiological sex and psychological gender differences have always been discussed and debated in academic milieu.People vary in their masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974). Unger (1979) states that the word sex described the *"biological mechanisms".* However, the word gender carries the traits promoted by the society and culture to suit men and women . Several research studies have been conducted to formulate definitions for masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974) (Basu, 2010). The definitions and the conceptual understanding discuss a variety of traits for men and women.

In an ambit outside research, the terms masculinity and femininity derives ordinary meaning of the behavioural expectations of men and women in a particular culture (Morawski, 1985). Most of the definitions of femininity and masculinity are based on stereotypes or on common knowledge(Watzlawik, 2009). In common terms, what men are or do can be termed as masculinity and what women are or do can be called femininity (Basu, 2010).

One of the three definitions offered by Maccoby (1998) is by differentiating masculinity and femininity in terms of the qualities and features demonstrated by individuals(Maccoby, 1998). Women were defined by the attributes like emotionality, sensitivity and concern for others and men weredefined by the adjectiveslike being competitive, active and independent (Spence & Helmreich, 2014; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975).

Men and women often need to follow the stereotypic attributes of masculinity and femininity for the general acceptance of the culture and society(Courtenay, 2000).The culturally accepted perception of femininity and masculinity may trigger questions about an individual's suitability to the norms of these concepts thereby questioning his or her own masculinity and femininity or even existence(Watzlawik, 2009). Sandra Bem (1974) advocated androgyny, a combination of masculine and feminine character istics, against a more sex-typical behaviour.

The projection of gender identity corresponding to the societal expectations are reinforced by the media(Steinke, 2005).The perception of one's own social desirability suffers a setback if one could not match the expectations generated by the media stereotypes (Dill & Thill, 2007).Hence while studying the perception of gender traits in oneself and in others, it is worthwhile to explore the projection of these traits in the mediated characters.

As an influential socializing agent, media reinforces the traditional stereotypic characteristics of gender in children as well as in adults. As Albert Bandura in his Social Learning theory claims, children learn and imitate the characters (Bandura, 1969). Children imitate the characters which they see in media. These stereotypes are assigned to women and men by the society, culture and media while these same qualities become the expectations by the society from the individuals of the society in accordance with the respective gender(Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

When media attempts to stereotype femininity and masculinity, the implications will be more on children.Children watch the same movies innumerable times (Smith and Cook, 2008). So movies act as socializing agents feeding them information about gender roles and identities(Steinke, 2005). Research suggests that there is an urgent need of a gender sensitive approach towards movies and entertainment aimed at children (Smith & Cook, 2008).

Teen films and television programmes instruct young women who do not follow the societal standards of femininity toundergo a "metamorphosis" from unattractive to beautiful young women (Moseley, 2002; Smith & Cook, 2008; Steinke, 2005). Children conform to the gender stereotypical norms propagated by their favourite media texts(Aubrey & Harrison, 2004).

Gender Schema theory proposed by Bem explainshow the process ing and assimilating of gender related information happens among children(Bem, 1981). The information given by several socializing agents like mediaare used by children to form an understanding about gender (Bem, 1981; Steinke, 2005). Gender schemas thus define, provide aid in responding to situations with respect to the information gathered about their gender in tune with the cultural expectations (Bem,1993; Steinke, 2005).Children learn the gender role expectations and start acting accordingly(Steinke, 2005). This learning has a great impact on them even after growing up.Hence this paper tries to find out how masculinity and femininity are depicted through primary characters in high fantasy films; how masculinity and femininity are perceived by youngsters.

Objectives
1. To examine whether college students perceive any differences in the qualities associated with men and women.
2. To identify attributes those are considered to be feminine/ masculine by college going youth.
3. To find out whether college going boys and girls possess those qualities they perceived to be associated with masculinity/ femininity.
4. To analyse the portrayal of femininity/ masculinity in high fantasy films.
5. To describe those attributes associated with femininity and masculinity in the high fantasy films.

