

# Unmasking Hegemonic Masculinity: Gender-construction in *Bangalore Days*

Midhun Mohan

## Abstract

Socially constructed notions regarding masculinity through artistic mediums such as art, literature and film are problematic and thus needs to be contested. Film, being the popular among all, can be both a site of reinforcing such views or challenging the same. Because popular cinema might add some extra flavours to spice up and exaggerate certain aspects of reality in a cinematic way. When a popular, commercially successful film portrays a noxious concept, it won't be difficult for the audience for its acceptance as a part of film's narrative and may even adopt it in their own worldview. The film was trying to rewrite some of the established norms regarding masculinity and patriarchy, unknowingly the end product sided with what the makers tried to critique. Conversely, leading to establishment of gender roles and gender stereotypes that are harmful to the society. The masculinities represented in the film is being diagnosed with the lens of hegemonic masculinity. The study aims to show the dialectical relationship between popular culture and gender politics.

**Keywords:** Film studies; Gender roles; Hegemonic masculinity; Heterosexuality; Toxic masculinity.

## 1. Introduction

Hegemonic Masculinity is a concept developed by Australian sociologist R.W Connell. Connell coined this term borrowing Antonio Gramsci's concept of Hegemony. Connell introduced the term in her book "*Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*" which was published in the year 1987. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the idealized version of men which should possess qualities such as toughness, heterosexuality, risk taking, heroism, physical strength, sex appeal and stoicism within a particular group or society. This is the socially constructed culturally re-

inforced idea and image of being a man from time immemorial. The concept burdens men to have emotional restriction and abstain from laughter since these are unduly associated with women and children. Cultural artefacts such as print and electronic medias and the role of popular culture in the reinforcement and perpetuation of this sort of a toxic form of masculinity is beyond measure. This concept is problematic and toxic at the same time, because it leads to the creation and perpetuation of societal gender roles and hierarchy. Further leads to exclusion of other normal forms of masculinities and total marginalization of women. The concept is problematic because just like how hegemony works as delineated by Gramsci, this version of masculinity will not take force or violence for its propagation, rather it uses cultural practices and other social institutions for its growth. Thereby, it is relatively invisible and imperceptible and restraining its proliferation will be quite handy. One way to fix this is to examine and correct where did it go wrong in its endeavour to reestablish.

Endorsement of heteronormativity, which is placing heterosexuals as the normal and accepted sexual orientation and any other sexual orientation should be considered deviant and in turn abnormal. This aspect is yet another feature of hegemonic masculinity. Exclusion of gay masculinities and heterosexual men with effeminate qualities are considered less masculine because of the proliferation and acceptance of toxic versions of masculinities such as hegemonic masculinity. Men should attract only women and any other form of attraction should be reckoned less masculine. Hegemonic masculinity as a concept is denying the complexity and fluidity of masculinity and granting it a fixed status hence propagating this corrosive type of masculinity. Bolstering of gender roles and hierarchy adds to this matrix, since we defined ways for men's performance, attitude, qualities etc, thus the professions they should choose needs to be aligned with the aforementioned qualities. Either having all the necessitated privileges of power and control or manual labour which entails ample strength and physique. In these times of Instagram and other social media platforms, unscientific versions regarding masculinity such as 'alpha male' and 'sigma male' are on the rise. These versions are actually modernised, sugar-coated versions of this same hegemonic masculinity. We can find similarities between all kinds of masculinities is in their approach towards women, they all take a mutually endorsing misogynistic stand. There are other internet terms and slangs to support this cause such as 'chad', 'simp' etc.

With this obsessive focus on gender roles and hierarchy between different sexes, hegemonic masculinity is creating centre-periphery dualities in

which men occupy the centre and pushing women to the margins, which was already worsen by patriarchy. When we excessively romanticize masculinity and undermine femininity obviously the focus will fall more on the former. During a period when protests and activisms are sound to eradicate gender inequalities and establishing equality, the existence of hegemonic masculinity will be a hindrance to the advancements. Hegemonic masculinity makes it easy for men to exert power over women without physical, political, social and economic forces. Since hegemonic masculinity creates a framework for men to act in a way of their liking which includes rude behaviour, attitudes, taking control and being dominant.

