

GENDERED CINEMATIC CITY: A CASE OF HYDERABAD CINEMA

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Abstract

The Hyderabad metropolis of India is one of the fastest growing cities with growing population. The city's access to women and how women navigates and defines the city, and the gendered cinematic urban spaces is explored in this paper. The movies of Hyderabad which include the regional cinema released in the 2000s are analysed. The paper uses semiotics and discourse analysis to understand the nuances of the complex relationship of women and the city. The built environment directs the navigation of a person in the city but for women it is fraught with risk and the spaces laden with cultural and social signifiers. In literature and popular culture, the city is equated to the women and their body- both equally dangerous. The presence of women in the city spaces induces male anxiety. The city is

a place for loose morals in the form of sex-workers, temptresses and uncontrolled female desire. The good women are always indoors. Women outside the domesticity spaces, has to declare her purpose. A woman out loitering for the pleasures of exploring, being and belonging to the city is not stressed and the paper tries to make a case for it. In this background, I study the films to try answer - How women in the cinematic city navigate and access the city? C) try to define the city girl represented in the cinemas D) How modernity has freed the city women and is the new women here- in the movies.

Keywords: Feminist geography, urban studies,. Film geography, cinematic city, Hyderabad.

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Introduction

The Tollywood movies in the 80s were lacking in representation of Hyderabad and women in that city. The movies' narratives in the decade of 1990s moved to Hyderabad and so did the women and their representation. The women in the 1990s movies were married and the struggles with domesticity, patriarchy and the unjust meted out to them in this patriarchal system were represented. The access to the city is not yet achieved and is limited to work and domestic chores. By nineties, Hyderabad has ushered in globalisation; it has earned the name of "Cyber city" replacing the name "City of Nawabs".

With 2000s, after the movie *Kshemamga Velli Labamga Randi* (Leave safely and Return with Benefits) the struggle for women to have careers and equal status to the men in a marriage has ended, at least in the representation in Tollywood. The new age girl has arrived and the right to work after marriage, to study and other basic rights have been fought hard by her predecessors. The movies depict women where the career and their desires take precedence over marriage and being home makers but the picture is not rosy and not fraught with patriarchy trying to hold them down. The precursor to the women of the 21st century has already been laid by the role of Anu who wants to be a scientist, gets admission into Harvard University as a researcher and inspires the hero - Balu portrayed to pursue his dreams in the movie *Tholiprema* (1998, A Karunakaran).

I use semiotics and discourse analysis to analyse the movies. The movies are considered as texts and the dominant reading informed by and placed in specific history and socio-economic conditions. Semiotics uses the mise-en-scene and the symbolism of the texts of the movies to derive meaning. With combination of discourse analysis, it lets us understand the nuances of the urban scapes under the surface. These methods help unravel the dominant of discourse of a city at a certain time and place, how the paradigms shift over time and also grasp the changes that caused the changes in discourse. Here, we deal with gender discourse and in relation to the city, particularly. Semiotics helps to examine the spatiality of the narrative through the movement, built environment and the culture of a city space; i.e. the meanings invested in spaces in the representation of the city to a reader. This paper deals with how the gendered meanings of urban spaces are negotiated, reproduced, and reconstructed in the movies.

The movies released in 2000s decade that women had substantial role and became popular are *Kushi* (2001, Suryah), *Allari* (2002, Ravibabu), *Anand* (2004, Shekhar Kammula), *Anukonda Oka Roju* (2005, Chandrasekhar Yeleti), and *Happy Days* (2007, Shekhar Kammula). The majority of Telugu movies invest highly in hyper-masculinity and star power of the male actors and out of all the movies released in this decade, these are some of the movies that gave visible representation for women and almost equal to the male actor. I include *Hyderabad Blues* (1998, Nagesh Kukunoor) in this section as the movie's themes fit here and like the movie *Tholiprema* it set a precedent, start of new thinking about romance, marriage, careers, tradition vs. modernity and freedom. Drawing from Tejaswini Niranjana's EPW article *Cinema, Femininity, and Economy of Consumption* (1991), the movies of this decade repackaged femininity which is driven by market and consumerism brought on by opening up of markets. All the women of the movies are written by men; Vivian Lee (2005) says that the modern girl is desirable for men in fictions created by men and that:

"for capitalist modernity with all its seductive allures of commodification, consumption, and entertainment. . . . [She is] a prominent fig. in the landscape of the male protagonist's desire, and ineluctably becomes constitutive of what he is as a man of desire" (Lee, 2005, p. 134).