Methodology
The current study adopted quantitativeand qualitative methods that involved a Surveyamong college students in the city of Kochi in the southern state of Kerala and Content Analysis of selected characters from fantasy films respectively. Postgraduate and undergraduate students belonging to the age group of 20 to 25 constituted the population. From the various colleges in Kochi city in the southern state of Kerala in India, 150 boys and 150 girls were selected using simple random sampling. Two sets of questionnaires were administered -one to possess the masculine and feminine characteristicsthey found in themselves and the second to assess the typical qualities through which masculinity and femininity are defined by the society.

For the content analysis, ninemovies, which fall into high fantasy category and carried a users' rating of > 6 in the Internet Movie Database released worldwide from 2000- 2014wereselected. Primary characters were defined as those who had a substantial role in the movie and changed the path of the story by developing or solving a conflict in the plot and twenty six male primary characters and twenty six female primary characters were chosen for the study.The movies selected were The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King, The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2, The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey, Stardust, The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, The Spiderwick Chronicles, Oz the Great and Powerful, The Sorcerer's Apprentice.

The female primary characters selected were Eowyn, Arwen, Lady Galadriel (The Lord of the Rings), Tauriel, Hermione Granger,

Minerva McGonagall, Ginny Weasley, Molly Weasley, Bellatrix Lestrange, Lady Galadriel (The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey), Yvaine, Princess Una, Lamia, Mormo, Empusa, Ditchwater Sal, Susan Pevensie, Jadis, Helen Grace, Mallory Grace, Glinda, Evanora, Theodora, Veronica, Rebecca Barnes, Morgana Le Fay.

The male primary characters selected were Aragorn, Legolas(The Lord of the Rings), Gimli, Frodo Baggins, Sam Gamgee, Gandalf the White (The Lord of the Rings), King Theoden, Eomer, Merry, Pippin, Thorin Oakenshield, Bilbo Baggins, Gandalf the Grey (The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey), Legolas (The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey), Azog the Defiler, Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Lord Voldemort, Tristan Thorn, Prince Septimus, Peter Pevensie, Oscar Diggs or Oz, Arthur Spiderwick, Balthazar Blake, David Stutler, Maxim Horvath.

The character traits as defined by Bem (Bem, 1974) and Basu (Basu, 2010)(Basu, Dasgupta, Chakraborti, & Basu, 2012) were taken for coding.

Bem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was used to assess the perception of gender specific characteristic traits among the youth. BSRI has been widely used by various researchers all over the world. The cultural variations in the projection of masculinity and femininity led in the modification of BSRI to suit people in various cultures and societies all over the world. Indian Gender Role Identity Scale (IGRIS), a scale to assess gender among Indians developed by Jayanti Basu was a modification of BSRI, incorporating its critiques (Basu, 2010). It was again modified to suit specific age groups(Basu, Dasgupta, Chakraborty, & Basu, 2012).

Findings and Discussion
Using Basu's Indian Gender Role Role Identity Scale (IGRIS) andBem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), sometypical qualities of femininity andmasculinity were identified as variables for the study.Shy ness,submissiveness,loyalty, compa ssion,affe ction,symp athy, gullibility gracefulness, being flatterable, soft spoken, yielding and sensitive toothers' needs were considered as qualities associated with femininity while leadership ability, aggressiveness, forcefulness, dominance, independency, courage, assertiveness, competitiveness, being active, adventurous,analytical andathletic were related to masculinity.

•   More than half the number of respondents (56% boys& 58% girls), quoted **affection** as a quality which both men and women should possess. However,only 40% of the boys said that they were affectionate.This could conceivably because of the patriarchal society in which they were brought up where men were not expected to show their emotions explicitly; naturally they were not ready eitherto show affection or accept being affectionate because it was not considered as manly by the society.78% of the girls said that they were affectionate.
•   Both genders deemed **shyness** as a feminine quality. Majority of them (91% girls & 98% boys) thought that women were shy. But among the girls, only one third (32%) said that they were shy. This proved the fact that the changing roles of women in the society have not changed the perception about them.The same stereotypical image of women still exists not only among men but also in the minds of women. A negligible 4% of the boys also said that they were shy. This was a reflection of their personality which meant that they were introverts.
•   **Submissiveness** was also considered to be a feminine quality by almost all the boys (96%) and more than half the number of girls (63%). But only one third (28%) of the girl respondentsaccepted that they were submissive. This is another indication to the variation in societal expectation which in turn results in a stereotypic characteristic creation and the attribute the girls possess in reality. There could be a possibility of them either being dishonest by judging the attribute to be intimidating or misjudging their real behaviour in which they could be submissive.

