



ISSN: 2395-7852



# International Journal of Advanced Research in Arts, Science, Engineering & Management (IJARASEM )

Volume 11, Issue 2, March 2024



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

**IMPACT FACTOR: 7.583**

| [www.ijarasem.com](http://www.ijarasem.com) | [ijarasem@gmail.com](mailto:ijarasem@gmail.com) | +91-9940572462 |



# Hypermasculinity in Modern Indian Cinema

Vidhi Chauhan

Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Lucknow, India

**ABSTRACT :** This research delves into the intricate notion of hyper masculine behaviour, examining its origins, manifestations, consequences, and potential avenues for remediation. Hyper masculinity is the overt conformity to traditional masculine ideals, which are characterized by aggression, dominance, emotional repression, and a devaluation of traits stereotypically associated with femininity.

Media depictions, societal expectations, and patriarchal systems are some of the historical, cultural, and social elements that have contributed to the development of hyper masculinity. These elements help to maintain inflexible gender norms and hyper masculine ideas, which are frequently absorbed by people from an early age.

**KEYWORDS:** toxic masculinity, mental health, hyper masculinity, masculinity, gender roles, gender equity, social justice, and gender stereotypes.

## I. DEFINING HYPERMASCULINITY

Since the release of Donald L. Mosher and Mark Serkin's study in 1984, the word "hyper masculinity" has been used vividly and extensively. Three elements are included in the definition of "macho personality," which is how the writers of the publication described hyper masculinity. Indian civilization has created an idealized picture of a psychologically tough, physically fit, and able-bodied man. This society's philosophy has silenced women's voices, kept them in their houses and forced them to serve their masters. This illustrates not only the differences between the sexes but also how men's existence forces women to suffer by limiting their agency and leaving them helpless, weak, and indispensable. In contemporary culture and advertising, toxic masculinity or hyper masculinity is frequently promoted. Words like "man up" and "boys don't cry" unintentionally highlight characteristics common to boys and men, such as a lack of feeling or a focus on strength and power. These rigidly defined gender stereotypes have the power to confine boys and men to behaviour expectations that are both restrictive and ultimately harmful. There is a link between male sexual and nonsexual aggression and hyper masculinity. This frequently results in men deciding on the spur of the moment to carry out violent acts. Action movies and other mass media frequently include hyper masculine stereotypes. For instance, Clint Eastwood's movies typically feature a powerful, quiet hero who kills his adversaries with complete emotionlessness. The hero's macho attributes are counterbalanced by an overly "feminine" female lead character. The majority of movies depict guys as aggressive, violent, strong, and criminals. These men's positions present an idealized image of themselves to young men, encouraging them to want to be like them. Men are influenced by the media, which presents a terrible image of what a man should be. Many people are influenced by masculinity through other people. Because it is now so toxic, hyper masculinity is starting to affect women. It spread to women who were referred to as "studs," who were impacted by the surrounding hyper masculinity and used it for their advantage to succeed in their surroundings. Men, violence, and masculinity have a turbulent and long-lasting relationship. The youth prison population in the UK is overwhelmingly male, with men accounting for 96% of all violent offenses. These institutions are overflowing with young men with these severe facets of masculinity, what are we to do? Such views undoubtedly violate societal standards, as most environments outlaw and rightfully disapprove of violence. Boys and men who adhere to hyper masculinity on an individual and interpersonal level can have an effect on their relationships and general wellness. They have a higher propensity for body dissatisfaction, depression, and risk-taking behaviour. They are less likely to ask for assistance when they are dealing with mental health issues. These young males may have trouble reading female cues, have trouble establishing healthy, respectful, and open romantic relationships, and have unrealistic beauty standards and their social and personal lives are impacted by the need to fit into a specific male stereotype. Without a doubt, one of the most oppressed groups in American culture has been and continues to be women. Throughout history, women have faced several obstacles and have been continuously marginalized in favor of men's strength and dominance. This for generations, the patriarchal ideal has impeded women's progress and development. But, frequently disregarded, it has also prevented males from thriving. Gender expectations are shaped by the patriarchal society for both men and women. However, men are more firmly and violently confined to unhealthy and constricting gendered roles, which has been shown to have long-term, detrimental effects and outcomes. Boys are taught by culture that hyper masculinity, or the possession of excessively masculine

traits, is the only path to becoming a major man in society. Young males are trained into hyper masculinity through the false standards and expectations of masculinity, which both directly and indirectly lead to dominance over women and other forms of violence.

