



CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SELECTED HINDI FILMS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INFERENCES

Kiran Chauhan, Anjali Capila, Kiran Saini

Assistant Professor, Retired Faculty, Scholar

Department of Development Communication and Extension
Lady Irwin College, Delhi University

ABSTRACT

Content analysis of five hindi films selected on the basis of the female lead character being a winner at the end, to analyse and evaluate factors of women's empowerment are reported in this paper. The indicators of empowerment as identified and established in an earlier paper have been used here also. The components of empowerment (Economic, Social and Individual) in selected films were analysed and revealed mostly individual empowerment followed by a smattering of economic empowerment and least of all social empowerment. The results show that strong female characters can be empowered to win with family support. A small amount of economic gain (Queen and English Vinglish) in two films was used to a great advantage.

Key Words: Content Analysis, Hindi Films, Women's Empowerment, Frequency, Scores.

INTRODUCTION

Gender bias is manifest in the patriarchal society and films are reflection of this. As it has been observed in 2015 Oscar nominations, all female protagonists were victims or sufferers (Bidisha, 2015). Till now female are not shown as empowered. This shows the bias of the film makers or social reflections or both. As society progresses towards removing gender biases and films showing women as winners / empowered women, a few films are beginning to depict these changes. Therefore an attempt was made to choose those films where the main female protagonist's was a winner at the end. Winning itself is a strong indicator of empowerment. Although empowerment is a continuous process, the films of 2 – 2.30 hours with the end of a winning woman is a fair concluding evidence of empowerment in that film.

The term content analysis is the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material (as a book or a film). Classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect. Technically content analysis is a research technique for making valid inferences from texts or other meaningful matter to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2013). It is considered a scholarly methodology in humanities by which texts are studied as to authorship, authenticity or meaning. This includes philology, hermeneutics and semiotics (Joubish, 2011). In simple lay language it analyses, who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect, (Lasswell, 1948) ? It is also a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1969). A wide and heterogeneous set of manual or computer-assisted techniques for contextualized interpretations of documents produced by communication processes (any kind of text, written, iconic, multimedia etc.) or signification processes (traces and artifacts), having as its ultimate goal the production of valid and trustworthy inferences (Tibaldi, 2014).

The method of content analysis enables the researcher to include large amounts of textual information to systematically identify its properties, such as the frequencies of most used words by locating the more

important structures of its communication content. The amount of textual information needs to be categorised to provide a meaningful reading of content under scrutiny.

The assumption is that words and phrases mentioned most often are those reflecting important concerns in every communication. Therefore, quantitative content analysis starts with word frequencies, space measurements (column centimeters/inches in the case of newspapers), time counts (for radio and television time) and keyword frequencies. However, content analysis extends far beyond plain word counts, e.g. with Keyword in Context routines words can be analysed in their specific context to be disambiguated. Synonyms and homonyms can be isolated in accordance to linguistic properties of a language.

One more distinction is between the manifest contents of communication, and its latent meaning. "Manifest" describes what an author or speaker has written, while latent meaning describes what an author intended to say/write. Normally, content analysis can only be applied on manifest content; that is, the words, sentences, or texts themselves, rather than their meanings. Therefore meanings and inferences are the logical analytic contributions of research.

The difference between prescriptive analysis and open analysis is that in prescriptive analysis, the context is a closely defined set of communication parameters (e.g. specific messages, subject matter); open analysis identifies the dominant messages and subject matter within the text (McKeone,1995).

A further step in analysis is to set up a list of categories derived from the frequency list of words and control the distribution of words and their respective categories over the texts. While methods in quantitative content analysis transform observations and set up categories into quantitative statistical data, qualitative content analysis focuses more on its intentions and implications.

An objective of the content analysis is to examine large amounts of media content with statistical methods. The content analysis reduces the complexity of media coverage as it brings out the central patterns of the coverage.

