

Women Film Directors of Indian Cinema: A Study of their Cinematic Representations Based on the Theory of Dhvani

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Summary

Cinema is largely a patriarchal discourse that is replete with images and diegesis, setting a regular pattern of representation using established codes. As a medium that generates attention from all sections of society, it handles concerns that are disharmonious and discordant to the canonical brouhaha of the cinematic echelons. Of the many interventions and experimentation that emanated as independent cinema, art cinema, avant-garde, black noir, new wave, third world, the one that produced copious amount of documentation, debate and discussion and effected a new epistemological study in the field of gender concerns was women's film.

This work on women film directors of Indian cinema is a critical evaluation on the position of Indian women directors in the film industry. Along with the analysis of their relevance in the exclusivist hegemonic discourse of cinema, the study also maps the growth of women directors who so far have not found any substantial presence in the evaluative cartography of film critics as worthy of discussion. The work also contemplates their development alongside the global presence of women directors. Finally the content focuses on the style and concerns of their filmic representations.

The work is categorized into seven parts, each emphasizing different but related aspects of the topic on Indian women directors. The first part deals with the role of women filmmakers in the entertainment industry and introduces the subject in an extensive manner. The second part deals with the aspects of creativity and gender concerns in the related medium of literature, theatre and film. The third part focuses on the deviations, alternate methods and unconventional ways of sketching and inscribing the subject matter by women film directors. The fourth part highlights the global scenario of women directors across the continents and identifies the larger issues they handle.

The fifth and the sixth divisions are devoted to the Indian women directors. The former etches the sexist biases in the film world by initiating a discussion on the term 'woman director'. It also traverses the gamut of questions concerning acceptance, ability and themes of women filmmakers. The commencing period of the course of filmmaking by women directors till the 1980s is tracked in a detailed fashion. The latter part pertains to the women filmmakers of the millennia till 2015 giving due importance to regional filmmakers. The study classifies the oeuvre of female filmmakers of India into four stages based on distinct and unique features of the times and the films.

The last division of the study is an illustration of how critical analysis have engaged with the suggestive *dhvani* elements of women's films and accentuated female aesthetics that thwart the patriarchal norms of perceptions and establish a resuscitated sense of pleasure. The presence of women filmmakers has been acknowledged and their credentials established in the platforms that matter. But the trajectory is still unwieldy due to the ingrained prejudices of the general public and the studio corporates that segregate women at the entry into the higher levels of direction.