

MAA - A CRITICAL REVIEW

R. Venkatesh Arvindh

Doctoral Researcher, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Periyar University, Salem, Tamilnadu, India,
Email - rvenkatesharavindh@gmail.com

Abstract: *Media is a part of lives of the people. They are spoilt for choice when it comes to choosing various avenues for entertainment, educating themselves, gaining awareness etc. Short films are not something which is new in our society. They portray some issue or incident that has have been happening in the society for a long or short period of time in our midst or surroundings. They also cannot be confined to some particular theme or genre or some geography. The current research paper looks at the newest trending short film by Sarjun KM that released two weeks ago – MAA which has touched upon the aspect of teenage pregnancy. The research paper will critically review various aspects that the short film has portrayed through iconography.*

Key Words: *Viral, Short film, YouTube, MAA, Analysis,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Films and Behavioural aspects:

Jenkins (1992) spoke about the aspect of anxieties and the behavioural aspects associated with it on youth. He observed that by combining anxieties about the potential dangers of modern technology with worries about the moral welfare of the young provides a very potent basis for the public.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Influence of movie reviews:

Pentheny J. R. (2015) in his study The influence of movie reviews on consumers quotes Suman Basuroy et. al (2003)'s article "How Critical Are Critical Reviews?: The Box Office Effects of Film Critics, Star Power, and Budgets." They investigated three issues related to the effects of film critics on box office success viz. critics' role in affecting box office performance, whether positive and negative reviews have comparable effects on box office performance; and examining how star power and budgets might moderate the impact of critical reviews on box office performance.

Anindita Chakravarty et. al (2010) in their article "The Differential Effects of Online Word-of-Mouth and Critics' Reviews on Pre-release Movie Evaluation" studied the influence of online user comments and reviews by movie critics on consumers' evaluation of soon-to-be-released films. Their article examined three key components of persuasion which are the message sources, message contents, and message recipients.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the various iconographic elements in the short film 'MAA'.

4. METHODOLOGY

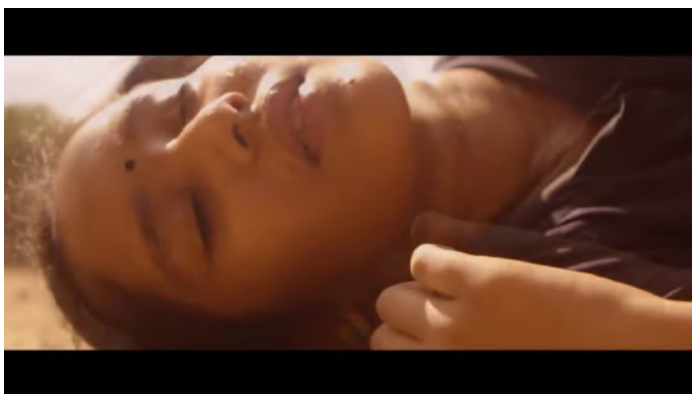
The researcher has envisioned to analyse the various iconographic elements present in the short film 'MAA.'

5. ANALYSIS

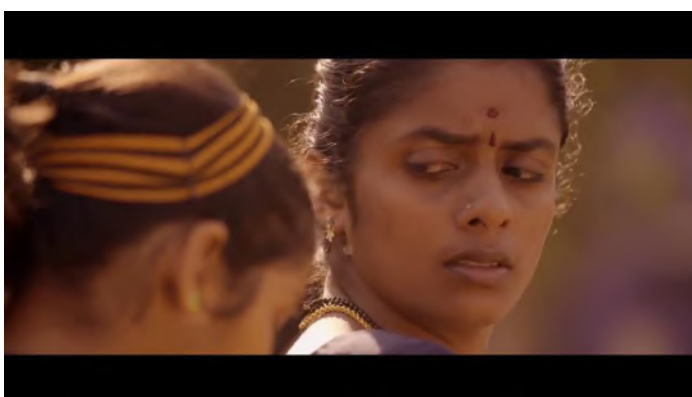
ICONOGRAPHY:



ICON 1 & 2 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 3 & 4 Courtesy: YouTube