Content analysis of selected Hindi Films with respect to women's empowerment was undertaken to answer the following objectives:

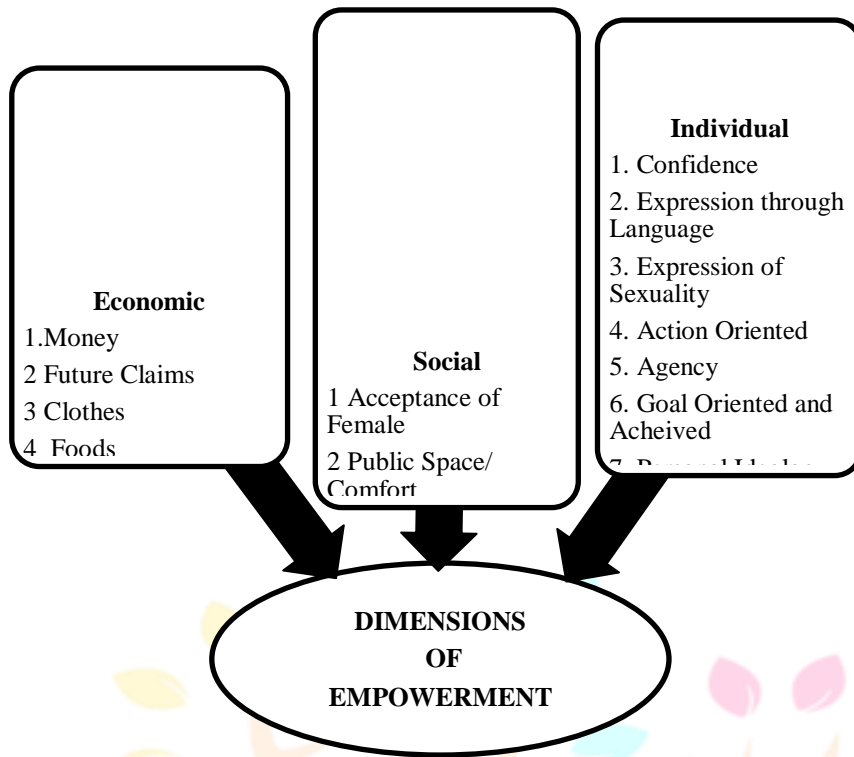
Objectives

1. How were the indicators of empowerment utilized for content analysis of selected Hindi films?
2. Were these indicators effective in bringing out the dimensions of empowerment of the selected films?
3. Were the inferences and the evaluation results synchronized with other observations?

METHODOLOGY

Women's empowerment as depicted in those Hindi Films where women are shown /depicted as empowered / winning, was analysed for its content to derive inferences. The method of krippendorff (Krippendorff, 2013) was modified and used to tabulate frequencies of indicators (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights) in respect of situations, dialogues, songs, expressions and actions. The framework of content analysis used is shown in figure 2.2.





The study was conducted in the following phases:

Phase I :Formulation of indicators

The indicators identified in an earlier paper (ref.) as used in the content analyses are shown in fig.

Figure 2.1: Dimensions, Elements and Modes for assessing Empowerment

Source: Derived and Developed from Human Right, 2009 and Table 2.1(Concepts and Definition of Empowerment)

Modes: Dialogues, Action, Song, Situation, Scenery, Costumes and Dance.

Inference Code: For Female, Against Female.

These indicators were transformed into research questions (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Research Questions

S. No	Research Questions		
1	What activities did the female lead undertake for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Empowerment • Social Empowerment • Individual Empowerment 		
2	Which songs, dance, costumes indicate / negate / reinforce / motivate the female lead’s efforts?		
3	Was agency provided to female lead by:		
		For Female	Against Female
	Male Lead:		
	Family:		
	Friend:		
4	Did changes occur in the female lead after winning:		
		For Female	Against Female

	Outer Image		
	Self Image		
5	Did the following take pride in the female lead after she won:		
		For Female	Against Female
	Male Lead:		
	Family:		
	Friend:		
	Any other:		
6	Did other female characters support each other :		
		For Female	Against Female
7	What were the stepping stones to winning?		

