

Harassment faced by women Police officers in Tamil Cinema

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Abstract: Women happen to occupy a major percentile of the Indian populace. Women also have been given important place in the Vedas and in many rituals and festivals. They are solely responsible and are the reason for a plethora of rituals and festivals to take place as they are the chief role players in them. Women also have had risen above men and even even above men in various fields. However, it was not all easy as they had countless difficulties in achieving the same. Films are an important form of media outlet that can easily penetrate the cognizance of the people and makes lasting impact as well. It is one of the mediums that tends to give wrong portrayal of events and more often glorifies many social evils by justifying them. Portrayal of women characters isn't something new in films however, it is to be noted that women characters in a Police character is no pushover but, the wrong portrayal is condemnable. The current research study looks at the wrong portayal and the harassment faced by women police officers in select films in Tamil cinema through Iconography.

Key Words: Films, Harassment, Portrayal, Tamil cinema, Iconography,

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Harrassment and workplace:

Harassment can happen anywhere but is most common in the workplace. It involves unwanted and unwelcome words, deeds, actions, gestures, symbols, or behaviors of a sexual nature that make the target feel uncomfortable. A safe workplace is therefore a woman's legal right. Indeed, the Constitutional doctrine of equality and personal liberty is contained in Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

Sexual Harassment includes anyone or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication), namely:

1. Physical contact or advances;
2. A demand or request for sexual favours;
3. Making sexually coloured remarks;
4. Showing pornography;
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at place of work. This act was passed by the Lok Sabha on 3rd September 2012 and it was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 26th February 2013. The Bill got the assent of the President on 23rd April 2013. The Act came into force from 9 December 2013.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

2.1 Women in Police force:

Thernstrom and Thernstrum (2009) quotes O.W. Wilson (1952) that a police personnel should be of a vely high order. A police chief cannot afford to appoint to his force an applicant whose reputation is questionable or one whose character is said to cause doubt on his future action.

Pearl J (2014) mentions about Kenney work (1954) which indicated that supervision may be summarised as the sum total of all techniques used to get people to perform acceptable work. Supervision is a key factor in the achievement of effective police performance and the sergeant of police is the corner-stone to the supervisory edifice for, without his highly motivated performance, the agency will be debilitated and the personnel frustrated.

Bayley (2015) reiterates Bihar Police commission;s report (1961) which observed that "a constable should be expected to exercise his discretion and assume responsibility. In all progressive police forces, every constable is a live unit of the force, and thus the constabulary forms a solid corps. It has been stated by many that constables who are recruited and trained to work like automations generally act as a drag on their officers and the force.

According to Richard H. Blum (1964), police service is rendered by individual policeman on a person to person basis. If police service is to be of high calibre, the member must have suitable qualifications and they must be directed and controlled.

David H. Bayley (1969) after surveying police and political development in India felt that the primary responsibility for the prevention and investigation of crime and for the preservation of public order are carried out by state police organisation while the central government had only police forces like the central bureau of investigation and the central reserve police etc.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To analyse and identify the kind of wrongful portrayal of women characters in Tamil cinema especially in Police department.

4. METHODOLOGY:

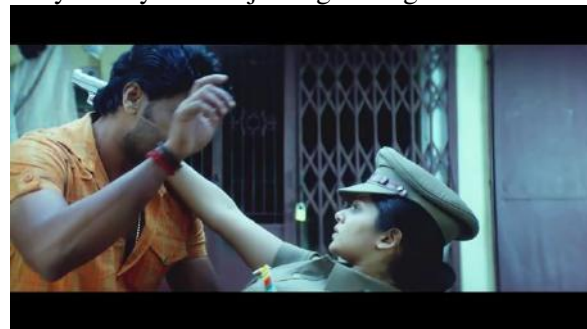
Four films viz. Madurai Sambavam (2008), Avan Ivan (2011), Jilla (2014) and Tirunal (2016) are taken for the study to analyse how the films are depicting and portaying women police officers in a bad way by using iconography.

5. ANALYSIS:

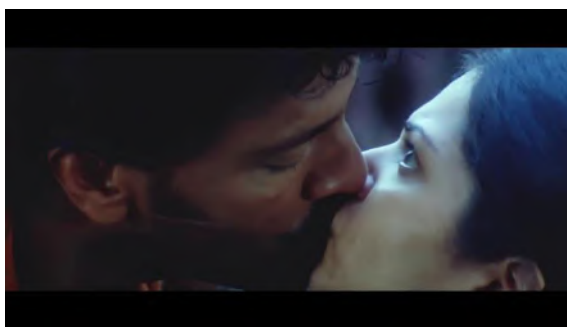
Madurai Sambavam (2009)

In the film madurai sambavam, Kutty is the protagonist of this film. He is a gangster and has involvement in illegal activities with his father Aalamarathaar. Kutty is being rounded up by the Police in an residential area. The female lead Caroline Thomas tries to catch him by pointing the gun.

She slips and Kutty catches her and removes her police cap rudely kissing her lip romantically and forcefully and doesn't have any feel that she is a cop. The next scene portrays Kutty to be rejoicing having kissed Caroline.



ICON 1 & 2 Courtesy: Madurai Sambavam



ICON 3 & 4 Courtesy: Madurai Sambavam

Avan Ivan (2011)

In the movie Avan Ivan, Walter is one of the protagonists. Baby is a Police officer. In one of the scenes, he asks Baby regarding the presence of zipper in a women officer's uniform and the need for it.

