

# Evaluating The Dalit Representation In Indian Cinemas

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The portrayal of Dalit women in Indian cinema history has been severely victimized. Social media has emerged as a powerful tool in bringing Dalit issues to the forefront of public discourse, leading to noticeable transformations. The portrayal of Dalit women in modern cinema is undergoing a transformation, albeit at a gradual pace. A number of filmmakers from the Dalit-Bahujan community are actively producing films that shed light on Dalit issues within both regional and mainstream cinema industries, offering unique perspectives. Noted filmmakers in the south Indian cinema include Pa. Ranjit, Mari Selvaraj, and Vetrimaaran. In Marathi cinema, NagrajManjule and BhauraoKarhade have made significant contributions. In Hindi cinema, NeerajGhaywan and NagrajManjule are also highly regarded. Subhash Kapoor, SarthakDasgupta, and T.J. Gnanavel are among the non-Dalit filmmakers. In the past decade, there has been a significant transformation in the portrayal of Dalit women in Indian cinema. The films created by Dalit filmmakers depict Dalit women as assertive, empowered, and self-assured individuals who are well-informed about their rights, dignity, identity, and honor. They prioritize ethical considerations when constructing movies, particularly in relation to the portrayal of female bodies and social life. Places a strong emphasis on the pursuit of liberation from caste and gender inequalities, rather than dwelling on victimization. The article focuses on the evolving roles of Dalit women as depicted in Indian cinema and their impact on the Brahmanical patriarchal society, with a particular emphasis on the films made by notable Dalit filmmakers. The study explores the transformation of the portrayal of Dalit women, shifting from vulnerability to aggression, negativity to positivity, passivity to activity, and the removal of caste distinctions. The study utilizes feminist film theory to explore the evolving role of Dalit women in Indian cinema.

**Keywords:** Dalit Representation, Indian Movies , Dalit Studies.

## INTRODUCTION

The depiction of underprivileged communities in film has been a topic of ongoing discussion. The portrayal of Dalits in Indian films has been the subject of much discussion and disapproval, as emphasized by Subramanyam (1996). Dalits, often known as untouchables or Scheduled Castes, occupy the most marginalized places within India's strongly entrenched caste system. Over the course of history, Dalits have faced persistent and entrenched discrimination and marginalization, which have become firmly rooted in society and culture. Dalits in Indian cinemas have often been depicted in clichéd positions or relegated to secondary characters, thus reflecting their marginalized status. However, there have been significant progressions in the domain of Dalit portrayal in Indian films in recent times. The rise of filmmakers and actors committed to questioning societal conventions and authentically depicting Dalit stories has played a crucial role in the rising representation of Dalits in Indian cinemas. These filmmakers and actors employ an exceptional and authentic method in portraying Dalit characters in their films. Their work not only questions and undermines prevailing assumptions, but also offers essential perspectives on the complex and nuanced realities of Dalit life in India.

Furthermore, the emergence of autonomous and concurrent cinema movements in India has presented a chance for intricate and authentic narrative, leading to a broader spectrum of precise depictions of Dalits in movies. Prominent individuals in the film business, such as NagrajManjule, who achieved notoriety for his highly regarded film "Fandry," together with Ginni Mahi and RandeepHooda, have played a crucial part in presenting intricate and varied Dalit characters in Indian cinema. Upon analyzing the historical context of Indian cinema, it becomes evident that Dalit women are commonly portrayed as individuals who suffer from both caste-based and gender-based prejudice. They are frequently shown as socially excluded, encountering sexual violence, and their narratives are commonly recounted from the viewpoint of privileged caste males. From the film *AchhutKanya* (1936) to *Chauranga* (2014), this tradition is a repetitive trend in the film industry, initiated by filmmakers belonging to privileged castes. In films, male characters frequently epitomize societal conceptions of masculinity, while simultaneously being depicted as crippled and susceptible. Regrettably, women are frequently portrayed through the lens of patriarchal clichés. One explanation is that the producers have a firm conviction that cinemas will be brimming with audiences and that blockbusters would enjoy immense popularity. The lack of gender equality, both in terms of representation in front of and behind the camera, has brought attention to concerns about gender stereotypes, the quality of media consumed by the public, and the faulty idea of a harmonious society. Frank Osten's *AchhutKannya* (1936) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the mechanics of caste differentiation in rural Indian society, whereas Nitin Bose's *Chandidas* (1934) and V. Shantaram's *Dharmatma* (1935) delicately addressed this sensitive subject. Sujata (1954), helmed by Bimal Roy, was a notable attempt to explore this particular subject topic. Several films have explored this theme, including ShyamBenegal's *Ankur* (1974), Nishant (1975), Manthan (1976), Aarohan (1982), Mandi (1983), GovindNihalani's *Aakrosh* (1980), as well as more recent releases such as Prakash