These questions form the basis of both the qualitative and quantitative tool. The questions at serial number 1, 2 and 7 pertain to dimension (Q.1), mode (Q.2) and inference (Q.7). The other questions 3 – 6 have also been used in quantitative analysis to determine the extent of empowerment (To Large Extent, To Quite an Extent, To Some Extent, Not at All) and the interaction support or oppose by other protagonists E.g. Male Lead, Family, Friend and Any Others. In the present study, the format of analysis is researcher's content analysis.

Phase II: Selection of Films

A total of eight experts who are critics of Hindi Cinema were approached. Out of these after several meetings and many follow ups over a period of six months five experts¹ very kindly agreed to associate themselves with the finalization of the films of the period 2006 – 2014. The experts were provided with a copy of the proposal, a copy of the fact sheets on human rights (ref.), a tentative list of films and the proposed criteria for selection. The tentative list of films and the proposed criteria was also prepared in consultation with these experts.

Proposed Criteria for selection of films was arrived at after perusing on entire universe of films from the inception of Indian films to zero in on the contemporary scenario (Somaaya B Kothari and S Madangarli 2012). A list of one hundred iconic hindi films (Hindustan Times, 12th May 2012) was considered, as was the importance of critic reviews and audience perception. Films were selected as per the criteria that.

- Films should be of year 2006-2014
- Films should be commercially successful.
- Films should be rated 3.5-4 stars as per critic rating of atleast one critic.
- Female lead should be a winner at the end.

The experts were requested to approve/disapprove/reject/suggest and make additions or deletions. Tentative list of the films was drawn up as: Parineeta (2005), Dor (2006), Chak De India (2007), Dev D (2008), Welcome to Sajjanpur (2009), Rajneeti (2010), No One Killed Jessica (2011), Saheb Bibi aur Gangster (2011), Paa (2010), Tere Naal Love Ho Gaya (2012), English Vinglish (2012), Kahaani (2012), Queen (2014). After considering the criteria and tentative list of films, **the experts recommended the following five films: Dor (2006), Chak De India (2007), Dev D (2009), English Vinglish (2012), Queen (2014)**. These five films were put through the content analysis procedure to arrive at inferences.

Phase III: Content analysis

The qualitative analysis was conducted according to the framework of Krippendorff, 2013 as shown in fig. 3.5. The research questions pertaining to the three parameters dimensions of empowerment viz. economic, social and individual were formulated as tabulated in table 3.2.

The dimensions of empowerment as detailed in the figure 3.2 were used in the analysis. All the cinematic modes e.g. dialogue, song, situation, scenery and costume were considered, then the inference was simplified as for or against women empowerment. Further the inferences were counted for frequency as the number for or against women empowerment.