For the 'activity of consumption,' the women should be able to move freely to gaze at the commodities, and nurture aspirations of a global identity through consumption of fashion and material culture. The globalised city creates geography of the city that is conducive to that movement (Mazumdar, 2007).

The women in these movies are middle-class, upper caste, younger and single. Here, the modern woman is the middle-class woman who is "apparently privileged in every way other than gender" (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011). Talking about the middle-class woman, in 'Why Loiter?' the authors opine:

The middle-class woman is, in fact, implicitly central to ideas of Indian womanhood as the symbolic measure of many things. It is her education and employment that become the measure of a family/community/nation's progress. Her clothing and visibility in particular places become a marker of desirable modernity... she becomes the canvas on which narratives of modernity and honour are simultaneously written (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011, p. 23).

The middle-class woman who is also of a higher caste is more desirable. Her presence in the city and on the streets is celebrated but also fraught with risk, as their honour is more valuable and sacred. Amanda Gilbertson (2013) based on field work about middle-class women in Hyderabad points out the problems and burdens that they face in maintaining the respectability and all the while keeping up with globalised modernity which dictates their everyday practices (Gilbertson, 2013). In last section of the paper this new cultural trope -a product of redefinition of femininity and modernity - in the form of "city girl", who is represented in the 'clean'¹ movies that are analysed, is discussed elaborately.

1.1. Of Lovers and Dreams

Kushi, Anand and Hyderabad Blues can be loosely categorised under the genre of romantic comedies. The heroes and heroines of these movies meet, become friends, and there is a mutual attraction but because of some misunderstandings, they grow apart to finally get together in the end. All the female protagonists are strong, independent and well educated.

Anand and Hyderabad blues are debut movies which had a commercial release for the directors Shekhar Kammula and Nagesh Kukunoor. Anand released on the promise of being different from the commercial movies with overly masculinised heroes and sexualised heroines and over the top emotional, melodramatic and actions sequences that were being released in Tollywood. Anand has marketed itself with a tagline "a movie like a good coffee". Many other movies which are clean and simple with no or little sexualisation of women and important roles for women are compared to the movie Anand.

Hyderabad Blues, Anand, and Kushi starts with the pressure to get married or of getting married (in Anand) but the problems of marriage and the prerequisites - material, financial and emotional – are not just for women but men face them too. Though men and women face the problems and pressures of society to settle down, get married and proper conduct, it is women who face more of it and affects them majorly compared to men given the compromises and sacrifices a woman is expected to make. The women in the movie are educated, converse in English and their mother tongue Telugu. The traditional knowledge is appropriated by

¹ There are divisions between 'clean' and 'mass' movies. The clean movies are movies that can be watched by the whole family and mass movies are movies that are highly commercialised with hyper-masculine heroes and overly sexualised women. These clean movies can also be commercial but as media and film industry opines doesn't have the mass appeal as a 'mass' movies enjoy.

modernity and by women as they are the carriers of "ideology" by following the rituals and learning Carnatic music (Niranjana, 1991) like in *Anand*.

The protagonist of the movie *Hyderabad Blues* - Ashwini is a doctor who reduces difficulty to enter into a field of medicine and becoming a doctor to the reservation (women reservation). Madhu of *Kushi* is abandoned by the groom on the eve of her marriage and she convinces her father to let her study further. She joins MSc Physics in Nizam College in Hyderabad and starts living in flat in Malaysian Township at Kukatpally. Rupa of *Anand* movie calls of her wedding as the mother-in-law is dominating, regressive and the fiancé is unsupportive. She gets her jobs back at the company from which she resigns as her ex-fiancé expects her to be a homemaker after the wedding.

