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Cinematography for female objectification: Analysis of item songs of Pakistani movies

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The transition in Pakistani cinema and terming it as a rival of cinema heavily depends on the bowing technique of item songs, which is deliberately fueling the negative representation of females. The qualitative analysis of item songs underlines the representation of women and sheds light on aspects regarding how the objectification of women in item songs is done in a patriarchal society and what values are assigned based on gender. The analysis of item songs revealed that women were sexually objectified and the use of clothing, jewelery, makeup, body movements, and gestures are filmed to enhance their bodies. Hence, most of the songs used females as an object of sensation and enjoyment. On the other side, the notion of women's empowerment is being raised all over the world but still, cinema presents her in a submissive way and defines her role to please men. The dominancy of the male is projected and the close angle of her body gestures and nude body parts show her vulnerability. The visualization of the female reflects that she is presented tactfully to appeal to the audience, and her fragile role is reinforced.

KEYWORDS

item songs, male gaze, patriarchal cinema, objectification, cinematography

Introduction

Item numbers serve as a vital link between the film and its audience. Therefore, film songs have been an integral component of South Asian filmmaking and bring means of expression through song visualization (Mahboob, 2020). However, the "item song or number" remained quite controversial and debatable in films, as they are only limited to Indian or Pakistani movies. An item number is characterized as a "cinesexual" idea consisting of a "sensual dance performance" where the focus is on the (item) girl, who is often accompanied by a male audience, pleasing them with body and facial gestures, and wearing revealing dresses (Brara, 2010; MacCormack, 2016). While comparing the "item songs" to the rest of the film songs, the item number is focused on "women objectification" and "women's submissiveness" to please men (Butler, 2002; Baranyi, 2016; Dwivedi, 2017).

Since 2014, a huge trend and adoption of item songs have been observed in Pakistani cinema, which was later disapproved by the film fraternity. Notably, on social media, actors and actresses raised concerns that it is "body shaming," a "cheap selling technique" and a "copied formula" to fill the gap in the story and

to present “a sexy girl” for film marketing (Polce-Lynch et al., 1998; Fardouly and Vartanian, 2016; Noh et al., 2018). Therefore, this paper focuses on eight item songs of Pakistani cinema, which were highly discussed and criticized for women’s objectification unacceptably. It assists in enriching the literature from a geographical perspective and helps to better understand cinematography in a patriarchal society, where society consists of a male-dominated power structure throughout organized society and in individual relationships (Ali Aksar et al., 2022).

History of Pakistani cinema

After independence, the first film produced was *Teri Yaad* in 1948, which Dawood Chand directed. “*Sassi*” was the first film to remain consistently in the Pakistani film industry cinema for 50 weeks. In Pakistani movies, the era of the 60s and 70s is known as the golden age –covering when Lollywood produced its most successful Urdu films. An example is a film entitled “*Aaina*” in 1977, which was recorded as the most successful film in the history of Pakistani cinema. Actors like Muhammad Ali, Waheed Murad, Nadeem, Shamim Ara, Shabnam, and Babra Sharif, were the most renowned artists of Lollywood. They made the golden age possible through their undoubtedly exceptional performances.

Punjabi films and downfall of cinema

In the late 70s, many Punjabi films were produced that introduced the “*Gandasa culture*” which is more violent and aggressive. “*Maula Jatt*,” a Punjabi film starring Sultan Rahi is one of the notable films of this time (Aslam, 2015; Parveen et al., 2015). Pakistan’s film industry was at its peak in the 60s and 70s, producing an average of 90 films per year. However, the Punjabi era resulted in its downfall as violent films introduced a very aggressive culture that was disliked by the audience. Most Punjabi movie themes incorporated elements of “*mujra*” and desi dances labeled as vulgar and not based on usual subtle dance moves (Caldwell, 2010; Ghosh and Basnett, 2019). These events created a shift in the societal mindset, and people thronged cinemas to notice the most hyped-up dances and get the most out of what was shown so openly. This led the way for a whole new world based on their objectivity by targeting women as the epitome of attraction and temptation. The era of Panjabi films sequentially led to the introduction of item songs that are captured by adding glitter and glamor and giving it a revamped look, although the objective remained the same (Abbi, 2018).