- ***Gracefulness*** was mentioned as a feminine quality by 67% of girls and 69% of boys. It is always treated as an important characteristic feature of women universally across cultures. This is often strengthened by advertisements and movies. Naturally that was reflected in the result; almost three fourth (71%) of the girls claimed that they were graceful. Interestingly 42% of the boys also stated that they were graceful. This could be a perception of the manner in which they treat girls, displaying the characteristics of gentlemen.

- Being ***flatterable*** was regarded as a feminine quality by majority of the respondents (boys 89% & girls 84%). This strengthened the stereotypic concept that women are easily flattered which could possibly be the consequence of the media generated compliments which would be mostly aimed at female characters than male characters. Research studies have proved that female characters received positive comments on their appearance twice than those received by male characters (Lauzen & Dozier, 2002). Even so, only 20% of the girls admitted of being flatterable. Others claimed that they could never be flattered. They stated that women generally could be easily flattered; but not them. They wanted to prove that they were different.

- 63% and 73% of girls and boys respectively felt that ***compassion*** was a feminine attribute. Almost three fourth of the girls (75%) and boys (70%) stated that they were compassionate. Thus a typical feature ascribed as a feminine quality by the society was in reality possessed by men too.Being compassionate has always been treated as a quality essential for any good individual. All religions and cultures endorse this and teach people to be compassionate towards other living beings. This could be the reason for the boys stating that they were compassionate.

- Around there fourth of girls (72%) andboys (83%) said that beinga person of***soft spoken*** nature was a feminine quality. But only 35% of girl respondentssaid that they were soft spoken and the remaining 65% denied possessing that quality.They were expected to be soft spoken but they did not admit to being so. Thatdesiredquality imposed by the society on women wasnot to be found among two thirds of the girl respondents. On the other hand, 28% of the boys said that they were soft spoken; again the reason being theirunderstanding that being a person of soft spoken nature would qualify them as a well-mannered person by people in the society. The stereotypical images of men suggest them to be capable of bearing the family burden on their shoulders, taking care of the women and children around them. They are perceived as handling every situations without taken over by emotions and always keeping things under control.

- ***Yielding*** was considered as a feminine quality by 77% of girls and 65% of boys. But only 42% of women respondents said that they had this quality within themselves. Also 22% of boys said that they possessed this attribute. Thus it could bethat though the society expects a woman to be ***yielding,*** in real situations this stereotypical characteristic might not hold good for every woman. Women might not want to create problems and since they would yield in such situations.

- 68% of girls and 73% of boys considered ***gullibility***as a feminine quality. Yet only 32% of the girl respondents agreed that they were gullible. The trait was marked as feminine, but most of the girls did not agree that they could be easily tricked. 19% men said that they themselves were gullible. The reason could be that they might have fallen prey to others' tricks in their life.

- 71% of girls and 65% of boys felt that being ***sympathetic towards*** otherswas a feminine quality. The rest felt that being sympathetic was androgynous (possessed by both men and women). However 68% of boysfound themselves to be sympathetic towards others.It indicated the deviance in the societal perception of masculine behaviour and the actualconduct of men. 79% of women also stated that they were sympathetic towards others. The result showed that regarding this particular attribute, women behave in accordance with the expectation of the society.

- Around three fourth of all the respondents (73% girls, and 70% boys) agreed that ***loyalty*** was a feminine quality. 74% of the girl respondents claimed to be loyal, agreeing to the general understanding of the feminine qualities. 53% of the boys said they were loyal to others. There was a slight variation from the typical behavioural expectation of men.

