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BREAKING THE STEREOTYPES: A STUDY ON THE MALAYALAM MOVIE *JAYA JAYA JAYA JAYA HEY*

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Abstract

A gender stereotype is an oversimplified belief or view about the characteristics, abilities, or roles that men and women should or should not possess or do. When a gender stereotype prevents men and women from pursuing their professional goals, growing as individuals, or making life decisions, it is damaging. Gender stereotyping is the practice of appointing specific characteristics or duties to a man or woman just because they are members of the same social group. This recently released Bollywood movie humorously captures the various patriarchal stereotypes/mindsets that a girl usually encounters from her childhood till her adulthood. It also signalled the start of a brand-new subgenre whereby directors could examine the tacit and nuanced methods society uses to oppress women. The genre specializes in highlighting the shortcomings in our societal conventions, which appear gentle at first glance but reveal their inherent cruelty upon closer examination. The film explores how a person like Rajesh never change, regardless of the circumstances, in addition to the amount of transformation Jaya the protagonist experiences. The preferential treatment given to a male child in a family is a topic that is spoken about and debated over for years. *The movie* is a reminder that such incidents still exist. But when Jaya, an ordinary girl with no family support, no degrees and no money signs the divorce petition, it is a nudge for society to wake



up and accept that ‘happily ever afters’ are sometimes just a fairy tale. Here, we witness when gender stereotyping leads to a violation or violations of fundamental freedoms and human rights, it is wrong.

Keywords: gender stereotype, gender, freedom, individual

“It’s not easy to challenge stereotypes, but society doesn’t change if you don’t start changing yourself first”

The roles that are ascribed to men and women from a young age are known as gender stereotypes. It is a falsification of the characteristics, variance, and feature of a particular group depending on gender. The idea that each gender and its corresponding behaviours are binary and are perpetuated by gender stereotypes, which also lead to commonly held biases on qualities or attributes. According to this presumption, there is a gap in the evaluator's thinking whether a man or a woman behaves differently from how their gender is expected to behave. People who are caught in this binary conception of gender find it difficult to comprehend people who do not fall into a rigid gender dichotomy as our society evolves toward a broader construct of what "gender means."

“Sugar and spice and everything nice, that’s what little girls are made of.” This is a famous nursery rhyme that is recited by parents when a girl child is born. But does it provide the structural support for the gender stereotypes that are embedded in our culture? What is the danger in linking an individual’s characteristics with themselves is a question that people ponder all the time. We always correlate things with qualities; it is a basic cognitive function. For instance, qualities like kindness, honesty, and innocence are connected to children; maturity and bravery are connected to youth; and wisdom is connected to old age. So, what exactly is wrong with assigning genders to positions and traits? The issue occurs when these prejudices are absorbed by both genders and begin to restrict their potential for personal growth and development. These preconceptions begin to seep into significant decisions that we make since they are associated not just with other people but also with one's own existence and set of traits and skills.



It is thought that stereotypes may have an impact on people's feelings, behaviours, attitudes, and self-cognitive growth. According to Allen (2000), stereotype is associated with the development of beliefs concerning the traits supposedly possessed by most members of a society. The idea that people in a group have characteristics that are exclusive to them is overdone. This suggests that over time, the influence of stereotypes tends to alter a person's perspective of reality. Stereotypes are commonly held ideas about the personalities and conduct of every member of a group. Stereotyping is the perception, clarification, and assessment of social objects (events) on the basis of specific notion (Ramalingam, 2006). A stereotype is a rigid, simplistic caricature of a particular group of people, which in one way or the other can affect individuals by limiting them on their academic achievement (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). Based on this information, stereotypes may prevent children from pursuing their career goals. When social and educational influences restrict students' ability to succeed academically, stereotypes become an issue.

The movie *Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey* unfolds the story of Jaya, who takes hold of her own life and learns self-defense from domestic abuse. The movie looks at several significant topics, including how daughters are still undervalued, gender imbalance in the home, and the benefits of education and financial freedom for women. Many of us have probably experienced this or know someone who has.