Considering the difference in the target audience of Punjabi films and Bollywood, the inclination and focus of the audience are captured by showing them images and moves that create a niche in their minds, which resonates with their emotions and feelings. Hence, it revolved around *Mujra* style to item songs that are added in today’s entertainment world (Awan, 2014).

The era of Urdu films and revival of cinema

The reviving of the Lollywood industry in the 90s is credited to Syed Noor for his blockbusters, including *Bulandi* and *Qasam* in 1992. The next movie was *Jeeva* in 1995, which also became popular during this time (Riaz and Umer, 2022). The revival of Pakistani cinema began with the genius creator of the movie, Khuda K. Liye, in 2007. The then director, Shoaib Mansoor, is credited for the revival of Lollywood after experiencing almost three decades of downfall. Later, Director Shoaib Mansoor presented his directional blockbuster in 2011, *Bol*, which set the benchmark for igniting the local cinema of the Pakistani film industry. Later, movies such as *Waar*, *Na Maloom Afraad*, *Jawani Phir Nahi Ani*, *Bin Roye*, *Wrong number*, *Moor*, and *Manto* received exceptional appreciation and set a relevant change in the box office (Shafiq et al., 2019; Rauf and Kanwal, 2020).

Romantic films like *Bin Roye* and comedies, such as the *wrong number*, were showcased on cinema screens in 44 countries worldwide. This marks a visible lift in the revival of the Pakistani film industry. Comedy movies dominated the movie industry more than any other genre, which is another Pakistani cinema success. However, item songs were introduced as a new element of entertainment (Safdar et al., 2015; Shams et al., 2018).

Item song strategy during revival of cinema in Pakistan

The music and songs in films have undergone several changes and development, particularly in sub-continent cinema, to compete worldwide (Sadoff, 2006; Mukherjee, 2012). Similarly, the emergence of the Pakistani Film industry after independence coincided with Lollywood transforming its stories, music, and songs according to prevailing standards. Currently, the term revival of cinema in Pakistan is in vogue, and it is perceived differently by many people. This term was coined in 2007 when after a long gap, a Pakistani film remained at the box office due to its story, technology, cinematograph, and music.

In the present decade, various high-budget and box office hit movies have been produced, thereby increasing the rate of film viewing in cinema. These films adopted different foreign techniques in production, picturization, and music. It is commonly observed that Pakistani films attempt to imitate the Indian film industry, particularly the use of item songs which are highly criticized (The Indian Express, 2015).

An item song refers to a song from a movie that involves a cameo appearance, typically by a seductive and sensual actress who may or may not have any other role to play in the narration (Jain et al., 2019; Zoon et al., 2019). Item songs usually have no relevance to the story or the plot. Several changes have been observed after the revival of the Pakistani

film industry in story, music, and cinematography. The Pakistani film industry previously witnessed some great melodic songs with pop, classical, and soft romantic songs being the focused genre of the golden era. Madam Noor Jahan, Mehdi Hassan, and Ahmad Rushdi were ever-known legends during the golden era (Shaheen and Khan, 2021).

Nevertheless, many item songs have been produced in the Pakistani film industry after the revival, which is the key focus of these films. Prior movies usually belonged to the drama or romantic genre, whereas comedy is the present main element of the plot. Meanwhile, cinematography has dramatically changed due to technological advancements and the locations chosen for the shoots are more relevant to the story (Walia, 2015).