- Women were found to be ***sensitive to others' needs***as described by 71% of girls and 68% of boys. But 69% of boys claimed that they were sensitive to the needs of others. In this aspect too there was a contrast between the expected masculine behaviour and the real conduct exhibited by men. 74% of girlsalsoclaimed to be sensitive to others' needs.Women behaved in line with the general expectation of the feminine behaviour.

- Competitiveness was perceived to be androgynous (possessed by both men and women) by almost half the number of girls and boys- 53% and 51% respectively. But only 40% of women agreed that they were competitive. The rest asserted that they were never competitive. 54% of boys stated that they had this quality. The other respondents did not find the need to be competitive. Being competitive, in career, is mostly allowed onlyfor men especially in Indian society. Women are bound to the family. So for a woman to be competitive and ambitious in career will not be appreciated by the family or the society. The media through movies asserts that women who are successful in careers might never have a contented family life (Steinke, 2005).

- Almost three fourth of the girls (76%) and boys (80%) regarded being analytical as a masculine quality. Yet 54% of the girls stated that they were analytical. The difference could be the societal perception of the cognitive ability of men and women. Gender disparity always prevail while depicting characters with careers in the field of science and technology in movies and advertisements(Steinke, 2005). Mostly in movies, scientists and people who have good analytical skills are male characters. 67% of the boys stated that they were analytical.

The other character traits which marked masculinity according to BSRI and IGRIS were in congruent with the answers given by the respondents.Boys and girls felt that these characteristics belonged to men.

- More than three fourth of the respondents (81% girls and 89% boys) stated having ***leadership ability***as an attribute possessed by men. 78% of boys said they had leadership ability. The rest of the boys did not find themselves to be capable of leadership. Only 24% of the girls stated that they possessed leadership ability. The society generally expects men to act as leaders, taking control of the situations and giving suggestions to improvement. However women are supposed to be followers of men. But there could be some women who take up responsibilities and leadership in life.

- ***Aggressiveness*** was perceived as a masculine quality by most of the boys(90%) and girls (87%). Almost all the boys(94%) said that they were aggressive. Only 15% of the girls found themselves to be possessing aggressive nature. Indian society does not approve aggressive women. From their childhood girls are taught to be calm and patient. Yet, men could be aggressive and they would not be blamed for displaying their anger. This is considered as an important characteristic of their manliness.

- ***Forcefulness*** was mentioned as a masculine quality by 70% of girls and 88% of boys. In every society, power is mostly associated with men. 68% of the boys stated that they were forceful. Though being forceful was considered as a masculine quality the rest of the boys would not have been able to execute this in their life. 21% of the girls said they were forceful. They might have experienced their power in handling situations in life.

- Both genders considered ***dominance*** as a masculine attribute. More than three fourth of boys (86%) and girls (81%) thought that men were dominant. Generally men are considered and are allowed by the society to be dominating. Interestingly only 67%

of men said that they were dominant. The others did not feel that they possessed this quality. They would have either thought having this quality as offensive or they would not have had situations in life where they could project their dominance. They could also be incapable of dominating others even while society granted men the liberty to dominate others.

- *Being independent* was regarded as a masculine attribute by majority of the respondents (Boys 70% and girls 67%). More than three fourth of the boys (77%) stated that they were independent. Interestingly 44% of the girls also said they were independent. This certainly showed the growing change in the perception of women about their life and attitudes. Many of them felt the need to be independent.

- 67% and 71% of boys and girls respectively regarded *being courageous* as a masculine attribute. 78% of the boys found they were courageous. The rest probably would not have shown courage in life when situation demanded. 50% of girls said that they were courageous. This again indicated the change in the mental makeup of women. They might have felt the need to face circumstances and threats in this world in order to accomplish their aspirations.

- *Assertiveness* was regarded as a masculine quality by 65% of girls and 69% of boys. Almost three fourth of the boys (73%) stated that they were assertive. 33% of the girls said that they possessed this characteristic. Being assertive could be a part of their individuality. Even while assessing the quality as masculine, these girls found the attribute in themselves.

- 67% of girls and 70% of boys considered the quality of *being active* as a typical masculine characteristic. 89% of the boys mentioned that they possessed this attribute. 41% of girls also said they were active. Although these girls regarded the quality of being active as masculine, they stated they were active. This instance also could be an indication to the changing roles of women in the society.

