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Thesis Title: Assessing Lyrical Impact of Bhojpuri Songs from 2008-2018:

A Study of Benares

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Bhojpuri, Objectification, Lyrical Violence, Hypermasculinity, Thematic Analysis

This thesis examines the representation of gender and violence in Bhojpuri music, focusing on lyrical violence, objectification of women, patriarchal stereotypes, and the influence of commercialization and digital media. While Bhojpuri music has traditionally been an important part of cultural identity and storytelling, the commercialization of the industry has also encouraged the production of songs containing sexist, vulgar, and sexually explicit representations.

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining thematic analysis, YouTube engagement data, and field research. A purposive sample of 50 Bhojpuri songs and 10 album titles released between 2008 and 2018 was analyzed across five themes: the Ideal Woman, Dependent/Powerless Woman, Beautiful Woman, Goddess-Madonna Figure, and Sex Object. The study draws on Rogers' framework of sexist lyrics, along with feminist perspectives, Objectification Theory, Male Gaze Theory, and Cultivation Theory. Qualitative thematic analysis was combined with YouTube engagement data, including views, likes, Like-to-View Ratio (LVR), and growth patterns. The lyrics were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) thematic analysis framework.

The findings show that women are frequently portrayed through beauty, dependence, submissiveness, and sexual availability, while men are often associated with dominance and aggression. Such representations can make objectification and misogynistic language appear normal and entertaining. Field findings also indicate widespread consumption of this content, with 65% of respondents listening to Bhojpuri music daily, 72% recognizing frequent objectification or obscene language, and 62% sharing or forwarding such songs digitally.

The study further highlights the role of commercialization and digital platforms in increasing the visibility of provocative content. However, it emphasizes that the concern is not with Bhojpuri music or its language, but with the commercialization and normalization of harmful representations. The thesis recommends greater media literacy, gender-sensitive content, stronger digital regulation, and increased participation of women in the music industry. It concludes that Bhojpuri music can preserve its cultural richness while promoting dignity, gender equality, inclusiveness, and social responsibility.