## **II. INSTANCES OF HYPERMASCULINITY 1] IN MODERN INDIAN FILMS**

It's commonly believed that movies serve as a reflection of the culture we live in. It sometimes chooses to escape reality by transporting the audience to a made-up place, and other times it portrays societal problems. It is hard to say when cinema influences society and vice versa.

Movies present a multifaceted civilization with a multitude of cultures, identities, and problems in a variety of ways. Occasionally, these portrayals bring up significant queries. The portrayal and politics of gender in Indian cinema have been the subject of public and academic examination in the wake of recent releases such as Kabir Singh and Animal (2023). "Mardon ki insecurity badh rahi hai, isiliye ab aur zyada zor diya jaa raha hai hyper masculinity ko," actor Naseeruddin Shah stated in a recent interview. (The urge for hyper-masculinity is a result of the growing fears among men.)

Indian culture is patriarchal, and the Hindi film business in particular is controlled by men. Males make up the bulk of the technical staff, which includes producers and directors. The way that gender politics and interactions are shown in modern movies is determined by the "male gaze."

I have the freedom to connect with history as a humanities student and observe how ideas and depictions of masculinity have changed over time. I frequently associate movies like Animal and Kabir Singh with the stereotype of the "angry young man" that emerged in the 1970s. A historical analysis of commercial film shows that women are frequently portrayed as objects of desire, helpless, conventional, and restricted to stereotypical "domestic" duties. Their main purpose has frequently been to personify an idealized femininity and support the story of the male protagonist. In such cases, item songs and dances with lavish costumes are used to use the female body as a technique to draw in male viewers. Examining recent films such as RRR, Pushpa, Kabir Singh, or Animal, a common thematic thread emerges the portrayal of an exaggerated form of masculinity that markedly deviates from reality. The violence and anger depicted in these films seem to function as an escapist outlet, prompting contemplation on the underlying reasons for the increasing appeal of such violently toxic masculine representations in contemporary Indian cinema. This phenomenon invites a broader conversation about societal norms, expectations, and the evolving dynamics of gender portrayal on the big screen.

## **III. HYPER MASCULINITY IN ANIMAL, PUSHPA AND KABIR SINGH**

Everyone in the nation had something to say about the visual portrayal of a hyper masculine protagonist performed by Ranbir Kapoor in the silver screen when Sandeep Reddy Vanga's film "Animal" opened on December 1. With its deluge of fast-moving, physically adept shots, display of cutting-edge killing devices, and presentation of risk as thrilling and violence as manly, "Animal" gave audiences a vision of "man" that is based on hyper-masculinity encapsulated in a spectacle based on the box office figures, "Animal" is said to have been a profitable business, drawing a sizable audience to the theatre. This raises the question of why movie goers didn't seem to care about the negative reviews of the film. Or, why did some individuals find the movie enjoyable while others did not? The movie achieved the "wow-effect" on the surface that drew attention and viewers thank the stylized presentation of a handsome dominant protagonist, a catchy background score that amplified the impact of each scene, excellent editing skills, a submissive love story, and the presentation of an angry young man fighting against an army on his own. But linked to this amazing visual experience is the mediated re-circulation of hyper-masculinity. Reiterating the stereotypical image of the typical hyper masculine male was the dissemination of exaggerated images of the male persona winning seemingly impossible battles, devaluing poetry and intellectual abilities as inferior to physical attributes, and treating women as secondary, if not inferior, to physical attributes performed with hard-hitting precision.

