



# **WOMANIYA!**

## **2021**

**A seminal report on the representation  
of women in Indian films**





India produces the highest number of films in the world. The Indian box office is valued at over ₹11,000 crore. Despite the scale and cultural impact of cinema in the country, there is little credible documentation on women in film.

O Womaniya! 2021, a collaboration between Ormax Media and Film Companion, aims to change that. This report is an attempt to start a necessary conversation about gender parity in cinema.

**Using rigorous research, this report highlights the discrimination on screen and hopefully will start a dialogue toward change.**

# 5

LANGUAGES

# 129

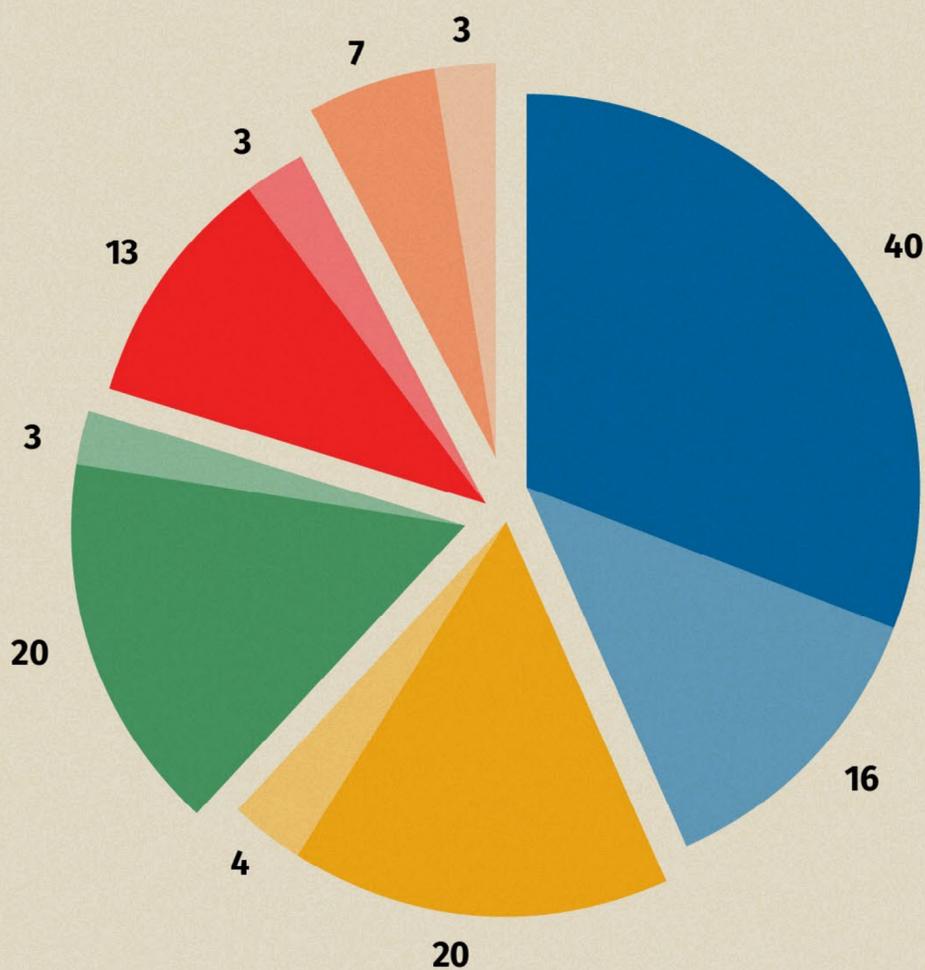
TOTAL FILMS

# 100

TOTAL THEATRICAL FILMS

# 29

TOTAL DIRECT-TO-OTT



DIRECT-TO-OTT  
FILMS



HINDI



TAMIL



TELUGU



MALAYALAM



KANNADA

THEATRICAL  
FILMS



HINDI



TAMIL



TELUGU



MALAYALAM

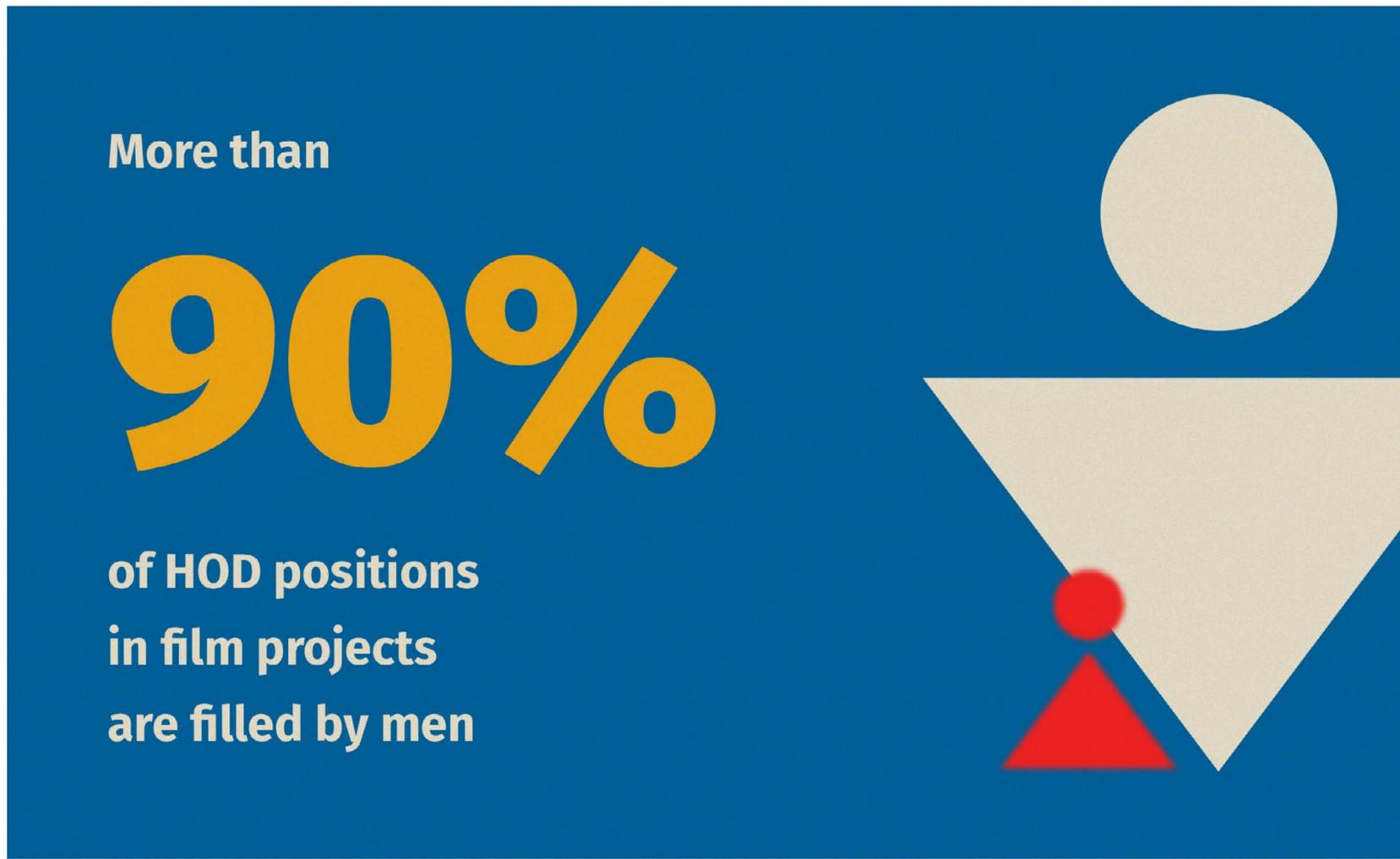


KANNADA

## Top 5 languages contributing to 93% of Indian box office (excluding Hollywood) were considered.

For theatrical films, box office footfalls was used as the parameter of selection, while for direct-to-OTT films, a combination of YouTube views and Ormax Advocacy (likeability) Score was used.

