



DISCOURSING OF PATRIARCHAL MINDSET: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DAUNTLESS FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE MOVIE 'BAAHUBALI'

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Abstract

This paper deals with the idea of women playing patriarchal roles, which is like a nightmare in a country like us and in particular, the time portrayed in the S.S.Rajamouli's magnum opus Baahubali series. Baahubali series, an epic drama is a superb narrative period with a visual magnificence seldom seen in Indian cinema. It is like a magical event that is going to remain in our minds for several years. The present paper reflects how this film is shaking the stable walls of patriarchal culture and bringing the country a fresh outlook on how a woman can also be a masculine warrior, and the mother of the state, as Rajya Mata in the movie. The producer and writer of this film are attempting to reflect through their female protagonists, the authentic desires for independence, equality and fair consideration of male characters. This kind of movie with a compelling female character is nothing new to Indian cinema, but how this film depicts their female characters has an exceptional taste in it and challenges culture regarding multiple patriarchal positions. Feminist cultural theory has been used in the paper to examine the idea of gender stereotypes as portrayed in media types, such as films, reflecting on how women's images are related to tales of actual life and social circumstances. The strong motive of this paper is to relate the women characters of this film to the women of today, to resume introspecting their ideas and acts and to wake up from the sleeping shells under which they are still residing. This paper offers a socio-cultural feminist analysis of a blockbuster series Baahubali.

Keywords: Movies, stereotypes, discourse, patriarchal mindset, domination

Movies and theatre have always treated as a mirror and reflector of the society. Cinema plays a significant role in altering the mindsets of society by teaching new thoughts and ideas into their lives. Some of the films are fictitious, too, but some movies are genuinely portraying the gritty reality of life that can bring a revelation for humanity. One of the same is the Blockbuster Baahubali series, which posed several concerns about the patriarchal structure of the society. This movie also raised questions on the real protagonist of the film. It is a tale about the monarchy, vengeance, passion and

deception that has shaken the conventional patriarchal pattern of the society. When the entire world was busy smashing their heads over Why Kattappa killed Baahubali, there were several viewpoints in the film too that are gaining attention after its release. Undoubtedly, the structure of the series points to a heavily male-dominated society with conventional sex-role typing that seeks to represent the idea of absolute control of the patriarchate. However, the way S.S. Rajamouli cleverly flipped the coin is commendable. He beautifully transformed the concept of so-called

male dominance into the status of dignity by imbuing egalitarian and masculine characteristics with his female characters in the film.

The feminist cultural theory examines the idea of gender stereotypes as portrayed in media types, such as films, reflecting on how women's images are related to tales of actual life and social circumstances. Feminism is simply a view that refuses to accept the self-framed limitations of women in society. This theory refers to the difference between male and female, especially concerning the conservative understanding of culture on the cultural front. It advocates equality between men and women and promotes democracy. Brooke Williams was the first to propound the "depoliticization of radical feminism" as "cultural feminism". Cultural Feminism diverged from liberal feminism, as certain progressive feminists dismissed the former unbiased and conservative idea that feminine characteristics are inferior and reverted to the adherent interpretation of gender distinctions under which they perceive female attributes as superior.

"There is nothing revolutionary whatsoever about the control of women's bodies by men. The Woman's body is the terrain on which patriarchy is erected." (Rich 55). As Adrienne Rich has aptly summed up in her *Woman Born; Motherhood as Experience* that she is a master of her own body and she can own it instead of submitting it to someone else's hands. How ironical it is to name it my body, my soul, but the truth is just the reverse. A film represents a parallel fact much more potent than what might be expected by the period portrayed in a movie. It is hard to imagine the empire in possession of a woman when her husband is right beside her.

