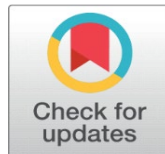
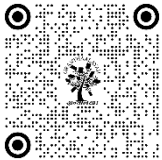


# THE PROBLEMS OF MIMI: UNDERSTANDING THE CONCERNS OF SEMI-URBAN WOMEN IN CONTEXT OF THE FILM *MIMI*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to critically analyze the film- *Mimi* [Utekar \(2021\)](#) to understand certain issues raised in its text through a popular mode of representation. The film is very recent and has become immensely successful, thus establishing its relevance from the point of research. It mainly deals with the topic of surrogacy to further highlight certain problems impending upon the day-to-day lives of common semi-urban Indian women. In the first place, this film problematizes the aspect of technology that has encroached everywhere including the realm of motherhood. Secondly, it has also dealt with the question of eastern values vs western technology through a feminine lens. Apart from this, the realistic depiction of motherhood as an independent but shackling choice also deserves some attention. The film has been chosen over other socially relevant films because of its distinct concerns pervading semi-urban Indian women who lie somewhere in the middle of Eastern values and western influence. Finally, the film is chosen over other surrogacy-based films for its practical representation of the concerns related to surrogate motherhood.

**Keywords:** Technology, Motherhood, Mimi, Surrogacy, Bollywood

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Commercial films are of immense importance in the lives of the ordinary masses since they can instill hope in them by presenting a happily ever after ending. While reading can be a tasking job, many people would rather invest time and money in films, especially those which will end on a happy note. Though commercial films mainly serve to entertain, they also possess an immense capability of influencing the minds of the audience. By presenting happy endings, these films manipulate the audience into believing that everything will fall into place. No matter

what, individuals associate themselves with the films' characters. Thus, it would not be wrong to assert that commercial films are intrinsically connected to society. In India, among the multiple film industries, Bollywood does the job of binding the diverse cultural forces which dominate the country. It is mainly famous for its '*masala*' films which entertain while providing social commentaries. Time and again, the problems of unemployment, exploitation, societal hierarchies, educational reformation, and female empowerment have been effectively handled by Bollywood. In this regard, *masala* films have played a crucial role since they have not only showcases the problems but also provide solutions for the same. Sometimes, these films also tend to whitewash certain problematic situations nonetheless leading the audience to hover on the issue.

Among other issues, the concerns of women have been frequently referred in Hindi commercial films. However, even while highlighting the problems, the roles of women are somewhere stereotyped as 'ideal wife, mother, vamp and courtesan' [Gupta & Prakash \(2021\)](#). Going by its typical rule of enlightening while entertaining and sticking to the societal norms, these films leave a lot of space for the audience to ponder upon. Off late, film makers have been shifting towards the small-town landscape and its culture since most societal and gender related problems have diminished in the fast-paced culture of the urban space. On the other hand, the small-towns of India are still going through a number of issues which need representation. Such problematic concepts provide a plethora of topics to the film-makers. Among others, gender issues are commonly taken up since the small-town society of India is still dominated by a patriarchal mindset [Sharma & Agarwal \(2020\)](#). However, the small-town women in the films of the recent years represent strength and rightfulness rather than subversion of the self [Chakraborty \(2017\)](#). They provide a good opportunity to de-stereotype the previously created image of the rural woman representing rootedness to traditions [Gupta & Prakash \(2021\)](#). Thus, instead of contradicting the urban woman belonging to the 'upper echelon of society' [Gupta & Prakash \(2021\)](#), the contemporary suburban woman becomes a mouthpiece of her ideals. The current paper will focus on the character and problems of 'Mimi' - titular role played by Kriti Sanon in a film of the same name. This film presents a suburban woman, whose role is further complicated by the use of the lens of transnational surrogacy – an aspect that problematizes women's role in general and mothers' role in particular. Besides dismantling the traditional notion of womanhood, surrogacy infringes upon the rights and privileges of an individual. Also, by bringing such a woman face-to-face with an American couple, this film also makes her a representative of Indian culture as opposed to the western school of thought. This aspect is better presented through her small-town attributes which make her a perfect amalgamation of 'tradition' and 'modernity' - an emblem of Indian identity.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last few years, several films have emerged which showcase potentially strong female characters hailing from small towns. Films like *Tanu Weds Manu* [Rai \(2011\)](#) *Badrinath ki Dulhaniya* [Khaitan \(2017\)](#), *Bareilly ki Barfi* [Tiwari \(2017\)](#) and many more have reflected on small-town life with special emphasis on the problems of gender discrimination and inequality in the society. However, the issues dealt with in these films are mostly generic where the rebellious stand taken up by the individual woman becomes the message of the film. However, in the film *Mimi*, the point conveyed becomes nuanced since pregnancy is very intricate for any woman. The idea is further complicated by invoking the aspect of Assisted Reproductive

