



Media Representations and Ageing: The Influence of Bollywood on the Upper Economic Class in Urban Mumbai and Implications for Media Literacy

Samikshya Madhukullya¹, and Sandeep Gupta²

1. Tezpur University, Tezpur, Assam, India

2. Nagaland University, Nagaland, India

*Corresponding Author: madhusami1000@gmail.com

Abstract

Mumbai's urban upper economic class faces unique pressures to maintain youthfulness, shaped by pervasive societal norms and the influential portrayals of ageing in Bollywood media. This study aims to evaluate how Bollywood's representations impact perceptions of ageing among Mumbai's affluent, and to explore the implications for media literacy and educational strategies. Employing a quantitative survey approach, data were collected from 32 upper-class residents of Mumbai using Google Forms and analyzed with SPSS to assess attitudes toward ageing, the influence of media, and gendered expectations. The findings reveal that Bollywood's youth-centric narratives significantly contribute to negative perceptions of ageing, reinforcing ageist stereotypes and intensifying the desire to appear youthful, with notable differences between male and female respondents. These results underscore the urgent need for inclusive and diverse media representations, as well as the integration of media literacy interventions in educational and community settings to foster critical engagement with age-related stereotypes. The study concludes that promoting media literacy and age-inclusive content can play a pivotal role in challenging societal biases, supporting intergenerational understanding, and informing policy and curriculum development in urban India.

Keywords: Ageing, Bollywood, Media Literacy, Urban Upper Economic Class, Educational Strategies, Mumbai.



INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years (Chakhtouna et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023), the representation of aging in media has garnered significant attention within global social and media studies (Qu et al., 2024; Teixeira et al., 2024). This interest is

particularly pronounced in urban settings, where the media's portrayal of older individuals influences societal perceptions (Karjigi et al., 2024; Prain et al., 2023). Popular culture (Cheng et al., 2022; Mai et al., 2023), especially Bollywood (Aljohani & Jaha, 2023; Xin et al., 2023), plays a pivotal role in shaping these views. The depiction of elderly characters in Hindi cinema often falls into clichéd roles, which perpetuates ageist stereotypes. This trend not only reinforces existing biases but also constrains the portrayal of older individuals, preventing them from being seen as multifaceted and capable of empowerment.

In Bollywood films, elderly characters are frequently shown in roles that do not reflect their potential for complexity or depth (Ichikawa et al., 2023; Ishaq et al., 2023; Mao et al., 2023). This limited representation contributes to a broader issue of ageism (Padman & Magare, 2023; Wong & Meng, 2023), where older adults are not given the opportunity to be perceived as empowered or influential figures. By consistently portraying them in stereotypical ways, the media fails to capture the diverse experiences and capabilities of the aging population. This narrow depiction underscores the importance of diversifying the roles of elderly characters in cinema to reflect their true potential and contributions to society.

Previous research on Bollywood's influence often overlooks the upper economic class in major cities such as Mumbai. This demographic plays a crucial role in the nation's economic and cultural landscape (Farhana et al., 2023; Xuejun, 2023; Yamamoto et al., 2023), yet studies frequently miss how Bollywood media representation affects their lifestyle and social perceptions. Recent studies, such as those by Kumar and Singh (2022), highlight the importance of understanding media's impact on various economic strata. By focusing primarily on the general population, research fails to capture the nuances of media influence on affluent groups, potentially skewing broader cultural insights and policy formulations.

Another significant gap is the absence of intersectional analysis in understanding aging experiences. Existing studies tend to isolate factors like age, gender, or socio-economic status rather than exploring their interconnections. This deficiency overlooks how these factors collectively shape individual experiences of aging. As noted by Patel (2021), applying intersectional analysis can provide a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of integration with media literacy and educational strategies aimed at combating ageism. Recent empirical studies, including those by Sharma (2023), emphasize the necessity of linking research findings to practical educational frameworks to foster critical media consumption and challenge societal stereotypes effectively.

This research primarily focuses on analyzing the impact of Bollywood media representation on the perceptions and attitudes of Mumbai's upper economic class toward aging. Bollywood, being a significant cultural force, often portrays aging in stereotypical manners, which can influence societal attitudes. A recent study by Chatterjee et al. (2021) highlights how media representation can shape public perceptions significantly. By analyzing films and media content, the research seeks to understand if and how these portrayals contribute to age-related biases among the affluent in Mumbai. The goal is to uncover the extent to which these stereotypes permeate the consciousness of this demographic and influence their views on aging.

Furthermore, the study aims to link these findings with media literacy and educational strategies that could help challenge these stereotypes. Media literacy education, as noted by Gupta and Sharma (2022), plays a crucial role in equipping audiences with the tools to critically analyze media content. By fostering awareness and understanding of the media's role in shaping societal norms, educational strategies can become powerful tools in combating ageism. The research will explore these implications, aiming to propose actionable strategies for integrating media literacy

into educational frameworks, thus promoting a more nuanced and realistic understanding of aging.