All the three protagonists have experienced loss in some form at a younger age or later. Madhu is abandoned at the marriage altar, Rupa loses her whole family in a car accident when she was young and Ashwini loses her father. Urban space is tied to alienation, loss and isolation (Haaland, 2013) (Lee, 2005) (Mazumdar, 2007), the protagonists here carry that trauma in negotiating and traversing the urban space and the people within those spaces. The losses they have suffered make them who they are.

Even though with established friendships and spending a considerable amount of time with men and also when there is a mutual attraction between the men and women in the movies, the women are always suspicious and cautious of men. The men in whom they are interested are not trusted around other girls either and they jealously guard them to the level of paranoia. This suspicion and level of caution are expected of good girls, they don't trust men around them or around other girls. Good girls who are modern, friendly but not sure of male friendships especially single men and of their age and older than them (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011). Madhu is never suspicious of her other male friend Babu, as he is in love with her best friend Shanti and she gets jealous when she hears Sidhu talking over the phone to his mother and mistakes her for his love interest. So is Ashwini who sees Varun's friend as non-threatening as he is married to her best friend. Rupa from *Anand* trusts men who are younger than her (still in high school) with whom she regularly hangs out but is suspicious of Anand and her cousin. When Anand hangs out with other girls from her work and smiles at other girls she chides him and fights with him.

Women are comfortable with sexuality "*a liminal space, a site both of empowerment through transgression and containment through regulation*" (Bose, 2008, p. 35) but there is an imaginary line that they draw for themselves that shouldn't be crossed and call out and chide their lovers if they cross it. The line is implicit and tacit among the youth in Hyderabad. NRI return Varun Naidu doesn't understand or accept to toe the line. It's his friends who get upset and lecture him over crossing that boundary, act as the moral police and censure him for not respecting the country's values and traditions which range from intimacy between lovers to rituals to relationships. Madhu fights with Sidhu because he fetishises and constantly stares at her Midriff. Rupa lectures and scolds Anand many times when he touches her on the cheek or talks about her "shape" and objectifies her body.

The consent and the agency of the women's body are their own and it is stressed upon which the men find silly and ridiculous. The suspicion and objections to unnecessary objectification and touch are also termed as women being conceited. The wish to be modern and carefree to trust the men they love and are friends with. But the tradition and the patriarchal system which renders women helpless and responsible and men as predators and absolved from transgressions pulls them back. There is a tussle between modernity and tradition in the

narrative with constant negotiation and compromises (Vasudevan, 2010) in growing globalisation and consumer culture (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011) (Mazumdar, 2007). It is in the city that we see this contestation between modernity and traditional. It is only in the city that older tradition is present from where modernity seemed to have spread from it (Giddens, 1991). Like the paradoxes of modernity, the women in the city symbolises the pulls and tugs of the modernity and those are inscribed on their bodies (Lee, 2005).

The city provides space for men and women to interact but the space threatens the women of possible sexual overtures by eligible bachelors on them and it is threatening to the women that the same eligible bachelors might establish romantic relationships with other women who are not them. The city restrains women from establishing romantic relationships with the men they are interested in and the same city provides space for men to freely interact with other women which might thwart their possible romantic liaisons with those men. This balancing act of saving themselves and the men they like in the city frustrates the women. The toll it takes on them mentally is shown in the movies when they finally lash out at the men they love violently and viscerally. The men are not restricted in any way in the city and they have the space, literally, to be honest about their feelings and emotions at all times without the fear of being judged which the women lack.

The division of masculinity and femininity is reinforced in *Kushi* and *Anand* movies. In *Kushi*, Sidhu saves the heroine from molesters in the college and beats up many throughout the movie. In the end Sidhu and Madhu are married, she is shown pregnant and already a mother of 17 children. Madhu has fought with her father to study further but the movie doesn't mention if she is working or what happened to her aspirations. Women are spatially confined to home with strict gender roles. Anand's mom visits Rupa and she wants to see how Rupa makes coffee. They have an honest conversation in the kitchen, and establish a familial relationship when Rupa calls her Mom. The kitchen is one of the spaces traditionally that brings women of a household or a community come together and bond doing chores. Feminist geographers talk about the strict gender roles and spatially confining women with child rearing and household chores (Geographies of Gender: Feminism and Masculinities).

