A STUDY TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATION BETWEEN BOLLYWOOD MOVIES AND BEAUTY STANDARDS

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Abstract

The world has been watching movies since the early 20th century and it has remained a very dependable source of entertainment for most people's life. With the advancement in time and improvement in technology, our understanding of consuming content has also improved and diversified. Bollywood has witnessed a lot many modifications in its 70 years of existence. This modification included promoting different body types and beauty standards over a period not only for women but men too.

Beauty standards are a set of prerequisites benchmarks defined by society or large groups and communities that determine what type of shape, size, colour and looks are considered best in the eyes of the public.

So, the question that needs to be answered is, has Bollywood influenced the rise of 'Beauty Standards'. The study takes the help of qualitative research to not only answer the given question but also find out to what has it left the audience to think and analyze if it has explored other side of the same coin. This research paper will take you through the movies of decades after the 90s and closely examine if they led to this toxicity among youth aged between 14 – 30.

INTRODUCTION

"Don't change your body to get respect from society. Instead, let's change the society to respect our bodies." Golda Poretsky.

Bollywood, also known as Hindi cinema and formerly known as Bombay cinema is the main source of entertainment in India. It is the Indian Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai. People from all backgrounds, irrespective of their age, gender, class, caste consume the content produced by Bollywood. Bollywood is frequently associated with India's identity. Bollywood has no longer only influenced the world however has also helped in shaping the nation's identity. It has emerged over time and has led to the creation of a perception of India in the world. Bollywood movies are loved for their action, drama, storyline, music and direction.

However, everything is not as ideal as it seems. Bollywood is way more complicated than it appears. From flourishing Nepotism to objectifying women, Bollywood has many limitations that the outside world is unfamiliar with. The dark side of Bollywood is covered with the veil of glamour, fame, money and stardom. Indian Cinema has still not succeeded in establishing itself as a meaningful and sensible cinema in the outside world. Apart from that, Bollywood also played a major role in establishing unrealistic beauty standards.

The concept of beauty standards is age-old. For centuries different body shapes and sizes are admired. The perception of ideal beauty standards was not only affected by culture but many factors were involved in shaping the notion around it. Different eras celebrated different body types and body shapes.

The period of Ancient Greece (c.500-300 B.C.) had idolized women with fair skin and plump body type. Chubby women were considered wealthy by thinking that they had access to more food. The Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) admired women with small feet. Girls at a young age were made to wrap their feet in confining mould to restrict them from growing. During the Italian Renaissance, women with big breasts, fair skin, and light hair were considered superior and wealthy. The era of Victorian England (c. 1873-1901) gave birth to an hourglass-shaped figure which was achieved by wearing a corset around the waist. The Golden Age of Hollywood (c. the 1930s-1950s) considered Marilyn Monroe as the Golden Standard of Beauty. She succeeded in bringing an end to the slim figure trend.

India was no further away. Just like people of all other county, people here also craved beautiful things. But all this started when the concept of beautifying objects was introduced to the audience too. The notion to look a certain way to feel beautiful was touching new heights all over the world. "Beauty is good and beauty is exclusive" is entrenched in our minds from the very beginning. Since the start of digital media, beauty standard

has been established. The role of villain has been played by a person with warmer tones and fuller body type and vice-versa.

Bollywood has bombarded the 21st-century women with beauty ideals which are being curvy, at some point is being skinny and the most dominating of all time has been having the fairest of skin. Despite having a range of skin colours, almost all Indian actresses and models are (portrayed) overwhelmingly fair-skinned. The editors in India are paid a ton lot for changing the skin tones of the model or changing their body figure whatsoever the reason might be. Media, in its diverse forms, has become a powerful tool for the construction and portrayal of the "should, ought, and musts" of a woman's body. This has majorly resulted in the "thinning" of beauty ideals in the media and thus in the real world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theatre is consumed by everyone irrespective of their age. It is a media people most depend on for entertainment whatever may the genre, language, style it be. Along with this not only comes its benefits but also power and influence. People are seen going to the theatres, if not that bingeing on OTT platforms like Netflix, Prime Video or some such sources. Indian movies have bombarded 21st- century Indian women with Western beauty ideals: fairness and thinness. As an example, despite getting a variety of complexion, most Indian actresses and models are (portrayed) overwhelmingly fair-skinned (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009). Kapadia (2009) interviewed 26 Indian women who reported that social comparisons with friends and relations also as Bollywood actresses play a task in their dissatisfaction with theory body shape and size. They also revealed that they need to note a trend for ladies in Bollywood to become slimmer over time. Indian media overwhelmingly portray Western ideals when it involves images of girls. As an example, albeit MTV aimed to "Indianize" it's programming after it had been introduced in 1994, Cullity (2002) found that the channel promoted many Western values notably the sweetness ideal of thinness. The link between the proliferation of Western beauty ideals and the rise of body image disturbances in

