CHAPTER 1

INDIAN MUSIC VIDEOS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN:

AN OVERVIEW AND INITIAL EXPLORATIONS

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Chapter Overview

This chapter briefly defines the Music Video (MV), reviews existing research that focuses on MV, its different genres, and the representation of women in this medium. It looks at surveys of Indian MVs for their gender representation, narrative content and classifies them according to theme and structure.

It identifies that while significant work has been done on performance using semiotics, image analysis and audience response, narrative MVs have been neglected and so has narratology as a method that can be applied to this field. The next section focuses on Indian MVs, the scanty research that exists on Indian MVs, popular and film music of Bollywood, as well as the relatively marginal exploration of media narratives in spite of their very high incidence in Indian media. Next, it discusses the results of a preliminary survey of Indian MVs and Bollywood film songs and finds them both very high in representation of women as well as narrative content. The survey also reveals that MVs show a distinctively high representation of women-centric MVs by female artists. The MVs consist of self contained narratives and are found apt for exploration while film music is not taken up as it forms a part of a larger narrative, where, usually, the centre of focus is the male protagonist. A second survey of 180 popular narrative Indian MVs shown on national music and entertainment channels of India spanning a period of 10 years shows distinctive categories of narratives that can be examined using narrative tools. Thus, the Indian MV is identified as an extremely fertile site for the exploration of narratives about women, and their representation through the stories by using narrative analysis – especially an analysis of their structures – as a substantive methodology.

1.1 Music Videos

"Music Videos (MVs) are short multi-media creations of 4-5 minutes' duration, where song, music and visuals are combined either to enact a performance, a celebration

or a short episode or story that often goes with the meaning or the mood of a song" (Frith 1993, ix). They have a promotional origin and function. One or two songs from an album are made into MVs and presented on music channels. Since the MTV in 1980s based its format around them (Frith 1993, ix), they have gained currency and evolved as a cultural form. Prior to this, terms such as 'filmed insert,' 'promo film,' 'film clips,' etc, were used to describe such presentations. They are also a comparatively new form compared to other subsets of popular culture like news, films, soaps, serials and advertisements. In the Indian context, where every Bollywood film has between 4-8 songs – which are used variously as item-numbers with no relevance to the movie, digressions, flash-backs, dream sequence, to showing transitions or relationships between characters, etc – music and other entertainment channels telecast both MVs and such film clips in the same space. Often, 'music videos' is a name generically used for both these categories (hamovhotov.com 2008). However, in this work, MVs refer only to non-film songs made by artists to showcase and advertise their albums.

MVs typically take one of three forms: performance, narrative or conceptual (Frith 1988, 115), though MVs may actually have elements of more than one category too (Goodwin 1992, 75). Performance videos often feature the singer or pop group singing in concert to wildly enthusiastic fans. The song is presented as if the artiste or the group is standing and performing right in front of the audience and the mediated nature of the medium is never allowed to come to the forefront (Frith 1993). Conceptual videos, on the other hand take recourse to poetic forms, primarily metaphors whereas narrative MVs present a story in a linear, cause-effect sequencing (Frith 1988). In the narrative mode, love stories are the most prevalent narrative mode where the narrative pattern is generally one of 'boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back.' Action, in the story, is dominated by "males who do things and females who passively react or wait for something to happen" (Schwichtenberg 1992, 224).

It is interesting to note that MVs have thus been defined on the basis of the visuals they convey. Though music, lyrics and visuals and their integration and amalgamation make up the form of the MV, still, in defining the term MV, it is seen that researchers mostly concentrate on the visual aspect. They define performance, narrative and

conceptual videos on the basis of the visual dimension. Lyrics or music do not articulate such a definition – probably because the same song can be sung at a concert in performance, or told in the form of a story, or presented in the form of a conceptual video. Thus, the visual dimension assumes the greatest importance in these videos and research work on MVs mostly emphasizes this dimension (Frith 1988, Goodwin 1992).

1.2 Music Videos, Women, Performance and Narrative

Women artists and protagonists (especially in the Indian context) have a significant presence in MVs (Khandekar 2006, 8, 13). Between 1980s and 1990s second wave feminism was ebbing and the third wave was coming into vogue (Shugart 2001). MVs, thus, are posited at this critical juncture, between two waves of feminism and have drawn much critical attention. While MVs essentially take three forms – performative, narrative and conceptual, as discussed, in the West, performance dominates (Gow 1992, 48). Performance videos are easier to produce, the only requirements being the setting of the stage and the presence of the performer(s), without any elaborate construction of plot, requirement of characters, change of scene, etc. This explains the prevalence of the performance videos and their "images of artists singing and playing songs" (Gow 1992, 49). In a medium where the artist sells as a product (Khandekar 2006), branding the artist through her performance is a common recourse in the US, UK and Europe.