Technology where a woman's womb is converted into a mechanized object through the usage of advanced medical technologies. The film presents how a small-town girl feels attracted towards the advancements brought in by science and technology and the economic opportunities opened up as a consequence. She readily agrees to become a surrogate for an American couple- John & Summer who ignite her dreams of a successful future by luring her with monetary benefits. However, everything changes when the commissioning parents disown the foetus and Mimi is left alone in her highly pregnant state. Although, surrogacy based films were made earlier even, those mainly focused on inter-personal relationships and were mostly based in an urban setting. Films like *Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* Abbas-Mustan (2001) and *Doosri Dulhan* Tandon (1983) had also reinforced the 'good woman' & 'bad woman' stereotypes Shriya (2017). On the other hand, a few other films like *Filhaal* Gulzar (2002) and *Badnaam Gali* Shetty (2019) have been strictly urban in its approach and thus could not focus on the societal issues pertaining to the semi-urban women who are the biggest victims of such situations.

### 3. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this paper is to explore the nuances of commercial transnational surrogacy and the technical, legal, and social issues associated with it by making a thematic analysis of the film *Mimi*. The semi-urban woman presented in the film requires some attention since she lies at the crux of tradition and modernity. In this position, she enjoys certain amenities but becomes susceptible to exploitation due to the lack of complete awareness. To systematically study the themes presented in the film, the paper is divided into the following sub-units:

- 1) The Problematic Role of Technology- this section will explore how technology can become emancipatory and terrifying at the same time.
- 2) Eastern Values and Western Culture- Here the precariousness of the woman's position would be analyzed since she is situated at the brink of both civilizations.
- 3) Rights of the Unborn Child- The child's life and ownership question impede the people involved in the act. The severity of this issue has led to the formulation of several governmental policies. However, people continue to remain unaware of the same.
- 4) Motherhood as a Problematic Choice- The concept of motherhood has mixed responses from Feminists from all over the world. The film presented the context realistically and thus left the audiences with plenty of opportunities to ponder over the idea. This part of the paper would further investigate the nuances presented in the film.

### 4. THE PROBLEMATIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

In an article entitled "Women Empowerment and Technology: An Overview" Bhat (2019), Mohd. Ishaq Bhat talks about the encroachment of technology in different socio-cultural scenarios and how society feels strained while responding to the changes evoked because of such invasion. He further claims that people press themselves by playing onto "catch-up" with the changes by adapting those in their daily practice Bhat (2019). In this film, the lead characters- Mimi and Bhanu are naïve and thus susceptible to giving in to the attractions of societal advancements for money. Upon knowing about the advantages of surrogacy and its economic value, they quickly indulge themselves in the process. Their initial reactions after knowing the details become representative of society's shock at the advancement of

technology -“Bhanu: Surrogacy! Mimi: Kiske jaisi?” (When Bhanu utters the word surrogacy to Mimi, she reveals her complete cluelessness by her inability to even pronounce the word correctly) (Utekar (2021), 0:23:45). The belief is that scientific advancements can help in overcoming multiple age-old stereotypes. However, despite the lack of much awareness, they give in to the advancements of science and perhaps out of a belief that scientific advancement are at the root of all developments and thus happiness. The problem of ‘cultural lag’ Bhat (2019) emerges here. It indicates the complexities which arise within the societal dynamics due to the lack of readiness among people to accept changes. Being parts of small-town Indian society, both Mimi and Bhanu were surrounded by a web of relationships. However, social change is a gradual process which has to be brought in through in installation of an ‘appropriate organization’ Bhat (2019). Unfortunately, Bhanu and Mimi fail to recognize the right process before accepting the changes. Hereby, the audiences feel intimidated of the impending challenges. Having the same idea in mind, they decide to avail the opportunities provided by the medium. Overcoming their initial hesitation, both agree to proceed with it.