This idea in the film has intelligently disrupted patriarchal traditions. Some scene in the movie would have caused hiccups to many of the male's viewers who still bear the weight of a male-dominated figure on their shoulders. Sivagami, the strongest woman hero to date, is one of the central protagonists of the Baahubali series. Veteran actor Ramya Krishna plays the role. She is a storehouse of

many qualities, an embodiment of grace and desire. She is a courageous woman who has not bowed down to any situation in her entire life. Her character has a fantastic portrait of motherhood that will stay in our hearts for years to come. She captured everyone's eyeballs when she did not only feed her baby but her nephew as well. She is in vibrant auspicious colours, bright theatrical jewels and a body language that is both proud and nurturing at the same time; her slight signs of strength with subtle expressions of nurturing affection towards her both sons. She has proved to be the best example of womanhood by becoming a mother to a boy who will compete for her son in the future. She broke all the myths about stepmothers and aunts in the films.

What Woman, in the solitary confinement of life at home enclosed with young children, or in the struggle to mother the while providing for them single-handedly, or in the conflict of weighing her personhood against the dogma that she is a mother, first, last and always-what Woman has not dreamed of "going over the edge", of simply letting go, relinquishing what is termed her sanity, so that she can be taken care of for once, or can simply find a way to take care of herself? (Rich 279)

On a contrary note, if Shivgami is not a Rajyamatha as she is called in a film and a simple typical Indian woman and only quietly following her disabled husband by being her queen. Moreover, following the norms that fit the mirror of the society by not showering her affection for Mahendra Baahubali, her nephew and leaving no coin unturned in bullying him and tossing him out of the life of kingdom or pushing him to represent his empire as a soldier or a worker. And merely being a so-called good mother, becoming a participant in all the wrong deeds committed by her husband and family, and then silently resting in peace, leaving no historical tale for the world to follow. Even if this tale is morally wrong, but it will be happily embraced by patriarchal culture as, the Woman has no part to play in it. She is only performing her usual character as a dutiful wife,

loving mother, and stubborn aunt as happily accepted by society. Feminist cultural theory is aptly subsumed in this character of Rajyamatha as it depicts how the representation of women reflected in actual life and social conditions.

For women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics. (Woolf 95)

Why are some stern qualities granted to a woman? Why there is such ambiguity about Woman handling things outside home. Why a woman cannot direct the men and be their boss, why does she have to be apologetic to her husband all the time? Undoubtedly, these stereotypes got exploded in this film. S.S.Rajamouli has set the mark on how strongly these brilliant characters are acknowledged to bring the feminist voice in the movie. It raised a much-unnoticed question as to who is the real protagonist of the film. It is Shivgami, rather than Mahendra Bahubali or her son as the whole movie revolves around her decisions, her punishments, so her dynamic character that gave this films an epic personage.

Considering the other compelling character of Devasena played by Anushka Shetty, left the eyeballs of society widened. It set a precedent for the audience to expect more of such strong female characters in the movies. Her role relates to every single girl in today's world. There is nothing wrong with granting her the title of Supergirl. In a society with a rigid gender structure and a substantial social order, both Sivagami and Devasena stand out as revolutionaries. Devsena is the central character in the series; an example she sets will remain alive in the hearts of society, particularly the girls, for years to come. Her actions can just contribute to more teenage girls viewing the film and finding encouragement from the warrior princess. She broke all the stereotypic standards of the patriarchal structure. Between becoming a brave queen and battling for her kingdom to a feminist

who fearlessly lifted her voice against injustice and oppression, she has built a precedent for women in society to pursue the footsteps.

It is time to affect a revolution in female manners - time to restore to them their lost dignity - and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners (Wollstonecraft 117)

Such quotes depict the image of Devasena. There are multiple scenes in the movie where she has alarmed the world with her bluntness. The optimum moment that has seized the attention of every single person is to use her sword as a response to women's injustice. There is a heroic scene when Devasena has to stand in a queue to enter into the kingdom, and a man on the gate was taking full advantage of his duty by touching the women inappropriately. Suddenly and thoughtlessly, she struck the hand of that man as if it was a precise and natural way to react in such a circumstance. This scene is what must happen in reality. She was very relaxed after her this act which reflected her attitude of my life; my laws have undoubtedly changed the mindset of not only men but also of women. She is a warrior full of grit and enthusiasm. Devasena is a woman of dignity. The charisma of Devasena will be acknowledged for crushing the masculine man ego for years to come. She is beautiful and elegant. She is compassionate, but strong at the same time as she is shielding her citizens from being targeted. Devsena's actions have surely bestowed a promised land upon many women out there in the society who are still living a life equivalent to slave. She not only stood for the injustice done by male sex in the community but also for the dominating voice of a woman to a woman. She has set an example for all the daughters-in-law to speak up for them and not being a victim of domestic violence. An only loud voice can slow down the other strong voice. She has presented a very bold picture of a woman through her words, which are not less than a canon that is bombarding some fake norms of the society. Devasena is the tenacious female character in the