Research on women, therefore, in the context of Western MVs (implying MVs primarily produced in Europe and the US), have focused more on the MV as performance, especially on performance styles (Bradby 2001; Christenson and Peterson 1988), forms of socialization and image creation (Kearney 1998; Shugart et al 2001), sexuality, gender and race (Brown & Campbell 1986), women's exploitation (Kalis 1989), body (Kalof 1993), etc. The fairytale quality of MVs has also been explored by critics (Mercer 1993, 100), but the narrative dimension of the videos has never been studied before.

1.3 Women and their Representation in Music Videos

Focus on popular cultural representation of women, especially through feminism and gender studies, is pretty recent and of contemporary relevance (Strinati 1995, 160). Liberal feminism criticizes the unequal and exploitative representation of women, whereas radical feminism sees men and women, their focus and their representation as fundamentally and essentially different (Strinati 1995, 161). Gender, power and patriarchy within which women's lives and representations as regulated are also the focus of research in feminism and gender studies (Glover & Kaplan 2007; Strinati 1995) and this gets reflected in MV research as well.

Studies on gender, sexuality and violence dominate research on MVs. Stereotypes of the violent man and subdued woman, based on traditional attributes of aggressiveness vs. affection often figure in MVs as found through semiotic analysis (Banks 1996). The misuse of the gendered body is also the focus of many researchers – especially the commodification of the body, violence, sexual exploitation both through visuals and lyrics (Sherman & Dominick 1986). Gender representation also shows explorations of roles like cheerleaders, secretaries, fashion models, telephone operators etc (Banks 1996). Image analysis of MVs show excessive concentration on the woman's body making the woman synonymous with the sexed body, what in common parlance is nowadays called 'sexploitation' in the music industry (Jeffrey 2007, Weitzer 2000, 51). This reiterates Mulvey's (1975) concept of the male gaze which stated that traditional filmic representations of female characters are subjected to three 'male gazes': the first is the gaze of the camera, which locates the spectator in an illusory situation where it appears as if they are looking in on the private world of the female, gazing at her sexualized body zones; the second is the gaze of the male characters for whom the female characters are nothing but objects of erotic appeal, and the third is the gaze of the viewer of the film, for whom, again, the female characters act only as erotic objects (Mulvey 1975, 18). This is much of the focus of second wave feminism too which views media representations as patriarchal constructs and is of the opinion that in filmic discourses like cinema, advertisements and MVs the representation of women is done in a manner so that the

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male audience is made to feel that it has gained control of the woman's body visually (Mulvey 1975, 18).

On the other hand, research on feminist elements in MVs (Lewis 1993) suggests that the depiction of female sexuality (Rubey 1991), in turn, provides a new way of looking at women by addressing and appropriating third wave feminist concerns (Neale 1983, 15) such as the right of women to determine their own sexuality, their right to express pleasure (Felski 1989, 65) and the fact that being the object of 'the gaze' may at times even be empowering (Brost 2007).

MVs, if they can act as a medium of free expression for men, can be made to do the same for women too (Lewis 1993). Mercer (1993) criticizes the use of women bodies to sell products (the MV itself), but she also questions the image of the macho male and introduces the concept of 'the male body as a spectacle' challenging Mulvey's (1975, 19) concept of the 'male gaze'. Gender inequality, inferiority of women and their subordination get reflected in MVs (Holtzman 2000, 51). Pat Benatar's video "Sex as a Weapon" delves further into the territory (Magee, 1985). While Benatar criticizes the way women are depicted in MVs – the use their bodies to sell products (in this case the MV itself), questioning the image of the macho male shown in these videos is also attempted. Magee ridicules the fairytale happy endings women are led to believe in MVs, and in doing so, touches on the very important concept of the narrative, and the MVs' similarity with a fairytale. But Magee does not endeavor to exact features of a fairytale that is present in the videos. Similarly, Sut Jhally's (1990) study of sexual images in MVs brings in key concepts of narrative structure (hero, helper, etc used first by Vladimir Propp), but does not systematically study it, while Toney and Weaver (1994) emphasize the fantasy element without, again, bringing in narrative.

Analysis of lyrics also suggests that the majority of MVs are about portrayal of women in more sexually alluring ways than men (Walker 1994; Whiteley 1997; Wilson 2000). Women are shown as preoccupied "with sexual activity to the exclusion of all other facets of human social behavior," and soliciting and responding to a variety of sexual encounters (Hebditch & Anning 1988, 15). The intertwining of religion and race with

sexuality is also attempted by a few critics (Schwichtenberg 1992). Indeed, women's presence as mere eye candy rather than in any significant role in these videos has been reiterated in most academic works on the subject. For example, an examination of any MV featuring men and women in technologically savvy roles (Lowe 2003, 125) reveals that women are invariably projected as subordinate, passive and technologically naïve as compared to the men. The predominance of hyper-sexualism in the songs makes Williams (1989, 124, 151) comment on "the sexual number taking the place of the musical number".