Mimi’s improper knowledge is revealed in the scene where she feels surprised by the fact that the doctor does not know her. She has more than a thousand followers on different social networking sites. That makes her believe that she is already famous. Whereas, in reality, she is not known beyond a limited circle. Here, one understands how technology blurs the line between real and unreal by creating a hyper-real world in the digital context. Regarding this, Ishaq Bhat also mentions that although Information and Communication Technology offers a ‘promising future’ for the development of women, its installation should be contextually relevant in a ‘particular setting’. In case of Mimi, however, it becomes evident that the influence of technology is more far-reaching than her small-town mindset can capture. It is very important for technology to be ‘people-centric’ Bhat (2019). But mostly its influence has a reverse effect in the society as it also becomes evident in Mimi’s context. Her lack of awareness restricts her from having many doubts. Before conceiving the child, she fails to ask the American couple about their touring plans. Also, it skips her mind to note down their home address in the USA. Hereby, the promising entrance of technology into her life becomes questionable since by now the vulnerability of her position becomes quite evident. In such a situation, one is reminded of Gerda Neyer and Laura Bernardi’s essay where they mention how ‘Assisted Reproductive Technologies’ create an illusion by producing the ‘rhetoric of choice’ Nayer & Bernardi (2011). However, in reality these systems have done nothing to increase ‘women’s reproductive freedom’ Nayer & Bernardi (2011). Likewise, this source of instant happiness backfires very soon and Mimi is left dismayed and disillusioned.

For Mimi, the blessings of scientific development (“Vigyaan to bahut aage chala gaya hai”, Science has progressed so much) (Utekar (2021), 0:24:00) as she expresses it in the film are short-lived. The developments in medical science have made it easier for doctors to detect the health condition of the foetus. Such detections can help the parents to take prerequisite steps for the smooth upbringing of the child. However, situations can also change drastically, especially in the circumstances of surrogacy whereby the mothers fail to feel their children inside their wombs. Regarding this, Roberts and Jesudason argue how technology has privileged only a certain section of women especially ‘middle and upper class White women’ to get children with preferred ‘genetic traits’ and ‘de-select’ any kind of ‘disability’ Roberts & Jesudason (2013). Upon knowing of their child’s ill health; Summer very quickly aborts her mission to become a mother. She asks Mimi to get rid of the baby. For her, it was an easy option because the child was not present

inside her. On the other hand, for Mimi, motherhood had become a real experience. All the technological advances in the world cannot deprive a woman of the realities of pregnancy after she conceives the baby. She had felt the child breathe and grow inside her and so she felt unable to discard the foetus like an object. Thus, it can be asserted that though technology makes life more convenient, it cannot convert human beings or their experiences into products that could be saved or rejected at one's suitability.

A desperate Mimi attempts to reach out to the real parents with whom she was in touch all this while through voice and video calls. It is said that the internet, which is the latest gift of science, helps to bring people closer. Feeling convinced by the same principle, Mimi imagined that she was in complete control of the situation. She thought that the real parents of the child were just a phone call away. All her impressions were shattered within moments as it is never too hard to disconnect or block people. This incident draws one's attention to the fact that although ICT has permeated in every level of the society, its outreach does not have parity with the requirements of the people. Despite being in favour of technology, especially ICT, Bhat has pressed upon the fact that development is impossible if technology modifies the behaviour of people instead of catering to them [Bhat \(2019\)](#). What happens to Mimi is a reminder of the fact that sophisticated technology despite its wide influence, fails to be 'economically accessible' and 'socially relevant' [Bhat \(2019\)](#). Therefore, one can assert that the claims of proximity made by technology are delusional and not real. It can be further claimed that the world of scientific advances is made fragile for the less privileged people by the fortunate ones. They use their upgraded knowledge to regulate the flow of information at the lower level of society. The doctor was well-aware that foreigners often discarded their children and went absconding. However, she refrained from disclosing any such information to Mimi. Such knowledge could have prevented Mimi from undertaking the process and consequently diminished the doctor's chances of earning money.

Her attempts to regulate the flow of information were also visible in the initial part of the film when Mimi asked her about the impact of motherhood on her figure. Instead of providing her with detailed information on postnatal care, she randomly evokes the example of Shilpa Shetty - an actress whose figure did not distraught post-pregnancy. While giving the reference, the doctor abstains from revealing the intensive regime that actresses follow to hold on to their shape and size. It suggests how the developments in reproductive technology have only introduced new forms of control over female reproduction [Nayer & Bernardi \(2011\)](#). This hyper-commercialization of society is also an outcome of technological advances. Thus, even though technology opens newer avenues for development, it also plays a dicey role in maintaining social hierarchies.

