Popularization of Sexist Language in Celebrated Tamil Lyrics

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Abstract
Women have been subjected to significant gender stereotyping in Tamil music. The media manager in the music industry frequently portrays women in a negative way and as having more negative qualities than men. These constant negative portrayals show viewers how to act toward women in specific ways, affecting communication and perception. The focus of this paper is on how sexism is being portrayed through lyrics in selected Tamil songs. Content analysis was performed on ten selected Tamil songs. The findings revealed that there is a clear difference in the portrayal of women in the selected Tamil songs.
Keywords: Tamil Lyrics, Sexist, Women, Representation

Introduction
India is known for its rich musical heritage around the globe and Tamil culture, is tied to Carnatic music. When people think of Indian music, they usually think of long, classical ragas or the pop music that pervades Bollywood, which accounts for the majority of the country's present musical output. The Tamil film industry, also known as *Kollywood,* is one of India's largest, and in recent years, these films have been forced to include a song sequence in which young men sing and dance while under the influence of alcohol, with lyrics that are primarily chauvinistic or misogynistic (Surendran, 2017). Apart from that, legendary music directors have created wonderful music, from which all musicians have been inspired and competed to deliver great music. Tamil's flexible nature makes it suitable for any genre of music. Its rich tradition of *chendhamizh* (classical Tamil) has been used to create words that are sweet-sounding (Pugsley, 2020). The usage of rhyming words in the lines of most Tamil film songs is another remarkable feature. Tamil film songs provide a platform for filmmakers to explore the cultural features of Indian society outside of the normal narrative structure of their films. Tamil film songs also discuss morality in gendered ways in the early 1970s supplied audiences with relevant and current cultural meanings (Pugsley, 2020).

In the music industry, the media manager commonly portrays women in negative ways and as having more adverse qualities than men. These constant negative portrayals impart listeners with specific ways of acting towards women, thus affecting communication and

perception. American songwriter Ani DiFranco aptly says, "every tool is a weapon if you hold it right". In other words, peaceful and enjoyable music can turn into something negative if you use it wrong or differently. In the year 2000, commercial Indian cinemas witnessed an uprise of sexiest dialogues and lyrics that objectified women in the form of *item numbers* which were ironically performed by women in barely there cloths surrounded by men and majority of these songs proceed to win accolades in the music awards (Rajesh, n.d). Tamil songs also have a large following in today's world, particularly among youth and young adult cultures. 'Protests against misogyny and violence in music videos have taken place all around the world, criticizing the underlying rape culture and the politics that follow, which devalue women' (Balraj, 2015) but till date no significant changes have taken place to combat these issues.

Gender Stereotyping

Men and women are commonly stereotyped, and a lot of oneness is found. Based on social theory, gender stereotypes emerge from the disparity in social roles at home and work (Koenig and Eagly, 2014). Gender-based labour division has existed for a long time in foraging and more complex societies. Women have done most of the household chores and acted as guardians. Women are employed in service jobs, not competitive jobs, which traditionally go to men (Lippa et.al., 2014). Gender-playing assumptions are traditional gender traits that distinguish typical attitudes from "masculine" behaviours (Coyne et al., 2014).

Women's emotionality, women's care, men's power, are all examples of gender norms. Gender stereotypes can be used in jobs such as nurses, secretaries, childcare workers, farmers, and pilots. The media's impact is one factor in identifying and redefining gender stereotypes. Since cultural understanding defines a woman's actions versus a man's conduct, it's important to examine how music has influenced such ideas. In social psychology, gender stereotypes or generalizations about various gender roles are imprecise, partial, or stereotypical.

Stereotyping in the Media

People today are the most media-saturated in history. When the media is at the heart of global understanding, everyone wants to keep their own identity. Audiences consume media content as a way of life, forming genders, cultures, and understandings. The media's production affects the audience's way of thinking and living. Some people believe the media only affects others and not them. But media scholars claim most people's beliefs, personalities, and lives are shaped by media (Ramasubramanian, 2019). Gender claims are made in the media by some citizens and the media develops the expectations of what is expected for women and men in portraying the representations of society (Boden, 2016). Gender stereotyping is the idea that a typical male or female has skills, desires, and actions. As a result, a stereotype emerges that, for example, discourages the opposite sex. Men and women's roles and power relationships in society are determined by their economic and social status. It can be a public or private concern.