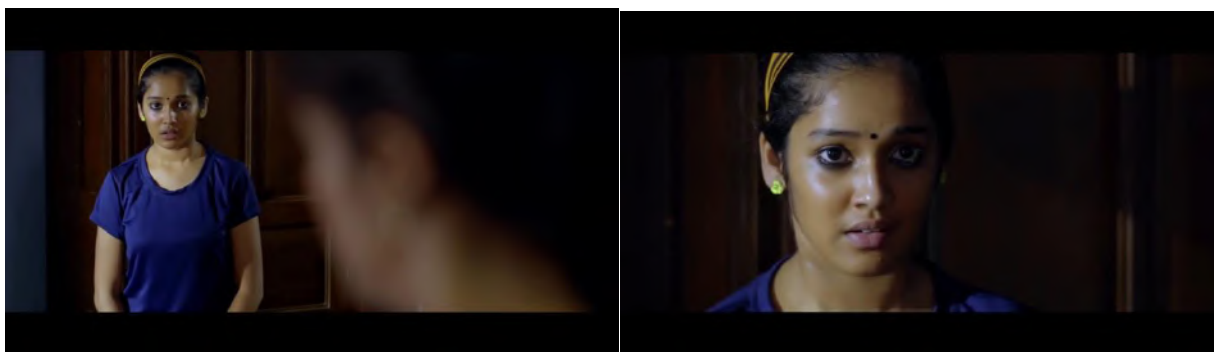
ICON 5 & 6 Courtesy: YouTube

The short film MAA, begins with an establishing shot of a schoolgirl playing hockey in the playground with her teammates. In the establishing scenes the protagonist Ammu is seen falling down unconscious and is later helped to revive by her coach. At that juncture her mom arrives on a scooty to pick her up from practice, where her coach asks Ammu to be given healthy food and informs her that her daughter Ammu fell down unconscious while playing the game and scolds her for not having breakfast in the morning and because she is studying in 10th standard, her mother is answerable to her father in the event of Ammu getting sick. (Icons 1 to 6)



ICON 7 & 8 Courtesy: YouTube

In the next scene it is shown that Ammu is vomiting immediately upon reaching her house and her mother exclaims that they visit the hospital amidst fears of Dengue outbreak in the locality and Ammu being a schoolgoing girl her health is of utmost importance.