In *Anand*, Rupa sees Anand beat up a man who harasses a girl on the bus and she starts desiring him physically, day dreaming about getting intimate with him. Rupa is always on wit's end with Anand who shows no masculine behaviour until that moment and after his masculinity is proven by beating up a guy, she starts desiring him. After they profess to each other their love, Anand orders Rupa to never cut her hair again.

The women in the movies say they don't care about others' opinions but they are always careful not to antagonize the family, relatives, and colleagues, and subconsciously give importance to the symbolic honour thrust upon them by the society. In a Metropolis of Hyderabad, even the gaze of strangers is censoring and controls the women's behaviour effectively. For women to be able to access city freely, the reputation has to be clean and that's the thin rope that they have to walk on for limited access to the city. If they jeopardise the reputation and the family honour, their restricted and conditional access to public places is cut off completely (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011).

Women know what they want now, with some compromises they have to navigate the city and personal desires within the confines of societal restrictions and patriarchy. Like the protagonist doctor who is clear that she won't give up her career and understands the patriarchal trappings of the better life of getting married to an NRI and settling in the US. Likewise Rupa and Madhu,

whose marriages are called off at the last minute, they move on and look forward to their career and higher studies respectively.

Good Girls and Bad Girls of the City

The girls of the city, studying, working, partying, and living are celebrated. The modern girl wears both western and Indian wear, has friends – both male and female, steps out of the house for work, college, eat out, watch movies etc but there is a thin line between a good girl and bad girl. It is always the good girls who get into trouble if she is friends with the bad girl. The good girl and bad girl (a vamp) dichotomies exist in many movies and for many years. The good and bad girl of the city finds a parallel in the analysis of *Geetanjali* by Tejaswini Niranjana (1991) – as good and bad products of modernity. The girls good and bad are pitted against each other as city vs. village, westernised/modernity vs. traditional but as modernity is celebrated in all aspects of life and city an important narrative space, women of the city walk on a thin rope of modernity balancing it all.

Sahasra is the protagonist in the movie *Anukokunda Oka Roju*. She goes to a party with her friend Swetha and Sahasra is offered a cool drink by a man laced with Rohypnol. She wakes up a day after with no recollection of what happened that night and the next day. She meets series of strangers – A cab driver (who is one of the male lead), a theatre/junior artist who claim that they have seen her and offered her a lift in the middle of the night, some men who try to kill her and strange recollections or déjà vu of places and people. She tries to unravel the mystery of the one day that went missing with the help of the cab driver and a police officer who is suspended on corruption charges.

She faces trouble at home from her step mother whom his father marries after he divorces Sahasra's mother. Her friend Swetha is the bad girl, she wears short and revealing clothes where as Sahasra wears long skirts and loose full sleeved tops and sometimes Salwar kameez. She forces Sahasra to come to a party and the men and women are shown doing drugs, kissing, touching, and dancing close to each other. Sahasra sits in a chair while everyone is dancing and getting shocked occasionally by the debauchery of the youth of the city at the party. She refuses to drink alcohol and then she is offered a soft drink laced with Rohypnol by Swetha's friend and boyfriend which she accepts.

Under the influence of the drug, she starts dancing, drinking alcohol, then when picked up by two men in a car outside she tells them that she wants to remove her blouse and later she kisses the cab driver Rajesh many times – when she is in no control of her senses, she indulges in the same things she is disgusted by earlier. When the police officer asks Sahasra if she drinks she replies indignantly that she never drinks.

As mentioned in the previous section about the boundaries set by the society and her to protect her honour and dignity consciously is lost when her subconscious takes over, her inner desires and sexuality surface up from her sub/conscious that she repressed. It is the big bad city and bad girls from that city land her in trouble. The big bad city is the den for drug abuse, it's the bad girls of the city who enable the crimes on women by going to the parties and enable sexuality and desires of good girls by forcing them to come to those parties. Sahasra has other friends – both men and women. Her other close female friend unlike Swetha is a good girl. She is like Sahasra wears only Salwar kameez and impatient with men who try and talk to her or Sahasra. Sahasra never chides or lectures her as she lectures Swetha on every occasion on how she should behave and be in limits.