Jha's Aarakshaan (2011), Pareeksha (2020), Anubhav Sinha's Article 15 (2019), Shubhash Kapoor's Madam Chief Minister (2021), Ramin Bahrani's The White Tiger (2021), and Sarthak Dasgupta's remarkable film 200 Halla Ho (2021). Some films delve into the intricate connection between caste and gender in various regions of India. Notable films in the list include Malapialla (The Outcast Girl, Telugu, 1938), Bharathi Kannamma (Tamil, 1997), Oruththi (A Girl, Tamil, 2003), and Papilio Buddha (The Malabar Banded Peacock Butterfly, Malayalam, 2013). Many people have endeavored to reassess caste-related matters using the medium of film. Similarly, movies such as Pistulya (Marathi, 2009), Fandry (Marathi, 2014), Sairat (Marathi, 2020), Pawasacha Nibandh (Marathi, 2020), and Jhund (Hindi, 2022) explore the lives and encounters of Dalit-Bahujan groups. Kabali (Tamil, 2014), Kaala (Tamil, 2018), and Sarpatta Parambarai (Tamil, 2021) directed by Pa. Ranjit have skillfully depicted the experiences of underprivileged folks. Mari Selvaraj's films, Pariyerum Perumal (Tamil, 2018) and Karnan (Tamil, 2019), depicted Dalit female and male characters as exceptionally courageous and influential. The film Asuran (2019), helmed by Vetrimaaran, illuminated the illustrious heritage of Indian cinema. The films Masaan (Hindi, 2015) and Geeli Pucchi (Hindi, 2022) by filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan do not meet the anticipated level of quality. These filmmakers are analyzing and transforming Dalit characters from their individual and distinct viewpoints. Yengde (2018) defines this style of filmmaking as 'Dalit Cinema'. Dalits engage in the exploration of their lived experiences and express them via several artistic mediums. In doing so, they delve into the notion of collective victimhood and its importance. The aforementioned sources (Vyas & Panda, 2019; Murthy, 2013) demonstrate that it results in a notable change in the perception of their victimhood, emphasizing a prominent display of resistance. The contemporary portrayal of Dalits in Indian cinema diverges from prior depictions that frequently portrayed them as victims of violence and atrocities perpetrated by higher castes. The current representation is characterized by a more nuanced approach. The aforementioned transformation has occurred progressively with the increasing presence of Dalit filmmakers in the film industry. The study emphasizes the evolution of Dalit women's roles, shifting from being susceptible to aggression to being resilient and independent individuals. Examining the intentional endeavors of Dalit film artists to confront and change the conventional depiction of Dalit women in their movies. The filmmaker's movies center around Dalit women and depict the main characters as resilient and empowered individuals who actively advocate for their rights. They are not shown as individuals who suffer from societal inequities or experience sexual violence perpetrated by individuals from higher social strata. Instead, they are shown as autonomous individuals who have been roused and instructed. This study examines the development of the position of Dalit women in the film industry, as shown by filmmakers from the Dalit-Bahujan community.

