

The Rising Trend of Item Songs

The trend of adding "item songs" in Hindi films to spice up things and attract eyeballs continues to find favour in Bollywood, just like it did during the times of Helen and Aruna Irani. It's nothing like an emerging sensation or the latest buzz.

Bollywood Item songs have always been a great source of entertainment for movie lovers because the audience loves to watch their favourite actors' high energy performances. The lively music and groovy beats featured in songs further increases the attraction and charm of these songs. Item songs were first introduced in the Bollywood movies in the mid of 1990s with an intention to add more value for money for the cinema goers. Bollywood item songs feature hot dance sequences and fast beats and mostly unknown actors and actresses get to star in these songs. This trend became a huge hit and item songs quickly became a staple part of almost every movie and the directors loved to include at least one item song in their movie to boost sales of their movie tickets. Nowadays, the trend has changed a bit and the leading ladies of Bollywood have started appearing in these songs! People's ideas about item numbers have not changed much, despite the years. They were considered a taboo even then, as much as they are now. The current take on item songs is "hypocritical". The question still remains unanswered, "Why are just the 'women' who feature in these songs being objectified?"

When we can take the story depicted in the movies as fiction and not relate to them, then why is it a problem to accept the songs featured in them as pure entertainment??

I do not consider myself a feminist and I do not believe that by doing female-oriented films and depicting women fighting the system, we can change the system. Or by omitting item song we can change mindsets. These item songs garner maximum viewership and are played at every family function so why should an actor or film industry be subjected to such hypocrisy. Popularity of item song is testimony to its acceptance. So If you are accepting it, take responsibility for your choices. If watching a woman dancing in the rain makes you lose control of your senses and you jump on the very first female entity you spot on the road to satiate yourself, there must be something seriously wrong with you, and not the content of the song.

It's appalling to hear everyone blaming these songs for the rise in the number of crimes against women. This is because these songs were never introduced with the intention of promoting any vulgarism or obscenity. It was our perception that modified their purpose. They were originally just a promotional tactic to raise the profits. No one was forced into doing them. It's worth pondering as to why the crimes have been on the rise incessantly when such songs have been a part of the entertainment industry ever since its advent. There were times when Helen grooved to preppy numbers, songs which can still today put us in our dancing shoes. It is true that there was speculations against them even then, but they never be held responsible for the degrading morality for the masses. Even the Censor Board has clarified that there is no move yet to give 'A' certificate to all dance numbers and such film songs will be examined on a case-to-case basis.

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)'s clarification comes in the wake of raging debate about 'obscenity' in item numbers, which have now become a key feature of most commercial films.

What is required now is that we change our own outlook towards these songs which are nothing but a source of entertainment, and cannot be certified as 'provocative and suggestive'. Else, their acceptance in the society should be condemned. As for the soaring crime rates, all we need is stringent action against such perverts because for them, women, whether they are well clad or not, are of any age, would only be objects. The media is not obligated to instil character and morality in our culture. Had it been, the only entertainment we would have had would be Sanskar TV. A country that celebrated erotica in the right spirit with 'Kamasutra', has today let sensuality and erotica degenerate into a violent and aggressive crime against old, young and minor children. "We portray both Ram and Ravan...If they want to follow Ravan and not Ram, why blame us?" asked Salman Khan whose film "Dabbaang 2" had another item number "*Fevicol se*" by Kareena Kapoor.

The writing on the wall is clear. It is now acceptable, fashionable and legitimate to commercialise films using sizzling item numbers which we should perceive them just as a passing cloud, a trend much in vogue as it was long ago, which might fade into oblivion in a few years. It's all up to us!!!!

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