

CHAPTER-3

Social issues, Women and Cinema

3.1 Introduction

India after partition was poor and illiterate; this was depicted in many movies including the unforgettable 'Mother India', which actually moved the Indian audiences and women character in this movie has set a goddess-like moral example of an ideal woman through the movie who depicted the problems struggled hard to survive on her own terms and conditions.

Now women were considered to be a material possession, for the men with money, was also presented on screen the movie 'Bazaar'. This movie shows how needy parents sold their young girls to affluent Indians in the gulf. It gave a bizarre image of the society, which was hard to believe but was truth. Another movie like 'Satti' which highlighted the issues like widow remarriage, 'Prem-Rog' also reflects the same issue. Director Mani Ratnam firstly introduced terrorism to cinema followed by 'Bombay' in which riots was highlighted.

But as the Indian society is growing in 21st century, different directors started making movies on different social issues like corruption, unemployment, slum & poverty, prostitution, dirty politics, corporate environment and issues related to women empowerment.

All the social issues that were highlighted in cinema are nothing new now because those were prevalent in the society, but not all the sections of society were aware of them. It can be stated that films/cinema are the most popular form of mass communication and especially Indian cinema is the largest film industry in the world. Cinema is being considered very important tool for society to bring change in society and to bring awareness also. Indian cinema has been portraying the different images of women and it is also influenced the society to a great extent. The reflection of women through cinema has also raised various issues that need to be addressed. Many

films have been made on social themes in the area of women's issues including dowry, widow-remarriage, rape and prostitution etc.

3.2 Cinema and Society

As it is very much acceptable that cinema is very important tool for society to bring change & awareness in society. The social impact of the cinema in India is also seen in the nationwide popularity of film-based programs. For example patriotic movies make us remember to love our nation.

The cinema exercises a great influence on the mind of the people. It has a great educative value also. Cinema in real sense has power to influence the thinking of the people, it can changes the society and social trends. These days cinema has become a powerful vehicle for cultural education. Cinema now days is not only a medium of entertainment, it is also a medium of infotainment and a source of education also. In a society like Indian there are many practices and traditions which are based on ignorance and these all issues are being highlighted by various directors time-to-time. It can also be stated that these days a society is incomplete without cinema in its real sense.

3.3 Women as Object

The representation and portrayal of women in Indian cinema is in majority focused on as representing women as sexual object, decorative material and for romance only. The movies of Madhur Bhandarkar are quite different from this thought as a director. The movies directed by him were more focused on representing reality exists in society. His movies were not representing women as an object of sex, decorative material and not only for romance. We can say that at the point of comparison with other directors at this point so it is very clear that other directors were more focused on presenting women character as romance especially in love stories like Dil to Pagal

Hai, Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, Love and Kuch Kuch hota hai. In other movies like Murder, Jism, Jism-2 and Race type of movies were focused at representing women as sexual object and or decorative material. In a mixture of action cum romance movies women character is also presented in a way which is focused as sex object or decorative material. But at the end it can be stated on behalf of the present study that movies of Madhur Bhandarkar is not representing women portrayal as sex object or decorative material.

3.4 Stereotype Reflection of Women in Indian Cinema

There are several points to be raised here. Laura Mulvey (1975) among many others after her, has critiqued cinema for objectifying the female body, claiming it becomes a passive reciprocal of the pleased active male voyeuristic gaze and this argument is readily applied here. Furthermore by only acknowledging women in terms of their sex, female identity is imagined to be clustered around two polar extremes of sexuality- dharma and desire. There is no other attempt to portray and explore the range of emotional and psychological complexities that may exist in-between these extremes, and in doing this, it actively denies that other complex female identities and subjectivities exist. Secondly, all female erotic performances of make believe occur in public spaces which continues to demarcate the sexually charged aspect of femininity outside of and distanced from the inner sanctum of the domestic sphere and its associations with chaste wifehood and benevolent motherhood. As we have seen, commercial cinema visualizes women within a specific structure of representation that pertains to be idealized values of womanhood. Women are represented as stereotyped characters, reacting to and participating in conventional social situations in ways that uphold social norms. In recent past we have come through with many more films giving substantial roles to its female lead. Films like Arth, Fire, Astitva, Kahani, etc are some of the movies that stand apart in portraying the strong side of Indian women.