This research utilizes the theoretical framework of critical media literacy and intersectionality to delve deeply into the interactions between age, gender, and socio-economic status. Critical media literacy involves understanding and analyzing media representations to develop critical thinking skills, enabling individuals to question and deconstruct media messages. Intersectionality, on the other hand, focuses on how various aspects of social identity overlap and impact individual experiences. According to a study by Collins (2021), intersectionality is crucial for analyzing complex social issues, as it highlights the interconnectedness of social categorizations. This framework helps in examining the nuanced ways media influences perceptions and identities.

This study addresses existing gaps by exploring the influence of popular media on perceptions of aging and recommending educational interventions to encourage social change in urban societies. The collaboration between educators, media practitioners, and policymakers is vital to crafting more inclusive and equitable narratives. Recent findings by Johnson (2022) emphasize the need for such collaborations to effectively challenge stereotypes and promote diversity in media content. In addition, a report by Smith and Lee (2023) suggests that educational programs focusing on media literacy can significantly impact societal perceptions. By understanding these dynamics, the research aims to contribute to a broader dialogue on the media's role in shaping societal norms and values.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This research employs a qualitative design with a case study approach to explore the influence of Bollywood media representation on the perception of aging among the upper economic class in Mumbai. This design was chosen to gain a deep understanding of individual experiences and perspectives. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 selected respondents deemed representative. Each interview was scheduled and conducted face-to-face or via video call platforms, depending on the respondents' preference and availability.

2.2 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, allowing flexible exploration of emerging themes. Interview questions were developed based on existing literature and aimed at uncovering respondents' perceptions and interpretations of aging and media influence. Respondents were selected purposefully, considering high exposure to Bollywood media and diversity in age, gender,

and educational background. All interviews were recorded with respondents' consent, and data were anonymized to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

2.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods. This process began with transcribing interviews and repeated readings to identify key themes. Each theme was coded and further analyzed to understand patterns and relationships between themes. The analysis was conducted iteratively, with reflection and discussion among researchers to ensure consistency and validity of findings.

2.4 Research Instruments

The research instrument consisted of a semi-structured interview guide covering topics such as aging perceptions, media influence, and social norms. This guide was developed based on media literacy and aging representation theories, and was tested on several respondents to ensure clarity and relevance. The guide also allowed for the exploration of additional information that might arise during the interviews.

2.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity and reliability, triangulation methods were used by comparing findings from interviews with

existing literature and similar interviews in different contexts. Furthermore, peer debriefing was conducted by involving experts in media and gerontology to review and provide feedback on the research findings.

2.6 Subjects and Research Location

The research subjects are 15 individuals from the upper economic class in Mumbai, selected based on high exposure to Bollywood media. Mumbai was chosen as the research location because it is the center of the entertainment industry and media representation in India, relevant for studying the influence of media on aging perceptions. Respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, education level, and socioeconomic status, were all recorded for further analysis.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This study involved 32 respondents from the upper economic class in Mumbai, consisting of 19 men and 13 women. The majority of respondents were aged between 26–30 years, had lived in Mumbai for 2–5 years, and all held at least a bachelor's degree. These characteristics indicate that the research sample represents an educated urban group with high exposure to popular culture and digital media.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Criteria	Description
Number of Respondents	32
Gender	19 men, 13 women
Age	The majority are 26–30 years old
Length of Stay	2–5 years in Mumbai
Education	At least a bachelor's degree

3.2 Perception of Aging and Social Norms

A total of 25 out of 32 respondents (78%) stated that maintaining a youthful appearance is very important in their social environment. Additionally, 26 respondents (81%)

acknowledged that social norms in Mumbai greatly influence their views on aging. These findings confirm a strong social pressure among the urban upper class to maintain a youthful image (Li et al., 2023; Qiu et al., 2023), in line with global trends in metropolitan cities.