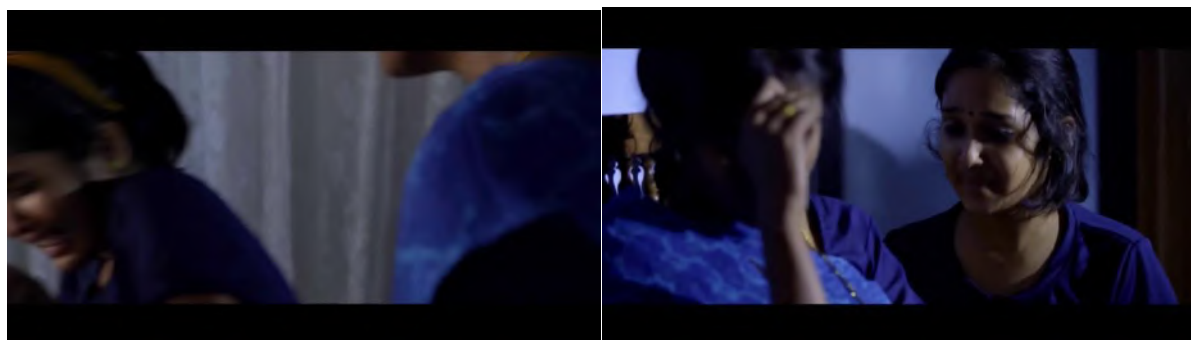


ICON 9 & 10 Courtesy: YouTube



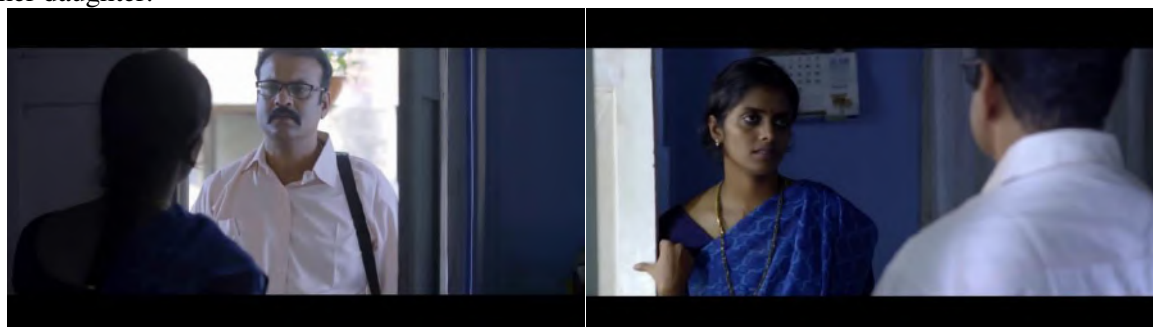
ICON 11 & 12 Courtesy: YouTube

Ammu later starts with a hesitation and says Amma I think I am pregnant (*Amma, naan pregnant ah irukken nu nenaikkuren*) for which her mother asks what did you say (*Yenna di sonne?*). Ammu responds by asking for forgiveness from her mother and hugs her. (Icons 9 to 12)



ICON 13 & 14 Courtesy: YouTube

Her mother responds by saying that What did you say, what did you say sinner, what age is this, what age is this, is this an act to be done at the age of 15 years? What will I do with you (*yenna di sonne, yenna sonne, enna kaariyam panni vechurukke paavi, enna vayasu ithu, enna vayau ithu, pathinanju vayasula seyyara velaya ithu, unna vechu naan enna panna poren?*) and starts beating, later her mother starts crying pondering as to what she is going to do about her daughter.



ICON 15 & 16 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 17 & 18 Courtesy: YouTube

The next scene shows the father who returns from work prematurely. He looks at Ammu and asks whether she has returned from playing hockey (*enna hockey ku poitu variya?*). His wife says that Ammu has an important tournament to play to which he replies in the negative asking whether she can't play the tournament next year and that at a time when Ammu has to be studying and if she's playing she would end up getting 40 or 50 percentile and that people would comment saying she's a lecturer's daughter hence the low scores. Ammu responds saying she will never go to play hockey again and apologises to her father. He also scolds his wife by stating whether its the right kind of dress to be worn in allowing a grown up girl for playing outside. (Icon 15 to 18)

W: Illanga, etho mukkiyamana tournament varuthu nu ...

H: Yen indha tournament ah adutha varusham nadakkatha? Ippo padippaula kotta vittu tu 40%, 50% vangittu lecturer oda ponnu nu peru vaangaporala?

A: Inneme naan hockey vilayada pola pa, sorry

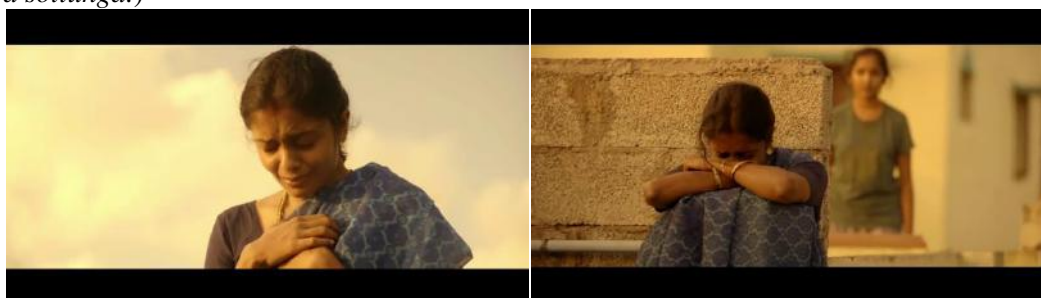
H: yeh yenna di dress ithu, ithnundu shorts, indha mathiri than vayasukku vandha ponna veliya annupuratha?



ICON 19 & 20 Courtesy: YouTube

The next scene happens to be a phone conversation between the father and one of his colleagues at the workplace when the family is having dinner.