Non-Western (Indian) women makes for a crucial topic of research. Given the role played by this socioculturally acquired vulnerability on the overall well-being of girls, the necessity to deal with this subject becomes pertinent. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the effect of exposure to acute thin-ideal media images on college-going urban Indian women's body image. Especially, the study examined the effect on (a) thin-ideal internalization, (b) body dissatisfaction, and (c) self-esteem of young Indian women. it had been hypothesized that the thin-ideal media images would cause an increase in internalization of the thin-ideal, increase in body dissatisfaction, and reduce in the self-esteem of college-going urban Indian women.

BODY

In this study, we are going to discuss body standards and find out if Bollywood movies have contributed to these exacting body standards. The objectives of the study are:
1.   To discuss in length what is body standards.
2.   Find out if Bollywood has played role in promoting the same.
3.   Evaluate if Bollywood can help to normalize all body types.

The study will take the help of the Qualitative method of research with the use of Personal Interviews to understand the concept of Body Standards and the reason behind it. The research will be based on the collection of all the necessary, accessible data. The reliable sources will include both Primary and Secondary data. Primary sources will include Personal Interviews where-else Secondary sources will include Case Studies, Questionnaires and existing interviews.

The interviews were done over a telephonic conversation. The views of Bollywood- freaks and people who have been criticized because of body standards has helped in providing the insights needed. The study couldn't have come together without a reliable research tool, hence a self-created questionnaire was designed and used to interview all the accessible crowd around especially the youth. The questionnaire is designed on variables that are crucial to the objectives of the study and consist of short, close-ended questions. The questionnaire helped by providing first-hand, truth worthy information.

 The study aims to answer three main questions:
Q) Has Bollywood through the movies promoted Body Standards overall this past year and is continuing to do the same?
Q) If Bollywood has promoted beauty standards, what are the effects on a general audience?

Q) Whether Bollywood has started accepting and promoting all body types?

MASS COMMUNICATION THEORIES RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH

There are many Mass Media theory which can be used to understand the influence of Beauty Standard in Bollywood.

Hypodermic Needle Theory and Cultivation theory can be used to understand the effect of media on the audience and can be used to relate to this study.

1.) Hypodermic needle theory also known as magic bullet theory implies that Media is a very powerful medium. When a message is injected into the mind of the audience through media, it acts as a bullet, thus influencing the mind of the audience and causing a change in their behaviour.

The objective of the theory can be described as following:

a. To explain how strongly the media can influence the audience.

b. To understand how media can change the behaviour of the audience.

c. To discover the positive and negative sides of media use.

2.) Cultivation theory postulates that media cultivates the mind of the audience, thus heavy exposure to Television may lead an individual to develop a certain set of beliefs or assumptions about life which are purely shaped by whatever is showcased on television. The content shown on television is generally exaggerated and far from reality. The audience fails to recognize the thin line between the reel and realness. Perfection is the only thing that's showcased in the digital world, there is no space for flaws there. The audience starts comparing both these worlds only leading to viewing the real world in a distorted and unsatisfied manner.

RESULTS

With the help of our primary and secondary resources used for the study of this research, we can safely state that Bollywood has played a major in establishing unrealistic beauty standards.

Bollywood hasn't left much imagination between the reel and the real world. The audience is highly influenced by what they see on-screen. Bollywood through their movies has idolized long hairs, big breasts, thin waist, curvy body and fair skin which has thus led to standardizing these beauty types in real life. Many female actresses struggle daily to maintain these standards.

Not just the audience but even the stars have fallen prey to this intoxication. Most of the actresses have undergone different surgeries to meet the expectations of beauty standards set by the industry. Like International Movies star Priyanka Chopra went skin lightening treatment just like our all-time favourite Deepika Padukone. The former miss world, Aishwarya Rai, who is also known as the most beautiful woman in the world has undergone cosmetic surgery to enhance her already flawless features. Pataudi's daughter Sara Ali Khan went on a keto diet and shred 30kgs just to enter the Bollywood Industry.