- *Being adventurous* was referred as masculine quality by 72% of boys and 70% of girls. Yet, only 51% of boys stated that they were adventurous. The society demands men to be adventurous and media strengthens this belief through advertisements and movies. While the perception could be that most of the men were adventurous, the result revealed that only half of the boys possessed this ascribed masculine quality. Moreover Indian society does not approve women who are adventurous. They are bound to home and their family. Only 18% of girls said they were adventurous.

- More than three fourth of the boys (81%) and girls (78%) mentioned that *being athletic* was a masculine attribute. 31% of girls said that they were athletic. These girls could be those who were good at sports or other games. 72% of boys said they were athletic. In Indian society boys mostly engage themselves in games and sports during leisure. But girls, other than professionals or winners in sports tournaments, generally are not encouraged to play outdoor games. Their working out is limited only to the maintenance of their body shape.

Content Analysis

Twenty six male and twenty six female primary characters from nine movies were analysed based on some of the masculinity and femininity qualities given by Bem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and Basu's Indian Gender Role Identity Scale (IGRIS).

- Almost all female protagonists and most of the male protagonists were found to be affectionate. On the other hand, none of the male or female antagonists were found to be affectionate. Being affectionate is looked upon as a positive quality. So all antagonists, men and women alike, were not portrayed as affectionate, thus strengthening evilness and mercilessness in them. However the protagonists, men and women, displayed affection, which could create in the audience a fondness for them. This goes in line with the survey result in which boys and girls marked *affectionas* an androgynous quality in contrast to the BSRI and IGRIS scale. Yet only a few boys

agreed that they displayed affection. Nevertheless in movies good men are portrayed as affectionate.

- The high fantasy movies under consideration did not portray women as being *flatterable.* Most of the female and male protagonists and antagonists were not shown as *flatterable*. But the female protagonists did receive compliments from the male protagonists.

- Only one female protagonist was portrayed as *shy* in the movies under consideration. Yvaine in the movie Stardust displayed shyness in a few scenes. None of the male protagonists, antagonists or female antagonists were depicted as shy in those movies. This is a deviation from the usual stereotypic perception of the typical feminine characteristics.

- Most of the female protagonists were depicted as submissive to the male protagonists or male primary characters. The exceptions were Lady Galadriel in "Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey", and Veronica in the movie "The Sorcerer's Apprentice". Lady Galadriel and Veronica were sorceresses. Lady Galadriel enjoyed high position among the elves and men. Veronica was shown to be talented in magic. Though talented in their area of expertise, the other female protagonists were shown to be submissive to others.

- In contrast to this, none of the female antagonists, except one was shown as submissive. The exception was Bellatrix Lestrange shown to be submissive to Lord Voldemort in the movie Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II. The others were all shown to be dominating. Movies endorse the view that dominating women are terrible and wicked. A few male primary characters were pictured as submissive. Sam Gamgee, Merry and Pippin in the "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" were shown to be submissive to the other male primary characters in a few scenes.

- Maxim Horvath, a sorcerer was shown submissive to Morgana, a female antagonist in a few scenes in the movie, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice". He was an antagonist.

- All female protagonists and most of the male protagonists were portrayed as being *compassionate.* None of the female and male antagonists were shown as compassionate. As the survey result suggested, this trait which was often regarded as a feminine attribute was found in men too. This quality made men and women good natured, portrayed as protagonists, and thus distinguished them from the antagonists.

- All female protagonists were portrayed as being *soft spoken*. None of the male primary characters were pictured as being always soft spoken. Also none of the female antagonists were depicted as possessing this quality. This again was in line with the traditional stereotype women who were soft spoken. Only wicked women did not have this quality. Men, on the other hand, regardless of being a protagonist or an antagonist were not soft spoken.

- All female protagonists were shown as *yielding.* A few male protagonists like Sam, Merry and Pippin in the movie "Lord of the Rings" and Bilbo in the "Hobbit" were shown to be yielding. None of the other male protagonists and antagonists and female antagonists were pictured as yielding. This too was in compliance with the expected feminine characteristic behaviour where all female protagonists were yielding and those who were not, were antagonists. The male protagonists who displayed this quality were all hobbits whose race was not considered to be consequential.