Cinema is an extremely indistinct medium and it is essential for this medium to be an instrument that enables people to think differently and empathize with different perceptions of reality. [1]

3.5 Representation of women images in Indian Cinema

Representation of women images and women characterization in Indian cinema has come a long way. Reflecting many shades, the portrayal of women being highlighted and presented all the strengths, complexity and beauty which defines a women. In the early days of Indian cinema, whenever a woman is shown, she is shown to satisfy men's desire and to handle family in a very traditional way.

These days the characterization of women and representation of women images is quite changes and going according to modern time. Women are playing role as a director, lead women character, social worker also. A new change is being reflected from past 10 years in Indian cinema that different directors are making movies with only a major women character for example movies like Fashion, Page-3 and Mary com etc. So with the releasing of the movies in which a women itself playing a lead role and also convey message to society at a big and important issue through which change and transformation can bring in society. The portrayal of women in cinema is now becoming real, the characters have become close to reality. Famous actresses like Priyanka Chopra, Rani Mukherjee, Konkana Sen sharma also played very significant roles in many blockbusters in which a real social message is also given to society.

The role of a mother, sister, lover, wife, friend, daughter-in-law, politician, bar-girl, journalist, model and the role of a prostitute etc. are being played by all the actresses in Indian cinema. In some of the movies the characterization of women is just casted to show as a sex object only, in these kind of movies the role of a women character was just either as traditional house wife who caters the need of his husband or men character or played a role of sex worker or prostitute to highlight real picture of true society.

3.6 Cinema: The Mirror of Society through Madhur Bhandarkar Films

Cinema is also considered the mirror of society through the films of Madhur Bhandarkar because the films directed by him simply reflect and highlight the reality of society. For example in the movie Chandni Bar the characterization of women is represented in a real way along with the life of mafia and their relations with police and politicians express the reality of society. The same is projected through the films of Fashion and Heroine the presentation of women characters reflects real picture of concern sections of society. The movie Satta itself is explaining the political game which exists in Indian parliamentary system. The movie jail clearly highlights the real life of a prisoner. So on behalf of all of these facts it can be stated that Madhur Bhandarkar's films are the Mirror of Society.

3.7 Trendsetter Women Character in Indian Cinema

As far as women character trendsetter is concerned, it is found in this study that movies like Chandni Bar, Satta, Page-3, Fashion and Heroine is directed in a way where the whole movie is based on women character mainly. These selected movies of Madhur Bhandarkar reveal a trendsetter character in Indian cinema. We can also say on behalf of this study that after these kinds of movies another directors in Indian cinema have started movies in which they took women character into central theme and whole movie is based on women character for example film Mardaani, Kahaani, Gulaabi Gang and Dedh Ishqiya are the movies which released after Madhur Bhandarkar movies. But it does not mean that in Indian cinema there were no movies based on women character in center. The movies like Mother India, Aandhi, Damini and Bandit Queen are the best examples in which the whole movie is based on women character, but there were no continuity of making these types of movie as compared to present days where there is a serious of the films directed by different directors in

which they are giving central theme and plot to women character and the whole movie is also based on women character.

3.8 Social Issues Presented in the Films of Madhur Bhandarkar

As far as major social issues are concerned so in the movie 'Chandni Bar' director highlights issues like legal, political and in social issues, the issues like corruption, Unemployment, Dirty Politics, Slum, Poverty and prostitution are highlighted and reflected the truth of our society. Through this movie director tried to give a real picture through this movie and characteristics of women.

The issues highlighted in this movie 'Satta' were based on politics, cultural and on social issues like dirty politics, extra marital affairs and traditional issues like relation of a Daughter-in-Law is also presented in this movie. So through this movie director wants to highlight the major burning issues of the society.