There is extensive literature on the representation of women in films in mass media research; however, such information is limited in the context of film research in Pakistan. Therefore, this study highlights how the Pakistani film industry is adapting camera techniques and how the female body is employed for marketing purposes through item songs. Unfortunately, the objectification of women through dress, makeup, body gestures, and camera techniques is prevalent, and an unacceptable portrayal is typical.

The film industry's representation of culture, society, and gender has remained the focal point. Through films, a pictorial and impactful picture is not only represented but also enforced. Music is an integral part of films, and it continues to play a critical role in the transformation of the film industry. The portrayal of females in film tracks, especially in item songs, has resulted in various objections. Specifically, the objectification of women in item songs is employed for marketing without any relevance to the story. The current research explores female representation in item songs in the Pakistani film industry, how females are framed and shown in item songs, and to what extent it is according to Pakistani cultural settings. Based on the aforementioned points, the research questions in this study are as follows:

RQ1: What attributes of womanhood are shown in item songs?

RQ2: How makeup and costumes are used in item songs to enhance the female in an arousing manner for audience attention?

RQ3: What camera techniques (angles and shots) are used to objectify women in the item songs?

Literature review

Hollywood is currently the biggest film industry globally. Notwithstanding, the representation of women in such a broad and diverse industry seems to be unfavorable for females. There is a general perception that females are only included in films as eye candy. A study conducted in 2014 found that 26.4% of females were shown nude as compared to males, who were only

given 9.1% of such similar roles. The use of “sexy attire” is all it takes for females to be a source of attraction and sensuality in films (Smith and Choueiti, 2010; Pomerantz, 2021).

On the other hand, Hollywood doesn't have the culture of picturization of songs in films, especially those with dances without any specific relevance. Bollywood is well-known for presenting songs in films that may or may not have significance. Similarly, Lollywood has kept up with the tradition of film songs. Bollywood blends in and adapts the culture and traditions of film from the western arena, which again questions the objectification of females (Dwivedi, 2017; Slatewala, 2019).

Women are objectified in music videos, from hip-hop to rap and so on. This is usually demonstrated by exposing female bodies through different postures, explicit dressing, double-meaning lyrics, seductive tones, and acting and dancing sexually (Slatewala, 2019). The woman's face is not the targeted area, rather, the body parts are more in focus. Furthermore, the female body is displayed as a showpiece and a sex symbol rather than an individual. Body parts, such as the female breast, buttocks, and legs, are given more focus and emphasis than the face (Ahad and Koç Akgül, 2020). This promotes the sexist approach and enhances the image of the female body as the weaker sex and as a submissive being, whereas males are viewed as the superior sex. In most music videos, females bend backward or frontwards to please the male and attract the opposite sex toward her. Moreover, women are mostly seen in supporting roles either behind or beside the male, trying to get his attention by any means (Aamir, 2017). The image portrayed through such music videos is that a woman's body is nothing but an object, and the advertiser behind the idea promotes the sexist approach that “sex sells” more than the content shown (Zoon et al., 2019).

It is difficult to identify the root and birth of the item song genre, but it can be considered to have stemmed and derived from the “*mujra*” style or the courtesan's song genre from the early 1930s. From the Bollywood blockbuster Mughal-e-Azam (1960) to Pakeezah (1972) to Umrao Jaan (1981) and the earliest Devdas (2002), the trend of a *mujra* girl or a courtesan's song has changed and modernized to the item song. This approach gained more popularity in the 90s when the vamp was associated with crucial surroundings and circumstances, which led her to expose herself in the open. From vamp to item girl, the films became rapidly overloaded with item numbers, leading to direct and obvious references to the body through camera angles, gestures, and lyrics. Men being joyful participants of the dance and drunken men around a half-nude body question the morality and sensuality of a female. One of the most prominent and direct events to be noticed in the term “item song” or “item girl” is that the female dancer is referred to as an “item”, which in itself means object (Kumar, 2017; Zoon et al., 2019).