# Key Findings



129 films released between 2019 and 2020 were evaluated on three dimensions to evaluate the quality of female representation in the Indian film industry.

01 **Talent** 02 **Content** 03 **Marketing**

The streaming category performs slightly better than theatrical when it comes to representation



**59%**

films failed the Bechdel test, i.e. did not have even one scene where two women speak about a topic other than men

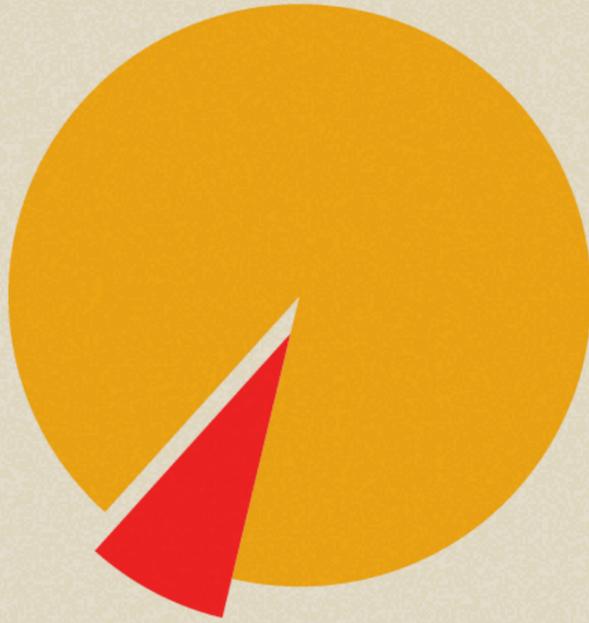


Representation is lopsided in film marketing too. Male characters 'outspoke' female characters in film trailers by more than four times



**92%**

Male HODs



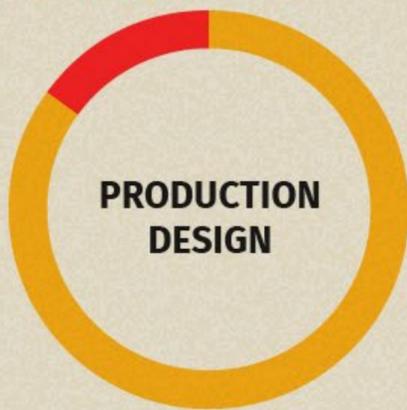
**8%**

Female HODs

# 92% of key departments in a movie helmed by men

Five HOD positions were analysed:  
Direction, Writing, Cinematography,  
Editing, Production Design

15% Female



85% Male

10% Female

90% Male



7% Female



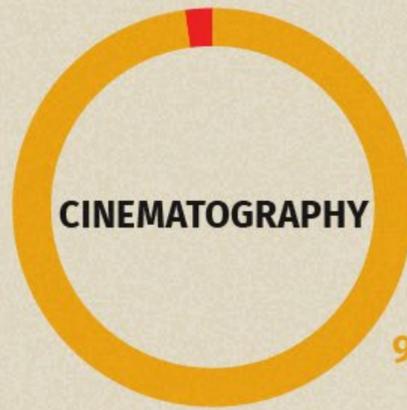
93% Male

6% Female



94% Male

2% Female



98% Male

## At just 2%, representation of women in cinematography weakest

Between 2019 and 2020, 6% of films were directed by women. But the department that saw the highest representation of women was production design. And the lowest was cinematography, with only 2%. Keiko Nakahara, was the only female DoP during this period, and her work in Tanhaji, Shakuntala Devi and Total Dhamaal constitutes this 2%.

