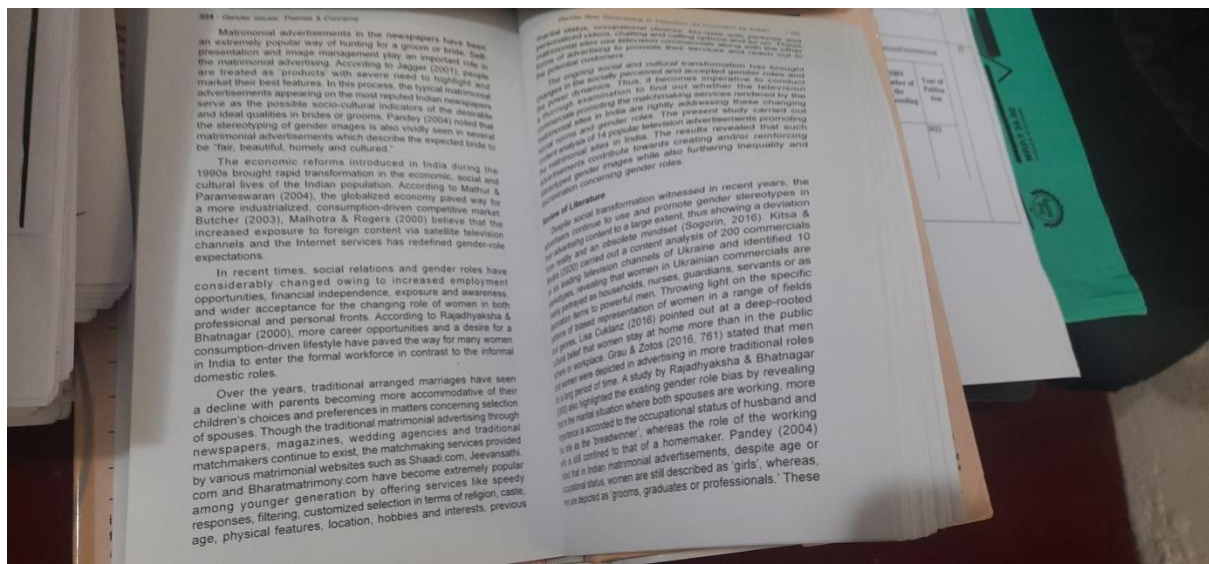
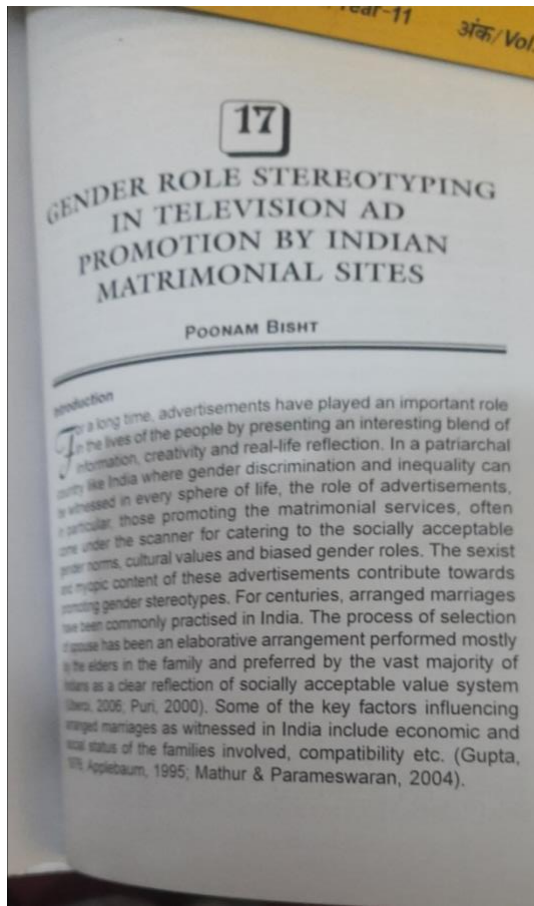
