



THE FEMININE ASPECT IN THE MARATHI MOVIE 'JHIMMA'

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ABSTRACT

Marathi film *Jhimma* revolves around a group of women who rediscover themselves through travel. The trope is not new; the treatment is. After all, it was in the 1st century CE that Roman Philosopher Seneca reportedly said, "Travel and change of place impart new vigour to the mind." In travel, man becomes old and new.... This dialogue written by writer Irawati Karnik tells the essence of the movie, *Jhimma*. It is said that if you want to know a person, if you want to see his true face, if you want to feel his company, then you have to travel with that person. People can be identified in travel. In fact, in the journey we find ourselves new. The movie, '*Jhimma*' gives us the vision of embracing ourselves new. This journey that makes the mind happy and pleasant is worth doing for everyone. The present paper focuses on the feminine aspect in the Marathi movie '*Jhimma*' (Nov-2021)

KEY WORDS: Rediscover, embracing, feminine etc.

Jhimma is a story about 7 women from different age groups and different socio-cultural backgrounds coming together on a vacation to the Great Britain with a tour company for 10 days. These women come with their issues and a lot of baggage. During the course of this trip we hope to unfold each character and their journey. Each of the women faces her demons and discover herself. The trip turns in to an opportunity to mend fences, heal old and new wounds, fall in love with life and combat their worst fears.

Jhimma is a slice of life film, which just gives us a new and fresh perspective towards our lives.

The travellers in *Jhimma* are Indians exploring the United Kingdom. Some of them have been there before but most of them have come this far from home for the first time. They have signed up with a travel agency run by Kabir (played by Siddharth Chandekar) who has inherited his wanderlust from his father. This is the first tour that has organized, so he is quite nervous. His future as an entrepreneur depends on the successful execution of this trip.

A doting mother packing his bag with food for the trip, a frustrated grandmother struggling with an old television remote control, a demanding sister ready with her shopping list, add to his worries. He doubts his own capacity to lead an all women tour but ends up surprising himself. It is refreshing to see that script writer Irawati Karnik does not make him a romantic lead. She keeps her focus on the stories of the women, who later become Kabir's friends.

There are seven of them-Indu (played by Suhas Joshi), Nirmala (played by Nirmiti Sawant), Mita (played by Kshitee Jog), Rama (played by Mrinmayee Godbole), Vaishali (played by Suchitra Bandekar), Krutika (played by Sayali Sanjeev), Maithili (played by Sonali Kulkarni). They are of different ages and temperaments, so breaking the ice takes a while. The film does not assume a natural sisterhood; it explores each woman's story with care.

The initial impressions that they had formed about each other-based mostly on attire and accent – begin to soften. Secrets are shared; bonds are forged. They open up about experiences of sexual abuse, bereavement, being taken for granted by children, running away from home, and the longing for personal space in relationships. They begin to take liberties, lean on each other, squabble occasionally, and dispense unsolicited but much valued advice.

"Unlike Aditya Chopra's film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), Gauri Shinde's film *English Vinglish* (2012) and Vikas Bahl's film *Queen* (2014), where the women are swept off their feet and emotionally rescued by the men they meet on their journeys. The women in *Jhimma* are not looking for knights in shining armour to magically solve their problems. They are pragmatic, take responsibility for their choices and turn to each other for support."

Kabir respects this dynamic. He is different from the overfamiliar tour guides in Kunal Kohli's film *Fanaa* (2006) and Imtiaz Ali's film *Jab Harry Met Sejal* (2017). Kabir is professional; he does not poke

his nose in his clients personal lives. When Maithili's fiancé-Nikhil (played by Hemant Dhome) asks Kabir to take good care of her and his future mother-in-law, Kabir replies that they are perfectly capable of looking out for themselves. They also teach Kabir to be more respectful towards the women in his family.

Jhimma is thoughtful and light hearted, touching on social issues through individual stories without becoming preachy. It may lack the intensity of Pan Nalin's film *Angry Indian Goddesses* (2015) and *Alankrita*, Shrivastava's film *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2016) but *Jhimma* is feminist in its own way. It does not claim to fight patriarchy; however, the women choose to travel without husbands, fathers and lovers. This is their assertion of autonomy.

The film emphasizes the interior landscapes of its characters rather than the picturesque locales of the UK. This works in the film's favour. It does not look like an extended tourism advertisement. The setting serves as a catalyst for the characters to introspect, and learn about the fetters they impose on themselves apart from the norms that society binds them to. They know that blaming systems and institutions will not change their lives; taking action will.

Mita is widow, who blames herself for her husband's death. They were deeply in love with each other, so she can't make peace with the fact that he never told her about his depression. He was going for

therapy, and was also taking medication, without breathing a word of any of this to his own family. There came a time when life became so unbearable that he chose to end it. She curses herself for not knowing about the pain he was going through all alone.

It is beautiful to watch how Vaishali, Nirmala and Maithili show up for Mita when they learn about the grief that she is carrying in her heart. They can see how debilitating the loss has been for her. They care without being patronizing.

Jhimma is a delightful tribute to the life-altering possibilities of travel, and unrestricted access to public space for women whose movements are regulated and hindered. Stepping out of their needs, desires and aspirations. This self-discovery empowers them to speak up where it counts in intimate relationships- so that freedom is not about breaking away; it is about breathing freely as and where you are.

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