**Anjali Menon, Filmmaker**

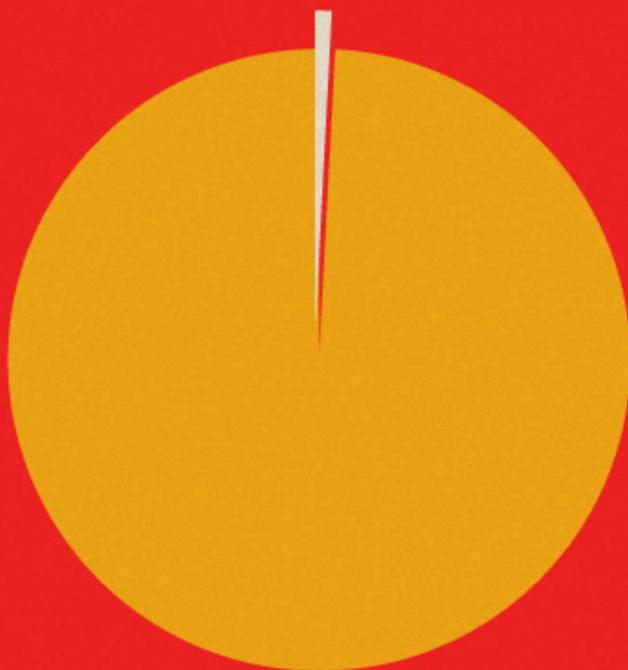
on why there are so few women directors:

***“We have fewer female directors because of investor confidence. Mainstream filming has a certain set pattern that people are very unwilling to break. They like to sit within that comfort zone. They think that a person’s gender is what they direct from which is such a weird assumption to make! People tend to be so judgmental of what shape and form and size you come in. Whoever has the power is definitely biased.”***

## WOMEN IN HOD POSITIONS IN SOUTH CINEMA

1%  
Female

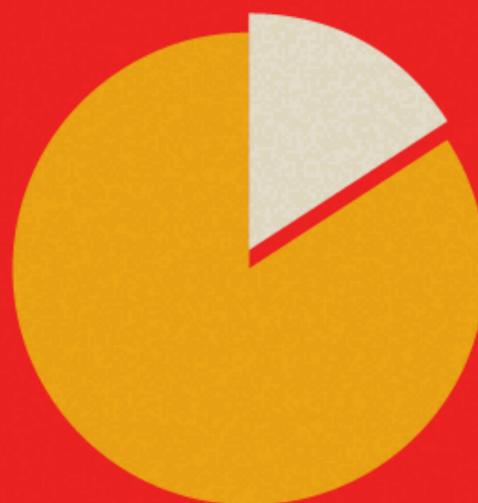
99%  
Male



## WOMEN IN HOD POSITIONS IN HINDI CINEMA

16%  
Female

84%  
Male



# South film industries way behind Bollywood in gender equality

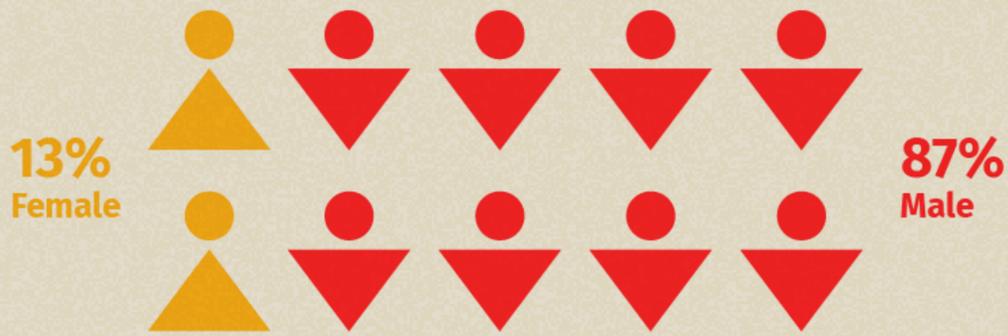
While female HOD representation in South cinema is 1% vs. 99%, Hindi cinema performs better at 16% vs. 84%.