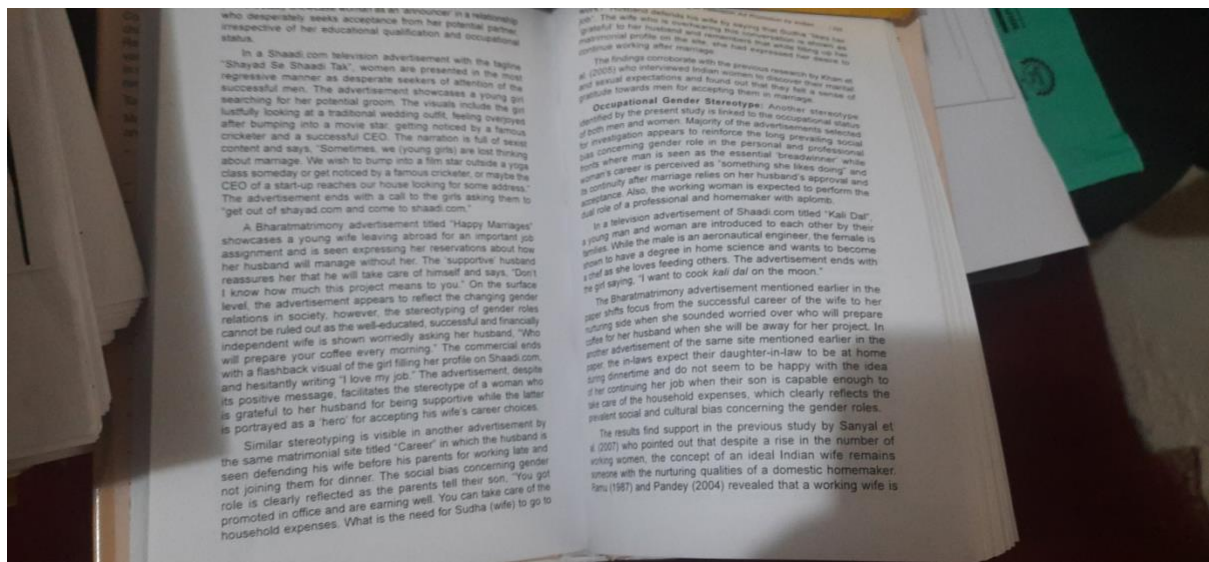
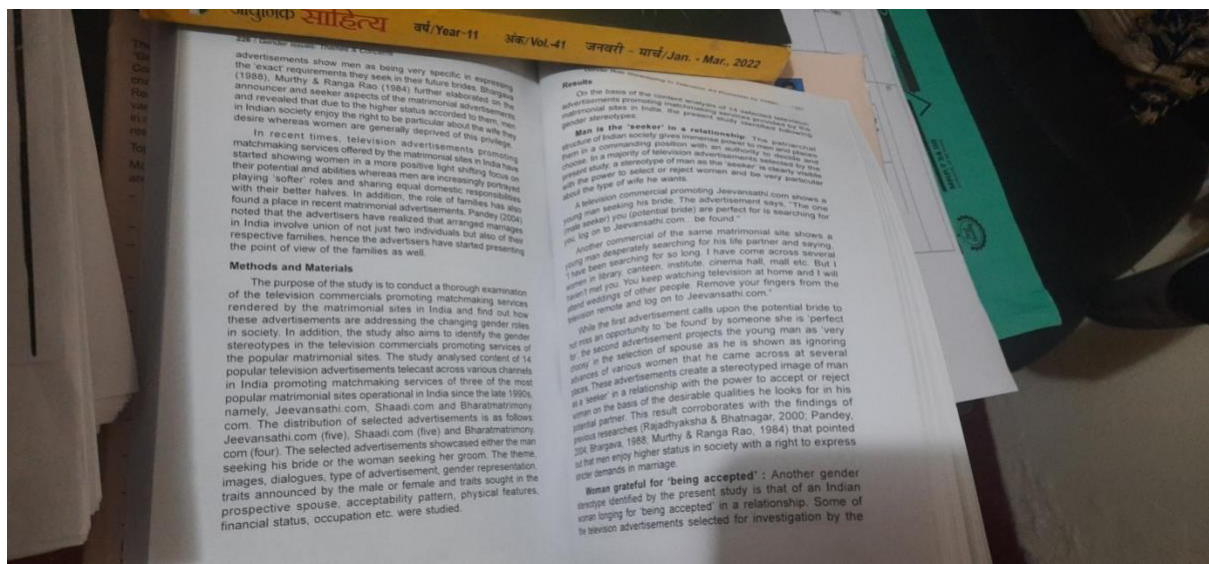