Indian movies so far. As a daughter, daughter-in-law, queen, and as a mother, she has come up with an impressive description of a Devi depicted in Indian culture. Her silent vengeance from her brother-in-law is recognizable as a perfect image of an intense woman. The patience and silence she has had in the entire film was a quiet observance of a lioness waiting for her deadly rug.

Avanthika, a rebellious warrior and the third female character in the film, portrayed by Tamannah Bhatia, is seen as the love interest of Sivudu aka Mahendra Baahubali. She and her tribe had been combating in battle with the kingdom of Bhallala Deva for several years to save their queen Devasena from slavery. In addition, as a fierce and devoted woman, she lives with only one purpose in her life to take revenge on Mahishmathi and release Devasena. Thought of just reaching Mahishmathi is a struggle in itself. She is a very vibrant, thought-provoking woman of today who has the least value for her physical display and gives all her commitment to her mission and inspiration throughout her life. She does not want to be treated any less than a male. She is a woman of words and commitment.

There are several voices raised against Avanthika's masculinity that she swamped in the ocean of male love and forgot her real mission. Some claim that her role has finally proved that a woman cannot be as tough as a man can, and that, like Avanthika, her mission has to be done by the greatest male hero like Mahendra Baahubali. However, I find her character remarkably real and practical. There is nothing wrong with falling in love. There is nothing wrong with having a partner who wants to share responsibility and work for you. There is nothing wrong with that, and it can be entirely unjustified to name Mahendra Baahubali's love for Avanthika, a mere displaying of patriarchal strength or viewing her as a weak woman. I consider her a woman of today's generation like Devasena, who exactly knows what she wants in her life. It is false to say that she is a pure shadow of Mahendra Baahubali. She has come up with her own unique identity as a warrior. Feminism is not about moving on to male sex or telling them that

they are better than they are. Feminism's real sense is equality that women are no less than male sex and can do all that is conceivable under the sun. Therefore, if you have a partner who is proud of you for being an opinionated and an independent woman and he wants to add on his share in your life by sharing your responsibilities, that is the real sense of feminism, and that is a real man as well. Avanthika can be seen on the last battlefield while defending Devasena. She has already made her name on the board of the feminist warriors.

Eventually, come up the role of Sanga who completes the fourth wheel of these four powerful women in this show. She was a mother who adopted and raised Mahendra Baahubali much like her own son. She even left her charisma of being an independent woman in a position of half an hour. There is nothing wrong with naming her the queen of her tribe. How she orders her tribesmen to lock the passage below the waterfall, so that no one arrives to look for Shivudu, is a scene that again informs the universe that a woman can rule and a man can obey. Everybody applauds S.S. Rajamouli for carrying forward this solid idea of interpreting the roles of women. Okay, what attracted my mind is not why Kattappa killed Baahubali, but what left me wondering is if it is a male-centred film that implies its title or a female-centred film.

The film has given us a space to talk about the many strong roles of women. As lioness, all the positions of her life are perfectly juggling her career and personal sides. In a somewhat similar manner, the women in the film presented the portrayal of a lioness as brave, determined, strong-headed, compassionate, and adding icing on the ice is to be a fighter. The film is a revelation for culture as a whole. The film has left a beautiful message to the males in our culture who are still operating under the misconception that it is they who owns the battlefield, or that it is a male who can rule the kingdom. Metaphorically, we should speak about the world of today where women often behave as perpetrators of male authority and culture. I believe the four women in this film have beautifully directed us to lead a life like a queen size. Besides, I am sure if S.S.Rajamouli is going to make the third

part, it is probably a woman who is going to be a hero.

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