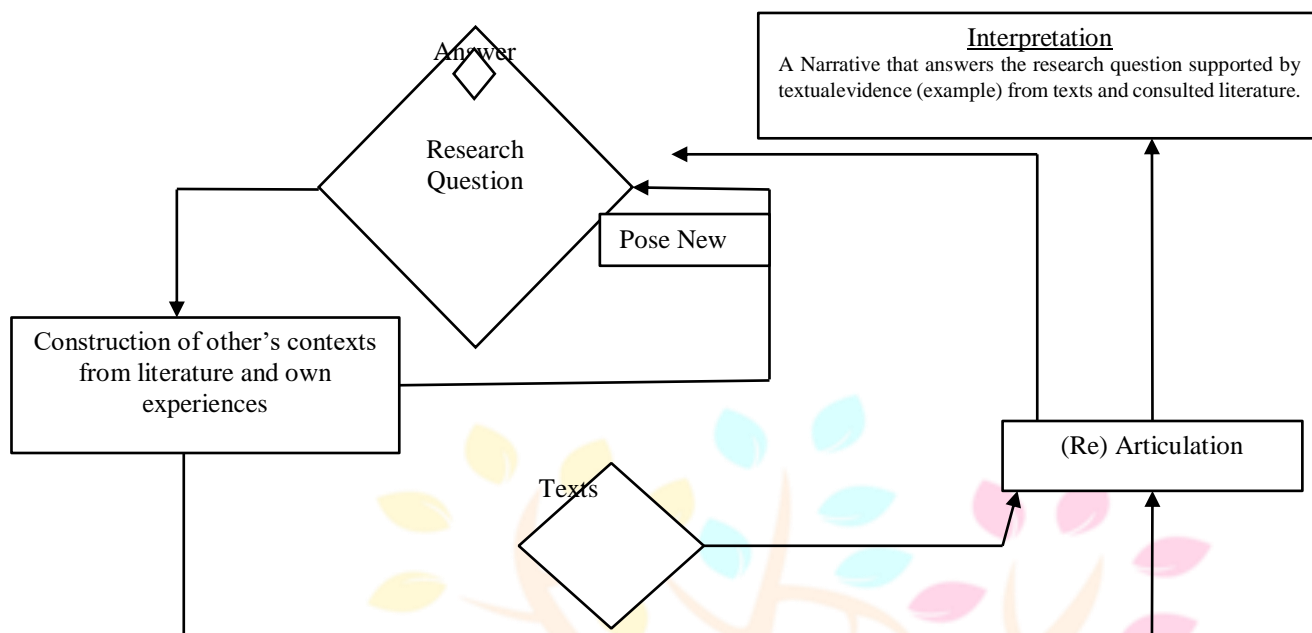


Figure: 2.2 Framework of Qualitative Content Analysis
Source: Krippendorff Klaus, 2014

Phase IV:

The film were viewed for content analysis several time. Each film was then divided episodically into scenes and songs. There were from 14-23 scenes and 1-3 songs in these films. The songs of the film were transcribed and included in Researcher's Content Analysis. The dialogues of each film were transcribed and tabulated. Each dialogue was rated 'For Female' or 'Against Female' and the dimensions (Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment and Individual Empowerment) in which the dialogue existed as also whether the speaker was male or female was noted. In any given scene there could be several dialogues. Each dialogue could have both positive and negative elements. The scoring was done with each element in a dialogue on the dimension under reference. The total scores for Economic, Social and Individual empowerment were calculated after considering the following indicators in case of each: **Economic** (Money Residence, Food and Job), **Social** (Community Support, Agency, Family Support, Set Gender Roles, Public Space / Comfort, Acceptance of Female, Resistance of Social Taboos, Social Pressure, Opportunity by Family/ Community and Collective Social efforts), **Individual Empowerment** (Confidence, Agency, Decision Making, Action Oriented, Personal Ideology, Identity, Self Esteem, Expression of Language, Ability to Connect, Leadership, Ability to Command, Goal Oriented and Acheived Expression of Language and Expression of Sexuality). These were later added up to total in each dimension (Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment and Individual Empowerment). These frequency scores for each film are presented in the tables and figures as shown.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the content analysis were calculated in terms of total scores for each dimension taking into account the various elements of the dimension being considered. The dialogue scores were considered as positive if they were encouraging towards the female lead and negative if they were against her.

A comparison of the five films which shows the analysis of the male lead character and the female lead character towards the female lead is shown in table 3.1 and figure 3.1.

Table 3.1 Scores of verbal communication by Male and Female Lead/s towards empowering the Female Lead/s

Films	Male Lead Score		Female Lead Scores	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Dor	1	0	14	-5
Chak De India	7	0	12	-5
Dev D	1	-4	10	0
English Vinglish	3	-4	11	-5
Queen	0	-6	11	-4