In terms of revitalizing the discussions surrounding hyper-masculinity and its portrayal in the media, the film "Animal" is significant. Numerous investigations have been conducted to comprehend the effects of these portrayals, particularly on adolescents and those who have experienced violence in any capacity. For these viewers specifically as well as the general public, "Animal" is the epitome of hyper masculine expression in visual media. Three fundamental characteristics were identified by Mosher and Sirkin in their 1984 study as defining hyper masculinity "a callous sexual attitude towards women, a belief that violence is manly and the experience that danger is exciting.





The fore mentioned characteristics of hyper masculinity are portrayed in the film *Animal*, if not celebrated. The film is full of scenes that depict a callous sexual attitude toward women, such as the lead actress's pelvis being mentioned in passing as though it "could accommodate healthy babies" (redefining the traditional role of women), another female character being asked to lick the man's boots as a sign of her love, and the film showing a gun to a labouring pregnant woman. Violence is also portrayed as the quintessential masculine quality. There have always been stories about the "Alpha man," who is said to be the genuine doer in society; he is brave and has always used violence with this in mind, Ran Vijay, the main character, is portrayed as a violent man. Who employs "toughness as emotional self-control," carries a machine gun into a classroom to intimidate those who engage in ragging, slashes the anti-hero's throat with a dagger, uses an axe to murder hundreds of people, and then elegantly lights a cigarette. However, the movie's most significant aspect is the deliberate use of music to accentuate and highlight the thrilling story of peril. Whether it's the action scenes where the main actor uses his bare hands to choke his brother-in-law to death, or the scene where he uses an axe to kill a lot of people while his friends cheer him on by singing the song "Arjan Vailly," which was originally performed by Kuldeep Manak as a tribute to the brave Arjan Singh Nalva, often referred to as Arjan Vailly, who led the Sikh Khalsa Fauj, the Sikh Empire's army, as its commander in chief during the 18th century. Actually, the music was crucial in drawing the audience in and enhancing the impact of each scene. Sandeep Reddy Vanga, who also oversaw the Hindi version, is the director of *Kabir Singh*, the remake of the Telugu smash *Arjun Reddy*. The film, which gained immense popularity soon after its 2017 release, faced criticism for elevating toxic masculinity and exploiting fury as a justification for the titular character's mistreatment of women and other people.

The filmmaker said to reporters, "Anger is a very special quality," when they questioned if the criticism had crossed his mind before he began work on the Hindi movie. The use of rage as a tool is perfectly acceptable. It can be applied in any way the user pleases. I don't think the criticism that critics voiced during the Telugu movie was lingering in the background. Shahid addressed the criticism, stating that occasionally "our perceptions of Indian movies are incredibly hypocritical. Next, we watch content produced elsewhere and applaud it for being so straightforward, honest, and free of constant political correctness. The purpose of film is to present a variety of people. It has nothing to do with amazing, flawless people.

The representation of women in the film has been limited to that of helpless victims who need the male superheroes to rescue or shield them. Not a single strong, independent female character in the film is able to make her own decisions. Their choices in life are the result of the actions of the men in their lives, not themselves. Though, in an ideal world, it would not have been appropriate to stereotype women in the past, what is done is done. What is troubling, though, is that South Indian cinema continues to portray women as the weaker sex in 2022, despite the fact that they are consistently shattering barriers and shattering the glass ceiling in practically every field.

Almost 22 years after the turn of the century, it is important that filmmakers become more sensitive when it comes to how women are portrayed in films. Our cinema has to adapt to the changing times. In the new future, I genuinely hope to see a South Indian film where the lead heroine is portrayed in the same way that the actors have been over the last five to six decades.

#### **IV. CONSEQUENCES OF HYPERMASCULINITY**

The prevalence of hyper masculine behaviour in our society is seen in acts of rape, domestic abuse, and even school shootings. We must take action to counteract this detrimental influence. We may begin to positively impact children at a younger age. Instructors play a crucial a component of the struggle against excessive masculinity. In addition to harming men, the conditioning of hyper masculinity has had a profoundly negative effect on women.