In his analysis of MVs, B.Lee.Cooper (1998, 79-89) attempts a different approach by studying lyrics of various MVs and examining how women have been portrayed lyrically throughout their lifetimes of personal and social development. Portrayals of baby girls, preadolescent females – stages of women's lives other than in their reproductive and therefore sexualized stages – have been examined. Such videos, however, by their very lack of presence and proliferation, are indicative of the fact that the majority of MVs are about portrayal of women in more sexually alluring ways than men (Lewis 1993, 130).

Thus, sexualization of woman, her commodification, and her debasement (Weitzer 2000) occupy the central focus of critics and researchers. However, these researches mostly focus on the white heterosexual female of the first world countries. They also do not explore the narrative quality of MVs.

2.1 Indian Music Videos and the Representation of Women

Indian MVs constitute a relatively unexplored territory of media research in spite of their great potential. While work on women and media has focused of films (Booth 1995), TV serials (Mankekar 1999), news (Mankekar 1999) etc, the focus has never been on women in MVs, probably because it is considered a poorer sister of films (in terms of story as well as songs), does not represent main-stream culture as Bollywood does and, apparently, represents women in stereotypes as well.

But then, before dismissing MVs, it is important for researchers to find out where it stands in relation to women. What kind of representation of women do we find in Indian MVs? Are they actively or passively involved? What do they usually do as

opposed to males? Is there any difference in these areas between MVs (which cater more to a youth culture) and film music (which caters to a more general audience?) Does any kind of search, quest or attempt at identity building emerge out of the MVs? Such questions become all the more important since media culture, especially films and MVs, represent women in diverse ways in diverse cultures (Lu 2000, Aziz 2004)). Research in Asia and Middle East is insightful. For instance, more and more Chinese films are now showing the westernized woman falling for a Chinese man, who is a globetrotter. However the Chinese woman is still the one who takes care of her husband and family irrespective of the job she does. The Chinese hero is no longer the youth who is studying hard for a degree but a businessman with sharp intelligence who has western women swooning for him. Chinese popular songs, portray a hero who is no longer the "scholar," intellectual type prevalent in Chinese culture, but a projection of "primitive vitality" (Lu 2000). Thematic studies in the field of Arabian MVs (referred to in Arabic as the 'video clip'), reflect that new musical genres, such as *Shababi* (youth) music, has gained more appeal under the spotlight of Arab media since the 1980s. Love songs and songs that describe certain personal situations with themes like "*wahashtiny*" (I miss you) and "*inta aomry*" (You are my life), which, earlier were applied to pursuit of God, are now very prevalent in the modern MV clips in the secular, romantic context. (Aziz 2004). Studying signs and symbols in films and MVs in other cultures also throw interesting light on the issue of gender. In her study of ethnic masculinity, Murray studies identity-types like Jewish, Catholic etc, and how they are portrayed in films through screen acts, words and gestures. She finds that using these parameters like acts, gestures etc, and one "can perceive an underlying structure informing individual characterizations of specific identity types" and how they differ according to gender (Murray 2002, 100).

An exploration of the depiction of the woman on screen in sexual terms becomes all the more important because in Indian MVs, the protagonist is no longer the white middle class heterosexual woman, inclined towards motherhood (Rivkin and Ryan 1998) but a beautiful, heterosexual, youthful woman who in most cases is pretty affluent. This itself is seen in feminist discourse as a response to cultural changes owing to globalization in the lives of the potential audience in India and their reaction to the

representation of women in media in India (Arthurs 2003, 81). Thus, globalization and its impact on the audience have been central to studies on women in media in India.

Indian writers like Gokulsingh and Dissanayake have researched films and have made passing references to film songs in their book, *Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change* (1998). Bhushan Nyay's article, "Indipop Still Evolving in India— and Globally" (1999) deals with Indipop's popularity and intrusion of artists into film industry – especially the rise of female stars. Women artists and their increasing popularity form the subject of Vanita Kohli Khandekar's *The Indian Media Business* (2006), but the book chiefly deals with how women's albums have contributed to the rise in the music album industry. Women's representation has not been taken into account by any of them.

Christiane Brosius and Melissa Butcher, in their book *Image Journeys: Audio-Visual Media & Cultural Change in India* (1999), have discussed women vee-jays and models to an extent but have concerned themselves more with their reception by the audience. Audience reception also forms the basis of Miriam Jordan's paper "India Puts Its Own Spin on Rock, Rap, and Reggae" (2000) which tells about audience reception of Indipop in the West but treats indipop and the music album as products to be consumed along with the other products afforded by the consumer culture.