**Samantha Akkineni, Actress**

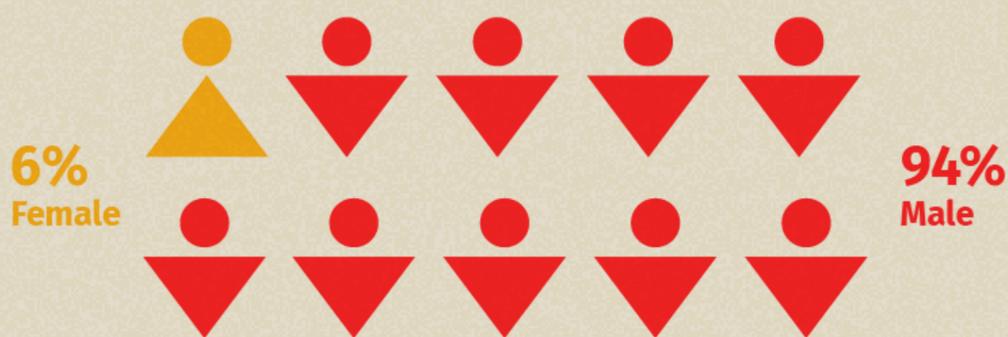
on pay parity:

***“It’s very sad that despite being among the top 3 actresses, an actor who’s not even in the top 20 will still get paid way more than you. It’s considered “very cool” when a hero hikes his remuneration. But when a woman does the same she’s looked at as “problematic,” “demanding” and “too ambitious.””***