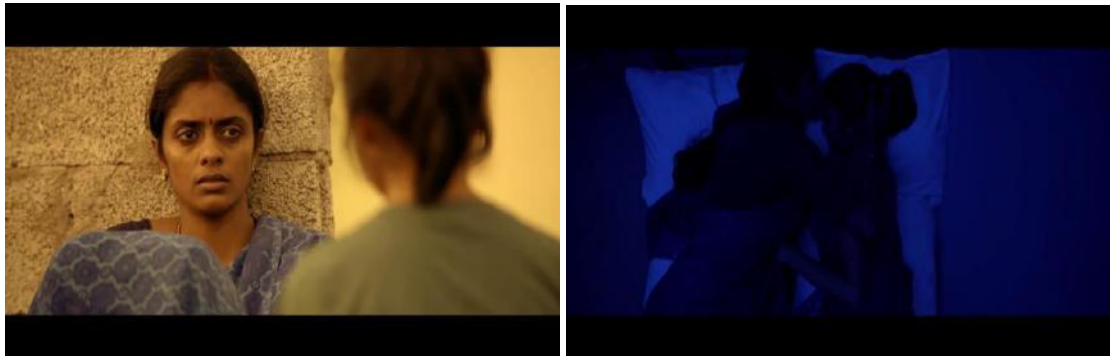
F: Hello, sir rules are rules sir. We are saying that boys and girls shouldn't be allowed to even sit together, you are saying that they went together in bike. Don't they even know what if it is campus or outside. Surely they would have touched each other and that they can't allow such nonsense. They are not to be blamed, it is their parents and their upbringing of the children. Ask their parents to come. (Hello, sir rules na rules than sir. Paiyyanum ponnun onna bench la okkarave koodathu nu namma solrom, ithula onna ore bike la ponnaga nu vera sollringa, campus kulla na ena, veliyana na enna? Oruthar oruthar thodamaya poiruppaga, we can't allow this nonsense, mothala avanga parents ah vara sollunga.)



ICON 21 & 22 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 23 & 24 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 25 & 26 Courtesy: YouTube

The next scene portrays the mother crying about her daughters' fate. She then explains to her daughter that we should think 10 times before committing and being a woman a 100 times. To this Ammu responds saying she'll do anything and begs her mother not to hate her. Her mother responds asking you'll do what ever I say? to which Ammu nods. Her mother responds saying go and die. During sleep he mother wakes up and then rushes to her daughters' room to check if she's okay and asks her forgiveness for uttering such words. Ammu responds by saying that she need not apologise as it was Ammu who sinned and again asks not to hate her. She says that she'll do something about Ammu tomorrow and asks her not to worry.

M: Oru pannathukku munnadi pathu thedava yosikkanum, ponna nooru thedava yosikkanum yenna kadasila pazhi un avasyhaiyum en melaiyum than varum.

A: Amma, naan nee enna sonnalum seiren.

M: Enna sonnalum seiriya

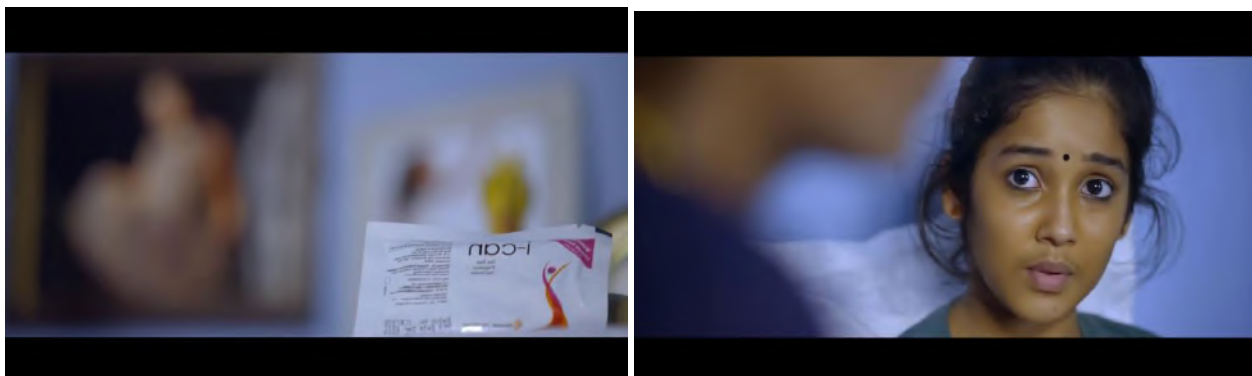
A: Nodds

M: Enna sonnalum seiriya? Sethudu.