Traditional personality attributes for genders and the way they are employed across categories like dancers, models, cheerleaders, secretaries, movie extras, who are often depicted in these MVs, form the basis of studies on the Indian woman for Sut Jhally (1995). Nina Laurie, Claire Dwyer, Sarah L. Holloway, and Fiona M. Smith in their book *Geographies of New Feminities* (1999) explore how the spread of satellite television in India has in some sense democratized media; they try to find out in what capacity Indian women participate in this process, to what extent patriarchal structures are dismantled, or if they are they reconstituted. They ask if the cultural hybridity of the new images (like the heroine who incorporates both sexuality and innocence) provide the idiom for a new hybrid form of patriarchy. The authors try to explore the theme in the field of films, advertisements, serials and songs (Laurie 1999, 26, 32).

Each day, at least one MV is released, each Friday at least three mainstream films are released, and all of them have women as characters – woman artist on screen or behind the screen. Many women artists go under after just one video, but many also rise, and this makes the field a very happening one for research. The lack of material on Indian MVs and the representation of women calls for a preliminary survey of the videos themselves as well as film music clips (shown separately in music shows) to get a picture of how significantly women figure in them.

2.2 The Significance of Indian Music Videos in Indian Media Culture

A survey of 80 cable channels telecast nationally and available in Kolkata and Kharagpur was done in 2004-05 and revealed that the distribution of channels according to thematic categories is as follows: Out of 80 channels, 11 channels are devoted to news, 8 are informative in nature, 9 are on music, 11 are on films, 2 are on religion and culture, 6 cater to sports. There are also 11 regional channels, 3 on fashion, 7 for children, and 12 channels featuring serials, soaps etc (Basu 2008, 49). The pie chart showing the breakup of the total channels and the available genres is given below.

Figure 1: Channels of Different Thematic Categories
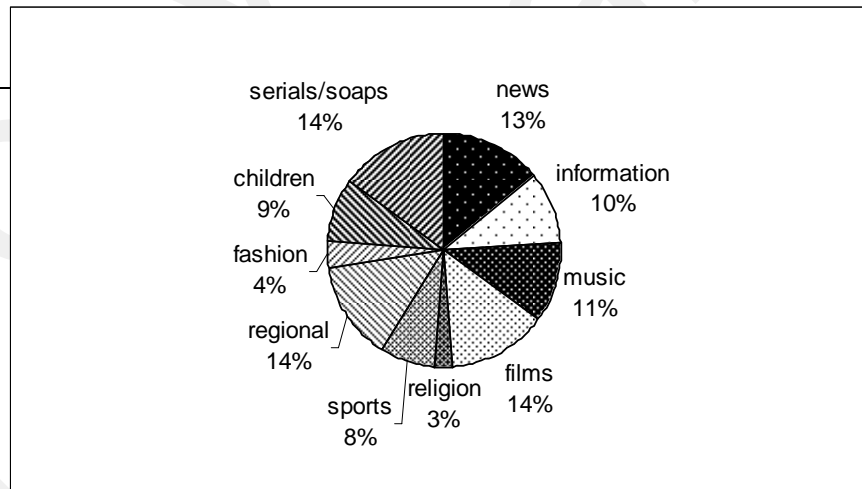
It would not be out of place to mention that music formed a part of most channels. Channels catering to serials had music filler programmes. Music also formed an important element of the film channels, as well as the regional channels. So, out of 80 channels, 9 were exclusively devoted to music, but on an average, another 12 serial

channels, and 6 film channels (since the other 5 channels play English movies) played music in addition to the 11 regional channels which also played mainstream music in addition to regional programs and regional music. Thus, music forms a considerable part of airing time in most channels. Considering the channels in which music is aired, we could get the following break-up which shows us how predominant music was in most of the channels in 2005. While many of the channels have been replaced by new ones, even today, the constitution of the channels remains similar and the findings are valid.