- Among all female protagonists considered, Yvaine in the movie Stardust was shown as *gullible.* This attribute often landed her in dangerous situations from where the hero had to rescue her. No other male or female primary characters were shown to be gullible.

- All female protagonists were depicted as being *sympathetic* to others. Some of the male protagonists were also shown to be sympathetic like Oscar Diggs in the movie "Oz the Great and Powerful", Harry Potter, Frodo Baggins in the "Lord of the Rings", Bilbo Baggins in the "Hobbit". No female and male antagonists were shown to be sympathetic towards others.

- All female and male protagonists were shown as *loyal to others*

especially to their superiors, kings, their spouses or lovers. The display of **loyalty** which was an ascribed feminine characteristic was portrayed in all good men and women. Most of the male antagonists were also portrayed as loyalto their superiors. Bellatrix Lestrange in the movie "Harry Potter" was the only female antagonist who was portrayed as loyal. All other female antagonists were disloyal.

• All female protagonists were shown to be **graceful.** Regarded highly as a feminine attribute, this characteristic was not present in any of the male primary characters. However, this quality was lacking in female antagonists too, in order to bring in the viciousness in them.

• All female protagonists were depicted as being **sensitive to others'needs.** Some of the male protagonists were shown asbeing sensitive to the needs of otherslike Sam Gamgee in "Lord of the Rings" and Bilbo Baggins in the "Hobbit" where both understood the needs of their companions and helped them accordingly. Female antagonists and male antagonists were not shown to be sensitive to others' needs. Thus the feminine attribute of sensitivity to others'needs was lacking in the female antagonists generating the impression that they were less feminine.

• Female antagonists were found to exhibit all the qualities attributed to men and masculinity. Male primary characters depicted all the masculine characteristics specified in the scales. Movies thus endorse the societal expectation of femininity and masculinity to a large level and those female characters who were evil did not possess any of the ascribed typical feminine qualities. In contrast, male antagonists possess the typical masculine qualities. Thus male antagonists were depicted as more masculine than male protagonists.

Conclusion

Analysis of the results revealed considerable difference in some of the qualities which were deemed to be feminine by boys and girlsand the qualities girlspossessed in themselves. There could be a possibility that the attributes which the respondents projected on others were in fact their own actual behaviour. Society demands certain typical behavioural characteristics from men and women. Individuals, as they constitute the society, also view these characteristics as masculine and feminine. The societal expectation is reflected in their perception about the attributes labelled as masculine and feminine. But as individuals, they deviated from this expected behavioural pattern. Thus they exhibited their individuality reflected in this variation from the conventional conduct which imposed typical characteristic attributes for men and women.

Indian movies, to a large extent, do not portray the female primary characters as independent or accomplished. They do not have any function in the movies other than to dance with the heroes or to create a situation showing the strength and dominance of the heroes like fighting the villain. They do not seem to possess a personality or individuality. In comparison to the typical Indian movies, these fantasy movies have female primary characters who possess strong personality. They do have some functions in the movies and are portrayed as talented in their field of expertise.

In fantasy movies, male protagonists and antagonists were shown to be in possession of all the typical masculine characteristics. But the portrayal of femininity depended on the primary female character being a protagonist or an antagonist. Female protagonists were depicted as feminine with typical female qualities whereas female antagonists were portrayed as possessing ascribed masculine qualities. They in fact displayed more masculine characteristicsthan the male protagonists. Thus the movies endorse the belief that only evil and wicked women would possess masculine characteristics.

The same study could be conducted among children in the age group of seven to thirteen. Though they might not understand the terms masculine or feminine, they would know the qualities generally associated with boys and girls. The subtle and subliminal messages enter the audience from their childhood through the fantasy movies they watch. Thus they try to emulate the characters they consider masculine or feminine. Since character formation happens mostly in the early years of life, these characteristics endorsed by the movies would generally be accepted by them repressing the qualities which they deem inappropriate for their respective gender.

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