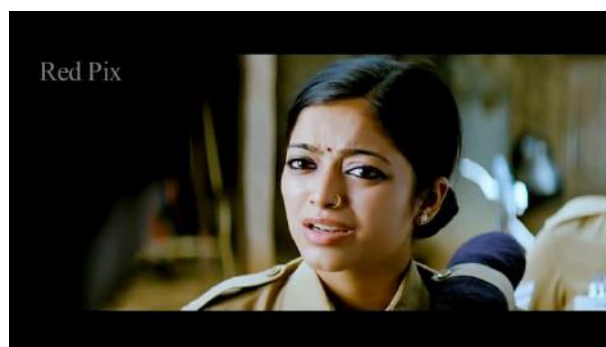
Yaam aniyum pant il zip irukkum, penmani nee aniyum pant il zip irkummuma? Avvaru irukkayil athu etharkku?

The secondary protagonist Kummudran Samy steals a Walkie-talkie from woman police constable, Baby from the Police station.

She reaches Walter's place suspecting that Walter is the one who has stolen the walkie-talkie. She begs him to give her walkie talkie and that she'll lose her job if she doesn't get it back.



ICON 5 & 6 Courtesy: *Avan Ivan DVD*



ICON 7 & 8 Courtesy: *Avan Ivan DVD*

Un mela sathiya naa edukala baby ma. Thayavu senju walkie-talkie ah thirupi kuduthudu, illana en vela poidum.

Jilla (2014)

In the film illa, Shakthi is the protagonist who falls in love with Shanthi who happens to be a Police officer. Shakthi is unaware but is behind Shanthi. Shakthi hates Police but is orced to become a Police officer himself upon compulsion by his father. The incident happens during his joining ceremony. He is being welcomed with a garland by Shanthi as he is her superior officer now.

At that time, he instruct the Police prade to turn around and touches her back and says that you touch me now it's time for me. She can't react and is really shocked.



ICON 9 & 10 Courtesy: *Jilla DVD*



ICON 11 & 12 Courtesy: *Jilla DVD*

About turn. Nee enna anniki thottela, inikki en turn.

Thirunal (2016)

The film Thirunal is about the underworld politics and local rowdies in Thiruchirappali and Tanjore districts. “Blade” Ganesh is the protagonist in the film. Vanitha is a police character in the film and serves as a Police sub-Inspector. She did the job of protecting and controlling the orchestra program in a Thiruvizha (“a village festival”). Blade snatches her walkie-talkie and ran away into the dark place. The scene has been portrayed in the film to showcase the audience about the harassments that a policewoman faces. The very next scene shows a parcel being sent in stealth to her father.

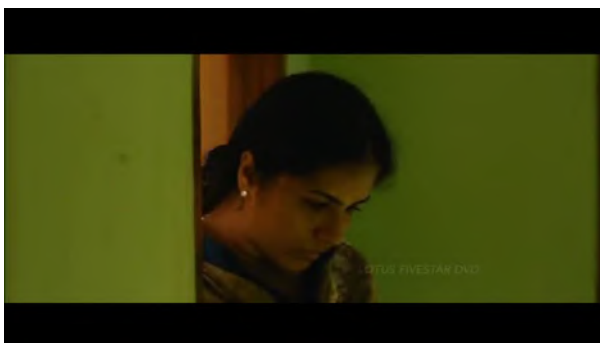
That parcel had his daughter dress (police uniform with her name badge). A phone call came and the person black mailed Anitha’s father to sign a bond to transfer his house property to the antagonist name illegally.



ICON 13 & 14 Courtesy: *Thirunaal DVD*



ICON 15 & 16 Courtesy: *Thirunaal DVD*



ICON 17 & 18 Courtesy: *Thirunaal DVD*

Her father also accepts and signed bond for the transfer. This whole scene in the film explains the fact that there is no security for women in working place, even she being a police guard or a police officer. The working nature of a police is very stressful thing for women these scenes in the films justify certain realities. This scene has shown women kidnapping and blackmailing is so usually happened in the society. These kinds of scenes portray the problems that women face. Finally when she was released, she was given a new dress by the goons, until then she was nude and locked in a room. After her father signed the bond the new dress is given and is not a police uniform. Even after that ordeal they are threatened by the antagonist.

Un ponnu vidu thirumbanum naa naanga solratha seinga. Pathilukku ethavathu senjingana naanga ethavathu seivom. Athukku thiruppi neenga seiyya naanga seirathulenthun galale meendu varave mudiyathu.

6. CONCLUSION:

Tamil cinema industry is one of the top most entertainment power house and is the highest earning amongst all other entertainment houses such as Tollywood, Mollywood and Bollywood. The portrayal of the film characters has a lasting impact in the minds of the people. They tend to believe that whatever is shown in the movies is the actual reality in the society. However, there are a lot of instances where wrong portrayals are shown in the big screen. The current research study was envisioned to look into the wrong portrayals and depiction of women Police officers and the harassment they face in particular. In this study, it was found that women police officers are being stripped or disrobed, stealing of gadgets used, indecent questions and inappropriate touching of women. This kind of unparliamentary visuals creates wrong and bad image and thoughts about the female Police personals among the people who watch this kind of visuals in cinema.

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