The narrative style employed in Bollywood films has resulted in a dualistic image. An essential factor in the success of these films has been the portrayal of women, not only as the epitome of a devoted wife and exemplary mother, but also as seductive and promiscuous individuals (Manzar, & Aravind, 2019). During the last decade, the positions of Dalit women in the Indian film industry have experienced a noteworthy change. They have transitioned from being depicted as victims to assuming proactive and confident roles, restoring their sense of self and dignity. Two prominent elements that have exerted a substantial influence are the

proliferation of social media and the advent of Dalit artists in the film industry. Members of the Savarna community have produced films that depict the experiences of Dalit women, however with a creative interpretation inspired by their own imagination and the masculine viewpoint. Current non-Dalit filmmakers persist in maintaining the situation of depicting Dalit women in stereotyped ways. Consequently, the situation experiences a significant change when Dalit filmmakers establish their presence in the film business. Pennsylvania. Ranjit, Mari Selvaraj, Vetrimaaran, and T.J.Gnanavel are notable names in the South Indian film business. Marathi cinema has benefitted from the significant efforts of NagarajManjule and BhauraoKarhade in authentically depicting the lived experiences of underprivileged Dalit women. NeerajGhaywan and NagarajManjule, along with other notable directors in the Hindi cinema business, have made noteworthy contributions to the discipline. In contrast to earlier cinematic representations that predominantly portrayed Dalits as victims of oppression and atrocities perpetrated by other caste groups, the current portrayal of Dalits in Indian cinema is characterized by its varied nature. The current Hindi, Tamil, and Marathi films, as well as other over-the-top platforms, have portrayed Dalits in a novel manner. These depictions present them as individuals who belong to a broader middle-class society or as urban strivers who seek to lead stable and respectable lives in major metropolitan areas. Nevertheless, the depiction of the new Dalit characters implies that they lack a connection to the principles of social justice and frequently reside as nomads in urban regions (Wankhede, 2022). Both Dalit and non-Dalit filmmakers produce films that center around the realities of Dalits. The objective of these videos is to communicate powerful themes that challenge conventional notions on gender and power dynamics. These films, such as *GeeliPucchi* (Hindi, 2021), *Madam Chief Minister* (Hindi, 2021), *200 HallaHo* (Hindi, 2021), *Jhund*(Hindi, 2022), *Kaala* (Tamil, 2018), *Sairat* (Marathi, 2016), and *PavsachaNibandh* (An Essay of the Rain, Marathi, 2022), along with *Jai Bhim* (Tamil, 2021), are integral to the Dalit-centric cinematic paradigm. Fandry, Nagaraj Manjule's inaugural film released in 2014, delves into the intricacies of gender roles by depicting female characters who actively cooperate with their male counterparts. There appears to be no apparent differentiation between males and females in terms of gender. Women in the household have an equal standing to men and have an active role in making financial decisions and giving support for the home. Although they have a crucial part in establishing a feeling of belonging and offering nourishment. Women exist alongside men, engaging actively in both professional and household domains. Within the Dalit community, individuals assume several responsibilities including laborers, homemakers, financial contributors, and decision-makers. They experience a higher degree of autonomy in contrast to Savarna females, as they are not restricted by the parda (veil) and male supremacy. *Sairat*, a Marathi film released in 2018 and directed by Nagaraj Manjule, achieved unprecedented success in the Marathi film industry by surpassing all previous financial records. Ingle (2018) emphasizes that the films *Fandry* and *Sairat* effectively depict caste consciousness by offering a firsthand perspective. The cinema industry is currently experiencing a new era, as stories centered around the Dalit-Bahujan community are gaining significant appeal and surpassing language boundaries. The female character is depicted as a resilient, confident, and self-reliant individual, marking a distinctive and pioneering portrayal in the annals of film (Moini, 2019). Manjule's art demonstrates a methodical and erudite approach, exploring the intricacies of reality to depict the profound influence of societal