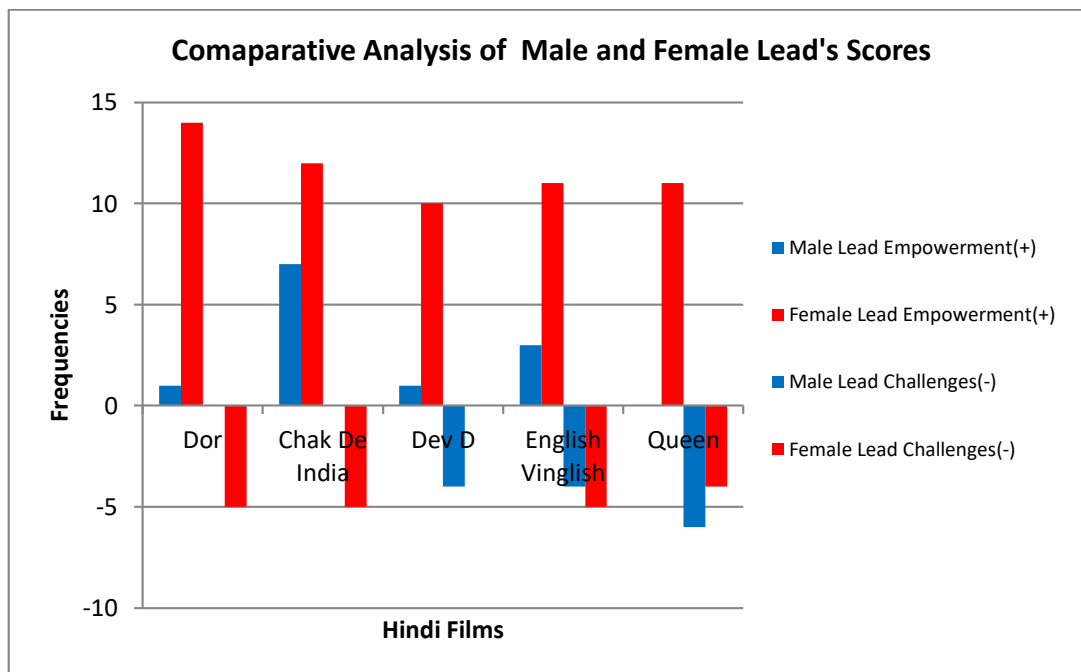


Figure 3.1 Scores of verbal communication by Male and Female Lead/s towards empowering the Female Lead/s

It is clear from these analyses that male lead tends to be negative towards the female with positive scores ranging from 0-3 except for a positive scores of 7 for Chak De India where Shahrukh Khan is the main motivational force for the all female hockey team. The negative scores for male leads range -4 to -6. In comparison the female positive scores range from 10-14. These positive scores are indicators of self confidence. The negative scores of the female lead range from -0 to -5 and are indicators of self doubts.

Table 3.2 Scores of verbal communication by other characters towards empowering the female lead/s

Films	Other Male Characters Score		Other Female Characters Scores	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Dor	6	-4	2	-3
Chak De India	4	-11	4	0
Dev D	0	-6	0	-2
English Vinglish	5	0	2	-5
Queen	5	-2	3	-4

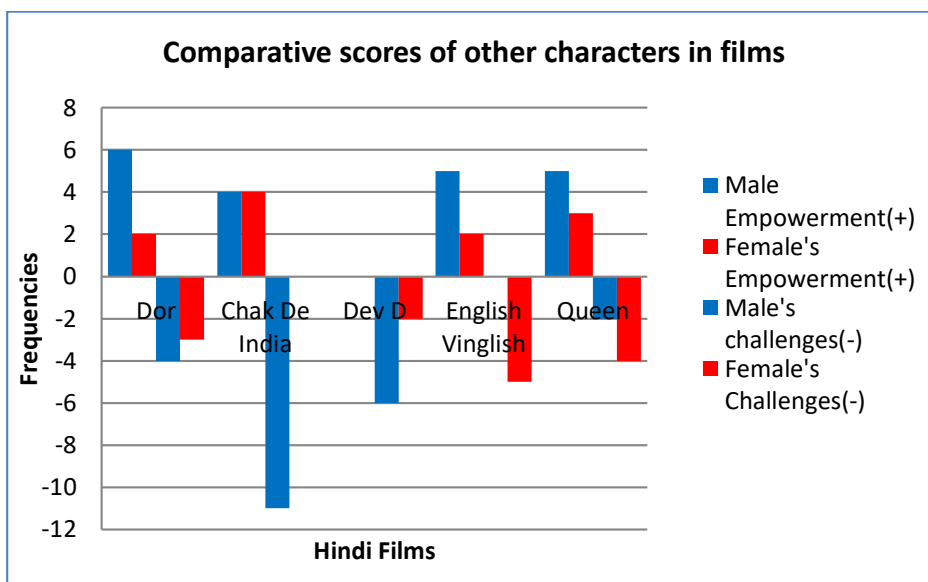


Figure 3.2 Scores of verbal communication by other characters towards empowering the female lead/s