Moving forward to Bollywood's on-screen displays. The characters too haven't taken a back seat in promoting this culture. In many Bollywood movies, the female lead is usually not accepted or appreciated enough by society if she isn't dolled up enough. Everyone is always shown bullying the tom-boyish character and the character is always asked to act, dress, and behave in a certain way. Even the male lead is shown making fun of the tom-boyish character, however, once she grooms up and turns all girly the same guy falls head over heels for the girl. This has led to most of the female audience think that she won't be accepted in the way she looks and has to dress up and act girly for a person to be attracted to her.

5.1 Answer to the research questions

5.1.1 Research Question 1

After thorough research, we have examined movies over time that stands together supporting the given statement. Following is a table showing different movies promoting the same:

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YEAR	MOVIE	HOW?
		It's a benchmark movie to set the beauty standards.

1990 - 2000	Kuch Kuch Hota Hain	Rahul isn't attracted to tom-boyish Anjali even after all her efforts but somehow as soon as she gets in a saree and applies makeup, Rahul can't stop thinking about her.
2001-2010	Mujhse Dosti Karoge	This movie exactly portrays how Indians fancy over fair complexion. Hrithik's character walks past Rani's character to woo over the more visually appealing Kareena's character.
	Kal Ho Na ho	This movie brought a new word 'Chashmish' to the dictionary of setting beauty standards. Apparently, a girl looks prettier without specs which as a result left every specs-wearing girl doubting herself
	Main Hoon Na	Miss Chandini helps Sanjana do a make-over which results to leaving Lucky jaw-dropped and falling for her. Miss Chandini is shown very proud for making the not so attractive (apparently) Sanjana desirable.
2011-2020	Aisha	This movie picks up every beauty stereotype. Shefali is given a full-fledged make over to turn her in to Aisha because I guess she wasn't "good enough"
	Student of the Year	Shanaya, a college going girl is shown perfect head to toe though it be her hair, bags or makeup. She walks in the

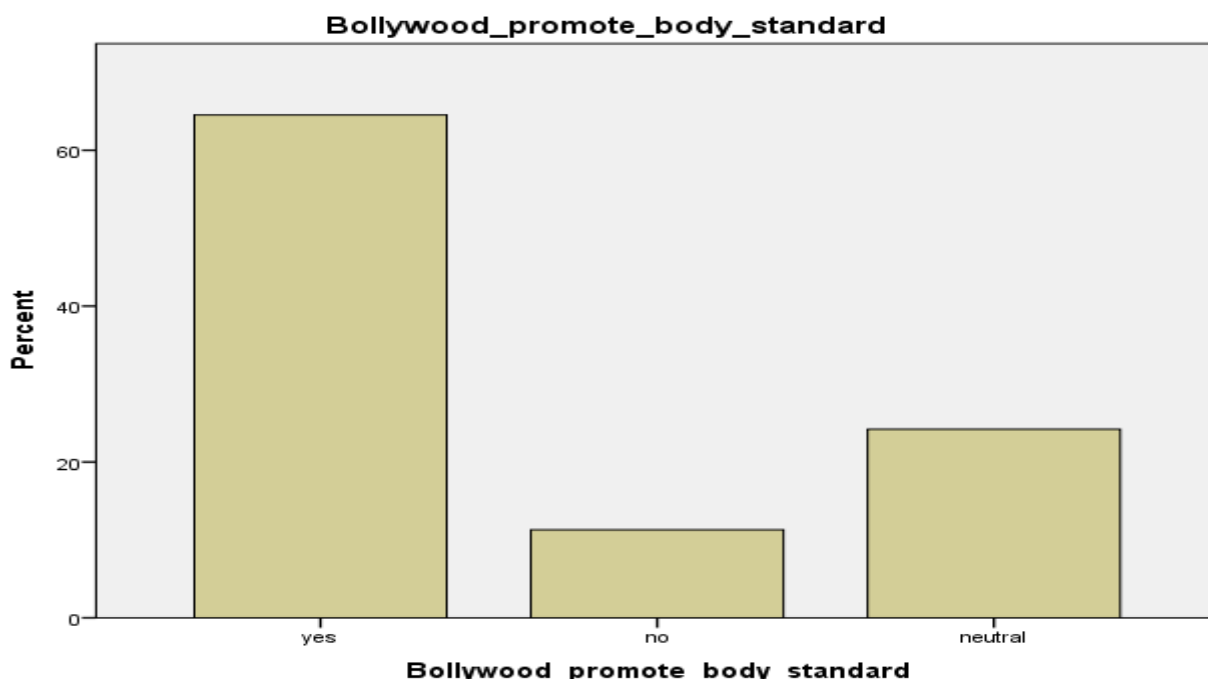|		college corridor as if she's walking on a ramp.
	Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani	Well, here we don't just have one but two characters playing with our mind. Naina loses her glasses just to get a second-look from Bunny and on the other hand Aditi grows her hair out of the tom-boy person she was to become the Dulhan every guy desire.

