

# **Postfeminist Woman Identity Portrayed in Select Tamil Films**

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## **Doctor of Philosophy**

*by*

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## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The main contributions as well as the limitations of the study are summarized in this chapter which also draws some important conclusions and ideas for future works.

#### 5.1 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we briefly summarize the contents, by pointing out some of the highlights in this study.

Postfeminism is a complex topic and some critics believe that postfeminists suggest ‘feminism is dead and no longer needed,’ while others declare that postfeminism is another type of feminist movement which needs further analysis. It is true nowadays that feminists are in search of new ideals with the help of the concepts postfeminism. Drawing from the words of McRobbie (2004) “post-feminism is a branch of feminism that rejects all of the progress of second-wave feminists; thus, post-feminism is an illusion, a backlash, and absence of second-wave feminism.” Most of the writers and media visualities have accepted the concepts of postfeminism and they have applied one or many of them in their works. Gill (2007) said that “there is no awareness among scholars about what postfeminism means. The term is used variously and contradictorily to signal a theoretical position, a type of feminism after the second wave or a regressive political stance” as stated in the book *Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of Sensibility* (2007). The main concept of postfeminist is that women are independent, freedom seekers and independent thinkers. As mentioned in the previous chapters, Most of the modern Indian writers have not made use of any traditional goal of feminism concepts in their writings but added personal feelings, failures, and sexuality of women in their works.

The postfeminists thought that the goals of feminism have been achieved in every form of media, which serves as a tool for projecting their views in the society. Due to the presence of woman power in media all over the world, they avoided using traditional goals in their writings. Postfeminists campaign through media and explore their thoughts in media. Mainly to describe women’s attitudes and issues of identity the concept of postfeminism is exploited variously in affirmation. The trend is also witnessed

in the postcolonial countries particularly in the identities of married, unmarried and widowed women and also their feelings in the society. It is a happening in which both popular culture and cultural criticism assume that the goal of postfeminism has been different from feminism. Feminism is a political movement and it is a group- supported activity but postfeminism is related to an independent woman.

The present study has examined five Tamil films analyzing the postfeminist woman's identity which is achieved through the postfeminist characteristics of self-surveillance, focus on the female body, girl power, female sexuality and individual choice of women. The selected films have portrayed the concept of woman identity through female characters with postfeminist views. The study has identified predominant streams of postfeminism in the select Tamil films representing modern Tamil cinema.

In the selected films, the female character is connected with the media in their daily life situations. In *36 Vayathinile* (2015) the character Vasanthi overcomes her negative image in Facebook in a positive way. She uses Facebook as a tool to prove her confidence level to her husband, daughter, friends, office colleagues and other Facebook friends. This film shows that there is no age limit for a woman to achieve her dream. The protagonist successfully shows her identity through self-surveillance in a competitive society.

*Inji Iduppazhagi* (2015) has the protagonist Soundriya who uses YouTube channel for spreading awareness on the physical identity of fat, obese and overweight women, both married and unmarried. Her video reaches many viewers and gets telecast in news channels. This film is fully focused on the body stereotypes and their real identity in the society.

*Irudhi Suttru* (2016) has the protagonist Ezhil Madhi, a slum girl who enters the 'World Boxing Championship' match. After her success in the first match, she is projected in newspapers, sports magazines, and news channels. In this way, she achieves her identity as a world boxing champion all over the world.

*Taramani* (2017) has the protagonist Althea who makes use of Facebook as a tool for overcoming sexual harassment from her boss and it is projected that women can use social media to avoid sexual harassment in the society. Andersen and Cyranowski (1995) stated that "issues like sexual harassment and assault become a problem for the individual victim, and are ignored as systemic issues of inequality." It is a major problem but a woman should overcome all such problems and prove her identity as a strong independent woman in the society.

The researcher has found that in all the above four films the heroines are connected with media. With the help of their social networking capabilities, they are able to achieve their identity and media serves as their only tool to achieve their postfeminist views in the society.

The main film in this study is *Iraivi* (2016). In this film the lead female characters do not use any type of media. In this film, there are three female characters that project postfeminist views on stereotype avoidance, widow's sexuality, remarriage, and independent life of a woman. The director has used modern thoughts in this film in which the female characters are presented with the postfeminist views of woman identity.

In this study, the nature of postfeminist characterization is identified at the outset and from there, how women make efforts to achieve their identity in the family and also in society is probed. The researcher framed beforehand the thesis statement, aim and objectives of the study. The researcher has found that the views of postfeminism are available in the selected films through their characterization of self-surveillance, body stereotype, girl power, female sexuality and individual choice of women. In these films, the diverse woman characters are married, unmarried, widowed or divorced whose lives are projected by the directors and also shown their identities with postfeminist views to the audience.