The representation of the female body in item songs also reinforces the extent to which males dominated societies and the incorporation of patriarchal mindsets that causes a behavioral shift in societies and traps them in activities leading to gender

biases and objectification (Aamir, 2017; Jain et al., 2019). For a male-dominated society, cinema promotes the role and position of women, and their features and characteristics are instilled into minds, followed by building a perspective on it and creating an air of acceptability in how society operates.

The public's sensitivity has long been triggered and awakened by attempts that are causing a paradigm shift in how societies govern and reflect their lifestyle. Historically, much emphasis existed on the lead roles and the integral part that actors and actresses played. Still, the moves and curves of the female body exhibition are now the main determinants of success in today's world (Butler, 2002). Thus, societies have created streamlined ways to gauge and scope what has to be displayed and choose how it must be visualized. The map of womanhood has been altered, and the definition of her presence is labeled by how society wants to envision the way forward for other generations. Thus, the use of item songs has become a necessity, and how it attacks and triggers the promotion of films by making them an integral part of stories (Dwivedi, 2017). By exposing their vulnerabilities to viewers, they are perceived as glam, glamor, and glitz objects and then later visualized as a negative commodity. Their nudity, revealing aspects, and naked parts are made more visible, raising exceptional questions on why a woman has been labeled and presented as an "eye candy" or a selling item (Nagar et al., 2011).

Hence, the name "item song" is supplemented with the theme of entertainment and made to soothe the eyes. However, this lifelong relationship has been made so strong and cemented over time that filmmakers focus their agenda and core purpose around incorporating the female gender as a means to attain outcome. Furthermore, the over-addition of clothes has become more prominent, targeted at revealing specific parts and a predisposed tactic encouraging women to utilize their bodies as sources of income.

The rhythm, theme, language, and lyrics are all packaged to create the fusion and bash the audience will be enthralled to be exposed to (Baranyi, 2016). Furthermore, this has caused a gradual rise in the demand generated over time and compelled filmmakers to consistently focus on using females and gender-specific approaches in the most appealing ways (Maule, 2010).

Gender-specific approaches are marketing tactics that come out to be the hallmark only when a hot female revealing her body is presented, which is accompanied by the use of tacky lyrics that is unforgettable for any human. The growing use of female depiction in movies is a clear-cut display of how minds have been controlled and monitored through the prescreening of elements going on for ages. Item songs can provide the spice and splendor needed to bring about the craziness in viewers who are more inclined toward movies with females in the lead role. However, this sweeping trend has penetrated western society from the introduction of the movie culture which is now systemic through strategies developed and evaluated results (Kishore, 2017). The sexist approach has added to more woes, plagued society as a

whole, and attracted male audiences by playing with their desires and molding their weaknesses into something they wish to see on the big screen (Pietrobruno, 2006).

In some instances, the stripping of a girl or over-exposure of bodies has been the sole reason for bringing crowds to theaters. This is accompanied by the vulgar dance moves that subliminally impact the way juveniles respond by keeping their adults as role models (Kapoor, 2018). Female representation with barely-any clothes on is aimed toward spurring an invitation for the men dancing around the "item-girl" to openly lust at her, thus creating a shift in how society responds and reacts to such acts (David, 2007; Broadnax, 2019).

Theoretical underpinnings

The current research is grounded in two theories, Gender Display (Goffman, 1976) and Male Gaze (Mulvey, 1989). First, a growing war between making women idols and items has emerged, and item songs are meant for mesmerization and entertainment. The modern-day opinions revolve around views that gender orientation is used in a way that best suits their abilities and their talents. Thus, men have a talent for showing their power and authority. In contrast, women have fragile and modeled bodies that can help them attain a lucrative profession and delve into the world of fame by working on their competencies and polishing their abilities even if it demands to reveal their bodies (Williams, 2017).