### WOMEN IN HOD POSITIONS IN DIRECT-TO-OTT FILMS



### WOMEN IN HOD POSITIONS IN THEATRICAL FILMS



## Streaming performs better than theatrical, but is male dominated too

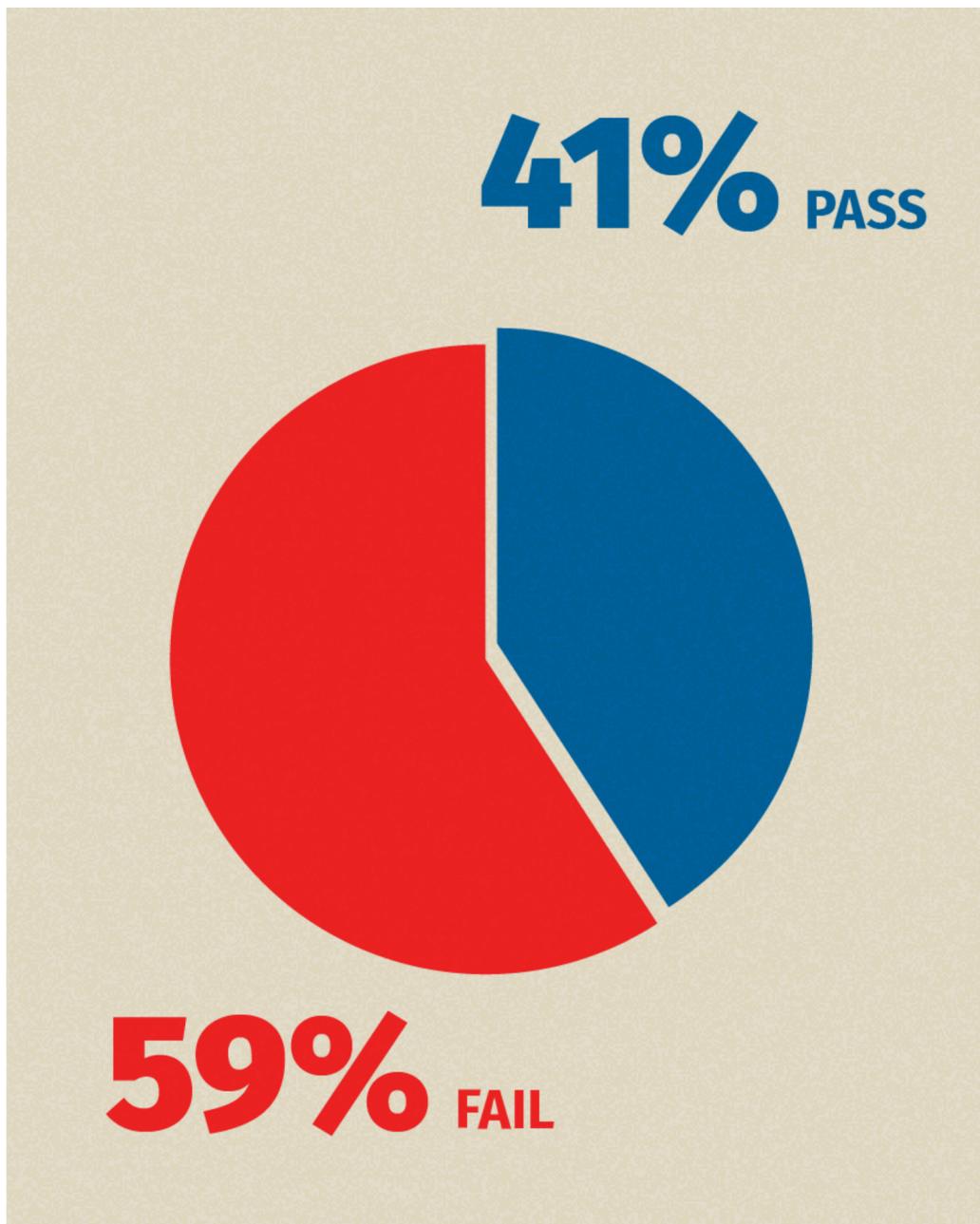
A little more than double the female representation is seen in direct-to-OTT film projects with 13% representation, but the consistently low numbers signify a long way to go for both film formats

# Some of the biggest blockbusters fail the Bechdel Test



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All 129 films were evaluated on the Bechdel Test, which is an Internationally-accepted measure of female representation in cinema.

**For a film to pass the Bechdel Test, it must satisfy the following condition: There is at least one scene in the film in which two named female characters are having a conversation that's not about a man/men**

**Taapsee Pannu, Actress**  
on sexism in the industry:

***“In my early years in the movies, I was once asked to change my dialogues during the dub because the hero wanted it altered. I refused to do it, only to find out after the release of the film, that they had gone ahead and got another dubbing artist to voice my bits there.”***