3.4.6: Book Chapters published





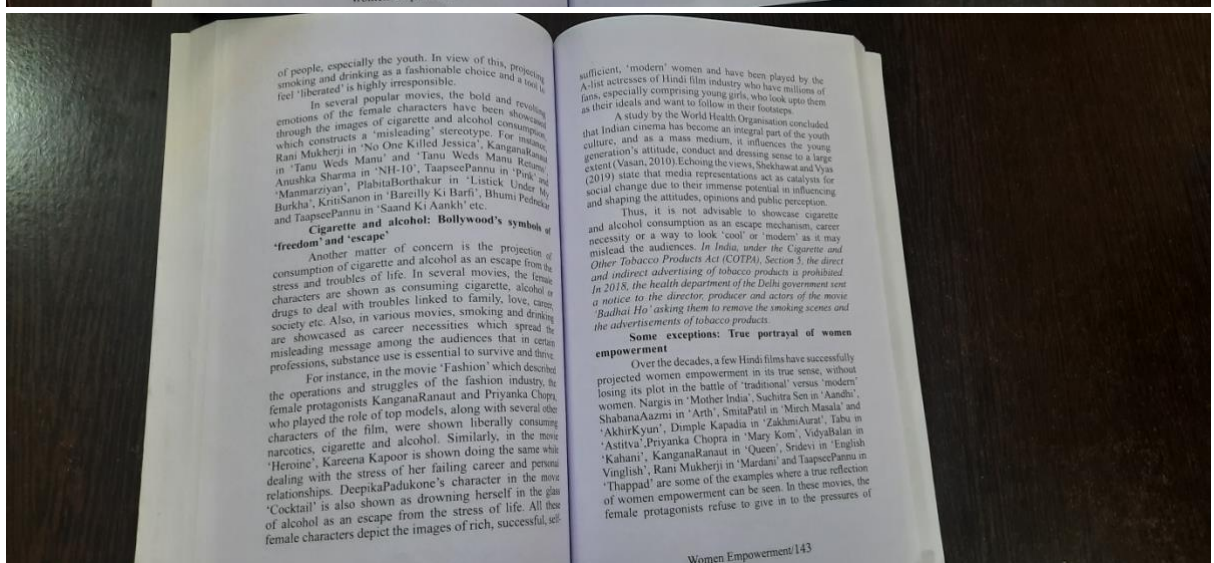
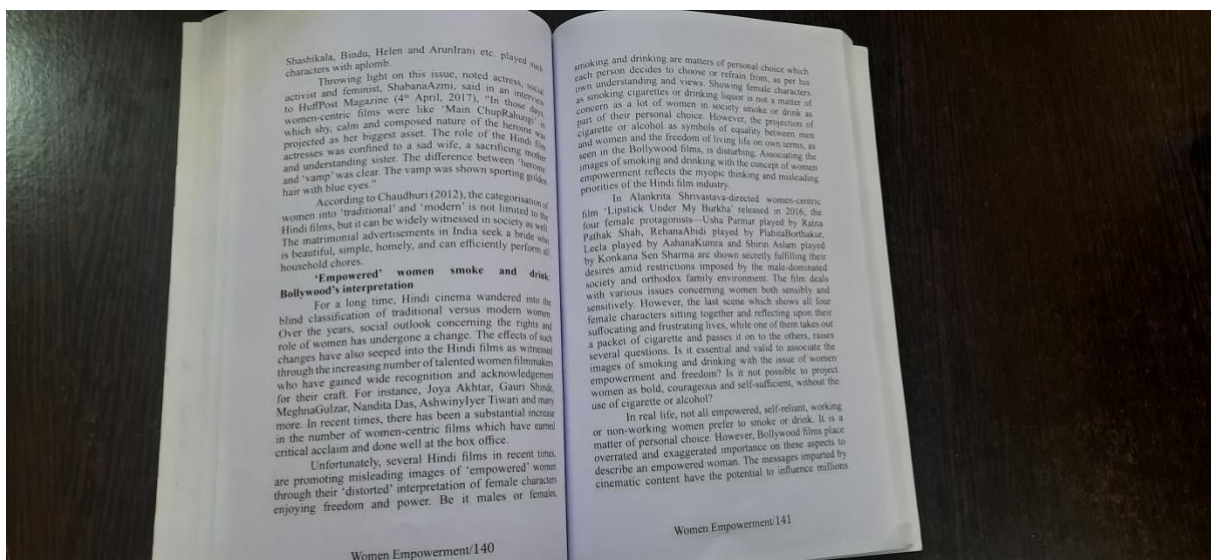
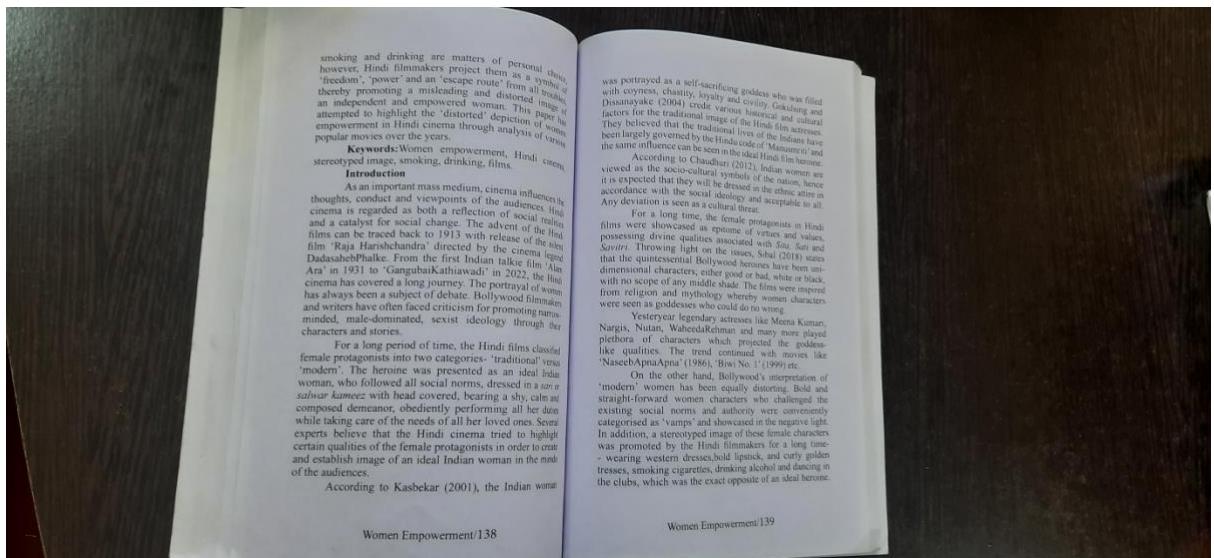
Chapter 11