Songs devalue women and treat them as sexual objects which sheds a negative light on how societal values are contaminated. Hence, a paradigm shift has occurred which in return shapes up the mindset of the future generation that is yet to be exposed to this poison of objectivity. From a feminist film lens, films are viewed as a cultural practice and norm that incorporates and pictures myths about women and targets their femininity as a primary concept. Femininity and spectatorship are the two instrumental aspects of the theory and visualize these different grounds.

Male Gaze Theory is based on three aspects; how a man sees women, how women see other women, and how women view themselves through a lens of theirs (Mulvey, 1989). This indicates that directors use specific slow-motion moves, women close-ups, and highlight features that the viewer must view. According to the theory, the use of this tactic in our society for the domination of men as living in a patriarchal society places their expressive roles, whereas men are considered the breadwinner. It reflects how women themselves from a secondary perspective, which is based on their idea from the men's perspective. Women are assigned roles to portray how men feel, and the former's sexuality is used in films and advertisements as a turning point.

Gender Display Theory broadly sheds light on how gender is used as an armor to portray different aspects of life

(Goffman, 1976). In most cases, men are used in videos to sing while women are employed to dance and make their bodily movements apparent. Men are used in commercials to depict and demonstrate aggressiveness accompanied by dominance, they are mostly subjected as independent and unemotional, thus giving them a superheroic shape. On the other hand, women are treated as sexual objects by showcasing in revealing clothes making them more explicit and noticeable. The two theories can well underpin the current study by explaining the representation and objectification of women in item songs in a patriarchal society.

Methodology

This study entailed a mixed-method approach, comprising qualitative and quantitative phases. For the qualitative phase, each song was analyzed, and the lyrics of songs that objectify the sexual attributes of females were discussed. Thereafter, the dressing patterns, looks, and body gestures of females were analyzed. For the quantitative phase, the content analysis of the eight selected item songs was performed to measure the number of frames, shots, and duration in which females were objectified. These item songs were selected from the songs initially produced in 2014 onwards, which created an abuzz and generated a discussion regarding producing item songs as a regular feature of films. Film critics also highlighted that these item songs were irrelevant to the story and are additional work for marketing. Feminists also raised their concerns about women's undue objectification in the songs. The eight songs selected were as follows; 1. Billi, 2. Mastimeindoobi, 3. IshqQamla, 4. Tuttifrutti, 5. Naughty sayan, 6. Jawani, 7. Kalabazdil, 8. Selfiyaan re selfiyaan. These songs are the most representative ones with high circulation and popularity over the past few years. Although it only contains eight songs, two coders work independently to categorize the content. In addition, two coders reconciled the results throughout the coding process. To ensure the content validity, the interrater reliability was calculated, with Krippendorff's Alpha all above 0.667 (Krippendorff, 2004).

Results and findings

Table 1 highlights the duration of the item songs, which ranged from 2:30 to 5:26 min. The above table also reflects that females are shown mostly in item songs to gain the attention of the audience. Notably, more than 50% of shots focused on females, which also indicates that more than 50% of the duration of item songs focused on women.

Table 2 depicts the number of shots used in item songs. An aerial shot was taken from a higher point or above the setting for a better understanding of what is happening in the scene. The establishing shot is usually the first shot, which is used to show the audience and place. It provides abundant information

TABLE 1 Duration and shots of item songs.

Item song	Duration (minutes)	No. of shots	No. of shots showing female
Billi	2:30	55	39
Masti Mein Doobi	5:15	156	114
Ishq Qamla	4:37	176	109
Tutti Frutti	3:57	163	111
Naughty Sayyan	3:40	126	94
Jawani	3:27	131	83
Kalabaz Dil	5:26	111	76
Selfiyaan Re Selfiaan	3:20	109	60

TABLE 2 Types of shots.