The mistake of Sahasra to go to a party with the bad girl puts her life in danger. The city is unsafe and hostile for the good girls who overstepped the lines and transgress their roles. The familiar city and places become uncanny and dangerous. She is attacked at a theatre, in a hospital parking lot, in a market place at Secunderabad. She finds out that she almost got saved from getting raped, under the influence of the drugs she walks into the night and gets picked up by two men who want to rape her. It is in the city, the safety of women who break the rules are at risk, a moving car, bus, streets, theatres, parking lots and even spiritual centres become dangerous and life threatening.

Allari is a movie about teenage crushes and romance, a coming of age story. Ravi and Aparna live in the same apartment and are best friends. Aparna is studious and industrious where as Ravi is a daydreamer and obsessed with girls. Ravi falls for Ruchi who recently moves into the apartment complex. Aparna secretly loves Ravi and though hurt helps Ravi to woo Ruchi who initially hates his guts. In the end, he realises that he doesn't love Ruchi and discovers that the letters he wrote to Ruchi are replaced by Aparna. She writes on behalf of Ravi and delivers it to Ruchi. He realises that Aparna is in love with him all along and he joins the same medical college that Aparna studies at, a year later.

Aparna is the good girl, who only studies and wants to be a doctor. She wears t-shirts and jeans but Ruchi wears miniskirts and shorts. Like Sahasra in *Anukokunda Oka Roju*, Aparna wears minimal make-up and Ruchi and Swetha wear make-up. Aparna jogs to be physically fit and Ruchi does various works out to shape different parts of her body differently. Ruchi has many boyfriends and doesn't believe that there are good men out there. She uses them for transport and gifts, as they are also selfish. This justification of Ruchi irks Aparna but doesn't mind when Ravi does the same, takes advantage of the soft corner she has for him and she goes out of her way to do anything for him because she is secretly in love with him. She also pays all his bills for eating out, gifts for his girlfriend, his debts etc.

Happy Days is a college romance set in an engineering college Chaitanya Bharati Institute of Technology, a famous college in Hyderabad. The film is about a group of youngsters in the college, the friendships, romance and heartbreaks through the four years of college. The friends' group consists of four girls and four boys. There are different types of girls typified and categorised in the film - The desirable good girl, the tom boy, the misunderstood girl and the bad girl. The boys are four types – the flirt, the nerd, the nice guy, and the selfish guy. There are no bad boys in the film, just boys who are growing up and finding themselves.

The good girl Madhu is fair skinned and bright student who ignores boys' attention. The tom boy Aparna dresses up in jeans and t-shirts only and is bespectacled. She is overt in her mannerisms and not feminine in the traditional sense. The misunderstood girl, Sravanthi, is a senior who has a boyfriend and dresses fashionably. The bad girl, Sangeetha, has a brother who is a senior in the college. She starts an affair with the Selfish boy Shankar.

There is a mutual attraction between Madhu and Chandu. Madhu is stalked by one senior, she comes to Chandu to rescue her from him and she gets upset that Chandu plays it safe. When the senior follows her, Chandu slaps him which satisfies Madhu and invites him to her birthday party. The old trope of the hero or the man she is interested in not being macho enough turns her off and when he displays his masculinity she approves of him. Even though later he and his friends get beaten up badly by the senior's friends, she doesn't apologise for goading him to be violent which ended up getting him and her friends beaten up.

Sangeetha is the bad girl as she starts an affair in the beginning of the college with Shankar. When all the friends go on a trip to Araku near Vizag, they all catch her and Shankar kissing near the camp fire on the beach. The girls start talking about Sangeetha's inappropriate behaviour. Sravanthi comments that she being a senior, has never did 'such' things and that Sangeetha is shameless. Sangeetha who is forward and comfortable with her sexuality and in her own skin is shamed and she cheats on Shankar later in the movie.

From their friends' group, Rajesh falls in love with an English professor and later flirts with a junior. Chandu also flirts with junior. Both the juniors reciprocate their feelings for which they are shamed by Madhu and Aparna because they like Chandu and Rajesh respectively. When Rajesh moves from girl to girl it is comedic and natural but when a girl like Sravanthi who breaks up with her boyfriend and starts hanging out with Tyson or the juniors who flirt with Chandu and Rajesh or Sangeetha who has another affair are shamed and ridiculed. Sangeetha is slapped by Shankar's friend Tyson over her cheating on Shankar.