In the movie 'Aan' the director highlights social issues like Slum, poverty, prostitution and the lifestyle of gangsters. Through the characteristics of Police Cops and Gangsters the representation of various social issues has been presented in this movie in a very real sense.

Another big movie of Madhur Bhandarkar, 'Page-3' also caters many social issues in this movie like unemployment, cultural issues, child trafficking, gay relations, corruption in journalism. These all issues are the burning issues of the society which is very catered by the director in a realistic way which has a significant impact at society also.

Another movie directed by Madhur Bhandarkar, 'Corporate' deals with the issues like cultural, political and social. In the social issues the director highlights the issues like corruption, Dirty politics, Prostitution, the use of politicians by businessmen. The whole story of this movie explains the corporate environment in a real sense which

also expresses the tricks used by different businessmen to be success in their strategic planning & affairs.

The movie 'Traffic Singnal' highlights various social issues like poverty, slum, unemployment, prostitution and corruption also. Like his other movies the director raised the major issues of the society which is also considered as a barrier for a development of any society. The social issue which is highlighted in this movie are quiet significant and to the reality as well as a common people observes the life of people who lives their life at a traffic signal.

Another big movie of Madhur Bhandarkar, 'Fashion', also presents and raised social issues like unemployment, cultural and traditional issues. The consumption of drugs by big stores also reveals the social problem of Drug Addiction. The traditional issues like for her daughter to be a part of fashion worlds and then supported her later, shows and reflects the director's wish to highlight social issues through his movies.

The movie 'Jail' as directed by Madhur Bhandarkar expresses the social issues like corruption, slum, and poverty and judiciary system in our society. The whole movie goes around getting justice which reflects the reality of our judiciary system. Another reality is also highlighted in this movie the how lead woman character maintains her dignity to be as a good friend and supporter of a victim who is in Jail. The director of this movie reveals the real life of a prisoner.

The movie 'Dil To Baccha Hai Ji' deals and represents the social issues like family broken through divorce and young boys & girls culture to have a Boy Friend and Girl Friend. The lifestyle of two couples and their expectations from each other's is being highlighted in this movie as a social issue which itself explains the reality of Society that how young generation is becoming decision makers for themselves to choose their life partner by ignoring their parents.

The big movie with a big name 'Heroine', presents the social and cultural issues exists in our society. The issue of unemployment, the lifestyle of stardom and the struggle for making this life in a good role and maintains the status of this lifestyle,

love affair with one and then with another, ignoring an affair for profession is presented in this movie in a real way which presents the real social issues in reality.

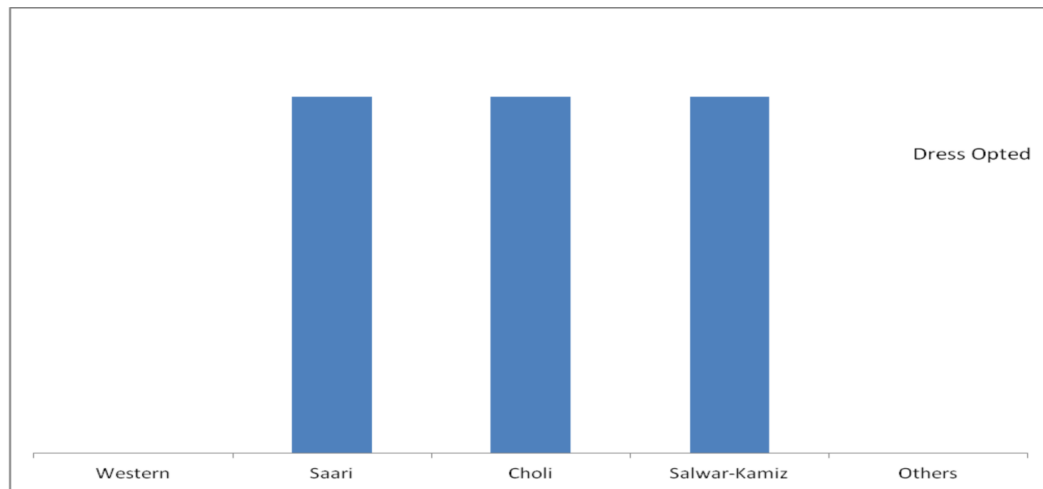
The women images and portrayal of women character in the movie 'Heroine' throws light on the life of a star. In this movie through the protagonist played convincingly by lead women character, one gets to see the rise and fall of an actress and the story of her personal life. The representation and images of women in special role as police officer, stardom, journalist, lawyer or a corporate employee it is being reflected in movies directed by different directors. Image reflection of women character in Indian cinema is not complete without talking about dress.