M: Sorry, Amma pesinathu thappu.

A: Nee en ma sory solra naan than ma thappu pannen. Enna matum veruthudathe ma.

M: Naalikke yethanachum pannalam.



ICON 27 & 28 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 29 Courtesy: YouTube

In the next sequence, the mother Satya gives her a anti contraceptive pill and Ammu asks what is to be done. At this juncture, the director captures the innocence of the child which has had indulged in adultery evn without knowing anything about it. At the end of the sequence Satya says to Ammu that she is pregnant.

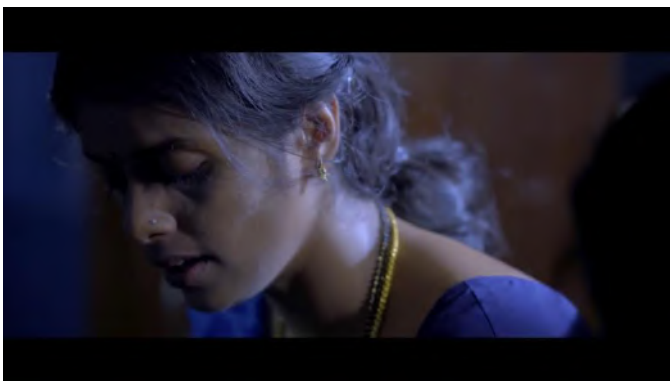
S: *Indha*

A: *Enna ma pannanum?*

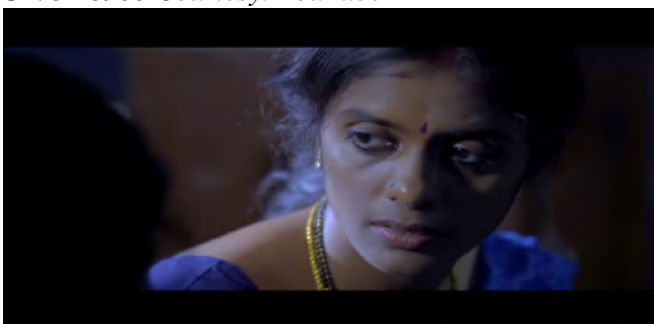
S: *Ammu nee pregnant ah irukke.*



ICON 30 & 31 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 32 & 33 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 34 & 35 Courtesy: YouTube

In the above sequences, Satya enquires Ammu about the incident as to when it happened.

S: Eppo achu?

A: Moonu masathukku munnadi.

S: Vera yaarachum irunthangala?

A: Illa ma.

S: Unnoda friends, avanoda friends.

A: Illama.

S: Ammu bayappadama unmaaya sollu, appo than amma vala unakku help panna mudiyum.

Photo video ethavathu eduthana?

A: Illama.

S: Avan friends kitta yethavathu sonnana?

A: Therila ma, aana irukkathu ma.

S: Thirupi ethavathu blackmail pannana?

A: Avanukku enna pidikkum ma, api lam enna panna mattan ma.

S: Un sammadhathoda than pannana?

A: Ammam ma.



ICON 36 & 37 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 38 & 39 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 40 & 41 Courtesy: YouTube

In the above sequences, Satya meets Hari Ammu's alleged partner at the playground.

S: Hari, Ammu pregnant ah irukka

H: Shocked

S: Ippo varum pothu kuda pathonne plar nu araiyalam nu than vanden, aana adichu enna preyojanam.

Seri ippo naan kekra kelvikku mattum pathil sollu, kelambidren.

Photo, video ethavathu eduthiya?

H: Cries and nods in the negative.

S: Un frinds kitta sonniya?

H: Satyama illa aunty.

S: Unmaya sollu, first time oru ponnoda irunthiruke. Friends kitta perumaya sollanum nu thonale?