problems like as caste atrocities and the degradation endured by Dalits (Ingle, 2018). PavsachaNibandh (An Essay of the Rain, Marathi, 2020) is a brief cinematic work that revolves around a young student who lacks a stable place of residence. Upon the mother's return from the farm, she finds her husband in a state of unconsciousness beneath a tree. She courageously assists her drenched partner in the heavy rainfall. She conscientiously collects water in containers as it infiltrates the hut from all angles. The woman's role epitomizes autonomy, assurance, assistance, and maternal concern for her husband, who grapples with alcoholism. among addition, she assumes the duty of imparting education to their child and boldly tackles and resolves any obstacles that arise, showcasing the bravery commonly shown among Dalit-Bahujan women. In the essay "PavsachaNibandh" (A Rain Essay), males depend on women both symbolically and practically. Monica, an athlete, confronts a range of obstacles, including inquiries on her personal identity and citizenship. Jhund (2022) offers a precise portrayal of the challenges encountered by women in marginalized communities as they strive to assert their rights. Finally, Monica has been chosen to join the national football squad and serve as a representative for her country. Rajiya, a victim of domestic abuse and a member of a minority group, exemplifies a resilient, assertive, and self-reliant persona in Jhund by Nagaraj Manjule. Dalit filmmakers' movies disrupt the conventional portrayal of women in employment, which confines them to domestic or caring roles, by exploring their involvement beyond typical tropes. Moini (2019) asserts that women belonging to the elitist or Brahmanical class exhibit comparatively lower levels of audacity and bravery when compared to their peers. GeeliPucchi (2022) presents a novel viewpoint on the realities of Dalit women, countering the traditional depiction of them as victims of social discrimination and rape by Savarnas. The creation of alternative cinema production is a commendable initiative aimed at confronting the prejudiced and stereotypical depiction of Dalit women. The film exemplifies the counter-cultural politics of Dalits, highlighting their own culture and awareness. Engaging in cinema production provides opportunities to examine and criticize the prevailing aesthetics of Brahmanical filmmaking in popular film culture. Members of the Dalit community who work in the film industry play a vital role in producing movies that have the power to bring about significant societal transformation. Their art endeavors to faithfully and really depict the experiences of Dalits. Dalit filmmakers seem to stress the promotion of Dalit social position in society through the creation of genuine depictions of Dalit individuals and culture, rather than being motivated by monetary gain. Their main objective is to faithfully depict excluded or underprivileged communities, placing greater importance on this than any political or economic motives associated with film production. Kumudavalli is a prominent character in the film Kabali (Tamil, 2016). She is depicted as a resilient and prominent woman. Pennsylvania. Ranjit presents a new viewpoint on Kabali that goes against the traditional understanding and creative interpretations. This perspective is based on anti-caste aesthetics, which is a hitherto untapped area. In the Tamil film Kaala (2018), there is a prominent female character named Payal who is the girlfriend of Lenin, the youngest son of Kaala. Payal is portrayed as a strong and forceful individual. She exhibits a unique and influential persona as a female advocate, different from her affiliation with Lenin. Ranjith offers a thorough narrative of their life, encompassing the difficulties they encountered and the instances of happiness they encountered. Edachira (2020) argues that these films offer a different viewpoint from mainstream Indian cinema by showcasing an anti-caste aesthetic and a