As far as present study is concerned the analysis on representation of women images is done and explained in following tables & graphs.

Table 3.1: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Chandni Bar

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Chandni Bar	
Western	No
Saari	Yes
Choli	Yes
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.1



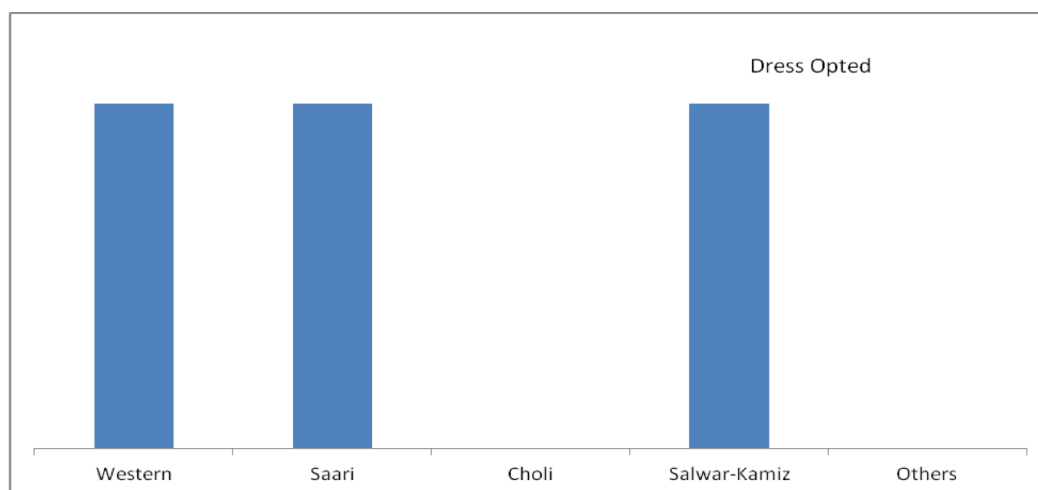
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters , in this movie Chandni Bar the representation of women is shown in Saari, Choli and Salwar Kamiz as all traditional Indian Dresses.

Table 3.2: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Satta

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Satta	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.2:



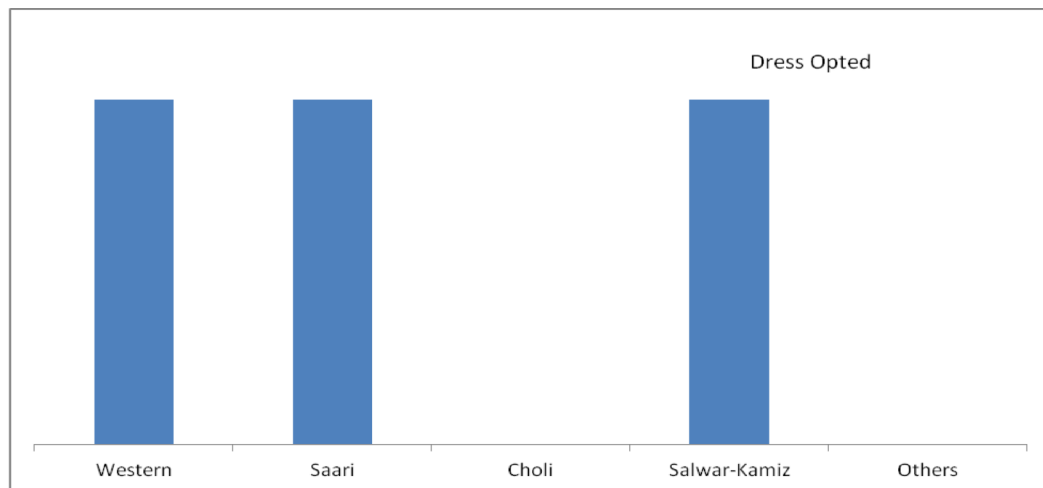
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Satta, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western dress and Salwar Kamiz as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