Name of song	Billi					
	Types of shots	Aerial	Establishing	Close up	Mid shot	Wide
<i>Masti may doobi</i>		2	2	7	29	15
<i>Ishq Qamla</i>		0	0	24	70	62
<i>Tutti Frutti</i>		0	0	19	66	91
<i>Naughty Sayyan</i>		11	0	17	74	61
<i>Jawani</i>		4	0	12	43	67
<i>Kalabaz Dil</i>		1	0	11	55	64
<i>Selfiyaan Re selfiyaan</i>		8	0	22	31	50
		0	0	7	71	31

regarding the scene and is usually an opener shot. A close-up shot is taken to focus and denote a specific feature. Meanwhile, a close shot frame provides details of the focused subject. The mid shot also shows details of a focused subject but leaves some space for the audience to feel the other areas as well. The wide shot depicts the area and environment around the subject.

Table 2 revealed that close-up and mid-shots were mostly employed. The aerial shots were only used to show and focus on the item girl's costume. Meanwhile, establishing shots were used to set the location and where the performance is taking place. All the close-up shots focused on the body parts of the item girl, especially her upper body and hips. The mid shots focused on the item girl's curves and movements and the men performing next to her, whereas wide shots emphasized the set location, the

TABLE 3 Dressing, jewelry, and makeup in item songs.

Song	Dressing	Jewelry	Makeup
Billi	Short dressing	Heavy	Dark
Masti mein Doobi	Short dressing	Light	Seductive
Ishq Qamla	Full dressing	Light	Dark
Tutti Frutti	Short dressing	Heavy	Soft
Naughty Sayyan	Short dressing	Heavy	Seductive
Jawani	Full dressing	Heavy	Soft
KalabazDil	Short dressing	Heavy	Seductive
Selfiyaan Re selfiaan	Full dressing	Light	Soft

set, and the people performing around, as well as the item girl. Overall, most shots focused on the bodily movements of the item girl while building a relationship with the male, touching herself or her male counterparts, and swirling or twirling in the dance. Notably, the number of areal and establishing shots were the least since they both either focus on the costume, environment, or location. Close-up shots were used to depict the uncovered parts of the female body, either the chest or the legs, or the back.

Short dressing was used in five of the total eight songs, which reinforces that short dressing is used to objectify females and their body features. Similarly, Table 3 depicts that heavy jewelry and seductive makeup are applied to give an attractive and noticeable look to the female. The short dress, seductive makeup, and heavy jewelry were used to cast an impression on the viewer and focus on the female's fragility. This approach was used to create an appeal as the song type complimented the moves. The explicit and open looks aimed to entertain the audience. In short dressings, the moves and curves of the girl are easily highlighted. The girl is used as a figure to shed all limelight and not divert attention from her.

The combination of a short dress, jewelry, and makeup help to enhance the item girl. In other words, the short dressing was shown to seduce or engage the audience, while full dressing gives the item girl a much bold look, which reflects how she is well-aware of her surroundings. Likewise, heavy jewelry is disclosed to make the girl look more traditional and engaging, whereas light jewelry reveals how the item girl is given a fusion look with the touch of western elements. Meanwhile, light makeup signifies how the item girl is submissive and feels obliged to serve the opposite gender, whereas dark makeup is shown to give a much bolder and more authoritative look.

The lead role is that of a female showing her fragility, seductive qualities, and also her vulnerable side as a means to present the message being conveyed. Table 4 describes the extent nudity is displayed to focus on part of the female body, and the common characteristics were seductive, fragile, submissive, and vulnerable. All these characteristics reveal her weakness and her powerless position to please men around her. The use of the substance by men indicates their power and masculinity.

TABLE 4 Costumes, substance, and gender display.