*Figure 2: Proportion of Music on Various Channels*
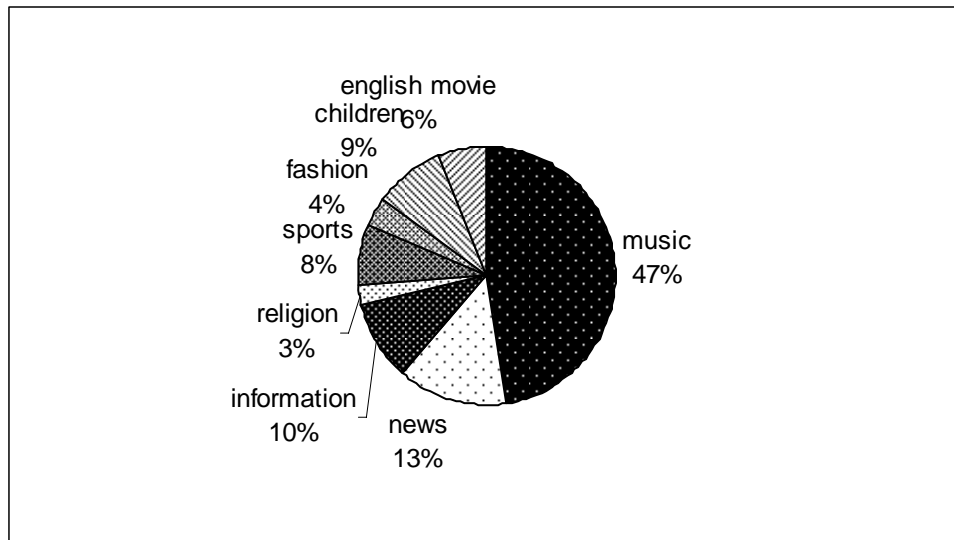
In terms of exposure, MVs and film song clips get the maximum exposure compared to other media categories like soap, ads and films. Soaps form continuity, a flow, and are repeated only once. Ads are repeated often, but once they disappear (after a few weeks) they disappear for good. Films are repeated infrequently. However, though new MVs and film songs dominate old ones do not go away. Especially owing to their three minute frame, when they are requested by the audience, broadcasting MVs is not a problem. Hence, MVs are one of the few genres seen by the viewer most repeatedly.

2.3 Narrative and Romance in Indian Music Videos

An exploration of different categories of MVs – peformative, narrative or metaphoric – was also conducted. Based on the earlier sample, videos were classified on

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the basis of their form – narrative or performative, and romance as opposed to other themes dealt with. It was found that about 72 percent of the videos have a narrative structure as opposed to performative. Narrative as a mode dominates MVs perhaps owing to the Indian love for story-telling (Booth 1995, 170). Since the MVs are primarily addressed to youth, and since a preliminary view of the MVs suggested high romantic content, the MVs were screened for their romantic content as well. It was found that 71 percent of the videos dealt with heterosexual romantic relationship, whether they were narrative or performative in nature. Thus, in the context of their heterosexual romantic orientation, women play a very important role in most MVs (Basu 2008, 50).

Figure 3: Percentage of MVs with Narrative Content (out of 203 MVs)
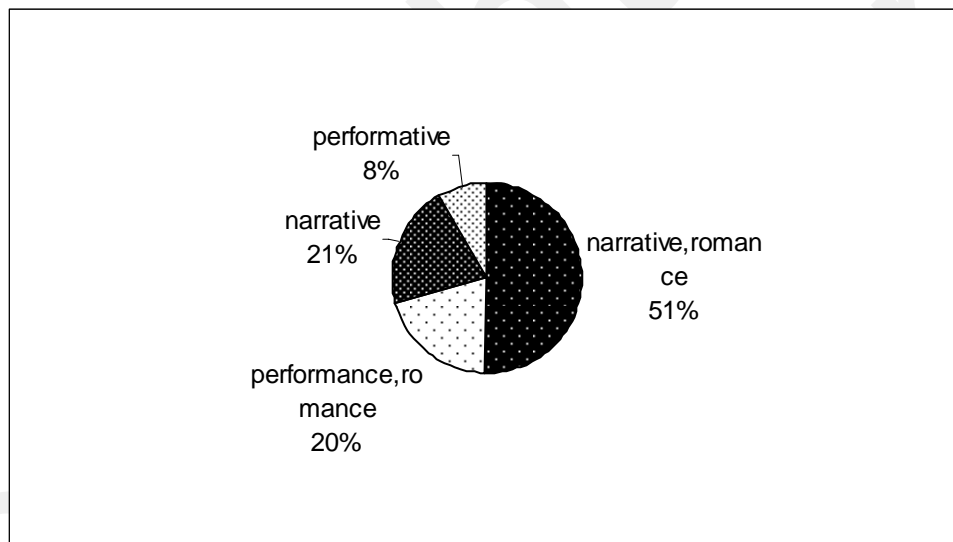
2.4 Women's Representation in Indian Narrative Music Videos

As discussed, Indian television telecast both MVs and film songs. While film songs are an important space for the depiction of women, their narrative contents are incomplete or fragmented, women have very little control over their production as opposed to MVs where women have a greater say. Our initial exploration also suggested that women play a more active role in MVs.