Table 3.3: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Aan-Men at Work

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Aan-Men at Work	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.3



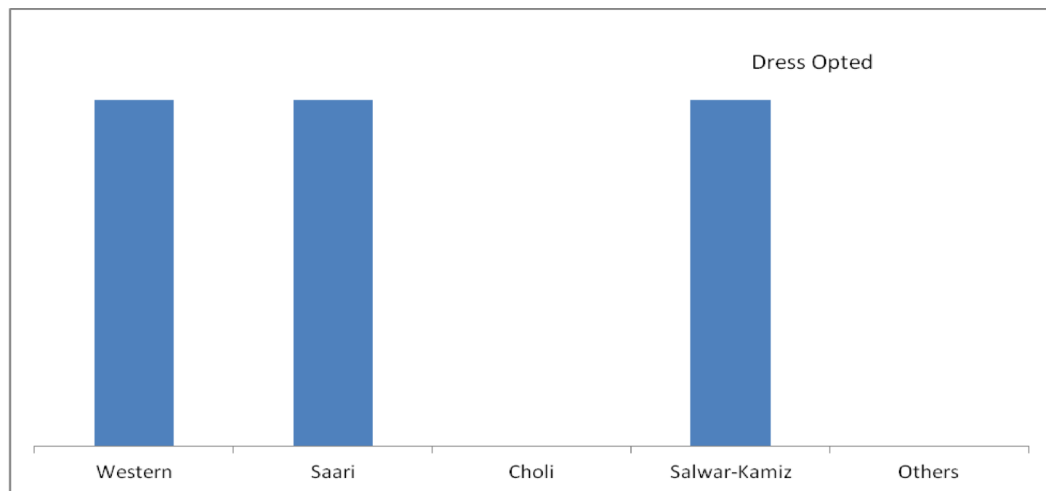
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Aan-Men at Work, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western dress and Salwar Kamiz as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

Table 3.4: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Page-3

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Page-3	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.4



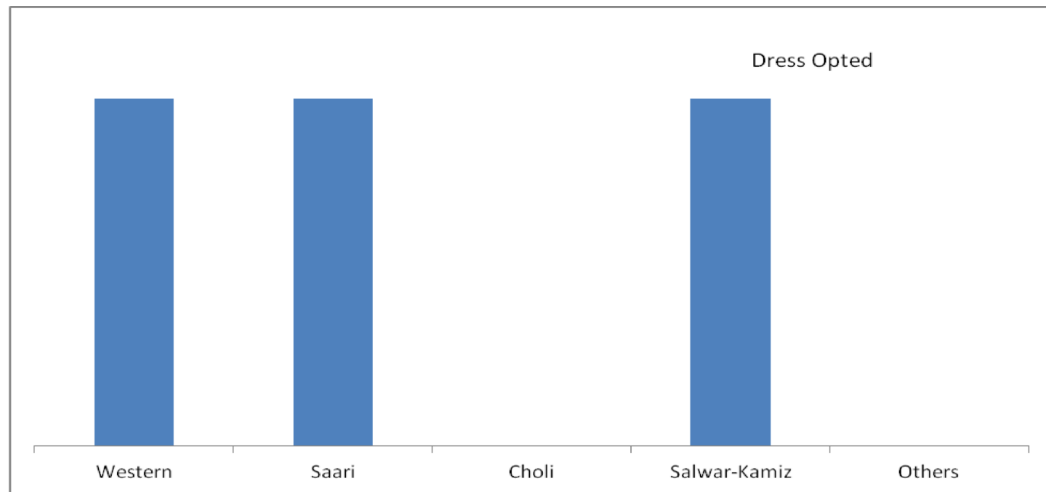
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Page 3 the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western dress and Salwar Kamiz as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