H: Appi ellam onnum illa unty. Enakku Ammu va romba pidikkum aunty. Theriyama pannitom aunty. Sorry.

S: Unga veetla appa, amma ellam enna pannramga?

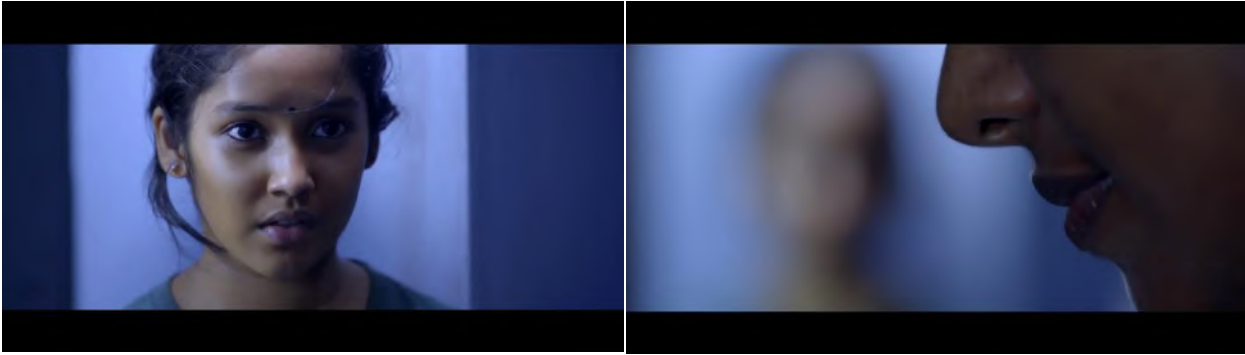
H: Aunty avangakitta solla vendam aunty please aunty, kondruvaanga aunty.

S: Appo thappu pannum pothu thonalaya?

H: Therila aunty. Ithu than love nu sonna.

S: Seri. Onne onnu sei. Ithu pathi yaar kittayum paesathe. Pothum.

H: Aunty. Ammu va naan pakkalam ah. Sorry mattum sollanum. (Cries profusely and wipes his tears)



ICON 42 & 43 Courtesy: YouTube

In the above sequences, Satya and Ammu have a conversation regarding various aspects of childhood and upbringing.

A: Amma, onna kekkatta? Thitta mattiye!

S: Kelu

A: Chinna vayasula enakku ethana vatti oru thambi pappa venum nu kettrukken, indha pappa va namba vechukkalam? Namaba rendu perum sernthu pathukkalam.

S: Kozhnthai pethukkarathu avlavu easy illa ammu. Athukku manasu, odambu ellam othuzhakkannum, athu oru pathu masam thavam mudinchu porakkarappo suthu ellarukkum kondadanum, andha kondattam, santhosham ellam athukku undana vayasula than nadakkanum, pethukitta unakkum kastam kozhandhaikkum kashtam illa. Bayathodayum verupodayum oru uyir ah indha ulagathukku kondu vara koodaathu ammu.



ICON 44 & 45 Courtesy: YouTube

F: Enna pa, rendu perum enga veliya kelambittinga?

S: Ah, kadikku poi maligai saaman vaangittu varalam nu.

F: Padikkara ponna ethu kadaikku eellam kootitu pora, ava veetla ukkandhu padikkattum, namba rendu perum poitu varalam.



ICON 46 & 47 Courtesy: YouTube



ICON 48 Courtesy: YouTube

The above sequences happen at the grocery shop and is a conversation between the shop keeper and Satya and with her husband.

S: Nooru puli, rendu majathul.

SK: Satya neeyama, naan gevanikkave illa paru. En machan oda medical shop la eho test vanginiyaame, sonnaru.

Enna good news ah? Modhal kozhandhaikku approm ethana varusham achu la! Indha thedava kandippa paiyyan than

S: Appi lam onnum illa ka, test la illa nu vandhuduchu.

SK: Ayyo, sorry ma.

F: Pregnancy test eduthiya?