Song	Costume	Substance	Gender display
Billi	Partially nude	Guns	Vulnerable and Seductive
Masti mein Doobi	Half nude	Juice	Seductive
Ishq Qamla	Half nude	None	Soft, Fragile
Tutti Frutti	Maximum nude	Naswar	Fragile
Naughty Sayyan	Partially nude	Alcohol	Vulnerable, Seductive
Jawani	Half nude	Alcohol, Cigarette	Fragile, Soft
KalabazDil	Half nude	Alcohol	Fragile, Soft
Selfiyaan Re selfiaan	Partially nude	None	Submissive, Fragile

Table 5 illustrates the results of the textual analysis. Strong explicit means that the songs are open and obvious in terms of their context, whereas mild explicit signifies obvious and open yet not too bold. Mild suggestive means that the lyrics are mildly indirect while suggestive denotes they are indirect in terms of context. Most of the songs were made up of lyrics that were either strongly explicit or mildly suggestive, thus indicating the content suits the need of item songs. Others were based on explicit content that means and speaks boldly with the audience. It makes use of phrases and words that have meanings relating to romance, love, and affinity. Like in the item song "Billi", the title in itself explains the character displayed by the female item girl as she is compared with a cat. This reflects that she has adapted the personality traits of a cat; which are being bold, sharp, selfish, clever as well as soft and delicate as the cat is very much known because of her walk; catwalk.

The songs are mild suggestive that provide entertainment and promote celebration in the viewer's mind. However, the mild suggestive songs were based on meanings that were not directly communicated but with hidden meanings. For instance, the song "Tutti Frutti's" lyrics go like "mein karari karari hoon, aa chaba le sipari hoon, mere nakhray utha leja, usko saari ki saari hoon" meaning that the item girl is comparing herself with an ice cream where she can be "eaten and enjoyed".

The majority of the songs use both genders as the main character. Masti Mein Doobi used both genders, as the scenes are dependent on both making the right moves. Ishq Qamla also utilized a male and female as the story reflects on aspects conveyed through the moves in the song. Tutti fruit focuses only on the female as it provides a diversion toward entertainment. Naughty Sayyan also employed both males and females collectively to proceed with the storyline. Jawani used the appearance of both genders to make it obvious that a love saga was being created. Kalabaz Dil utilized both genders to show

TABLE 5 Lyrics, theme, location, and main character.

Song	Lyrics	Theme	Location	Main character
Billi	Strong explicit	Seductive	Outdoor	Both
Masti mein Doobi	Mild explicit	Seductive	Indoor	Both
Ishq Qamla	Mild suggestive	Seductive	Indoor	Both
Tutti Frutti	Strong suggestive	Seductive, Funny	Outdoor	Female
Naughty Sayyan	Strong explicit	Seductive, Funny	Outdoor	Both
Jawani	Explicit	Seductive	Outdoor	Both
KalabazDil	Mild suggestive	Seductive	Outdoor	Both
Selfiyaan Re selfiaan	Mild suggestive	Funny	Outdoor	Female

romance, love, and closeness in the scenes. Meanwhile, Selfiyaan re selfiyaan only used the female figure to show movements and create an air of excitement through the dance and creativity.

The objectification of woman through the lyrics are performed since they are explicit enough and refer to objects like Gutka, batting, reporting, referring herself to as a “cheez” (thing), or sipari. Even in situations where the item girl is not referred to as an object, the lyrics are such that sensuality exists in the context with a deeper meaning and effect than the object visualized.

The majority of the item songs were shot outdoor, which reflects that the female item girl is more open and welcoming to society and the involvement of a larger number of audiences. In contrast, the indoor location suggests that the female item girl is entitled to perform to a lesser audience and is not as open to the people as item girls performing at an outdoor location.

Discussion

The analysis and findings of the study suggest that despite numerous efforts to enhance the role of a female in society and empower her to contribute to national development, the cinema still employs female objectification techniques to indicate her submissive role in male dominant society, where she is an object to please males who are in the position of authority. The representations of females in item songs are simply objectification of their bodies and de-humanize them. These findings are consistent with the study of Ullah (2014) in which the objectification of women was reported as a common representation in television advertisements.