Table 3.5: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Corporate

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Corporate	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.5



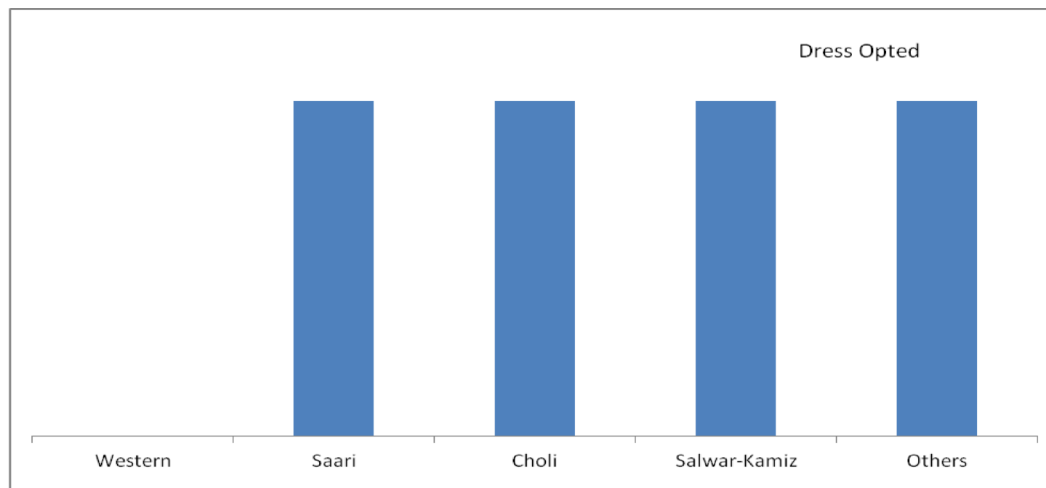
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Corporate, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western dress and Salwar Kamiz as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

Table 3.6: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Traffic Signal

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Traffic Signal	
Western	No
Saari	Yes
Choli	Yes
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	Yes

Graph 3.6



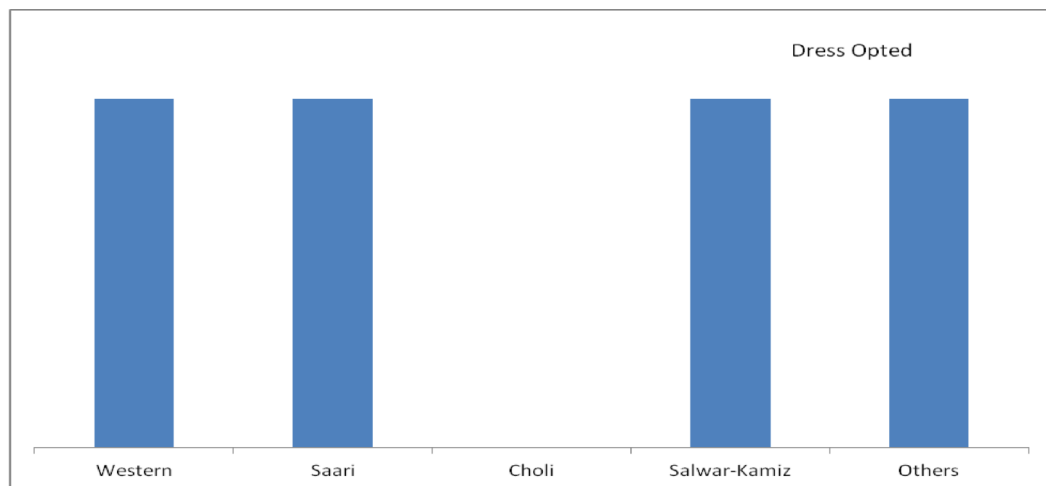
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Traffic Signal, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Choli and Salwar Kamiz and in other type of dresses as the director reflected women character in Indian traditional dresses.