Body

Bollywood_promote_body_standard

CHART 1: BOLLYWOOD PROMOTES BODY STANDARD

The expectations of this industry are unreasonable. In Bollywood's eye, nothing is good enough until it's perfect. Based on various resources, we have listed a few beauty standards demanded by the glam world:

1.   Fair skin: The idea of having fair skin or a lighter skin tone is always encouraged in the industry. Actresses having warmer tones often feel rejected and unacceptable by the industry-leading them to undergo skin lightening surgery.

2.   Long and thick black hair: No matter what the scene is, whether the actress is walking, running, dancing and even fighting, her hairs always look lustrous, voluminous, shiny, dark and well-combed which is not practical in the real world.

 Skinny and curvy body type: According to Bollywood, fat means funny. There are many movies in which a fat person has been trolled for the way he or she looks. Bodies which are too skinny are also not acceptable. Only the perfect wavy and curvy body types are appreciated.

3.   Sharp Nose: Many of the celebrities have been trolled for the way their nose looks. It is believed that a sharp nose makes a face look slimmer and more attractive. Actresses like Priyanka Chopra, Aishwarya Rai, Shilpa Shetty and Kareena Kapoor had their nose job done to meet the beauty standards.

4.   Flawless Skin: Actresses are always caked in makeup to hide their acne, scars and pimples and appeal to the masses. There is no room for them in the glamour world. Even if they develop pimples or acne, they undergo heavy and expensive skin treatment to get them removed and get the perfect flawless skin.

5.   Chiselled face: It is believed that having a chiselled or a sharp face is a feminine feature. Celebrities having chiselled jawlines are considered more stunning and appealing than those with a square or round chin.

6.   Almond-shaped eyes and dark eyebrows: Women with almond-shaped eyes are considered more beautiful. Dark eyebrows are another beloved trait in Bollywood. Eyes are always covered in make-up to hide dark circles and dullness. Pencils are used to darken the eyebrows and give the best possible look.

CHART 2: FEATURES PROMOTED BY BOLLYWOOD MOVIES

5.1.1 Research Question 2
Beauty Is the Beast. Women often compare themselves to images of other women in the media, which leads
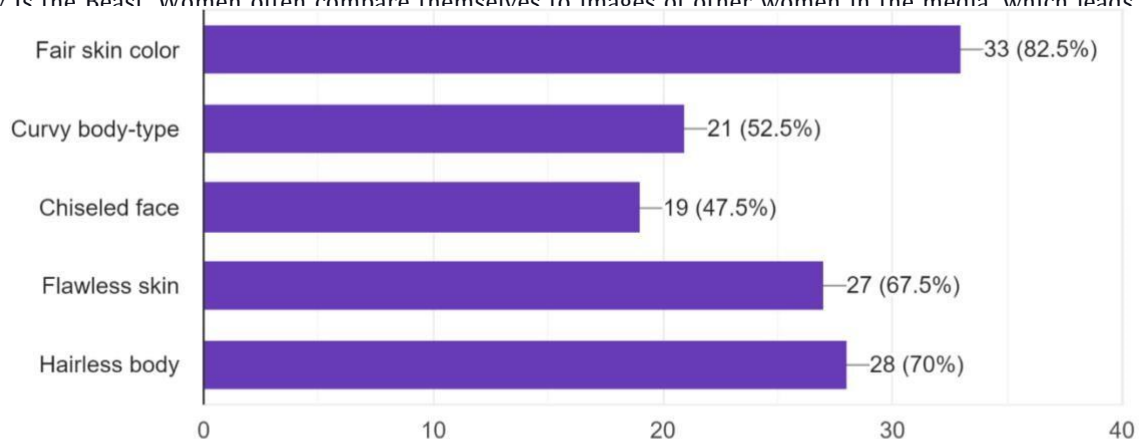
●   Physical Health Issues: Beauty Standards leave the crowd feeling insecure about their body and further to doing whatever it takes to change it. This may result in people going on extreme diets and over-exercising without proper consultation. This weight obsession can lead to Anorexia, Bulimia, Orthorexia, Compulsive overeating or binge eating disorder. People also undergo heavy surgeries and transplants to meet the ideal body goal which does give them the wanted but not without tons of health problems. Youth