Jaya is raised to follow the social norms of a traditional woman from an early age. "I want to raise her like Indira Gandhi," her father says, holding the newborn Jaya. "But make sure she has long hair, or else no one will marry her," her uncle replies. Jaya used to get her brother's old books, clothes, and toys as she gets older because why spend on a girl's education when the family needs to spend a fortune on her marriage? These scenes demonstrate to us that she comes from a patriarchal household in which women are supposed to submit to males and let them make all the decisions. Jaya realizes as a teenager that her parents are obviously categorizing her and her brother based on gender. As a confident and outspoken young lady, she expresses her desire to pursue an anthropology degree. Her parents, however, compelled her to enroll in the BA Malayalam program. There, she develops feelings for her lecturer, who strikes her as a progressive guy who, in contrast to the other men in her life, supports



women's rights. His sexist side quickly surfaces as he starts to take charge of her life; after he hits her, the relationship ends.

As usual, she has no say in the issue and her family intends to marry her off as soon as they find out about the relationship. Jaya's initial meeting with Rajesh, the groom, raises suspicions. Jaya finds it uncomfortable because he seems to be a very self-absorbed person who only discusses his chicken business. The couple is married, and it is evident from the damaged appliances, furniture, and glass that their marriage won't be happy. Jaya is abused both physically and mentally from the start. Rajesh is a hazardous package as a whole. After every slap, she gets an apology from her namesake, goes to the theatre, and have dinner at a restaurant where he gets to choose the menu. He asks her if she is "happy," gives her a slap, then brings her to a restaurant to make amends. When Jaya confides in her family about the assault, they merely offer the tired counsel that it is common for husbands to lose their cool and strike their spouses. Women must learn to compromise and adapt. Jaya chooses to defend herself after accepting 21 slaps and realizing that her family is not there to support her. She uses YouTube to study self-defense techniques. One day, when Rajesh attempted to smack her, she smashed him back in self-defense.

The national anthem, which the husband hums to his wife as a peace offering, is the source of the title. Rajesh's cousin advises him to sing a song with his wife's name in it. Jaya's self-defense retaliation caused chaos in the family, despite Rajesh's ongoing abuse of her being accepted as "men will be men." Families discuss things, feigned apologies are offered, and the pair is compelled to make amends, just like in every home. The brother of Rajesh suggests that he should teach her that a woman belongs in the house—a mistake that toxic men tend to make. Jaya eventually learns about their plan and is forced to accept an unbearable defeat. Everyone, even her parents, blames her for the tragedy, calls her conceited and ungrateful, and claims that because she is not a "good woman," she is ruining her life.

Rajesh chooses to get Jaya pregnant after she began adopting Hitler's strategy so that she may quietly go back to her previous domestic life of taking care of her husband, cooking, and cleaning. Having a child is typically seen as the last straw that can keep an unhappy couple in a lifelong relationship and preserve their reputation in the eyes of the public. At last, Jaya



finds the guts to leave. Her family criticizes her for not finishing her degree and for not having financial independence, but in reality, they were the ones who denied her those chances. Surprisingly, her brother supports her and shows understanding when she goes.

A court meeting is held between the divorced couple after Rajesh applies for divorce. Women have the right to "justice, equality, and freedom," the judge emphasizes. There is an interesting and worthwhile twist at the end of the movie. Given that the film maintains the outdated definition of a decent woman as someone who is "tolerant, a good cook, and cultured," it helps us realize how backward, most of society still is. However, he emphasizes in this film that modern women are unwilling to remain silent in the face of violence from their husbands and act as a mirror to the patriarchal hypocrisies of society.

Our culture still accepts wives being abused by their husbands but finds it intolerable when wives retaliate. Is it not unjust to criticize a woman for retaliating against abuse in her home? *Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey*, even though it is just another film with a female lead cast and nothing unique to offer, I still think you should watch it for the following reasons: Great acting from Jaya and Rajesh, serious subjects presented in a light hearted way, realistic yet sardonic song lyrics, and the ability to inspire ladies to bravely challenge stereotypes and deal with comparable situations are just a few of the things that make this performance so memorable. People need to modify the way they view women to allow them to flourish and make even greater contributions to society. They must embrace women and empower them, and they must inspire all women in the community to pursue their educational goals. It makes sense that the film portrays this as the real moment to challenge and introduce an evolutionary shift in the ideology of conventional wisdom.



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