contrasting outlook. Dalit cinema exerts substantial endeavors to produce films that serve as sources of inspiration for the Dalit population and aim to foster a society characterized by equity and justice. Mariyamma, a character in the Tamil film *SarpattaParambarai* (2021), displays remarkable resilience as she overcomes the challenges of caste conflicts and fights against gender bias and caste-based violence. She confronts a rival group and offers steadfast support to her husband, who experiences disillusionment following his losses in boxing contests. Notwithstanding his recurrent defeats, he descends into drunkenness. Nevertheless, Mariyamma stays resolute in her determination to provide him with support. Mariyamma exemplifies the attributes of autonomy, bravery, and spousal assistance, as depicted by Pa. Greetings, Ranjit. Kema, a female character in the Tamil film *Dhammam* (2022), personifies a profound sense of curiosity and a penchant for inquiry. Cinema showcases diverse depictions of the emerging Dalit generation, emphasizing their curiosity, heightened consciousness, education, and commitment to Ambedkarite ideals. This approach investigates the symbolic tensions depicted on the screen, which delve into the confrontation between social and cultural standards. These conflicts possess the ability to mold an individual's identity and their perception of reality (Rajan, & Venkatraman, 2017). Within a mere decade, Pa. Ranjith has successfully elevated anti-caste politics to a prominent position in South Indian film. This has involved questioning the prevailing trend of idolizing characters from dominating castes and the feudal system they symbolize. He illuminates their lives and culture, igniting a fresh outlook in the sector. He adeptly examines the convergence of anti-caste and cultural politics in cinema, as seen by the works of Rajan and Venkatraman (2017) and Naig (2022). The urban environment provides a backdrop for the goals of Dalit men to achieve social status and upward mobility. These desires are mirrored by the representation of strong and determined Dalit women who play the central roles in stories (Wankhede, 2022; Kamble, & Biswal, 2022). Dalit cinema has established remarkable benchmarks for itself and has emerged as a new wave of alternative film. It is essential to emphasize alternative education, constitutional resolution, and empowerment, while also tackling the problem of excessive celebration of violence, pride, and intolerance (Viduthalai, Divakar, & Natarajan, 2017). These alternative narratives establish the basis for change by exposing the common experiences of victimhood caused by injustice and disregarded systematic violence. South Indian films have experienced a discernible trend in recent years, wherein there is a growing acknowledgment of the significance of depicting strong female characters. As a result, a wide range of films have portrayed resilient female protagonists, delving into many aspects of women's lives. Indian cinema delves into a diverse array of subjects when portraying female protagonists, surpassing the conventional emphasis on matrimony and maternity. Dalits employ visual imagery to record their defiance and confront the fragmented and segregated portrayal of Hindu culture. This graphic depiction also serves to emphasize the imperceptibility of Dalits. The utilization of visual arts by Dalits in different circumstances has been thoroughly examined in their publication "Dalit art and visual imagery" (Thorat, 2012 & Tartakov, 2012), where they adeptly integrate visual elements to convey their message. Indian film has endeavored to liberate itself from religious and social conventions linked to the privileged class and caste, with the objective of amplifying the voices of marginalized and oppressed populations (Sarker, 2017). Non-Dalit filmmakers have made significant and unbiased contributions in recent decades to the portrayal of Dalit women. *Madam Chief Minister* (2021), *200 HallaHo* (2021), and *Jai*