is often seen cutting off their meals and surviving on the bare minimum which only affects them fainting, getting strokes, migraines and other such issues.

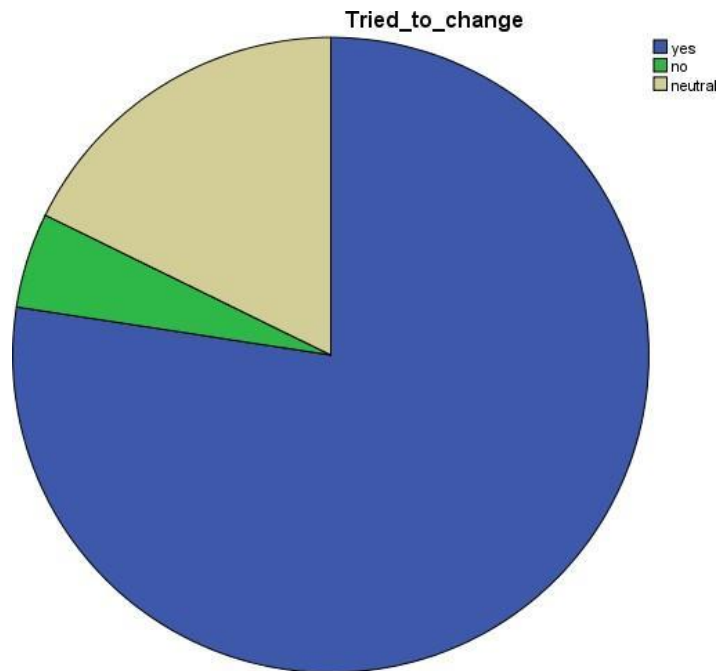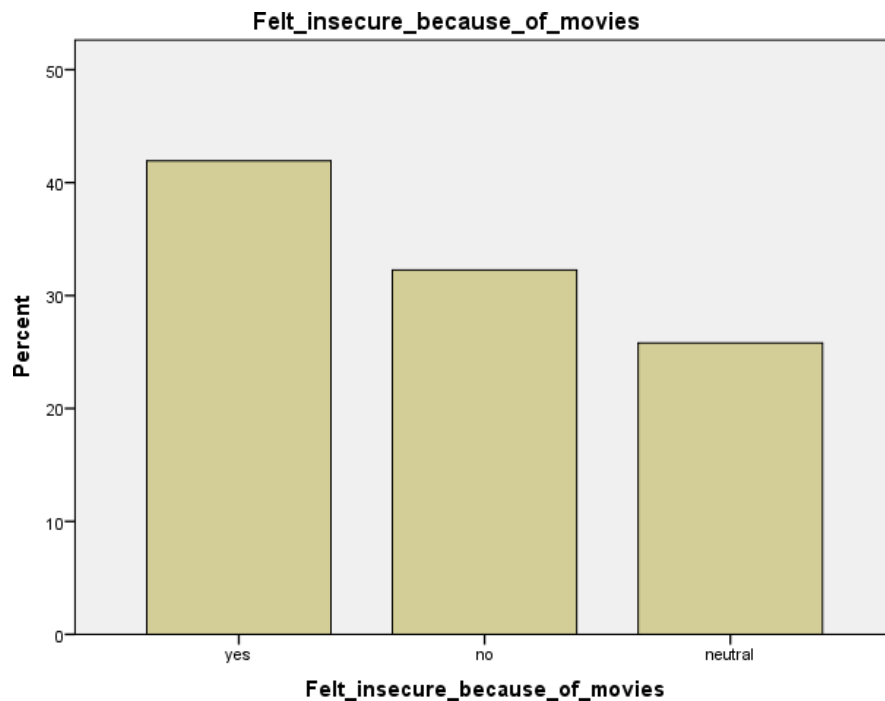CHART 3: Tried to change after watching Bollywood movies.