Creation of masculinities based on respect, equality and healthy interactions are being hindered by the grave misconceptions put forward by hegemonic masculinity. Promoting and fostering of unhealthy conceptions regarding masculinity is their primary norm. Hegemonic masculinities provide avenues for men to act aggressively and take a dominating stance, since these are easily vindicated and counts other forms of masculinities as insignificant and worthless. Horrendous activism at the deep societal level is required for the eradication of such a corrupt concept like hegemonic masculinity, since it run deep into the psyche of both performing and advocating it. We are living in a country in which films like *Arjun Reddy* (2017) was released which told the story of a person with toxic masculinity and the movie was celebrated all over India and got remake into many other Indian languages. Why such kind of a movie was successful here in India, because that is the masculinity we accept as the normal one. Our collective psyche accepted the film without any guilt or moral conscience. Even after five years from it's theatrical release it has a cult following, such misconceptions regarding masculinity should be studied and amended. Through this study I argue that, there is an indefinite and dialectical relationship between popular culture and gender politics. Popular culture can be a great medium for the multiplication and rewriting of such outdated and problematic concepts regarding gender, sex and sexuality. But if an attempt in which critiquing of a problematic concept gone rogue it can have negative consequences among the viewers. Such unsuccessful attempts will lead us to, what I call 'spaces of ambiguities' where the audience siding with the problematic concept even more.

## 2. Literature Review

Studies regarding hegemonic masculinity is relatively scarce when comparing to other conceptions of masculinities such as patriarchal mascu-

linity, marginalized masculinity, modern masculinity etc. A concept as nuanced and problematic as hegemonic masculinity requires careful examination and rigorous research. Perpetuation of such immoral misconception will create complex and overlapping problems in the near future that will be hard to resolve. *Bangalore Days* presents a complex and contradictory picture of masculinities, where some characters embody hegemonic masculinity while others resist or subvert it. This article adds to the growing literature on masculinities in global perspectives, as well as to the critical analysis of popular culture as the site of gender politics. This paper will demonstrate how the concept of hegemonic masculinity is contested and glorified in the film *Bangalore Days*.

### 3. Material and Methods

The study primarily focuses on the Malayalam movie *Bangalore Days* (2014). The study is qualitative in nature and analyse the movie using methodologies such as textual analysis and content analysis. Through this the study could systematically examine the narratives, visual content and the dialogues used in the movie. Thereby, unfolding and decoding the socio-cultural aspects and other nuances within the movie.

### 4. Results and Discussion

*Bangalore Days* (2014), the then trendsetter and popular flick casting the promising young generation of Malayalam cinema such as Dulqar Salman, Fahad Fazil, Nivin Pauly, Nazriya, Parvathy etc. The film was celebrated all around the southern side of India, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The romance/comedy/drama was indeed a game changer in Malayalam considering its time and contemporaries at the likes of *Gangster*, *Tamar Padar*, *Villali Veeran* etc. Debut film of one of the illustrious cine makers of Mollywood, Anjali Menon. Anjali Menon, Geethu Mohandas, Revathi etc are the current frontiers of 'feminist counter cinema in Malayalam' (Pillai 6). The entry of such women directors into the industry which is run by the higher caste and patriarchy driven populace is promising. Because Malayalam cinema, Meena Pillai argues had the custom of silencing 'half the population of the state by co-opting them into a patriarchal mindset (52). Post-liberalization period in Kerala witnessed the unprecedented growth of superstars and megastars and the 'death of the director'. Malayalam cinema which was once famous for the brilliant cinemakers such as Bharathan, Padmarajan, G Aravindan, Adoor Gopalakrishnan etc. Post-liberalization period saw the metamorphoses of Malayalam cinema from an art to a product (Pillai 53). Post 2010 period saw a slight decline