In reality, these selected films are detached from the run-of-the-mill Tamil films because the postfeminist concepts used by directors will change the cultural ethos in intellectual tone. Hence these films are made in postcolonial tenor with postfeminist views in India. These films are a few examples of the postfeminist western culture which try to influence the Tamil society. The film directors employ postfeminist heroines and avoid the political aspects of feminine goals, the traditional goals of feminism, stereotypes, etc. There is some consideration for their independent views and woman identity in this society where they move towards a positive way of life. Woman protagonists are in various relationships like sisters, father-daughter, mother-daughter, etc., through which they endeavor to achieve their real postfeminist woman identity in society. However, the protagonists in the aforesaid five films have become part and parcel of this study and have proved that all of them have achieved their individuality through woman identity.

## 5.2 SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Tamil films have been elevated to international standards and recognized by the counties from all over the world owing to their technical aspects and presentation styles. Many films are made for commercial purposes to entertain the audience. Therefore, female lead actors are not being portrayed as sexually attractive but have been given powerful, strong and domineering roles when compared with other language films produced in India. Tamil culture is very rich and gives respect to women in every field. Tamil films give more importance to female leads than Hollywood films. A large number of people watch films in theatre and on television as a means of entertainment. Johnson (2000) stated that “audiences watch some movies...asking with

their mind if what they observe is plausible. Movies take us to places, show us situations, put before us in dilemmas, move us forward or backward in time, and allow us to see people in ways we have yet to experience. And we must be able to put ourselves in these places, time, and situations if the movie is to have its intended effect of the viewer” Anamika (2014). A Tamil film in general runs for two to two and a half hours. Even Tamil films have recently shaped the destiny of the people in Tamil Nadu. This is mostly due to the aspect of fixation in which the particular theme and characters get fixed in the minds of the audience. Therefore, the postfeminist concepts interpreted in the select films have ever chance of getting into the viewer’s belief and trust.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are successful achievers in all fields and also they are facing many problems in this society. Women should try to overcome all their problems and prove their identity in the society. The woman representation in the films has been a subject of study over the years. There are many films that move around female characters more than males in them. There is no doubt that the landscape for women has changed considerably over the periods. Today women characters come alive on screen. The study has shown that some of the complex film characters have been created by the directors in the real-life situations of women characters in society in everyday life. Youngblood (1970) observed and said that “cinema technology shapes and records the objective and subjective realities of every person” Kalorth (2016). Postfeminists support women to project as domineering film characters. So that they can help to view the reality of life character presented in different ways.

Since the selected films with postfeminist views have an intellectual tone these films are detached from Tamil culture and Indian reality. Yet these films are based on entertainment purposes and the concepts have to reach every person. It has been already pointed out that a postfeminist trait can spread easily through visual media. Media plays a major role in conveying the messages to people. The woman identity can be portrayed through media, especially through films. A film is simply a tool with which one can find out the political and social spirit characteristic of an age or generation. Media is ruling all over the world. Nowadays postfeminists use media as a tool for spreading their concepts to everyone. As has been previously mentioned postfeminism is a transformable culture which is spread all over the world. It is also applicable in India and particularly in Tamil films. In many of the latest films, the female-oriented subject is preferred to disseminate postfeminist views. It is obvious that there are several Tamil characters with postfeminist concepts in films similar to such themes explored by the directors in the western countries. To conclude, from the analysis of all the selected films it is evident that the postfeminist characterization can be achieved by woman identity, with

which they should protect their identity in social positions, emotional situations, independent thinking and sexual activities. Women can achieve more with their postfeminist perspectives in all the fields.

#### 5.4 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has analysed postfeminist woman identity portrayed in five Tamil films. Based on the outcome of the study there is scope for synchronizing the postfeminist theories in media, especially in films for further research. In addition to that, the plot and characterisation with regard to upcoming postfeminist films can be evaluated using the films of female directors. Another exciting area of critical study would be to work towards examining Tamil films and Hollywood films or other language films which can be done as a comparative study. Research can be extended to compare old and modern films from the angle of postfeminism. It is also recommended to make use of advanced media such as TV serials and advertisements for future research. The present study is limited to only five films; further studies can be conducted with more films. Further research can be extended by examining other postfeminist traits which could not form part of this study. Studies can also be conducted with contemporary novels with postfeminist views. In this competitive world, the studies can be undertaken in various forms of media and for better career and future prospects of women. The prospective experimenters can extend their modes of thinking and analysis in multiple dimensions with regard to postfeminist views in media, which would certainly form new trends in media studies and literature.