CHART 4: FELT INSECURE BECAUSE OF BOLLYWOOD MOVIES

5.1.2   Research Question 3
As we have seen Bollywood has always encouraged beauty standards. But nowadays, the industry seems to understand the importance of body acceptance and thus has taken a few steps towards promoting all body types by producing a few movies in that direction.

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2013	Gippi	Gippi, is a story of a teenage overweight girl, who is insecure and ashamed of her body. Soon she learns how to let go of her insecurity and love herself for who she is.
2015	Dum Laga ke Haisha	In the world full of fairy tales, comes this realistic movie with simple message" Beauty lies in the eyes of beholder." It shows the hypocrisy of Indian patriarchy by showing how a man, who is uneducated and liar, is acceptable. But a woman, who is fat, is not. The movie comes with a simple and beautiful message of accepting all Body-types.
2020	Chapaak	Chapaak is the story of an acid-attack survivor. It shows, how even after getting her face discarded from acid, Malti stands up for herself to seek justice. She not only regains her confidence but also help other girls who have been the victim of Acid-attack.
Year	Movie	How?

Women, especially young girls grow with the perception of having the perfect and unrealistic body and beauty standards. However, what they don't know is that the achievement of these standards involves heavy workout sessions, going on

Extreme diets, and of course tons of money and after all it's a part of their job. Many female celebrities have busted the impractical ideas about beauty and body. When women, who are a part of this industry, educate why others shouldn't fall under this trap of having unrealistic beauty goals, it injects a

Sense of confidence in other women and encourage them to accept and embrace their bodies. We have listed a few Divas who have helped in breaking the stereotypes:

1. Priyanka Chopra
(Indian Actress, Singer, Film Producer and Winner of Miss World 2000 pageant)

"The idea of a perfect female body exists from centuries ago in all industries. Whenever you see women, they are supposed to be 36-24-36; even I am not 36-24-36. But why do we have to be that? You don't feel as beautiful as you are unless you look like what the magazines look like. Even I don't look like what the magazine models look like. That is the wrong standard of beauty. Beauty is who you can be, the best version of you. How healthy you can be, how great you can be in whatever you can do; it is an internal look."

2. Sonam Kapoor
(Indian Film Actress)

"I've said it before, and I will keep saying it: It takes an army, a lot of money, and an incredible amount of time to make a female celebrity look the way she does when you see her. It isn't realistic, and it isn't anything to aspire to. Aspire to confidence. Aspire to feel pretty and carefree and happy, without needing to look any specific way. And the next time you see

a 13-year-old girl gazing wistfully at a blemish-free, shiny-haired Bollywood actress on a magazine cover, bust the myth of flawlessness for her. Tell her how beautiful she is. Praise her smile or her laugh or her mind or her gait.

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3.   Huma Qureshi
(Indian Film Actress and Model)

"The focus should be on developing personality and individuality, which is more important than having poker-straight hair or a size-24 waist. I have so many friends who are shamed for being skinny. Why can't we just let women and their bodies be?"

4.   Kangana Ranaut
(Indian Film Actress and Filmmaker)
"Bollywood beauty standards are unbelievable. A lot of actresses are Miss Universe or Miss India. By Bollywood standards, I think I am not extraordinarily beautiful but I am beautiful."

5.   Vidya Balan
(Indian Film Actress)

"I got tempted and tried to be someone else. Then I felt victimized. I was suffering from a persecution complex. (There was) a part of my life, I was in a battle with my body. But even at my thinnest, when I managed to lose a lot of weight (it happened a few times) I realized that I wasn't fully acceptable to everyone. So really there's no point in trying to change yourself to suit others' needs and ideals."

"I began to accept and respect my body, and it's been a long journey. I find myself happier, I feel beautiful. I think the best gift I have given to myself is that I won't let anyone make me feel differently about my body today."