in this trend and the cinemascap changed from a superstar centred market product to a director centred establishment, from the arrival of films such as *Traffic* (2010), *Chappa Kurishu* (2011), *Ustad Hotel* (2012) etc. *Bangalore days* followed the same convention and pattern as these aforesaid films and came out as a cultural critique of the modern Malayali community. The film sheds light on various issues women facing in the society which were often idealized and romanticized by the preceding Malayalam films. Post 2000s Malayalam cinema portrayed women as unimportant and always defined women in correlation with men. Alienating the from any sort of agency or individuality throughout the film. *Bangalore Days* dwelled on the importance of education among women, especially in the Indian context which considers education for women is always a fancy. *Bangalore Days* tried to give equal space to all the lead characters irrespective of their gender. Because Indian cinema as a whole is always the monopoly of lead male actors and all other characters will be drawn to the level of co-actors to emphasize the agency and hero-centeredness of the male lead actor. The film portrays men as “responsible, rational, level-headed, disciplined and tough. Women, in contrast, are dependent, irrational, docile and weak physically and emotionally (Kumar 41). *Bangalore Days* attempted to break this stereotype and tried to bring change, which was much needed in the cinemascap of the time.

Anjali Menon was efficacious in her venture in contesting some of widely held and accepted inequalities prevailed in Kerala through her craft, thanks to her finesse and understanding in dealing with the nuanced ways these disparities function. But when it came to contesting hegemonic masculinity, the outcome took an unexpected turn. Instead of undermining the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Anjali Menon reinforces the idea unintentionally. As Meena T Pillai rightfully stated many of the films today are trying to question the cultural constraints society imposed on women from a post-feminist perspective, but within the same established narrative conventions (7-8). When a film tries to question the old patriarchal trajectories that was naturalized by the men-driven industry using the same old convention, the result will not make much of a difference big enough to welcome change. Anjali Menon tried to create a film which rewrites or at least question every established gender role convention that was unduly established by the men driven industry. For this she included love, marriage, dating and all other aspects in which this gender role traditions will be most visible and reinforced. Liberation of women from the clutches of the phallic order should start from these spaces where men always occupy the lion share of domination. All other characters did the job except the one played by Dulquer Salman. The actor did his job in

a decent way, but the characterization itself was a flawed one. This paper mostly focuses on this character and how this characterization can have serious misinterpretations among the audience is the crux of this study. Aju played by Dulquer Salman is supposed to be the hero of the film, even though the film features other Bollywood superstars such as Nivin Pauly and Fahad Fazil. Aju is rendered as a rough person, who will not confine to the standards set by society and leads a life to his whims. He is tough, emotionless (as society demands men to be), daring, rebellious and has some anger issues (another trope society associated with masculinity). The characteristics of Kuttan, as played by Nivin Pauly, are entirely different from those of Aju. He is a traditionalist and conservative who upholds the traditions and beliefs of his family. He is empathetic, emotionally sensitive, light hearted, following society's norms to every last bit. Shiva played by Fahad Fazil is yet another character who is tough, less talkative, workaholic person, who was once an energetic man who had changed entirely after a personal loss.