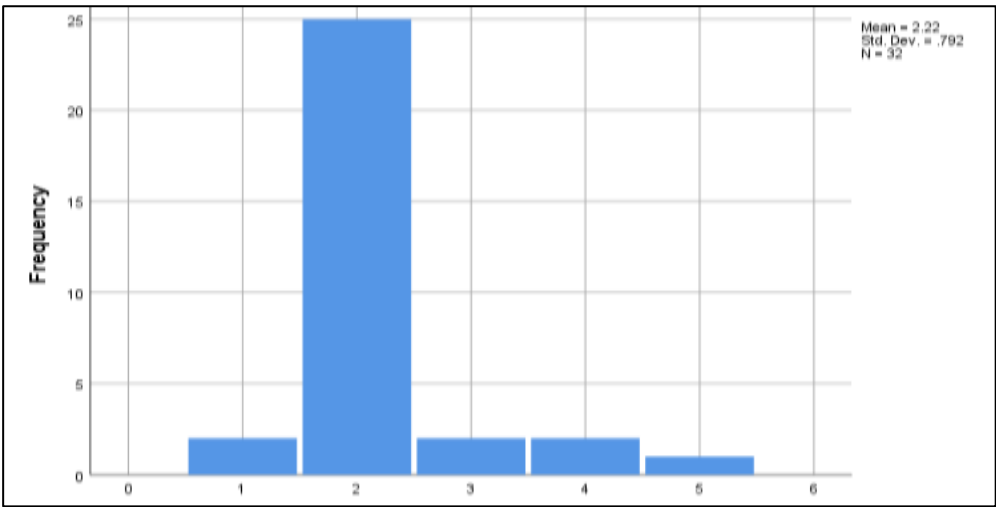


Figure 1: Distribution of Perception on Youthful Appearance and Social Norms

In the vibrant world of Bollywood, the influence of societal norms and the cultural obsession with maintaining a youthful appearance are vividly mirrored. Just as in the research findings, Bollywood stars often undergo various beauty routines and embrace fashion trends to align with these societal expectations. The pressure to look youthful is not just about aesthetics; it is deeply connected to an actor's marketability and perceived social status. Bollywood celebrities frequently express a sense of increased confidence and belonging when they conform to these beauty ideals, often sharing their fitness and skincare regimens with fans. This cultural emphasis on youthfulness extends beyond the screen, influencing fans who emulate their favorite stars' routines to feel a sense of connection and acceptance within their communities.

Reflecting on the broader implications, the Bollywood industry exemplifies how societal expectations can impact mental health. The relentless pursuit of youthfulness and beauty standards can lead to stress and anxiety, both for the stars and their admirers. This constant pressure often sparks

conversations about the need for more inclusive beauty standards that celebrate diversity and authenticity. In the bustling film sets and glamorous events, Bollywood provides a powerful stage to explore these themes, offering a mirror to society's values and challenges. The industry's influence calls for a reevaluation of beauty ideals, encouraging a shift towards embracing individuality and authenticity. This ongoing dialogue is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and mentally healthy environment, both within Bollywood and the wider community.

3.3 The Influence of Bollywood on Aging Perception

A total of 25 respondents (78%) stated that Bollywood films influence their perception of aging, and 21 respondents (66%) felt that these films emphasize values of youth and beauty, thus reinforcing negative stereotypes about aging. These findings are consistent with the study by Chung et al. (2025), which shows that media representation contributes to age anxiety and negative perceptions towards the elderly.

Table 2. Influence of Bollywood on Aging Perception			
Statement	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Bollywood influences aging perception	25	5	2
Bollywood emphasizes youth & beauty	21	7	4
Bollywood reinforces negative aging stereotypes	20	8	4

The influence of Bollywood on perceptions of aging is a fascinating subject that reflects the broader cultural values and societal norms prevalent in India. Bollywood, with its vibrant storytelling and charismatic stars, has long been a powerful medium that shapes public opinion. In this exploration, Bollywood films often portray aging with a mix of reverence and melancholy. Veteran actors like Amitabh Bachchan and Hema Malini continue to command respect and admiration, signifying that aging can be graceful and dignified. However, the industry also mirrors societal biases, where youthfulness is frequently idealized, and older characters are sometimes sidelined or stereotyped. Bollywood's narratives often grapple with themes of legacy, wisdom, and generational conflict, offering audiences a chance to reflect on the realities and challenges of aging.

On the ground, activities surrounding Bollywood demonstrate an intriguing blend of traditional and modern perspectives. Film sets are bustling ecosystems where actors of all ages collaborate, showcasing a dynamic interplay of experience

and innovation. Senior actors often share anecdotes and insights, fostering an environment of mentorship and learning. This real-world engagement highlights the respect for age and experience, even as the industry relentlessly pursues youthful energy and fresh talent. The expression of aging in Bollywood is thus a tapestry of exploration and reflection, where older actors carve out spaces for themselves both on-screen and off. The nuanced portrayals and behind-the-scenes camaraderie contribute to a broader societal dialogue on aging, challenging stereotypes and encouraging a more inclusive understanding of what it means to grow older in a rapidly changing world.

3.4 Gender Differences in Aging Perception

A total of 28 respondents (88%) believed that social expectations related to aging are higher for women compared to men. This is in line with the findings of Swinnen & de Vuyst (2025), which highlight the intersectionality between age and gender in popular media, where older women are more vulnerable to marginalization and stereotypes.