Bhim (2021) showcase strong female protagonists who exhibit assertiveness and dynamism, thereby making notable contributions to Indian cinema. This is a substantial undertaking that largely examined the marginalized representation of Dalit women from the viewpoint of higher castes. A collective of committed filmmakers is actively striving to challenge the conventional prejudices of Dalit women through their intellectually stimulating alternative movie. I derive great satisfaction from actively participating in the unique representation of Dalit main characters in Indian film industry. The film *Madam Chief Minister* (2021) is made by filmmakers from the Savarna community and presents a distinctive representation of Dalit women in contrast to early Indian cinema. Filmmakers from the Savarna community are making a noteworthy attempt to depict Dalit women in Hindi cinema. The film delves into the life of Mayawati, an individual from the Dalit community who ascends to the position of chief minister. Furthermore, it depicts a resilient and self-assured female leader, emphasizing the inclusion of the Dalit-Bahujan majority populace in India. Savarna imaginations have consistently found that the portrayal of Dalit women's agency in movies does not appropriately represent their lives and experiences. The depiction of Dalit-Bahujan characters, their socio-political existence, and alternative cultural principles has been rendered with inaccuracies. However, in recent years, the progress of empowering Dalit women in Indian cinema has been led by filmmakers, both Dalit and non-Dalit. This marks a momentous achievement in the chronicles of the nation's film sector. Their films serve a crucial role in confronting the conventional portrayal of Dalit women as victims, a frequent theme in early filmmaking. The movie *200 HallaHo* (2021) is noteworthy for being based on an authentic incident that took place in Maharashtra. Upon analyzing the oppression and exploitation endured by women belonging to higher castes, it becomes apparent that the exploitation suffered by Dalit women is notably more severe and violent. This is because Dalit women experience exploitation at multiple stages throughout their whole lifespan. However, the video raises an important point about the ongoing portrayal of Dalit women as victims of sexual assault. The film portrays Dalit women who valiantly champion their rights, utilizing a blend of nonviolent and assertive methods, both inside and beyond legal confines. The depiction of women on film prior to *200 HallaHo* was seldom witnessed. The victims also challenge their assailant in court, demanding retribution for the brutality they suffered. They endured a decade marked by persistent sexual violence, murders, and exploitations, and ultimately resorted to employing violence as a method to bring an end to the era of danger. The accounts of Dalit women elucidate the complex interplay between social and political identities, revealing the diverse manifestations of prejudice and disadvantage they encounter. This intersectionality unveils their susceptibility to violence. This event has significant academic significance and acted as a catalyst for Dalit groups dedicated to eliminating various forms of injustice. South Indian cinema has begun to create films from a research-driven standpoint. *Jai Bhim* (2021) revolves around an actual incident, particularly Sengeni's unwavering quest for justice. The woman's spouse is fatally shot by law enforcement officials while being detained, and the authorities assert that the suspect has managed to flee from prison. The narrative of the victims from the lower caste focuses on the courageous fight of women against the entire police force, aided by a lawyer who holds progressive and communist beliefs. Ultimately, she achieves justice through the habeas corpus case, owing to the proficiency of a highly skilled attorney. The films "*200 HallaHo*" (2021), "*Madam Chief Minister*" (2021), and "*Jai Bhim*" (2021) were all

released in the same year, highlighting the importance of Dalit filmmaking. These movies have attained significant commercial prosperity in India. Regional Dalit filmmakers have paved this new road with their multitude of commercially successful movies. It seems that non-Dalit filmmakers who are making movies focused on Dalit characters may not be adequately expressing empathy towards the Dalit protagonist. The filmmakers have introduced compelling, inspiring, and brave characters who were previously lacking in mainstream filmmaking. Agarwal (2014) states that popular films frequently portray women as self-reliant, self-assured, and dedicated to their professional pursuits. Contemporary films now feature female characters who have transcended their traditional role as simple appendages to the hero. They exhibit multiple layers, unwavering resolve, and, most importantly, an augmented amount of screen time. When audiences need narratives that exalt the fortitude of women, they frequently go towards popular Bollywood or Hindi films. Recognizing the importance of the Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada language industries in southern India is of utmost importance. The Indian film industry is presently experiencing a significant change due to the increasing popularity of OTT platforms, the changing preferences of multiplex audiences, and the advent of innovative directors. This has resulted in a change in how characters and issues are depicted, departing from entrenched prejudices (Moini, 2019).

Dalit representation in Indian cinema has been a subject of both progress and contention. The term "Dalit" refers to those who belong to the lower castes in the Hindu caste hierarchy, historically subjected to discrimination and marginalization. Over the years, Indian filmmakers have attempted to shed light on the struggles, aspirations, and identity of Dalits through various cinematic narratives. Historically, Dalit representation in Indian cinema has been scarce and often misrepresented. For decades, mainstream Bollywood predominantly focused on stories revolving around upper-caste characters, perpetuating stereotypes and sidelining the experiences of Dalits. Dalit characters were often portrayed as one-dimensional or relegated to stereotypical roles like servants, labourers, or victims of oppression.