A survey of 644 MVs and film songs was carried out in 2005 to explore the number of videos depicting women. Ninety-five percent of them showed women actively

participating in the narrative or performance. This active participation of women was present both in terms of visuals as well as vocals. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the MV is a very significant site, most widely viewed (since they are not confined to only music channels, but are shown as fillers in almost all entertainment channels), where women and their representation can be researched. Women were present in 609 of the 644 music videos. As most of the MVs are romantic in nature, women play a central role in these videos. So, the MVs act as a 'woman's space' and is a fertile ground for study and research on women.

Based on the earlier survey, a second survey of 406 songs (203 film songs and 203 MVs) televised on popular entertainment channels, was carried out. Findings suggested that MVs have a very high narrative content with independent storylines telling the stories of women, and a much greater representation (33.5% as opposed to 9.8%) and very few duets (4% as opposed to 71.4% in film songs), thus justifying their study in isolation and their comparison with male oriented videos for possible differential treatment of story and theme.

Table 1: Gender Representation in Film Songs and Music Videos

	Film songs (n=203)	Music videos (n=203)
Male vocal	38(18.7%)	126(62.07%)
Female vocal	20(9.8%)	68(33.5%)
Duet	145(71.4%)	9(4.43%)

As the survey reveals, unlike western MVs, Indian MVs are distinctively narrative in nature – at the heart of almost every video is a story of some kind. Not only this, Indian MVs also have a very high incidence of romance – a finding reflected in the initial survey as well (highly dependant on narrative) –which is primarily heterosexual and youth oriented romance. As we have already seen in the literature survey, research so far has concentrated mostly on the image of the woman and how she is portrayed as a sexual object on screen. But how the woman is portrayed in terms of the narrative structure or the development of story element is relatively absent in academic works on Indian MVs.

Therefore, the study of narratives of the videos and their treatment of the element of romance, it is assumed, will yield interesting insights into the representation of women in the field of Indian music videos. Thus, Indian MVs may prove to be a very fertile cultural category to pursue research on the representation of women, especially through certain tools of narratology.

3.1 Using Narrative Tools to Analyze Women and their Representation

Since narrative dominates as a mode of presentation of MVs, like image analysis, it can also constitute a major tool for exploring the medium. What happens to women, how and why are their stories told differently can be explored meaningfully by looking at sequence, time and cause and effect and not merely by image analysis that excludes the logic and unfolding of relationships that constitutes a narrative. Since Indian's are fond of stories (Booth 1995) and this is amply illustrated by the multitude of films, soaps, narrative MVs and even ads, it is felt that a survey of how narratives unfold and what themes they present in such a medium become important in order to evolve our methodology.

3.2 Women's Representation through Narratives in Indian Popular Music

As discussed earlier, there is hardly any material on narratives and Indian MVs. This could be due to the dominance of Bollywood in Indian media culture. However, some research on women and narrative in Indian popular media is available and is discussed briefly below. While it is not related to Indian MVs directly, it may prove insightful for comparison later. Besides, since the Indian MV is strongly influenced by Bollywood songs, later, these findings can prove insightful.

Mankekar's (1999) women-oriented study on the representation of women on Indian television in the 1980s-1990s reveals that the basic tendency of women-oriented narratives during this period is to reconfigure traditional (Indian) and modern (western, urban) values with reference to the nationalist discourse. According to Mankekar, Doordarshan was for the citizens. But with the advent of satellite television in India, which was for the consumer, the transnational quality of images such as those propagated

by MTV soon displaced and posed a challenge to the hegemonic ideology of the Indian woman. Not only this, cable TV shifted the focus on woman and her identity from the politics of nation and community to the politics of family, sexuality and intimacy. The sublimated eroticism of Bollywood (Gokulsingh & Dissanayake 2003) with its regulatory discourses on woman's desire was challenged by the sexual aggressiveness of the MTV female. It would be interesting to explore how Indian MVs' representation of women matches these findings.

Virdi (2003, 145) explored the binary of the heroine vs. the vamp and their shared space of romance with the hero as a significant tool for the representation of women in Indian mainstream cinema and its songs. Since most Bollywood films deal with youthful romance, have many songs and dance routines, colorful costumes, the songs constitute important spaces where romance as well as the advances of the vamp get reflected (Chowdhury 2010, 51; Mehta 2010). The vamp, the other woman, was usually fashioned after non-Indian (European or American) models, was called western names (Lily or Rita as opposed to Laxmi or Sita), with Western values and formed a contrast to the homely, pure, and de-sexualized heroine with her glamour, her flaunting of her body, etc (Dasgupta 1996, 173-189; Gargan 1993, 11-12). She was sexually aggressive in contrast to the heroine, ready to lead men to their ruins (Dasgupta and Hegde 1988, 209-16). However, in recent years, the vamp has faded into the background with the heroine taking on more sexualized roles, at least in dream song sequences or fantasies. The display of the female body, either through the vamp or the heroine reiterates Mulvey's stand in the context of Hollywood. It is probable the Indian MVs follow the same tradition, and it would be interesting to explore what roles female leads take and how actively.