The introduction assigned to the character Aju played by Dulquer Salman is quite different from the rest of the leading characters. Or rather they (Nivin and Fahad) didn't even have a proper introduction scene as opposed to Aju. These scenes are incorporated to establish the character's bravery and rebellious nature and to assert his distinctiveness from the rest. Aju was engaged in an act of graffiti, which is painting the walls of streets and cities unlawfully to convey protest and resistance to a particular cause. Unfortunately, this act of vandalism is presented in a way to reinforce the characters daring and brave life. Amidst this ruckus he gets a call from Kunju played by Nazriya, in which she invites Aju, to her wedding. He picks up the call casually, connotating these hide and seek with the police is quite usual for him. Aju's rage and rough exterior is being justified through a backstory in which his parents are divorced and he had a bleak childhood. There are several instances in the movie in which his rage is romanticized more than the usual. More than anything this aspect of his personality is highlighted over every other quality the character possess. Three masculine leading characters represent three aspects of life, while Kuttan and Shiva represent tradition and career respectively, Aju represents rage. Aju's temper is a conventional topic of discussion for those who know him and those who dislike him. Because it is the easiest way to portray someone who is masculine and strong than the rest, associating anger issues with that particular person. Relying on this stereotype of masculinity is the foundation of hegemonic masculinity.

The characterization of Aju was supposed to break free all the constructed

conformities set by the society and to lead a carefree life, but he is still confined within the conformities set by hegemonic masculinity. Aju might seem like a non-conformist, but on the deeper level he is trapped inside such noxious levels of hegemonic masculinity. The more he moves from the spirals of conformity, the more he is entangled in the labyrinths of toxic masculinity. This is where the characterization went wrong, one can easily break-free from the norms and conventions set by the society, without confining to such toxicity. There are certain instances where Aju justifies his carefree and relaxed lifestyle to Kuttan and Kunju by citing Kerala's alarming rate of suicides and heart attacks. He implies living with fear and stress can affect one's wellbeing, health and happiness. This sequence is incorporated in the film to showcase the daring life Aju leads without yielding to the conformities positioned by the society. This particular trope leaned more towards accentuating the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity rather than rendering the protagonist as someone who flouts societal conformities. And most of all, leading a life devoid of responsibilities is not the right way to deal with such serious issues such as suicides and heart attacks.

This instance undermined the multifaceted aspects of those grave issues and the ways to deal it. Creating a work-life balance is what required nowadays because of the proliferating competition and lack of opportunities, instead the film presents itself as a bad example of facing such crisis. Kuttan and Shiva are the products of capitalist-consumerist society, where both do not have much choices to make regarding their life and living. Kuttan who is a pro-traditionalist, who likes to settle in his village and who had a homesickness and nostalgia regarding his homescape. Even after moving to Bangalore, he will visit his home every week owing to this same love for his home. Shiva on the other hand, who is keeping himself busy to escape the trauma and painful memories he had during his previous relationship. He is forced to marry a person whom he hadn't seen his entire life and forced to live with that person. But Aju is a carefree, bohemian kind of characterization in which he abides by the rules he likes and not by the society. He enjoys his life, without worrying about the future, money or career. He finds the love of his all by himself while the rest two barely had a chance to do the same.

Rage is yet another trope widely used by filmmakers and writers to emphasize masculinity throughout the Indian cinematic scenario. Aju is portrayed in a way having this sort of immense anger issues, who will lose his temper in a fraction of second. Aju is bike racer who gets a one-year ban owing to this same anger issue. There are ample instances throughout

the film showcasing his rage which is associated with masculinity and to show the viewers that he (Aju) is masculine enough to be the hero of the film. Other male lead characters such as Kuttan (Nivin Pauly) and Shiva (Fahad Fazil) are not having these sort of anger issues, which makes both lesser of a hero to the film. Although, Shiva has some sort of rage issues, but it is not glorified throughout the film and portrayed from a negative angle, while glorifying Aju's rage. The filmmakers could have averted this situation by giving equal importance to the three male lead characters, the screentime may be somewhat similar to the three, but the importance isn't the same. This aspect is being extolled in the movie through the words of his (Aju) coach, which is, "Thante deshyavum aveshavum oke kani-kendathu roadilo puratho alla trackila" (You should show your rage and aggression in the track, not in the streets) (*Bangalore Days* 00:24:27). Moreover, the jobs assigned to the three male heroes talks itself of the nature of the jobs they are indulged in. Aju is bike mechanic and a bike racer, which is much of manual job than the rest two IT professionals. Since films have associated toughness with manual labour (Kumar 38).