# HINDI FILMS THAT FAILED THE TEST



# SOUTH FILMS THAT FAILED THE TEST

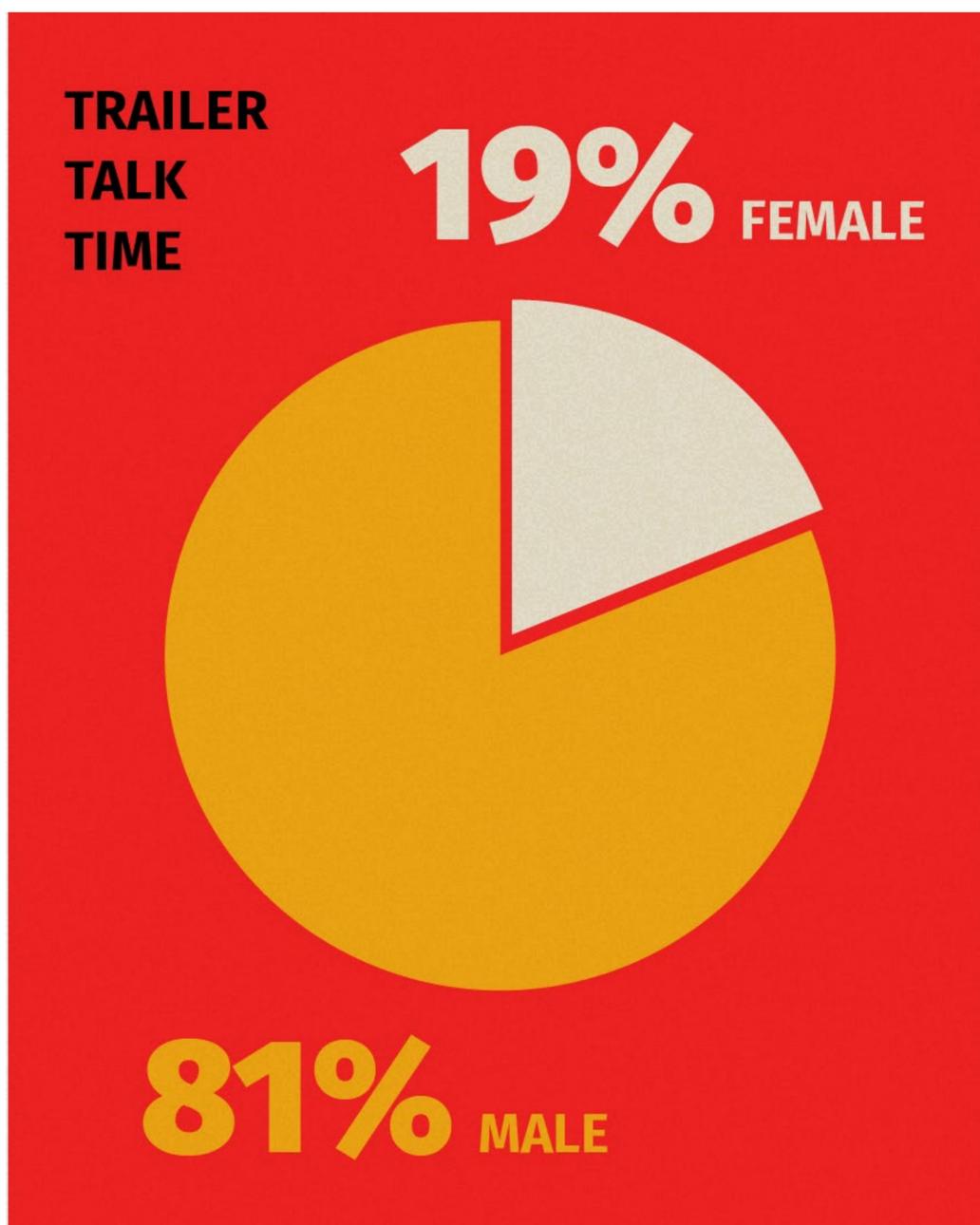


# Are female characters being represented adequately in film marketing?



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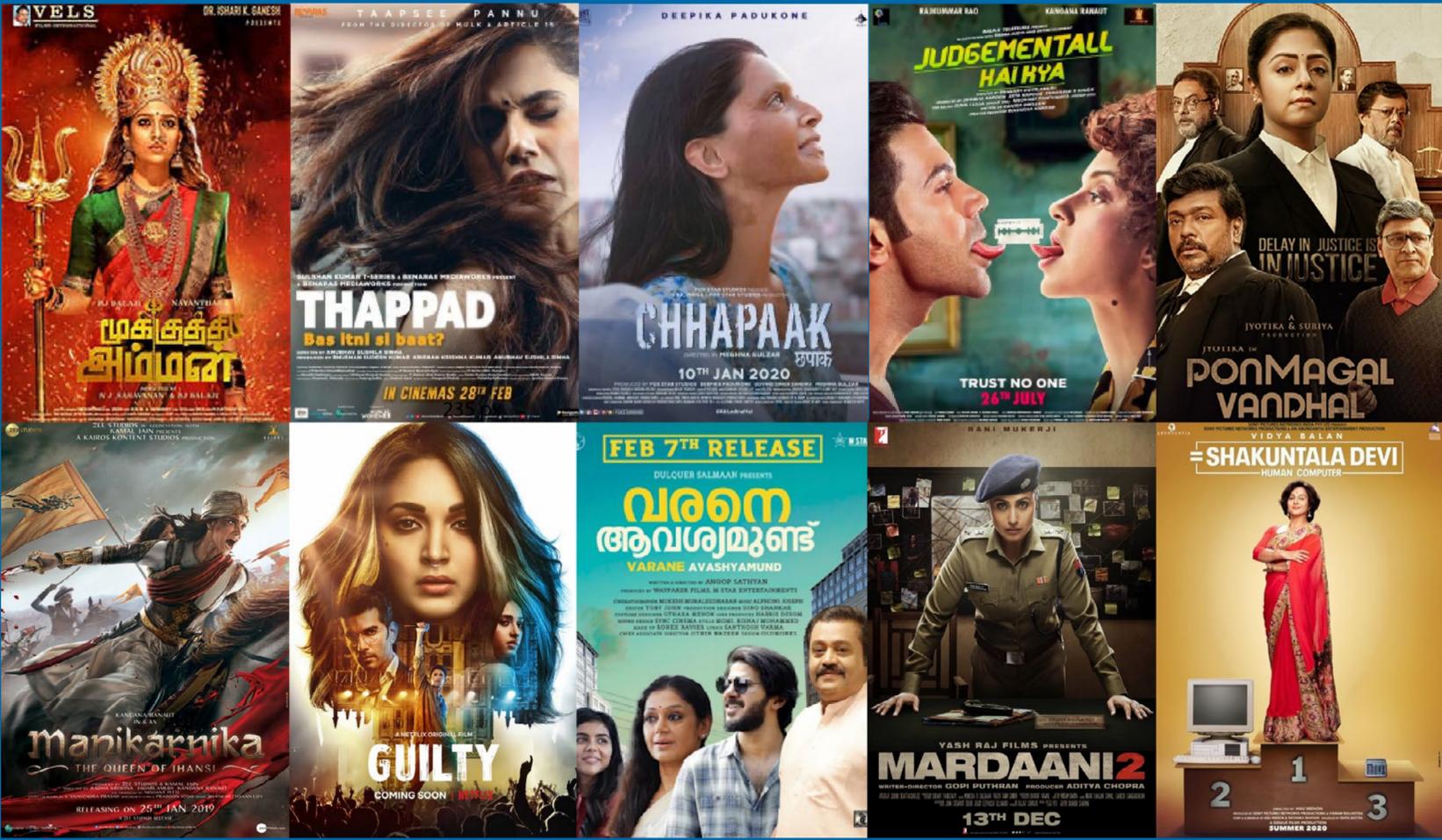




Since no existing test measures the marketing representation of female actors/characters, we devised The Trailer Talk Time Test for it.

- The main trailer of each film was identified
- The length of the spoken parts in each trailer (in seconds) was segregated into male and female components
- Measure: % of talk time in the trailer allotted to female characters.

Male characters 'outspeak' female characters by more than four times in movie trailers



Only 10 films had more than 50% female trailer talk time

**Anjali Menon, Filmmaker**  
on representation of women  
characters in trailers:

***“The hero construct is very significant in our culture. A lot of the industry’s money is riding on that hero and therefore the whole attempt is to showcase that hero - in the film, the trailer or the poster. We have in a sense normalized how skewed the system is. When people are pitching films to satellite channels, they always say that the difference in pricing while negotiating is only dependent on the male leads.”***

# To watch the O Womaniya! Roundtable [Click here](#)



**ROUNDTABLE WITH ANUPAMA CHOPRA**



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