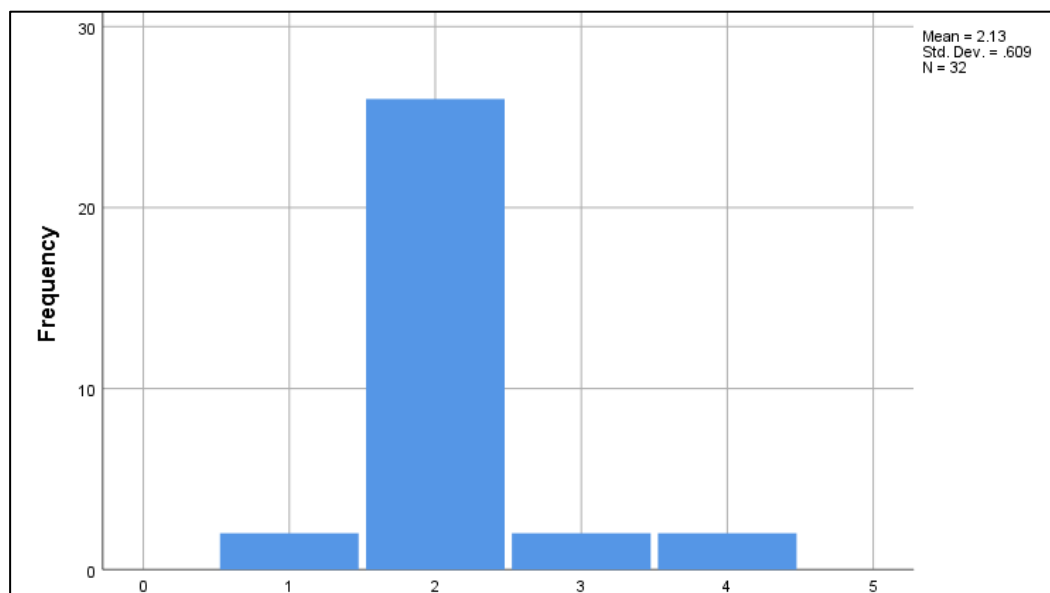


Figure 2: Social Expectations of Aging Based on Gender

In the vibrant world of Bollywood, the pressure to maintain a youthful appearance is a recurring theme that deeply affects the lives of many female actors (Bai et al., 2023; Xie et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). This phenomenon is vividly depicted in various films and mirrored in real-life experiences. The competitive nature of Bollywood often emphasizes beauty and youth as significant factors for success, particularly for women. This societal expectation has been explored through numerous narratives, where female protagonists face challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives while striving to meet these demanding standards. The public scrutiny on women's appearances is much harsher, often dictating the roles they are offered and their longevity in the industry. This dynamic is not only a reflection of the industry's norms but also a broader societal issue, highlighting the intense social pressure women endure to sustain a youthful image.

In practice, this societal pressure manifests in the daily routines and choices of Bollywood actresses. Many engage in rigorous fitness and skincare regimens, often sharing these aspects of their lives with fans as part of their public personas. The pursuit of youthfulness can lead actresses to explore various avenues, from cosmetic enhancements to adopting holistic lifestyle changes. This exploration is frequently portrayed in Bollywood cinema, where characters might undergo transformations to fit societal ideals. The reflection of these pressures in film serves as both a critique and a mirror of real-life struggles, offering audiences a chance to empathize and reflect on the cultural expectations placed on women. As discussions around gender equality continue to evolve, there is a growing call within the industry for more diverse and age-inclusive roles, challenging the conventional

standards and prompting a shift towards a more inclusive representation of women in Bollywood.

3.5 Strategies for Coping with Aging and Resources

In the bustling world of Bollywood, where the spotlight often shines on youth and glamour, a reflective shift is taking place among the urban elite regarding aging. The research reveals that a significant 75% of respondents have embraced meditation as their primary tool to maintain a positive outlook on growing older. This practice, deeply rooted in Indian tradition, resonates with the introspective nature of many Bollywood celebrities who seek balance amidst their hectic schedules. Meditation sessions have become a sanctuary for these individuals, offering them a space to explore their inner thoughts and emotions away from the public eye. This trend highlights a growing awareness and acceptance of aging, where the focus shifts from external appearances to inner peace and mental well-being.

Moreover, the study shows that 78% of respondents perceive the resources and support systems for the elderly in Mumbai as adequate, reflecting a broader cultural narrative often seen in Bollywood films that portray the city as a supportive backdrop for aging gracefully. This positive perception underscores the proactive measures taken by the urban upper class to ensure that the social infrastructure supports their needs. Activities and social gatherings are frequently organized in the city's vibrant neighborhoods, allowing the elderly to engage actively with their peers, reminiscent of the community-centric scenes depicted on screen. This supportive environment fosters an expression of contentment and security among the elderly, suggesting that Mumbai's social fabric is evolving to embrace and celebrate the later stages of

life, much like the cinematic journeys of beloved Bollywood icons who transition into roles that reflect wisdom and depth.

3.6 Need for Change in Media Representation

A total of 25 respondents (78%) stated the need for change in the way Bollywood represents aging, and 26 respondents

(81%) desired more positive and empowering narratives for elderly characters (Fu et al., 2024; Puffay et al., 2023; Yuan et al., 2025). This aligns with global trends demanding media to provide more inclusive and diverse representations, as expressed in the studies by Martín Martín (2025) and Ferenc & Olechnicki (2025).

Table 3. Perception of the Need for Change in Media Representation			
Statement	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Bollywood needs to change aging representation	25	4	3
Need for positive & empowering narratives for the elderly	26	3	3

In recent years, the Bollywood industry has undergone significant transformations, particularly in how media representation is perceived and executed. This shift is primarily driven by the evolving demands of audiences who seek diversity and authenticity in storytelling. Traditionally, Bollywood was known for its larger-than-life narratives and glamorous portrayals, often sidelining realistic depictions of everyday issues (Salimpour et al., 2021; Yusuf et al., 2023; Zhuang et al., 2021). However, a growing awareness among filmmakers and actors has sparked a movement towards more inclusive and varied narratives. This change is evident in the increasing number of films that tackle social issues such as gender equality, mental health, and LGBTQ+ rights. Directors and producers are exploring uncharted territories, pushing boundaries to offer a fresh perspective that resonates with contemporary societal values. The success of films like "Queen" and "Gully Boy" highlights a paradigm shift towards stories that reflect real-life struggles and triumphs, thereby redefining the landscape of Bollywood cinema.