Hegemonic masculinity demands men to have higher sexual prowess and should confine to heteronormativity as well. Because masculinity was always associated with heteronormativity, that's why gay masculinity and men with effeminate qualities are always deemed secondary by the society. This in turn propagates homophobia, repression and denial of other sexual orientation. Kuttan who is a software engineer, who comes to live in Bangalore is not quite fond of the urban spaces and have some redundant longing and nostalgia towards his home, which resides in a rural locality. Kuttan asks Aju about his sex life, Aju reveals he had sexual intercourse with many girls and the focal point is, he is stating these with such pride, deeming it as some triumph. Conversely, this flaunts the sexual prowess of the character, making him an apt specimen of hegemonic masculinity. Aju and Kuttan have very different perspectives on life, beliefs and worldviews. They are contrasted in their ways of thinking and behaving throughout the story.

In a scene where Kuttan talks about upholding the traditions and morals of one's culture, Aju responds like "Swantham Karyam paranja pore Kutta" (Speak for yourself Kuttan) (*Bangalore Days* 00:34:25). In the succeeding sequence, Aju alludes subtly about his numerous sexual encounters and lack of virginity. This behaviour can be seen as form of social validation or a way to assert one's sexual prowess or masculinity. These behaviours can be disrespectful, objectifying and contribute to a toxic culture that prioritizes and objectifies sexual encounter. It is essential to promote healthy



attitude towards sexuality that respect consent, individual choices and the dignity of all parties involved. In another scene, Kuttan says that Aju lost his innocence implying that he is not virgin anymore. Innocence is illogically associated with virginity and sexual encounters. These are age-old Indian societal constructions and the filmmakers reinforce it by glorifying such irrationality. By referring to Aju's 'one-night stand' the narrative underpins the character's higher sexual prowess, portraying it as a means to celebrate his masculinity. We can interpret the sexual encounter references from the film in various ways possible. Sexual encounters have been reduced to a trope in the film to portray the character's manliness. Other characters fascinating at the news of these revelations is quite evident here. At times we might feel like the purpose of Kuttan's characterization is to get enchanted by these narratives. There is scene from the movie, in which Aju and Kuttan discusses about tradition, culture and public display of affection, Aju intentionally catcalls a woman passing by. The woman seeing Kuttan having a perplexed expression mistook Kuttan for this lewd deed and scolds him. The director had the audacity to stage this offensive, indecent behaviour as a light-hearted joke. And to how Aju's expertise regarding such inappropriate innuendos.

Furthermore, it is undermining the dignity of consensual sexual encounters, dragging it to the age-old notion existed or rather still exists in Indian society, to view sex as a taboo. As long as the participants are consenting adults, fully informed to engage in sexual encounters without infringing other person's personal rights and privileges, it will be a matter of private choice. At this time of accelerated advancements regarding sexual education, these narrow-minded views can be reverting. Hegemonic masculinity has always been closely interweaved with sports, since sports can be a perfect site to display someone's qualities such as strength, aggression and dominance, traditional ideals which are affiliated with masculinity. Creation of Aju's character aligns to these conditions perfectly, but interestingly, Shiva (Fahad Fazil) also had a backstory in which he was a bike racer. He was aggressive, dominant, impulsive and had anger issues as well. The entire character arc changes after a bike accident in which he loses his girlfriend Natasha (Nitya Menon). Thereafter, the Shiva transforms to this busy, less talkative, serious workaholic business whose life revolves around business trips and meetings.