Table 3.7: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Fashion

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Fashion	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	Yes

Graph 3.7



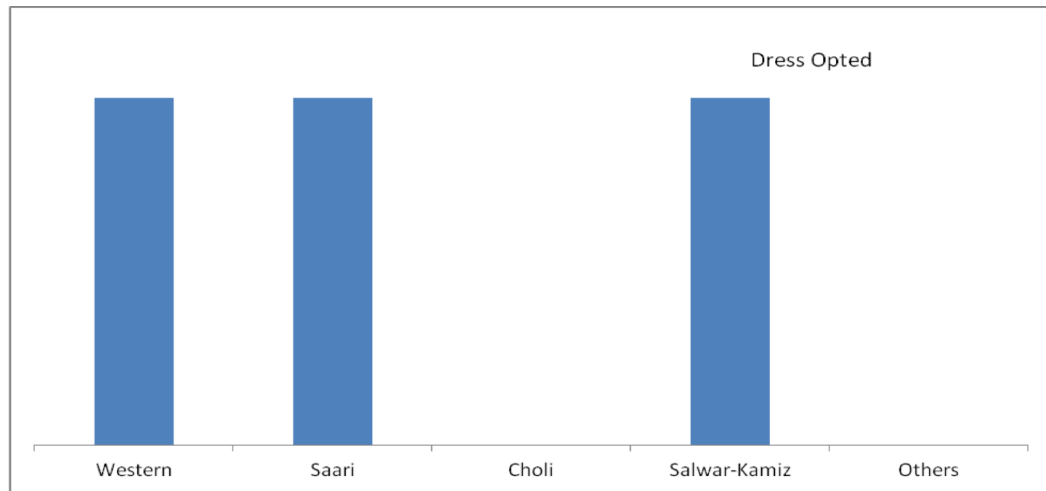
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Fashion, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western, Salwar Kamiz and in other type of dresses as the director reflected women character in Western and in Indian traditional dresses both.

Table 3.8: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Jail

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Jail	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.8



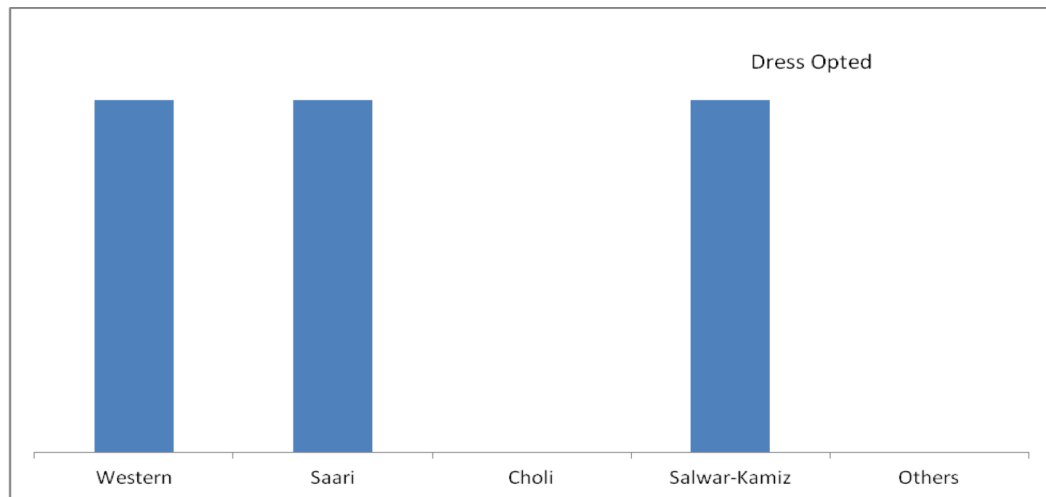
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Jail, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western dress and Salwar Kamiz as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