The stereotype of the hero of a romance who is ready to accept a prize only when he has struggled and earned it is often seen in these images – especially with the woman being the 'object' of desire (Virdi 2003, 121). This concept of pursuing pleasures and resisting pleasures however, was challenged with the advent of MTV and its main focus on the disco or club culture, and reflected in the new image of the heroine in popular cinema (Gokulsingh & Dissanayake 2003) who by means of her physical charms would provide visual delight to the audience. Yet, at the same time, the narrative was designed

to restrict her in blatantly pursuing her desires to fulfillment. Thus, patriarchy and hegemony of gender configures these texts (Virdi 2003, 60). How Indian MVs represent women in such situations becomes an important question which can be explored through a narrative analysis.

Thus, while research tells us something about media representation through narrative of women in Indian films, we have very little information on MV representations of women. This is extremely important since MVs target and influence Indian youth – the new generation and their identity formation.

In the Indian context, though this comparatively new form of media made its appearance much later than conventional media like films, soaps, serials, ads etc, it still has been able to make a niche for itself in this short period. Though Bollywood cinema, replete with its abundance of song and dance, has been ruling the roost since the 1930s, MVs, a western form, came to Indian shores only in the 1990s and could get a solid foothold only around 1995. It would therefore, not be far fetched to say that MVs are giving Bollywood films a run for their money and seriously competing for the Billboard ratings. The popularity of MVs becomes further apparent when one observes that most successful and established playback singers of Bollywood have at some time or other chosen MVs as a platform for artistic expression and have at least one such album to their credit (Khandekar 2006, 13). It would be interesting to explore how MVs treat women, what kinds of stereotypes are confirmed, what kinds of patriarchy come into operation, how they are modified, refuted, manipulated or confirmed to in a space which especially belongs to the youth (as opposed to Bollywood songs) and to women who have greater freedom of representing themselves in new ways in this space.

4.1 Why apply Narrative Tools to Indian Music Videos

Indian MV is a rich site offering possibilities for exploration of narratives of women both from patriarchal and women's point of view, enabling scholars to look at how women are represented as well as how they articulate themselves in contemporary Indian popular culture. Narrative analysis or narratology, which is "the study of narrative structure and the activity of narrative comprehension (Stam et al, 1992), allows, among

other things, for analysis of structure of the filmic medium for its plot, and this has already been explored in film studies (Stam et al 1992; Wright 1975). Feminist narratology (Lanser 1986) has also successfully explored women's writings and films to gain insights into how women represent themselves.

It is true that the MV narratives can be analyzed through image analysis, lyrics, or quantitative content analysis that takes all of these into consideration. But doing so would be ignoring a very important dimension of the MVs – that they are also narratives or stories about lives of women and men, how they interact, what happens to them and so on. If Indian MVs are analyzed through image analysis like the western videos, the result would be similar—a woman's visual exploitation and commodification. But what happens to the women in the MVs? Why do such things happen to them? How are their stories different from that of men? Such questions cannot be answered unless narrative tools are used.

A second objection that might come up relates to narrative theories and feminism. It has often been felt that narrative theories deal primarily with stories of men. Rather, most stories have been told from the male perspective and hence women have also primarily followed the same tradition (Mezei 1996). However, it is also true that right from the time of Virginia Woolf (Gruber 2005) patriarchic narratives have been questioned, and especially by feminist critics like Susan Lanser, etc (Lanser, 1986). Feminist narratology has now come into its own. Interestingly, patriarchy and its narratives can also offer insights into representation of women. How are stories of women told by men? Do similar stories get told? Are women allowed to do the same things that men do? While not offering insights into women's distinctive ways of story-telling, such theories (say by Propp or Campbell) definitely allow one to see how in patriarchy women's stories get told differently and why. Thus, both patriarchal oriented as well as women-oriented narrative theories will provide insights into women and their representations through narratives.

Analysis of narratives can be done in various ways, especially in the context of a rich filmic medium like the MV. A number of elements like perspective, point of view,

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narrator, story and plot, etc, may be explored. It is true each of them would throw a certain amount of light on the representation of women. However, what happens to women which is different from men, and why? This can probably be best answered by looking at 'linear sequence' and 'causality' – analysis of the structures of the narratives. Besides, some of the other tools like discourse analysis can be best used with a small number of illustrations only. Since this work surveys an entire site – that of Indian MVs – over a 10 year period, it would be worthwhile to identify some signifying patterns. This can be best done only by taking a large number of sample narratives, in this case about 180 MVs. Such a large number of narratives can be best analyzed by looking at structural patterns based on their themes and treatment. Similarly, where structural patterns are broken, or female-oriented themes dominate, such MVs can be explored through feminist narratological insights. Other kinds of narrative tools and insights gained from them are definitely relevant, but without a primary survey of the field, going in for detailed analysis may prove insufficient.