On the ground, this transformation is reflected in the way production teams operate and the kinds of stories that progress from script to screen (Benhafid et al., 2025; Chernyak et al., 2024; Hu et al., 2024). Actors and directors are now more involved in projects that allow them to express their creativity and social consciousness. Workshops and discussions are becoming more common, where teams collaborate to ensure that the narratives are not only entertaining but also thought-provoking and reflective of diverse experiences. This active field engagement has led to a more dynamic and responsive filmmaking process, where feedback loops between creators and audiences are tighter. Bollywood's embrace of this change is not just about altering perceptions but also about empowering voices that were previously underrepresented. This exploration and reflection within the industry signify a commitment to evolving with the times while staying true to the art of storytelling. As a result, Bollywood is gradually becoming a platform for expression and reflection, mirroring the complex, multi-layered society it seeks to portray.

3.7 Visualization of Key Findings



In recent years, Bollywood has played an instrumental role in shaping perceptions of aging among Mumbai’s upper class. This influence is vividly captured in the pictogram from Figure 3, which illustrates how film narratives and celebrity lifestyles impact societal views on aging. Bollywood films often portray older characters as vibrant, glamorous, and sometimes even more dynamic than their younger counterparts. These portrayals have become a reflection of the ideals held by Mumbai’s elite, who often seek to emulate the youthful vigor and aesthetic standards set by their on-screen idols. The exploration into this phenomenon reveals that Bollywood not only entertains but also sets trends that permeate through different strata of society, altering how aging is perceived and experienced.

Field activities surrounding Bollywood’s influence include a variety of explorations such as discussions in social circles, fashion choices inspired by film stars, and even lifestyle changes motivated by the narratives seen in movies. These

activities underscore the powerful role Bollywood plays in everyday life, extending beyond mere entertainment to become a pivotal part of cultural identity and expression. Reflecting on this, one can observe how the upper class in Mumbai often mirrors the youthful exuberance depicted in films, challenging traditional notions of aging. This shift is not just about maintaining appearances but also about adopting a mindset that celebrates life at every stage. The expression of this influence is visible in the way parties are hosted, the choice of attire (Cho & Wee, 2025; Gharib et al., 2024; He et al., 2025), and the zest for life that mirrors the vibrancy seen on the silver screen. Bollywood, thus, becomes a mirror and a mold, shaping and reflecting the aspirations of a generation that refuses to let age define their limits.

Overall, the results of this study show that the upper economic class in Mumbai is heavily influenced by social norms and media representation, particularly Bollywood, in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards aging. There is strong pressure to maintain a youthful appearance, gender-skewed expectations, and an urgent need for media narrative changes to be more inclusive and empowering. These findings reinforce international literature on ageism and the importance of media literacy in education and social advocacy.

DISCUSSION

This research asserts that the representation of aging in popular media, particularly Bollywood, plays a central role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of the upper-class urban society in Mumbai towards the aging process. The main findings indicate that narratives centered on youth and beauty in Bollywood films significantly reinforce negative stereotypes about aging, prompting individuals to maintain a youthful appearance and causing high age-related anxiety among respondents. These results align with Deepak Pawar's study (2023), which found that elderly characters in Hindi cinema are often depicted as weak, dependent, or irrelevant, thereby reinforcing ageism in society. The study by Chung et al. (2025) also supports these findings, showing that exposure to media portraying age stereotypes contributes to increasing age-related anxiety and a decline in psychological well-being among urban Asian groups.

Furthermore, this research identifies significant gender differences in social expectations related to aging. Upper-class women in Mumbai face greater pressure to remain youthful compared to men, a pattern also found in studies by Swinnen & de Vuyst (2025) and Ren & Yao (2025) in global and East Asian contexts. These studies highlight that media, both in the West and Asia, tend to portray elderly women more negatively, limit their roles, and impose unrealistic beauty standards. These findings strengthen the argument that ageism in media is heavily influenced by gender factors, with

women being the most vulnerable group to marginalization due to biased media narratives.

Implications for Media Literacy and Educational Strategies

The implications of these findings are highly relevant for the development of media literacy and educational strategies in urban Indian societies. This research emphasizes the importance of integrating media literacy programs into school, university, and community curricula, enabling individuals to critically analyze and challenge age stereotypes reproduced by popular media. Studies by Joshi (2021) and Ylännä (2023) show that media literacy interventions can enhance critical awareness, reduce ageist attitudes, and promote more inclusive intergenerational understanding. Additionally, utilizing digital media and online platforms such as social media and online learning modules can be effective means to disseminate positive narratives about aging and strengthen intergenerational dialogue.