**'Distorted' Depiction Of
Women Empowerment In Hindi Cinema****Dr. Poonam Bisht**

Assistant Professor,

Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand
Email: bisht.poonam19@gmail.com**Abstract**

Cinema is an influential mass medium. The content presented on the silver screen touches upon various aspects of the lives of millions of people. Hindi cinema has covered a historical journey spanning over a century, serving entertainment, information and varied emotions. Indian society, for a very long time, placed men in the position of the head of the household, while confining women to the role of a dependent partner. Hindi films, as a mirror of social realities, have also played a key role in facilitating the male-dominated ideology through its content and characters. For decades, an 'ideal' heroine was presented in a stereotyped image of a self-sacrificing goddess, wearing ethnic clothes, sporting *bindi* and *sindoor*, silently tolerating the injustice and insults, and yet showing unconditional loyalty towards her male partner and other loved ones. With time, the social outlook concerning the role and position of women started changing. This change is also witnessed in the Hindi films over the years with increased attention on women empowerment. Unfortunately, Hindi cinema's interpretation of 'empowered' women is misleading, full of distortions and reflects a myopic viewpoint. Several women-centric movies in the recent times showcase female protagonists as consuming alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Even though



society, decide to carve a new path for themselves and do not hesitate in taking the 'right' decisions. These female characters do not feel the need to take help of cigarette and alcohol to realise their innate strength and potential, or to deal with the stress of life.

Conclusion

Hindi films have always been under the scanner over the portrayal of women. Despite crossing a long journey spanning over a century, majority of the movies seem to be overshadowed by the myopic vision and misplaced priorities of the filmmakers, which led to the 'distorted' projection of women empowerment. For a long time, the female characters in the Hindi films were shown as 'ideal' Indian traditional women possessing qualities of Sita, Sati and Savitri resulting in a stereotyped image, whereas the 'modern' female characters were shown as 'vamps' representing a bold, glamorous, and revolting stereotyped image. The change in the social outlook over the years also brought changes in the portrayal of women in the Hindi films. However, the 'distortion' continued with the creation of a new stereotype cultivated by the filmmakers which involved showcasing the image of 21st century 'modern', strong, independent and self-sufficient women as consuming alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Smoking and drinking are matters of personal choice whether applicable to men or women. They should not be projected as symbols of equality and freedom, or a fashionable choice. If it is wrong to portray Hindi film actresses as glamorous dolls, item girls, rewards or trophies for male masculinity or as meek, self-sacrificing women who silently suffer and tolerate the mistreatment and injustice, then it is equally wrong to associate the images of strong, independent, empowered women with cigarette and alcohol. It is time that the Hindi film industry act responsibly and ensure justice to the portrayal of women, to avoid sending misleading and distorted messages among the viewers concerning women empowerment.

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