Boys are raised to understand that there is a gender hierarchy and that they are superior. Boys eventually learn in their growth that masculinity is linked to Men conquering other men is linked to dominance and strength. The hyper masculine ideal of dominating and controlling women, which is ingrained in cultural norms, contributes to the rise of patriarchy and rape in contemporary America. Gender education is a swift and absorbing process. Early in their growth, elementary school pupils take in the implicit and unwritten gender norms. Men are portrayed in school and media such as music, movies, and television an overly masculine, poisonous way that teaches young boys the true meaning of what it means to be a powerful, dominant guy in today's world. In the US, one of the most effective socialization tools is the media. Youngsters pick up their gendered expectations from a variety of media sources that perpetuate the same ideas of masculinity and femininity. Men often hold a lot of things inside of them. All of the traumas and painful experiences are included in this. There must be an eventual release and much too frequently, that's in a violent way.



Many broader societal issues are exacerbated when men deliberately avoid being vulnerable, act on homophobic ideas, neglect personal traumas, or act prejudiced toward women. Toxic masculinity's effects abuse in the home Violence against women, Gun-related violence and Intolerance of homosexuality. When Men are frequently pressured by society to "be men" in the conventional sense rather than to just be people. Vulnerability is something that males tend to ignore, reject, or resist. Men's mental health suffers when they suppress their emotions, deny their sentiments, or minimize their feminine characteristics, Men can suffer from mental illness, anxiety, and depression just like women do. However, men are less prone than women to seek help, particularly when it comes to mental health, and to underuse mental health services.

Women may likewise be negatively impacted by hyper-masculinity. Relationships with hyper-masculine men may lead to emotional and physical abuse of women. Males who place a high value on aggression and physical strength may be more prone to use violence to exert control over their relationships. Moreover, a toxic masculinity culture can result in a variety of detrimental effects for women, including hyper masculine behaviour. This can involve discrimination at work and sexual harassment and assault.

Another setting where hyper-masculinity is common is sports. Aggression and physical power are highly prized in many sports, including boxing and football. It is common for athletes who exhibit these qualities to be praised and rewarded, while those who do not are viewed as weak. In addition to encouraging risky behaviour, this emphasis on hyper-masculinity can also encourage sportsmen to play through injuries or use performance-enhancing substances in order to obtain an advantage over rivals. Another field where hyper-masculinity is evident is politics. It's common for people to expect male politicians to be strong, combative, and in charge. They are supposed to give off an air of power and strength, which might encourage negative behaviour like sexual harassment and power abuse. Because they do not fit into established gender roles, women and non-binary people may find it challenging to succeed in politics as a result of this emphasis on hyper-masculinity. Politics, athletics, and the media are just a few areas of society where hyper-masculinity is pervasive. This focus on disproportionate and stereotyped behaviour can be detrimental and perpetuate unfavourable gender norms.

When people were seized as slaves' centuries ago, they were treated with utter contempt and a disdain for their humanity. Slave women endured severe mistreatment and were viewed by their captors as little more than objects to be utilized for domestic tasks and recreational activities. Conversely, the men who were captured were sent to the front lines of battle and forced to work as slaves without any rights. The selection was skewed in favour of structure and attractiveness. Before the era of slavery, men were assigned specialized tasks that they alone could perform, while women were given their own. They were taught to appear inhumane and resilient. A man was incapable of crying in the face of any degree of emotional or physical suffering. These recent occurrences set the foundation for what it means to "be a man." Since it is socially unacceptable for a guy to display any weakness, any hint of weakness is viewed as feminine. Men have been expected to emulate their older men's customs and behaviour and to be as manly as possible from the day they were born. The well-known proverb "Boys will be boys" describes and illustrates how boys act in a straightforward way; for a very long time, this has been accepted even when they are acting immaturely. Studies reveal that feminism can readily intimidate hyper-masculine guys. As a result, they become more aggressive in order to establish their value in the cutthroat environment. When used appropriately, aggression can be a positive quality, but there is a risk that it can have unfavourable side effects, such as severe tension and worry. Men are therefore forbidden from acting out in response to stress. When they are under stress, they simply accept their difficulties and move forward, acting as though everything is OK. For as long as memory serves, talking to someone about their struggles has been viewed as a show of weakness. Overly masculine behaviour has frequently been employed to control children's behaviour as they grow older. The kind of things that youngsters should accomplish in order to develop into adults on their own are limited, even though this may be beneficial for their overall upbringing. Rather, the majority of parents mould their kids into the people they want them to be, which limits the range of potential adulthood. They become what their parent's model for them. Boys aren't supposed to know how women feel, and this could have an impact on how they interact with women in the future.