4.2 Collection and Classification of Indian Music Videos According to Thematic Categories

In the light of our assumption that analysis of structural patterns can form an important method of exploring the representation of women in Indian MVs, over 180 popular narrative MVs telecast over the last 10 years (2000-2010) on mainstream Indian channels were collected. Since the theme and focus of the narratives – in the light of earlier classifications especially done by Propp and Campbell (discussed in **chapter two, three** and **four**) – were felt to be critical in determining how narrative structures unfolded, especially for men and women, the MVs were classified broadly on the basis of their thematic content and focus into four broad categories. Research suggests that narrative structures correlate with genres (say tragedy, quest, fairytale, romance, detective, thriller, and so on) (Keen 2003). It was found that the Indian MVs could be broadly classified into (1) fairytale romantic adventure, (2) romantic quest, (3) romance that falls into neither of the earlier categories and (4) women-oriented MVs. It was also found on an initial survey that the first two genres confirm to a structure that critics call patriarchic narratives (Mezei 1996) while the second two categories either do not confirm

to patriarchic form or else deal with stories that come either before the beginning, after the end or the in the middle of patriarchic narratives. Fairytale romances mostly deal with situations where the men and women meet by accident and fall in love and get united or 'live happily ever after' – a very significant trend in patriarchic tales (Booth 1995). Quest MVs mostly deal with men or women actively pursuing the partner and (generally) successfully getting them. But romance videos suggest a variety of themes, possibilities and structures. Women-oriented MVs, at a cursory glance, suggest distinctive trend to break patriarchic structures or self-consciously deal with gender-sensitive issues, Hence, it is felt that a detailed analysis of how structures within same genre varied for men and women would prove insightful.

On subdividing each genre into male and female-oriented MVs, two significant points emerge. Theoretically MVs can be classified into the following categories based on gender – (a) MVs by male artist focusing on male protagonist and his perspective, (b) MVs by male artist focusing on female protagonist and her perspective, (c) MVs by female artist focusing on male protagonist and, (d) MVs by female artist focusing on female protagonist. It was felt that (b) and (c) would give insights into how each gender constructs, conceives or represents the other. Our classification suggested that while (a), (b) and (d) exist, there are no MVs under category (c) – MV by female artists focusing on male protagonists. *Women do not tell stories of men in Indian MVs.* The other point is that there are hardly any MVs that focused only on men to the exclusion of women, thus suggesting that women and their representation is very significant in MVs. The findings of the survey based on themes are presented below.

Table 2: Indian MVs Represented According to Category and Gender

	Male Artist Hero-Centric MVs	**Male Artist Heroine-Centric MVs**	**Female Artist Heroine-Centric MVs**	**Total**
Fairytale	7	4	23	34
Quest	15	4	15	34

Romance	38	13	37	88
Feminist/Women Oriented	---	1	23	24
	Total male artist hero-centric MVs = 60	Total male artist heroine-centric MVs = 22	Total female artist heroine-centric MVs = 98	Grand total= 180

5. Objectives and Scope of the Work

A survey of the field of MVs, especially Indian MVs suggests potential for research. As our review of existing works suggests, there is a great potential for exploring women's representation through the lens of narrative structure. This is confirmed by the collection and classification of over 180 narrative Indian MVs discussed above.

The rest of the work attempts to explore the representation of women in Indian MVs through an analysis of their narrative structures – plot sequence, actants, how the stories begin and end, what happens to the characters, who help them, who/what hinders them. It also asks if and how in similar narratives women protagonists are represented and treated differently. Broadly, the following questions are asked:

As women and their representations are very significant in Indian MVs, what are the important categories/genres that emerge in Indian MVs? What types of stories get told? How do they present women as opposed to men?

Is there any significant relation between categories/genres and structures within which stories are told? Do women's representations vary from that of men?

Are there patterns of variations in narratives of the same category/genre based on gender? How do they differ for women and what do these differences imply for them in the Indian context?

In order to answer these questions, a suitable narratological tool or a set of tools needs to be identified. **Chapter two** looks at the field of narrative analysis briefly and attempts to locate appropriate tools for the analysis of the MVs and their structures, especially the narrative unfolding, actors, the various roles they perform, alternative trajectories possible, etc, that would give insights into differential treatment of women, contexts in which they happen, and what happens in the 'end.' **Chapters three, four, five and six** analyze the MVs in the light of the four-fold thematic classification using appropriate narrative tools.