An analysis of the dialogues of other characters in respect of the female lead in the five films show a range of positive 0-6 scores and negative -0 to -11 for males and positive 0-3 and negative -0 to -5 for females. These scores are indicators of social attitudes of the males which in both positive and negative cases are stronger than those of the other female characters (Male; 0-6 positive, -0 to -11 negative; Female: 0-4 positive and -0 to -5 negative). These analyses indicate that social behaviour towards the female protagonist is strongly guided by the male elements of society.

Table 3.3 Scores of Verbal Communication encouraging (positive) / discouraging (negative) towards empowering the female lead.

Hindi Films	Economic Empowerment	Social Empowerment	Individual Empowerment
Dor	3(+) 1(-)	6(+) 6(-)	43(+) 6(-)
Chak De India	0(+) 0(-)	19(+) 13(-)	59(+) 0(-)
Dev D	0(+) 0(-)	3(+) 5(-)	46(+) 7(-)
English Vinglish	2(+) 2(-)	12(+) 9(-)	40(+) 12(-)
Queen	4(+) 1(-)	29(+) 28(-)	57(+) 23(-)

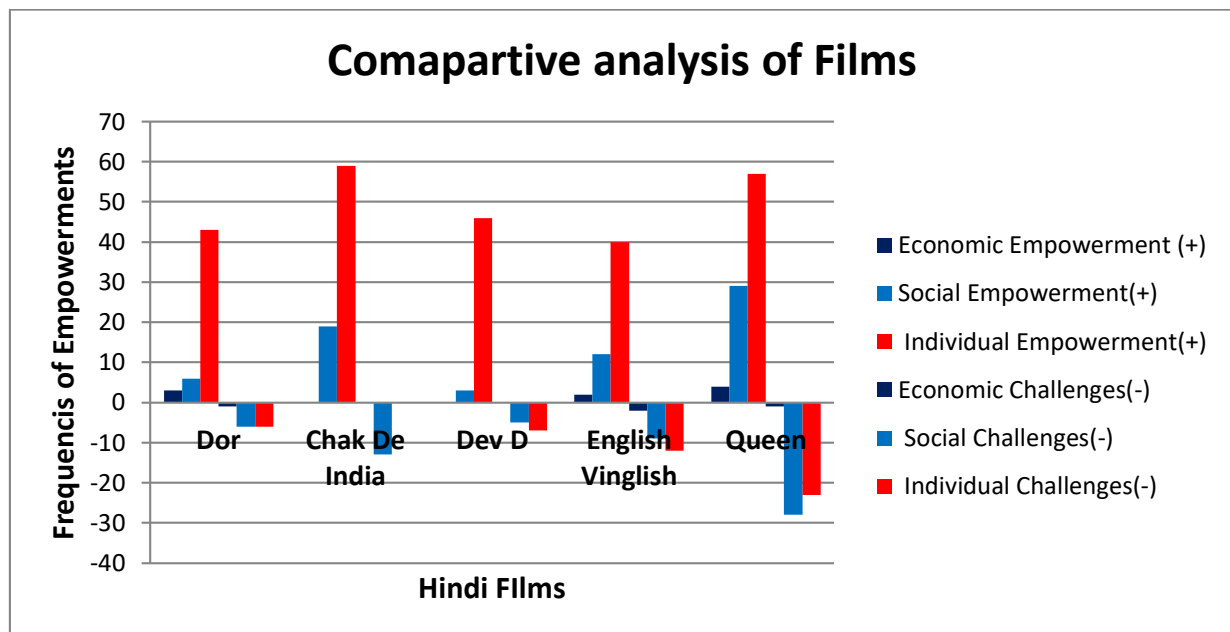


Figure 3.3 Scores of Verbal Communication encouraging (+ve) / discouraging (-ve) towards empowering the female lead.