CHART 5: BOLLYWOOD CAN BRING CHANGE
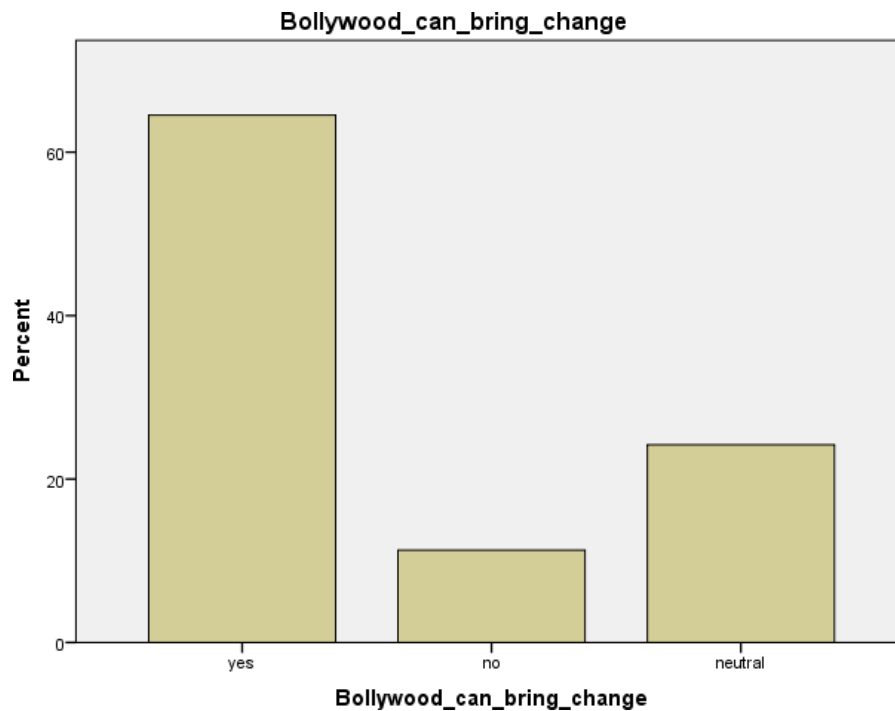
METHODOLOGY

The most dependable source of the study were surveys and interviews. Surveys were conducted over the internet among 60-70 people, aged between 14-30. 4-5 pertinent personalities were interviewed through telephonic conversation.

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CONCLUSION

The study successful helped us analyze the objectives we aimed to answer. The study left us in deep research and thinking all that is about Beauty Standards and Self-Acceptance

Based on extensive research we can safely conclude that Bollywood indeed has promoted Beauty Standards over the past years through their movies by appreciating the girl who fits their standard and vice versa for the other.

Few such movies for example are; Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Main Hoon Na, Aisha and many more.

The results of the qualitative research have also led to stating that these movies have not only mentally but physically too affected the audience. Such standards have left the viewers in psychological distress where they feel inferior and don not appreciate their body enough, which in result has led to cutting off food, suicidal thoughts and even diseases like Anorexia, Bulimia, Orthorexia.

However as seen recently, the industry is evolving and bringing a new perspective of body acceptance by showcasing that all bodies are equally beautiful and redefining these standards by movies like; Gippi, Chappak etc. Not only this but also the glam queens through their Interviews, Social Media posts and many such platforms have promoted body acceptance. This has shown a positive graph in the audience of self-love and accepting their skin instead of trying to fit into some other.

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Appendix

The first few questions of our questionnaire ask the interviewee for some personal information like name, gender and age and the further questions go as:

- Have you watched Bollywood movies?
  - ➢ Yes
  - ➢ no

- Do you think Bollywood movies influence your thinking?

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- ➢ Yes
- ➢ No
- ➢ Maybe
- ➢

- ● Are you familiar with the concept of body standards?
- ➢ Yes
- ➢ No
- ➢ Maybe
- ➢

- ● Do you think Bollywood promotes a particular type of body standard?
- ➢ Yes
- ➢ No
- ➢ Maybe
- ➢

- ● Have you felt insecure about your body because of watching Bollywood movies?
- ➢ Yes
- ➢ No
- ➢ Maybe
- ➢

- ● Have you tried to change yourself after watching Bollywood movies?
- ➢ Yes
- ➢ No
- ➢ Maybe

- ● According to you, what all body standards, do you think Bollywood promotes?
- ➢ Fair skin color
- ➢ Curvy body type
- ➢ Chiseled face
- ➢ Flawless skin
- ➢ Hairless body

- ➢ Do you think Bollywood can bring change by showing acceptance towards all body-types?
- ➢ Yes
- ➢ No
- ➢ Maybe

- ➢ Current Bollywood movies are more progressive than earlier in terms of Body Standards". How strongly do you agree with the given statement?
- ➢ Strongly Disagree
- ➢ Disagree
- ➢ Neutral
- ➢ Agree

➢ Strongly agree