Both Aju and Shiva share a set of qualities which brings them together in this conversation regarding hegemonic masculinities. Dominance, controlling, aggressiveness etc are some of those to mention. Arjun represents one for of hegemonic masculinity which represents the macho, risk-tak-

ing, rebellious sect who defies authority. While Shiva represents the elite sect of hegemonic masculinity related to success, power and status in a corporate world. Both will have the same kind of transformation once a loved one comes to their lives, coming of Kunju for Shiva and Sarah (Parvathy) for Aju. Here lies the contradiction in the film, Shiva who was leading a bleak monotonous life realizes that there are other things to live for in life once he meets Kunju. Characterization of Shiva is far better than the characterization of Aju when it comes to character development. And Fahad Fazil did that job far too easily with such a brilliant performance. The Shiva we see in the early phases of the film gets transformed into a better human being who understands the value of love and loved ones. Anjali Menon challenges the concept of hegemonic masculinity through the character of Shiva, which is well written character compared to Aju. Shiva defies traditional gender roles by being autonomous and self-reliant. He does all of his own daily tasks, including making his coffee and washing the dishes. In an instance from the movie, after having coffee, Kunju said she insisted on washing the cup drank by Shiva. He says no and will say "I like to do things on my own". Rather than leaving the household chores to his wife, like every other husband does, Shiva has no problem in helping her and moreover to do things on his own. Shiva's character depth is second to none in the film, especially when the actor conceives the job far too easily. There is always a second chance in life awaiting you, no matter how worse our life once was, if you have the mind to grow. Another one is, you can lead a successful love without compromising your love of life. And many more layers of significations can be decrypted from the characterization of Shiva.

Even though the three cousins are of the same age group Aju occupies the power centre in the group owing to his dominant nature. Aju will have the last word in all the joint decisions they took. When visits USA as a part of business trips, Kunju will ask Aju what to do next. To stay here or to leave to Kerala, Aju tells her not to go home and to stay in Bangalore. Even without asking Kuttan, he will say "I will tell Kuttan to take leave". Considering the fact that Kuttan is busy, highly sought after software engineer working in the IT capital of India, Bangalore. He should have asked him even for the sake of courtesy. This shows the kind of authority he holds in that three-person group to some extent. Not just this, but most of the decisions in which the other two cousins are involved will have Aju's last say. Kuttan and Kunju might be new to Bangalore, that doesn't make them any less mature enough to take decisions. To some degree, the two other characters are portrayed with some humour contrasting to his seriousness and to give Aju more space and agency.

The love track given to Aju and Sarah in the movie is a bit problematic because it portrays a stereotypical and unrealistic image of a specially-abled woman who needs to be rescued by a charming man. This love track might seem so progressive and different, on a closer analysis it unfolds itself as the same old love track where the hero impresses the heroine who was not so impressed in the initial stages. Janaky Sreedharan rightfully stated this in her work, "Mainstream cinema hit upon a successful formula with the first half of the film focusing on an encounter between a self-willed heroine and a macho hero, while the second half witnesses a systematic and extremely popular process of breaking her down" (Women in Malayalam Cinema 83). Even the way Aju approaches Sarah is creepy and unacceptable. He stalks her for a long time, makes calls and sends messages to her workplace constantly. Flirts with her while she is working, even asks her to speak Malayalam disregarding the fact that she is a Radio jockey working in Bangalore. As a sign of bravery, he even dares to go her workplace challenging her, he will meet her very soon. He kept stalking her and once she asks him about his relentless following, he will lie that he was following her cousin not Sarah. However, this statement does not diminish or reduce the severity of stalking. He proceeds with this romantic (as per the film) gesture against her will and once she asks him "Enthina ente purake nadakkunath" (Why are you following me) He'll reply "Enik ninte purake nadakkan alla, ninte oppam nadakkana ishtam" (I don't want to walk behind you; I want to walk with you) (*Bangalore Days* 01:20:24).