However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable shift towards more authentic and diverse representation of Dalits in Indian cinema. Independent filmmakers and directors from marginalized communities have emerged, striving to depict the complexities of Dalit lives with sensitivity and authenticity. These filmmakers aim to challenge stereotypes and amplify Dalit voices through their storytelling. One notable example is the rise of Dalit cinema, a subgenre within Indian cinema that specifically focuses on the experiences and narratives of Dalit communities. Films like "Sairat" (2016), directed by Nagraj Manjule, and "Fandry" (2013), also by Manjule, have received critical acclaim for their portrayal of caste-based discrimination and the struggles faced by Dalit youth. These films not only shed light on the social realities but also provide nuanced insights into the aspirations and resilience of Dalit characters. Moreover, the emergence of streaming platforms has provided a platform for lesser-known voices and stories to reach wider audiences. Web series like "PaatalLok" and "Article 15" have tackled issues of caste discrimination and systemic oppression, albeit not exclusively focused on Dalit narratives. Nevertheless, these platforms have enabled more opportunities for Dalit filmmakers and actors to tell their stories on their own terms. Despite these advancements, challenges persist. Dalit representation in mainstream Bollywood still



remains limited, and there is a need for greater inclusivity and diversity both in front of and behind the camera. Additionally, some critics argue that there is a risk of tokenism or superficial portrayal of Dalit characters in certain films, emphasizing the importance of authentic representation and meaningful storytelling.

## CONCLUSION

Subsequently, Dalit women are frequently depicted as societal casualties and targets of sexual assault from the standpoint of the prevailing caste. For an extended period, Dalit women have been subjected to unjust portrayals that undermine their integrity, autonomy, and make them especially vulnerable in a society controlled by the dominant culture. This refers to the outward appearance and presence of Dalit women, including the names they are given, who suffer ongoing captivity and humiliation at the hands of the Savarna. This enabled the exaltation of upper-caste standards, customs, and convictions, particularly those that have a severe effect on Dalit women. An examination of the representation of Dalit women in early Indian films reveals a clear separation based on caste and gender. These women were frequently shown as both passive objects and active participants, thus reinforcing detrimental preconceptions. The Indian film industry is presently experiencing a substantial metamorphosis, primarily due to the emergence of over-the-top (OTT) platforms, the growing number of viewers in multiplexes, and the emergence of a fresh cohort of filmmakers. This transition has prompted an investigation and trial of many characters and themes, deviating from entrenched clichés. An outstanding feature of this growth is the courageousness exhibited by the female characters, who boldly confront society injustices and biases without fear. Dalit filmmakers are accurately depicting the empowerment of Dalit women in their films, providing a distinctive viewpoint. They are actively endeavoring to contest and transform the unfavorable depiction of Dalit women in Indian movies. Dalit women characters have had a notable increase in their empowerment, self-confidence, initiative, assertiveness, and consciousness of their personal autonomy. Recently, the film industry has witnessed an increasing focus on anti-caste aesthetics and socio-cultural politics. This has resulted in a more subtle and precise depiction of the empowerment and influence of marginalized Dalit women in Indian film industry. Dalit cinema aims to amplify the cultural and social empowerment of women, while also regaining their identity and dignity, among other goals. The alternate portrayals of Dalit filmmakers in these locations have demonstrated themselves to be a performative endeavor, functioning as a beneficial asset for the disadvantaged. Dalit films employ cinematography techniques that enable the marginalized Dalit people to actively participate in mainstream discourse and provoke contemplation over their own existence. This technique enables the investigation and expression of issues that were previously disregarded. In addition, the neo-Savarna filmmakers have made a conscious effort to accurately and impartially portray Dalit women in their films, without any bias or discrimination. This work emphasizes the representation of Dalit women characters, showcasing their endeavor to attain self-respect and improve their social status in metropolitan environments. The portrayal of these women is characterized by their autonomy, logical thinking, and strong drive, as they assume the central role as the primary characters.

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