In general, one's sexuality has little bearing on one's level of manliness. People often forget that just because a woman behaves better than a man does not mean that she is a man. One's character is the most important factor in determining their type of man. It is more crucial to be able to validate oneself to oneself than it is to put in the effort to validate oneself to others. Nor does one's physical makeup indicate how much of a man they are. Furthermore, talking about concerns does not make a guy weak; rather, it allows them to reduce or prevent stress. You are still a man even if you identify as a woman.



## V. RESOLUTION OF HYPERMASCULINITY

To treat hyper masculine behaviour, a multifaceted approach is required, one that addresses the root causes of hyper masculine behaviour in societal standards and moves toward a more inclusive understanding of masculinity. Education is crucial to dispelling gender stereotypes and assisting males in being more empathetic and emotionally intelligent. Breaking down barriers and promoting more positive forms of expression can be facilitated by having an open dialogue about masculinity and how it impacts individuals and society. Accepting a more inclusive and diverse view of what it means to be a man is necessary to promote decent masculinity. This involves embracing characteristics that are sometimes condemned within hyper masculine paradigms, such as empathy, compassion, and vulnerability. We can build a more just and accepting society for people of all genders by questioning conventional ideas of masculinity and encouraging men to be true to who they are.

Addressing hyper masculine behaviour requires encouraging men and women to talk openly and honestly about their emotions. To achieve this, safe spaces that allow males to express their feelings without fear of ridicule or condemnation must be created. By normalizing emotional expression and appreciating men's experiences, we can remove the barriers that keep men from receiving the care they require and from asking for help when they need it. Healthy relationship dynamics based on communication and respect for others are just as vital as treating hyper masculinity. This means battling negative behaviours like control and aggression while promoting empathy and attentive listening. People of both genders will gain from the early cultivation of healthy relationships because it will foster a culture of respect and consent. To overcome hyper masculinity, a concerted effort to challenge accepted gender norms and develop a more inclusive understanding of masculinity is required. In a culture that celebrates positive masculine traits, wholesome relationships, and emotional expressiveness, people of all genders can be free to express themselves authentically and without fear of judgment. Adopting a healthy masculine identity benefits not only men but also society as a whole since it fosters better equality, empathy, and general wellbeing.

## REFERENCES AND CITATIONS

1. Ray, Kumkum. H. L. V. Derozio As The Romantic Revolutionary Poet.
2. 1997. Purvanchal University Jaunpur, Ph. D Thesis.
3. Ray, Kumkum. *Shades of Resilience*. Kolkata: ExcellerBooks: A Global Press, 2022.
4. Contributors to Wikimedia projects. "Hypermasculinity - Wikipedia." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 30 Mar. 2006, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypermasculinity>.
5. Gopinath, Praseeda. "Bollywood's Toxic Hypermasculinity Problem." *The Quint*, 26 July 2019,
6. <https://www.thequint.com/entertainment/bollywood/bollywoods-toxichypermasculinity-problem>.





INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA



# International Journal of Advanced Research in Arts, Science, Engineering & Management (IJARASEM)

| Mobile No: +91-9940572462 | Whatsapp: +91-9940572462 | [ijarasem@gmail.com](mailto:ijarasem@gmail.com) |

[www.ijarasem.com](http://www.ijarasem.com)