The strong, bold Sarah falls for this supposed to be mass-dialogue, which is a term often used by Indian film audience which refer to a catchy and punchy line, mostly a closure by the hero. After prolonged sequence of melodrama, Sarah choses Aju over her career by rejecting an opportunity to study abroad and decides to stay in Bangalore. Rather than challenging the ableist prejudices that are prevalent in the society, the character arc of Sarah revolves around Aju. And finally ends in a cliched romantic track which is quite predictable. This love track is supposed to be genuine and idealistic apart from all the other love tracks depicted in the film. But on a closer examination, this one seems quite shallow. The way the hero approaches the heroine, glorification of stalking, giving less agency to Sarah and the final decision by Sarah to stay and not to pursue her career. Even this different storyline felt like giving more emphasis to Aju and the daring life he leads. Considering the hype given by the writer to Aju, a usual love story will not suffice.

The filmmakers claims that they have given equal screen space and time to every lead character but the importance given to each is still debatable.

From these conclusions we could easily trace that Aju is the one who got the most importance in the film. The character's exaggerated portrayal led to emergence of concepts such as hegemonic masculinity. The film would have been different and less problematic if three of lead actors were give equal importance and Aju, who is the victim of an emotionally unavailable parents, transforms at the onset of his romantic relationship. But the character lacks this kind of a character development and thus his noxious temperament and masculinity is being glorified. The other two characters will have noticeable development and transformation towards the climax of the film. The glorification of his unacceptable deeds makes it even questionable. Love is dominant theme the film dwells on, how love changes the life all the three protagonists in different ways. But the love story of Aju is inept and petty comparing to others. In the case of Shiva, love changed his life forever. After his personal loss Shiva distanced from everything he loved once and to recover from that traumatizing environment, he finds solace in his workaholic lifestyle. But he was not willing to fully leave his previous life he cherished to his heart. So, he kept all of his ex-girlfriend's belongings in a room in his apartment. Whenever life gets hard or uneasy, he will go to that room which is a safe space for him. He did all this owing to his guilty conscience that he is directly or indirectly the reason to his ex-girlfriend's demise. He made himself busy to forget all the painful past memories he had. But Kunju came to know about all these and helped him to vast extent to bring him back to normalcy and happiness. In Shiva's case his temper, aggression is not justified, because the character undergoes a radical change after meeting Kunju. But it is not the same with Aju, he remains the same without proper character development. Even the kind of change he undergoes is in tune with his nature and temperament. Because a total change in his character will downplay his deeds as the hero of the film, even though the film crew claims otherwise.

## 5. Conclusion

*Bangalore Days* tried to challenge the dominant masculinities that existed in the society through the depiction of diverse forms of masculinities. The writer needs to be more focussed when presenting and challenging a nuanced idea. Sometimes, during that attempt to capture the toxicity and consequences of some idea, the writer might inadvertently fall into the track of admiring that same idea which they intend to critique. This happened in the case of *Bangalore Days*, because we could see traces of reverence and critique of hegemonic masculinity, which is one of the worse forms of masculinities out there. This will in turn lead the audience into a state of impasse in choosing which signification they should take. On clos-

er examination the film looks problematic than it appears to be. In a country like India, film stars, politicians, sportspeople and other celebrities are considered God-like, the unwanted reverence, fan worship, obsession about them, fans associations etc cannot be found in any other country. People take films too seriously in our country because of the trajectories of such lethal extremism. That's why we usually say that 'films have nothing to do with life'. We usually stress this line more often, because we created a false notion that films represent life itself. There are films which tells the life story of many people, but we can't generalize every film in this sense. The filmmakers have a huge role in the perpetuation of certain norms that are prevalent in the society when it comes to India. The same medium can be used to rewrite such anomalies that exist in the society. But it should be done with such precision and care, otherwise it'll end up like this one. The study that I presented here might look small but its consequences aren't. And there are films which represent lived experiences and life in it's all complexities, but unfortunately such films will not get this much public attention like these commercial films. Or else we believe everything shown on the silver screen to be true. Our unnecessary obsession towards film stars can be read along these lines. In an environment where such a misconception prevails, the filmmakers should be careful with their content with what are they trying to convey, trying to critique, trying to rewrite, debunk etc.

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