Table 3.9: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Dil toh Baccha hai ji

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Dil toh Baccha hai ji	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	Yes
Others	No

Graph 3.9



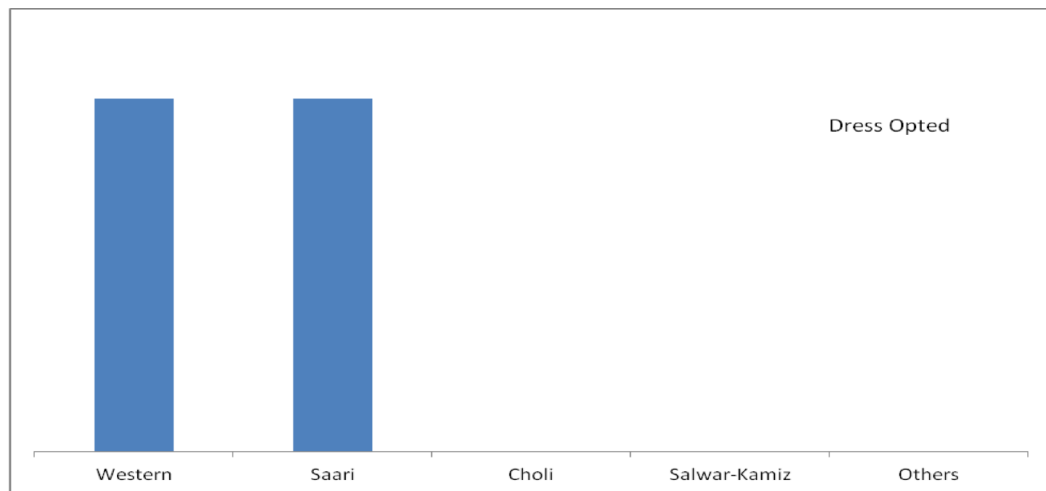
The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Dil toh Baccha hai ji, the representation of women is shown in Saari, Western dress and Salwar Kamiz as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

Table 3.10: Dress of Women Characters in Movie Heroine

Dress of Women Characters in Movie Heroine	
Western	Yes
Saari	Yes
Choli	No
Salwar-Kamiz	No
Others	No

Graph 3.10



The standing blue graphs reflects as Yes and other categories as No

The above data reveals that the dress opted by the lead women characters in the movie Heroine, the representation of women is shown in Saari and Western dresses as the director reflected women character in western and Indian dresses both.

3.9 Summary of Data and Tables

According to the above data and tables presenting dress analysis of women character of each and every selected film of Madhur Bhandarkar. The Data shows that in the movie the dress opted by the female characters in the movie Chandni Bar are only traditional Indian dresses like Saari, Choli and Salwar Kamiz. The selection of dresses is done according to the script and demand of the scene. In the movie Satta there is a combination of western and Indian dresses as opted by lead women character. In the movie Page-3 the dresses opted by female characters are again a mixture of western and Indian attires. In above of all in the selected movies of Madhur Bhandarkar highlights the women characters in Indian as well as in western dresses for example in Indian dresses category representation of women is done in Saari, Choli and in Salwar kamiz and in western dresses the representation of women is done in western attires, pent shirts, corporate suits and in shorts also.

On behalf of above data presented here it can be stated that in the movies directed by Madhur bhandarkar represented women character and images in all kind of dresses as we can say that in Saari, Choli, Western dresses, in short dresses and in other category of dresses like in swim suit or in bikini also.

References

- 1 Mulvery, L. (1975), Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), pp. 6-18
2. K. Suman.(2013), Various Issues OF Representation of Women in Indian Cinema, *AJMR*, Vol-2, Issue-9,pp.81-86.