Methodology

For this study, content analysis approach was used. The content analysis is based on the selected Tamil songs and extracted codes based on the lyrics. The Tamil songs for this study were chosen based on some criteria. Firstly, since the study is explaining how women are

being portrayed in Tamil songs, the songs should be about women or the way they describe women in the lyrics. Next, the Tamil songs are chosen based on their popularity. The singers' popularity was also considered because more people will stream their songs if the singer is famous. Besides that, the songs were chosen from different years and from four famous music directors. Finally, the songs were also chosen based on the negative word usage in the lyrics. A total of ten songs were selected for this study.

Findings
The findings reveal that the lyrics treat a person, most commonly a woman, as an object and/or seeing her as such. This entry focuses on sexual objectification, or objectification that occurs in the context of sexuality.

L1- Size zero
Cylindera Pola Urundaiya Iruntha Gaselonea Neethaannu Oduvaanunga
'If you look like a gas cylinder (fat), men will run away'. The artist expresses that mankind is not fond of fat women. The lyrics above is comparing a gas cylinder with a woman's body. This is considered objectifying.

L2-Bittu Padam
Nee enakku bittu padam di
The direct translation for the lyrics above is women are pornography for men. These film songs made women appear powerful, delivering the mixed message that they could influence men while yet being powerless objects available for male consumption (Balraj, 2015). The artist meant that all women are merely sex objects and sexual impulses for men.

L3- Kannitheevu ponna
Kannitheevu ponna katterumbu kanna Kattu mara thuduppa pola iduppa aattura
'A girl like a desert island (virgin girl), eyes like large ants, shaking her hips like boat's paddle'. Based on the translation of the lyrics, it is clear that women are being compared with an object or place. In the first line, the artist indirectly meant that the girl is like a desert island because she is a virgin, still pure. In the second line, the artist states that the woman's hip is as thin as the boat's paddle.

L4-Manile Manile
Mun kopura azhagai
Un thaavani moodiyadhae
Un ragasiyathi mazhaithuli

Ambalam aakiyadhae
In this lyric, the hero is upset that the heroin's shawl is obstructing his view in seeing her bosom but the sudden rain revealed what she had been hiding. A woman's bosom is likened to a dome in this lyric.

L5- Anbe Anbe Kollathey
Pennae unathu mellidai paarthen adadaa brahman Kanjanadi.
Sattrae nimirnden thalai suttri ponen aahaa avanae vallaladi.

The hero criticizes the Creator for making the heroin's hip's really small but when he looks up he is amazed at how huge the heroin's bosom's are created.

L6-Karuppu Perazhaga
En sekka chekka chevappi Nee saela kattuna gulfi
'You are my white and tasty girl, You are a gulfi (traditional ice cream) that wear saree'. The artist referred that women are white and tasty like ice cream. This lyric is the same as the lyrics before comparing women with food.

L7- Jingunamani
Oh Ithu Enna Odamba Veda Kozhi Kuzhamba
This lyric translates that 'Is your body the same as chicken curry'. It is a clear picture that women's body is being compared with chicken curry in this lyric.

L8- Oru Kuchi Oru Kulfi
White-Ah Tube Light-Ah, Nee Jollikira Bright-Ah Hey Pala Palanu Minukkuriyae, Plastic-U Rice-Ah
'You are glowing bright like a fluorescent lamp/ tube light, you are shining like plastic rice'. The artist is using things to describe the women such as a fluorescent lamp and plastic rice.

L9- Jingunamani
Vetti vachu pona
Oru watermelon cakeu
'You are a piece of watermelon cake'. The artist explained that the woman looks as delicious as a watermelon cake. In this lyric woman is being described as food. In general, women are being objectified and being called things, food, and places. Their body parts and characteristics are being compared with objects.

L10- Andankaka Kondakari
Sutta paal polae thegam thaandi unaku,
Adhil paalaadai matum konjam vellaku

In this lyric, the hero is practically requesting the women to remove her clothes so that he can have a better view of her milky body.

Conclusion
The findings are just some of the problematic songs that are currently winning accolades and accepted for public consumption. The issue with these sexist songs is that it normalizes the objectification of women and listeners are often blissfully unaware of what the lyrics actually mean. The objectification of women is Tamil songs is an issue that has been debated but no constructive action has been taken simply due to the demand of these types of songs.

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