In the vibrant world of Bollywood, the implications of recent studies on media literacy are particularly significant. Bollywood, with its massive influence on Indian culture and society, often shapes and reflects societal norms, including age-related stereotypes. This research underscores the necessity of integrating media literacy into educational frameworks across schools, universities, and community programs. By doing so, individuals can be equipped to critically engage with the age stereotypes frequently portrayed in Bollywood films and series. This critical engagement is crucial in challenging and transforming these stereotypes, fostering a more nuanced understanding of aging. For instance, just as Bollywood films often depict youthful protagonists, media literacy initiatives can encourage audiences to appreciate narratives that celebrate aging as a journey full of wisdom and vitality, as seen in films like "Piku" and "The Lunchbox."

On the ground, the activities involved in promoting media literacy in Bollywood's context could include workshops and discussions that explore how Bollywood narratives influence public perceptions of age and aging. These initiatives can be designed to encourage reflection and dialogue among different generations, using Bollywood's rich tapestry of stories as a backdrop. Social media platforms can also play a pivotal role, offering a space for younger and older generations to share experiences and insights, thereby creating a more inclusive intergenerational conversation. Moreover, by exploring digital media and online learning modules, these strategies can reach wider audiences, disseminating positive narratives about aging. Bollywood's expressive nature provides an ideal canvas for such explorations, allowing people to reflect on their personal attitudes and beliefs about age, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and accepting society.

Policy and Advocacy Impact

From a policy and advocacy perspective, the results of this research provide a strong foundation for policymakers, educators, and media industry players to promote more inclusive and empowering representations for the elderly in mainstream media. Collaborative efforts between educators, media professionals, and gerontology communities are essential to develop campaigns and learning resources that challenge ageism and promote the diversity of aging experiences. Studies by Khalili-Mahani and Loos (2023) and Ishikawa (2022) affirm that policy changes and media literacy-based curricula can contribute to creating a more equitable and age-friendly society.

In the vibrant world of Bollywood, the portrayal of older characters has often mirrored the fast-paced and youthful glamor that dominates the industry. However, recent research underscores the necessity for a paradigm shift, advocating for more inclusive and empowering representations of the elderly in Indian cinema. Much like the way Bollywood has evolved from traditional storytelling to more diverse narratives, the study suggests a collaborative effort among filmmakers, educators, and gerontology experts. By drawing on Bollywood's influential platform, these stakeholders can craft stories that challenge ageist stereotypes and celebrate the multifaceted experiences of aging. This not only enriches the cinematic landscape but also resonates with the industry's penchant for exploration and innovation, urging a reflection on how aging is perceived both on and off-screen.

On set, this shift would manifest in a more dynamic and authentic representation of elderly characters, moving beyond the stereotypical roles of passive grandparents or comedic relief. Bollywood, known for its expressive storytelling and emotional depth, can use its influence to highlight the wisdom, resilience, and vibrancy of aging individuals. By integrating these narratives into mainstream films, the industry has the power to reshape societal attitudes, much like it has done with issues like mental health and gender equality. This exploration of aging through cinema not only fosters a more age-friendly society but also aligns with Bollywood's tradition of pushing boundaries and sparking dialogue. In doing so, it reflects a commitment to diversity and inclusivity that echoes through every frame, inviting audiences to appreciate the richness of life at every stage.

Research Limitations

Nevertheless, this research also has methodological limitations that need to be considered. The small sample size and exclusive focus on the upper economic class in Mumbai limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The potential for selection bias and socioeconomic representation limitations pose challenges

that must be addressed in future research. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples and adopt mixed-methods approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of ageism in urban Indian society.

Reflectively, this research contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of media literacy as a tool for social transformation in confronting ageism and gender bias in media. By strengthening the critical capacity of society through education and media advocacy, it is hoped that a more positive, inclusive, and empowering narrative will be created for all age groups in the rapidly advancing digital and urbanization era.

CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Impact of Bollywood on Ageing Perceptions** Bollywood's portrayal of ageing significantly influences the perceptions of Mumbai's upper economic class. The industry often emphasizes youth and beauty, reinforcing ageist stereotypes and creating societal pressure to maintain a youthful appearance. This impact is particularly strong among women, who face greater societal expectations to remain youthful compared to their male counterparts.
- 2. Gender Differences and Societal Expectations** The research highlights marked gender differences in expectations related to ageing. Women in the upper economic class experience more pressure to adhere to youthful beauty standards. This gender disparity is consistent with global trends and underscores the intersectionality of age and gender in media representations.
- 3. Need for Inclusive Media Representations** There is a pressing need for more positive and empowering narratives for elderly characters in Bollywood films. Current portrayals often fail to reflect the diverse experiences and capabilities of the ageing population, perpetuating stereotypes that need to be challenged.
- 4. Role of Media Literacy in Education** Integrating media literacy into educational frameworks is crucial for enabling individuals to critically engage with media content and challenge age-related stereotypes. Media literacy can foster a more inclusive understanding of ageing, supporting intergenerational dialogue and reducing ageist attitudes.
- 5. Policy and Advocacy Implications** The findings provide a strong foundation for policies and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting inclusive media representations. Collaboration among educators, media professionals, and policymakers is essential to develop resources and

campaigns that challenge ageism and celebrate the diversity of ageing experiences.