Bad girls have consensual premarital sex and when Swetha gets pregnant in *Anukokunda Oka Roju*, Sahasra accompanies her to the hospital. Sahasra talks about her being shameless, crossing all the boundaries and that the doctor thinks ill of her because she is with her. In *Allari Ruchi* Ruchi wants to get physically intimate with Ravi, Ravi rejects Ruchi's advances and tells her that this is all wrong.

The "City Girl"

The fight for equality with men and right to work, domesticity vs. tradition has been settled. The married women, lower middle-class women, poor and Dalit women, issues like dowry, rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and work-home balance etc has been sidelined and confined to the parallel cinema to deal with, with coming of young, single and confident middle class and upper caste women. They don't have to fight hard to study further, marry the person of their choice and to wear clothes that they are comfortable, go out to cafes, pubs, malls, cinema with boys and be friends with boys, invite them home. Commenting on this phenomenon Ghosh and Shahani (2000) say the strong, free, independent women is the product of consumer capitalism.

The ease with which this 'new' but 'Indian' woman can reconcile the conflicts between modernity and tradition diffuses the actual conflicts and struggles that women as a class have to confront and overcome. ... the image of the highly individuated woman is derived primarily from the urban educated middle-class career woman. She serves as a model not only for consumer products but also for citizenship (Shahani & Ghosh, 2000, p. 3814).

There are women who are oppressed and live in regressive families which treat them like second class citizens like Shanti, Madhu's friend in *Kushi*. She is house arrested when her father finds out that she is in love with a poor and orphaned man and rescued by the lead pair. Like this story, it belongs to the fringes of the city and the city is generally egalitarian and conducive to young girls and lovers. The narrative of oppressive father and mother who look at the girl as a burden and a symbol of their honour in *Kotha Bangaru Lokam* is given due importance on how it affects the girl child's psyche but they don't belong to the city, they come from a small town. Such backwardness belongs to the village and small towns and not to the city.

There is a city girl trope that is being normalised which is a middle-class girl who is comfortable in both western and traditional clothes but nothing too skimpy or short and too revealing. A "mind map" of the city is always carried by women/city girl for negotiation of the city space and

for safety. The spaces engender women's performance; women also mark the spaces in their mind maps. A 'spatial vocabulary' that is implicit in navigating the spaces (Kumar, 2016, p. 160). The city girl will never declare her love to the man she is attracted to until he proves his love consistently in different ways or with a grand gesture of heroism/sacrifice or until pushed to a point of losing him. In *Kushi*, the hero and heroine are leaving college forever and then they run to each other. In *Hyderabad Blues*, the hero and heroine ready to get married run away from their respective marriages to find each other and get married. In *Anand*, the hero gets tired of the heroine's flippant attitude and decides to leave. In *Happy Days*, the heroine comes to hero when he helps her Dad and decides not to go to the USA for further studies as he doesn't want to separate the heroine from her family.

As long as the city girl is accompanied by other good girls, parties are at a cafe or even a pub is safe. The middle-class female body is a marker for gendered spaces or marked as gendered space. The stratification of spaces are for her own protection and lays down restrictions (Kumar, 2016). It is advisable if the pubs and certain spaces that are marked as masculine are avoided altogether and hang outs are confined to safe places like restaurants, cafes, malls, and colleges. This self-regulation and the imagined control by colleagues, fellow students, strangers etc in the city space are called 'spatial expression of patriarchy' (Valentine, 1989).