Table 3.3 and figure 3.3, show a comparative analysis of different dimensions in the films. There is a negligible amount of Economic Empowerment ranging from 0-4 whereas the only films where it is shown is Queen and English Vinglish. Only in Dor, one of the female protagonists “Zeenat” who earns her money is empowered in the beginning while in English Vinglish “Shashi” makes ladoos and uses that money to travel to America and empower herself by learning English, the lack of which knowledge had disempowered her. In queen Economic Empowerment agency is provided to her by her family and she herself earns some money making Golgappas which shows up in a score of positive 4.

In the five films of the study no emphasis is given on Economic Empowerment in any dialogues rather in English Vinglish the husband makes a derogatory comment while convincing his son “Jao mummy ke sath school se nikal denge phir aake laddoo banana padega”.

In Social Empowerment there are both positive and negative elements in all the films. The positive elements are range from 3 to 29 and negative elements are range from 6 to 28.

In each case negatives are far more than positive. The positive elements evidenced coming from the family. Individual effort is the main empowering feature of all the winners in the five films. The negative or self doubting part of each film is only a fraction of the positive. It is notable that in Chak De India there are no self doubts and no negativity towards female protagonist/s efforts. The only negative part in Chak De India is the social discouragement received by the hockey players. In case of Queen where she had to motivate herself to overcome her heartbreak of a broken engagement and motivate her self through the social agency of her family and to set out as a journey of individual empowerment.

To sum up films being on entertainment media do not focus on Economic Empowerment Issues unless they are showing lavish sets which were absent from all the films under study. Social empowerment appears to be most difficult element of empowerment as the society is shown to be against the protagonists who have to heroically fight as individuals to be empowered / winners.

Content analysis of five selected Hindi films shows individual efforts of female protagonists to come up as winners at the end of the film. Economic empowerment is addressed only in one film (English Vinglish) wherein she makes ladoos, collects money which she uses to pay for the tuition fees for English lessons. In Dev D Chanda (Kalki Kochlin) is shown to be economically independent. She is shown attending evening classes to empower herself further through education. The economic divide between Dev and the two women is a backdrop of the film. Social validation according to the dialogues of other characters (Table 3.1 and figures 3.1) is highly negative. In the case of the film Dor, Zeenat is shown to be economically, socially and individually empowered she is the main agent to provide support and resume the other female protagonists Meera so that they both come up winners.

To sum up the content analyses using the indicators from the human rights document were effective in clearly identifying dimensions (Economic, Social and Individual) and elements of empowerment and qualifying the results to enable identification and comparison of the films.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1. This article is a part of doctoral research entitled “Depiction of Women’s Empowerment in Selected Hindi Films (2006-2014) – An Analysis”, University of Delhi, Unpublished.
2. University Grants Commission’s Senior Research Fellowship for the accomplishment of doctoral research.

REFERENCES

1. Bidisha, (2015). *And the Oscar goes to....only white men. Hindustan Times.* pp 16.
2. Holsti, Ole R. (1969). *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
3. Joubish, Muhammad Farooq; Muhammad Ashraf Khurram, (2011). Outlook on Some Concepts in the Curriculum of Social Studies. *World Applied Sciences Journal* 12 (9): pp 1374–1377. ISSN 1818-4952.
4. Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. p. 413. ISBN 9780761915454.
5. Krippendorff, K.(2013). *Content Analysis An Introduction to Its Methodology* Third Edition. sage publications, The Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
6. Lasswell, Harold D. (1948). *Power and Personality.* New York, NY.
7. McKeone, Dermot H. (1995). *Measuring Your Media Profile: A general introduction to media analysis and PR evaluation for the communications industry.* Hampshire, England: Gower Press Ltd. ISBN 9780566075780.
8. Somaaya B, J Kothari and S Madangarli. (2012). *Mother Maiden Mistress Women in Hindi Cinema 1950- 2010* Published Harper Collins New Delhi India.
9. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.
10. Tiplado, G. (2014). *L'analisi del contenuto e i mass media.* Bologna, IT: Il Mulino. pp 42. ISBN 978-88-15-24832-9.