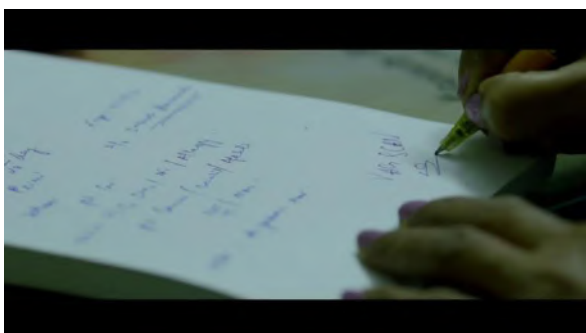
S: Ammam, nee than family planning pannitele, enna di?



ICON 49 & 50 *Courtesy: YouTube*



ICON 51 & 52 *Courtesy: YouTube*



ICON 53 & 54 *Courtesy: YouTube*

The above sequences happen at a hospital wherein the director establishes through various shots and Satya getting an appointment for Ammu for abortion and requests the doctor to do the procedure without any pain. (Icons 49 to 54)



ICON 55 & 56 *Courtesy: YouTube*



ICON 57 & 58 *Courtesy: YouTube*



ICON 59 & 60 Courtesy: YouTube

The above sequences serves more of the end of the short film wherein the director establishes the end through a conversation between Satya and Ammu

S: Po ammu, ethukku thayangura. Ithu neenga rendu perum senthu panna thappu than. Irunthalum athu avanoda life ah endha vithaluleyum baathikkala eppavum pola irukkan. Aana neethan athoda kashtatha anubivicha, ithu approm nee veetukkulla vekka pattu surundu kedakkanum nu endha avasiyamum illa. Ippo board exam varuthu, hockey tournament vauthu athula concentrate pannu. Ippidi oru thappu nee thirumba seyya matte nu enna theriyum. Unakku unmela nambikkai irunthuchu na nee po.

A: Ammu smiles and runs to play hockey again.

6. CONCLUSION:

The current research study was undertaken with an objective of analysing the iconographic elements present in the short film MAA, which released in YouTube two weeks ago on January 26, 2018. This short film has Kani Kusruti and Anikha Surendran as the leads amongst others. Directed by Sarjun KM and produced by Venkat Somasundaram, the music in the short film was scored by Sundaramurthy KS and DOP by Sudarshan Srinivasan. The director has worked hard to capture the essence of the aspect of teen pregnancy that has been happening for quite a period of time in the society. He starts by establishing it through the simple instance of unconsciousness of a child and then takes the script and travels to get us into the aspect of teen pregnancy through the lens of a child in a middle class family to its mother. The short film then goes on to depict the kind of reactions which a mother would have in the event of her child blurting out that she's pregnant. The sequences of another instance ironically at the girls' fathers' workplace adds extra depth and strength to the script. The director also has showcased the various lies told by the mother to hide the incident from her husband. The short film also captures the essence of the bond between a daughter and a mother and also goes on to portray and showcase the various aspects of motherhood and social norms existing through the lens of a mother. The placement of music tracks and bgms and the DOP deserves special accolade.

REFERENCES:

1. Basuroy, S., Chatterjee, S., & Ravid, S. A. (2003). How Critical Are Critical Reviews? The Box Office Effects of Film Critics, Star Power, and Budgets. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(4), 103-117. Retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.unh.edu/ehost/command/detail?sid=97a320ae-5349-4cd5a884834aa28dba37%40sessionmgr110&vid=4&hid=127&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtG1Z2ZQ%3d%3d#db=bth&AN=11235605>
2. Chakravarty, A., Liu, Y., & Mazumdar, T. (2010). The Differential Effects of Online Word-of-Mouth and Critics' Reviews on Pre-release Movie Evaluation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 24(3), 185- 197. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com.libproxy.unh.edu/science/article/pii/S1094996810000241>
3. Jenkins, P. (1992) *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* New York, Aldine de Gruyter.
4. Pentheny, J. R. (2015). *The Influence of Movie Reviews on Consumers*.
5. Sarjun, K.M. (2018, January 26). *MAA - Short Film* [Video file]. Retrieved from - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lKk_5qYdkk&pbjreload=10

Disclaimer: All the images used in this research film work have been taken from MAA, the short film in YouTube.