The city girls are at home for a handful of scenes and they are neither outside on the streets throughout the movies. They dwell in the transient spaces outside their houses in the veranda/courtyards or the inside of the open space of building complexes and elevators, parking spaces of buildings, colleges, travelling in buses, bikes or cafes and restaurants. The aspiration of being out of the home and the anxiety to be outside on the streets which are dominated by men they dwell in the middle and safe spaces like the ones mentioned above. They walk on the streets but it's not like the Flaneur, they walk with a purpose and with a destination. The spatial experience of the city for a woman is different and even if the woman takes the role of 'flaneuse' the gendered city has different spatial practices for different people (Haaland, 2013). As long as one fulfils the necessary characteristic traits of a city girl, they find love, a fulfilling one and it is the Hyderabad that provides them space and opportunity to fall in love. This optimism is reflected in the city in all the movies except, *Anukonda Oka Roju*. Hyderabad has always pleasant weather and the harsh summers of the Hyderabad city are absent. The rocks and empty tracts of lands covered with grass which was used as an uncanny and dangerous place in *Anukonda Oka Roju*, they transform in other movies as a backdrop for romance. In *Anand*, it rains very often or it is cold where the characters keep saying, "it is very cold today, isn't it?" The slums, abandoned houses, dilapidated structures like under the bridges, out of use public wells, the crowds, claustrophobic spaces of Hyderabad city shown in *Anukonda Oka Roju* are absent in other movies. The danger on Sahasra's life in the city is haptic the way the city is framed, the threat that can come from anywhere and anyone is captured in the shots from the top which shows the vast Hyderabad space and the crowds surrounding her.

The patriarchal structure is repackaged and refurbished in a consumerist culture and is depicted as equal. The free women in these movies seem oblivious to the subtle ways the same old values are being reinforced. An urban milieu is a "highly contradictory site" for the modern women with the double burden of being the modern girl who also upholds the traditional values (Fisher, 2010, p. 124). The good modern girl always waits for the right guy to get intimate with but it wouldn't go beyond a kiss, as premarital sex is still something a bad modern girl would do. A women acting on sexuality and desires is shamed, a clear dichotomy of good and bad girls are created. The masculinity is being reinforced by shaming men equally who are scared and non-confrontational to be violent and confrontational by rewarding them with female attention and

desire. A women's sexual agency is controlled by not the external factors but the internalised morality imbibed by the ages of patriarchal conditioning as described in the previous sections. The city girl has her own vehicle, a bike which takes her anywhere she wants. But she doesn't ride it for pleasure or getting to place without a purpose. If it is for pleasure of taking in the city and to enjoy a while being outside, it is always with friends. If she doesn't have a ride of her own, she takes the bus or relies on her friends. She never travels alone for pleasure, or spends time alone at a cafe, park, temple, mall, market, cinema etc. The time when Sahasra is alone in the night outside in *Anukokunda Oka Roju*, narrowly escapes sexual assault and murder and that night haunts her every waking moment for many weeks later. When the city girl is alone she invites unnecessary male attention, like in *Kushi*, *Happy Days*, and *Tholi Prema* etc.

The city girl is charitable and friendly, always smiling. The city girl should be friendly and outgoing but not too friendly and outgoing and only with the right people who are kids, older people and mean who are not seen as sexual threats. In *Kushi*, Madhu starts a blood donation camp. In *Anand*, she volunteers at a nursery, provides food at an orphanage and old age home every year. In *Anukokunda Oka Roju and Allari*, Aparna and Sahasra respectively are friends with all the kids and elder people in the building, she sings for them, does chores for them etc whereas Swetha and Ruchi are friendly with selective people, she doesn't respect elders if she thinks they don't deserve it and gives importance to her privacy.

Conclusion

Hyderabad city has come a long way in representation of women and access to the women. Like every city in reel and real lives, the space of Hyderabad is built for upper caste men and marginalises women and other vulnerable groups. The absence of other classes of women from the representation of the Hyderabad city reflects the exclusive nature of the urban architecture. The 'city girl' with all its character traits dominates the reel and real spaces of Hyderabad but the access still restricted. The city still hostile and the liberating city spaces of Hyderabad are conditional as long as they repress their desires - sexual, career-wise and in mobility. The city girl of Hyderabad is given a false sense of hope by the global markets and consumer culture, and global media separated from the issues of oppression of women, the problems faced by Dalit women, Muslim women and other groups are not their's or the systems' failure but due to their backwardness. The women's movement in the 70s and 80s brought all the problems of oppression together and the movement was successful. The honour and safety of the middle-class women are placed above other women in the urban setting.

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