Recommendations

To address the issues identified in this study, it is recommended that Bollywood filmmakers and producers actively pursue more inclusive and diverse representations of ageing in their narratives. This can be achieved by creating complex and empowering roles for older characters, showcasing their wisdom and contributions to society. Additionally, educational institutions should incorporate media literacy programs that equip students with the skills to critically analyze media content and recognize ageist stereotypes. Policymakers should collaborate with media and educational sectors to develop initiatives that promote age-inclusive content, fostering a societal shift towards appreciating the richness of life at all stages. By implementing these strategies, Mumbai's urban upper economic class can be encouraged to adopt a more positive and inclusive perspective on ageing, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.

REFERENCE

- Aljohani, N. F., & Jaha, E. S. (2023). Visual Lip-Reading for Quranic Arabic Alphabets and Words Using Deep Learning. *Computer Systems Science and Engineering*, 46(3), 3037–3058. <https://doi.org/10.32604/csse.2023.037113>
- Bai, Z., Li, Z., Li, Z., Song, Y., Gao, Q., & Mao, Z. (2023). Domain-Adaptive Emotion Recognition Based on Horizontal Vertical Flow Representation of EEG Signals. *IEEE Access*, 11, 55023–55034. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2023.3270977>
- Benhafid, Z., Selouani, S. A., Amrouche, A., & Sidi Yakoub, M. (2025). Attentive Context-Aware Deep Speaker Representations for Voice Biometrics in Adverse Conditions. *Circuits, Systems, and Signal Processing*, 44(1), 534–555. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00034-024-02854-4>
- Chakhtouna, A., Sekkate, S., & Abdellah, A. (2024). Modeling Speech Emotion Recognition via ImageBind representations. *Procedia Computer Science*, 236, 428–435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2024.05.050>
- Cheng, T., Curley, M., & Barmettler, A. (2022). Skin Color Representation in Ophthalmology Textbooks. *Medical Science Educator*, 32(5), 1143–1147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-022-01636-4>
- Chernyak, B. R., Bradlow, A. R., Keshet, J., & Goldrick, M. A. (2024). A perceptual similarity space for speech based on self-supervised speech representations. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 155(6), 3915–3929. <https://doi.org/10.1121/10.0026358>
- Cho, S., & Wee, K. (2025). Multi-Noise Representation Learning for Robust Speaker Recognition. *IEEE Signal Processing Letters*, 32, 681–685. <https://doi.org/10.1109/LSP.2025.3530879>
- Farhana, I., Shin, J., Mahmood, S., Rabiul Islam, M. D., & Molla, M. K. I. (2023). Emotion Recognition Using Narrowband Spatial Features of Electroencephalography. *IEEE Access*, 11, 44019–44033. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2023.3270177>
- Fu, K., Du, C., Wang, S., & He, H. (2024). Improved Video Emotion Recognition With Alignment of CNN and Human Brain Representations. *IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing*, 15(3), 1026–1040. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TAFFC.2023.3316173>
- Gharib, S., Tran, M., Luong, D., Drossos, K., & Virtanen, T. (2024). Adversarial Representation Learning for Robust Privacy Preservation in Audio. *IEEE Open Journal of Signal Processing*, 5, 294–302. <https://doi.org/10.1109/OJSP.2023.3349113>
- He, S., Xue, W., Yang, Y., Zhang, H., Pan, J., & Zhang, X. (2025). Enhancing target speaker extraction with Hierarchical Speaker Representation Learning. *Neural Networks*, 188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neunet.2025.107388>
- Hu, Y., Chen, C., Zhu, Q., & Chng, E. (2024). Wav2code: Restore Clean Speech Representations via Codebook Lookup for Noise-Robust ASR. *IEEE/ACM Transactions on Audio Speech and Language Processing*, 32, 1145–1156. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TASLP.2023.3332545>
- Ichikawa, R., Zhang, B., & Lim, H. (2023). Research on a Guide Dog Robot for Expressing Visual Environment by Voice; 視覚環境を音声で表現可能な盲導犬ロボットに関する研究. *IEEJ Transactions on Electronics, Information and Systems*, 143(5), 562–568. <https://doi.org/10.1541/ieejieiss.143.562>
- Ishaq, M. H., Khan, M., & Kwon, S. (2023). TC-Net: A Modest & Lightweight Emotion Recognition System Using Temporal Convolution Network. *Computer Systems Science and Engineering*, 46(3), 3355–3369. <https://doi.org/10.32604/csse.2023.037373>
- Karjigi, V., Roopa, S., & H.M., C. M. (2024). Investigation of different time–frequency representations for detection of fricatives. *International Journal of Speech Technology*, 27(3), 599–611. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10772-024-10129-1>
- Li, T., Fu, B., Wu, Z., & Liu, Y. (2023). EEG-Based Emotion Recognition Using Spatial-Temporal-Connective Features via Multi-Scale CNN. *IEEE Access*, 11, 41859–41867. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2023.3270317>
- Mai, S., Sun, Y., Zeng, Y., & Hu, H. (2023). Excavating multimodal correlation for representation learning. *Information Fusion*, 91, 542–555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.inffus.2022.11.003>
- Mao, K., Wang, Y., Ren, L., Zhang, J., Qiu, J., & Dai, G. (2023). Multi-branch feature learning based speech emotion