As the cinema is considered a very influential medium, it brings the question if the objectification of females in such an arousing and sensual manner is genuine or a medium to represent them in a patriarchal society to behave decently to please men. The cultural imbalance where a female is victimized due to gender roles is evident when her private body part is covered while focusing on her feminine characteristics and showing her as an entertainer. Meanwhile, males are presented to represent their masculinity

and confidence with drugs or guns, while staring and looking at the female present.

The concept of the item song itself identifies that this song is an item, something which is being sold, therefore, an “item girl” performing in the song correlates with “something” not as a human being. The framing and her portrayal depict that she has no integrity, is a sexist object, and taking advantage of her femininity, celebrating her sensuality, and attracting a large audience on set and in cinema halls. The notion of her weak role in society is presented in more dehumanize manners, fulfilling public demands, generating revenues, and making the industry profitable, because she is an item girl. The characteristics defined by Goffman (1976) such as Soft, Fragile, Vulnerable, Seductive, and Submissive, are applied to the female in item songs.

Not only do the frames show her in an objectionable way, but the words used in songs further reiterate her gender and role. The lyrics like “sapari hoon chubba le” depict her as a commodity that can be bought and eaten with pleasure. The use of lights, dressing, makeup, and jewelery, altogether present her as a full package. The representation of females by cinema in item songs does not correlate with her actual role in society; media construct the reality and further reinforce this reality with consistent representation. The sexual objectification of females has been used to gauge audience attention and ensure their eyes are glued to the planned agenda. This aspect indicates that media is playing a crucial role in setting the agenda and affecting the audience’s perception.

These aspects revolve around female features, attractive makeup, use of tacky colors, body movements, gesture building, deliberate use of dress length, overexposure to makeup, embellishment of jewelery, and body depiction that collectively generate an image of female fragility and boldness combined to give viewers a moment of enjoyments and satisfaction. However, these attached labels are thus used as a power that makes females stand out based on the use of their physique and looks in a way that brings them under the limelight. The title and lyrics of the songs have been scripted to reflect seduction, allurements, and sensation.

Historically, the revival of cinema in Pakistan was accompanied by exhibiting and visualizing female bodies and promoting them as a tactic to bring high ratings and publicity. The air of such traditions and practices has strengthened the impact of item songs and captured a place in viewers' minds, who demonstrate great indulgence and appreciation. Furthermore, the success and growth of films depend significantly on the play of the item songs and the use of strategies that bring the charm and essence of the female gender. The selected cinematography, such as shots, light, and angle, contribute to the female objectification and expose the female body in item songs.

Implications of the study

This is theoretically important because the findings corroborate the applicability of gender display and the male gaze in the Pakistani context. It also gives more evidence of non-verbal posing codes that connote the subordination of women in commercial imagery (here, Cinematography) (Goffman, 2017). The finding further displays a prominent perspective for assessing visualizations of gender stereotyping in mass media. Along with theoretical implications, the discussion mentioned above engenders the practical implications of this study. Firstly, it reminds relevant filmmakers and producers to re-think the portrayal of females in media products, where gender inequality is intensified in a patriarchal society. Secondly, it calls the attention of stakeholders and policymakers to implement more policies and regulations to censor the film content and boycott stereotypes of females.

Conclusion and limitations

The results from this study clearly indicate the role and existence of female representation in item songs and how it is increasingly adopted as a deliberate addition in today's world. The findings reflect that females are used as a product to be sold out by giving them the best packaging in terms of attractive jewelry, seductive moves, visible makeup, and

adoption of an attire that makes them stand out among all. Thus, through this study, it can be easily determined that the culture of item songs has further strengthened the victimization of women's representation and made its influence on society more impactful.

However, there are a few limitations of this study. Only eight songs were investigated in this study, which is a relatively small sample. This study also employed content analysis, which is descriptive in nature. Thus, future studies should use interviews or survey to test or interpret the phenomenon.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

IA and JG finished the first draft. XJ did literature review and revisions. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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