- recognition using SCAR-NET. *Connection Science*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540091.2023.2189217>
- Padman, S. N., & Magare, D. B. (2023). Multi-modal speech emotion detection using optimised deep neural network classifier. *Computer Methods in Biomechanics and Biomedical Engineering: Imaging and Visualization*, 11(5), 2020–2038. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681163.2023.2212082>
- Prain, V., Xu, L., & Speldewinde, C. A. (2023). Guiding Science and Mathematics Learning when Students Construct Representations. *Research in Science Education*, 53(2), 445–461. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-022-10063-9>
- Puffay, C., Vanthornhout, J., Gillis, M., Accou, B., Van hamme, H., & Francart, T. (2023). Robust neural tracking of linguistic speech representations using a convolutional neural network. *Journal of Neural Engineering*, 20(4). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1741-2552/acf1ce>
- Qiu, Y., Tian, H., Li, H., Chang, C. C., & Vasilakos, A. V. (2023). Separable Convolution Network With Dual-Stream Pyramid Enhanced Strategy for Speech Steganalysis. *IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics and Security*, 18, 2737–2750. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TIFS.2023.3269640>
- Qu, L., Li, T., Weber, C., Pekarek-Rosin, T., Ren, F., & Wermter, S. (2024). Disentangling Prosody Representations With Unsupervised Speech Reconstruction. *IEEE/ACM Transactions on Audio Speech and Language Processing*, 32, 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TASLP.2023.3320864>
- Salimpour, S., Tytler, R. W., Eriksson, U., & Fitzgerald, M. T. (2021). Cosmos visualized: Development of a qualitative framework for analyzing representations in cosmology education. *Physical Review Physics Education Research*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.17.013104>
- Teixeira, F. S., Abad, A., Raj, B., & Trancoso, I. M. (2024). Privacy-Oriented Manipulation of Speaker Representations. *IEEE Access*, 12, 82949–82971. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2024.3409067>
- Wong, K., & Meng, H. M. L. (2023). Automatic Analyses of Dysarthric Speech based on Distinctive Features. *APSIPA Transactions on Signal and Information Processing*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.1561/116.00000077>
- Xie, Y., Liang, R., Liang, Z., Zhao, X., & Zeng, W. (2023). Speech Emotion Recognition Using Multihead Attention in Both Time and Feature Dimensions. *IEICE Transactions on Information and Systems*, E106.D(5), 1098–1101. <https://doi.org/10.1587/transinf.2022EDL8084>
- Xin, R., Miao, F., Cong, P., Zhang, F., Xin, Y., & Feng, X. (2023). Multiview Feature Fusion Attention Convolutional Recurrent Neural Networks for EEG-Based Emotion Recognition. *Journal of Sensors*, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/9281230>
- Xuejun, W. (2023). Application of sensor-based sound control principle in speech recognition technology. *International Journal of System Assurance Engineering and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13198-023-01939-8>
- Yamamoto, K., Zhu, Y., Aoyama, T., Takeuchi, M., & Hasegawa, Y. (2023). Improvement in the Manipulability of Remote Touch Screens Based on Peri-Personal Space Transfer. *IEEE Access*, 11, 43962–43974. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2023.3271003>
- Yuan, K., Srivastav, V., Yu, T., Lavanchy, J. L., Marescaux, J. F., Mascagni, P., Navab, N., & Padoy, N. (2025). Learning multi-modal representations by watching hundreds of surgical video lectures. *Medical Image Analysis*, 105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.media.2025.103644>
- Yusuf, B., Cernocký, J. “Honza,” & Saraçlar, M. (2023). End-to-End Open Vocabulary Keyword Search with Multilingual Neural Representations. *IEEE/ACM Transactions on Audio Speech and Language Processing*, 31, 3070–3080. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TASLP.2023.3301239>
- Zhang, H., Li, H., Peng, G., Liu, Y., & Xu, D. (2023). Image Emotion Recognition via Fusion Multi-Level Representations; 多层次特征融合表征的图像情感识别. *Jisuanji Fuzhu Sheji Yu Tuxingxue Xuebao/Journal of Computer-Aided Design and Computer Graphics*, 35(10), 1566–1576. <https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1089.2023.19742>
- Zhou, Y., Wu, Z., Zhang, M., Tian, X., & Li, H. (2023). TTS-Guided Training for Accent Conversion Without Parallel Data. *IEEE Signal Processing Letters*, 30, 533–537. <https://doi.org/10.1109/LSP.2023.3270079>
- Zhuang, H., Xiao, Y., Liu, Q., Yu, B., Xiong, J., & Bao, L. (2021). Comparison of nature of science representations in five Chinese high school physics textbooks. *International Journal of Science Education*, 43(11), 1779–1798. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2021.1933647>