## 5. EASTERN VALUES VS WESTERN SENSIBILITY

It is significant to study the convoluted status of eastern values and western ideology in the Indian context since the common semi-urban Indian women are situated at the juncture of both. Western modes of living and luxury attract them, but those fail to detach them from the eastern values imbibed in them since childhood. According to V. Chakravorty, small town women have a lot of 'substance' in them [Chakraborty \(2017\)](#). Despite carrying rusticity in their attire and behaviour, such women are upright having the strength to fight for both- her own as well as other's rights. Such traits make her represent the spirit of India which according to Maitrayee Chaudhury is an amalgamation of 'tradition and modernity' [Chaudhuri \(2012\)](#). As an emblem of this spirit, women in films are expected to represent this



coexistence. Sometimes, they might modify the values depending on the situation and needs. However, they rarely debunk them altogether. On the other hand, during times of crisis, these values become their greatest source of strength. The very first instance of the film depicts the American couple surveying the country in search of a perfectly fit woman. However, to them, neither the woman's background nor her capabilities matters. Their only concern was the outward appearance of the women, which they evaluated by casting a glance at them. Here, it becomes evident how in the process of transnational surrogacy, women are subjected to a foreign gaze. In her thesis submitted to Wright State University, Stephanie Brooks mentions how the process of transnational surrogacy operates in conjunction with racism and other structural ills that determine a few people to be less than humans. Even their preference for Indian women is determined by the fact that Indians are primitive and more aligned to natural elements than rational western women, given the modern amenities [Brooks \(2020\)](#).

Also, surrogacy is a process that involves a lot of money. In the film, the American couple compels Mimi to undertake a quick decision or else they will find somebody else and give money to the other woman. However, in reality, they were the ones looking desperately for someone to bear a child within their budget. The belief that anything can be acquired by paying money is rooted in the idea that Indian women like Mimi are poor and nothing more than resources that can be conquered or over thrown at any point in time. This showcases how transnational surrogacy is essentially a site for exploitation of the underprivileged woman who is manipulated through the use of various 'disciplinary tools' for the creation of 'perfect mother workers' [Schneider \(2018\)](#). Such manipulative designs ignore the dynamics which are bound to arise in this new world of 'technologised and medicalised bodies' [Schneider \(2018\)](#). When they reject their baby due to some health issues, Bhanu laments at their regressive attitude by exclaiming- "tum angrezo ko yehi lagta haina, paise se kuch bhi khareed sakteho, ye garib country hai, paisa fenko, hum kuch bhi karne ko tayyar ho hai" (Just because we are poor, you foreigners feel that we will readily do to whatever you say) ([Utekar \(2021\)](#), 0:55:45). Though Mimi takes a quick decision for conceiving the child, she was not equally rash in discarding it. Many radical feminists have discarded the concept of 'motherhood' as 'something innate' to the nature of women. They argue that women are not naturally inclined towards motherhood, rather it is a social responsibility imposed upon them as a biological feeling. [Nayer & Bernardi \(2011\)](#). However, in case of Mimi, her motherly role is anything but a societal imposition. Rather, as a surrogate mother to a white child, her role tends to shock the entire societal structure. So, unlike the claims made by the western feminists, for Mimi, the choice of motherhood does not legitimize her subordinate position rather it determines her strength and freedom of choice.

Her resolution to give birth to the baby reiterates the Indian values as per which the adoptive mother always has an edge over the biological mother. This aspect parallels the fact that the mythological character- 'Yashoda' (Krishna's adoptive mother) is considered to be the real mother of 'Lord Krishna' when in reality Devaki gave birth to him [Anonymous. \(2018\)](#). Undertaking a similar role, Mimi proceeds with raising the child by herself. For her, abortion of the foetus is equal to murder of a child since she had felt it alive inside her. At once, the audience realizes that the childish girl-Mimi is also capable of taking bold decisions in life. At this point of the film, every Indian feels capable of relating to her emotions since, in India, ethics as well as the law, recognize every individual's right to live. Section 312 (6) to 316 (7) of the Indian Penal Code give priority to the unborn child. As per these sections, individuals involved in causing death of a foetus are liable to punishment depending

on the nature of the case. Even her conservative parents embrace the child wholeheartedly. For them too, Mimi becomes a representation of both - 'Yashoda' as well as 'Devaki' [Utekar \(2021\)](#).

On the other hand, the money-minded and western educated doctor fails to display a similar sensibility. When Mimi feels the pangs of labour, the doctor asks- "bacchey ki maa kahaanhai?" (where is the mother of the child?) [\(Utekar \(2021\), 01:10:50\)](#). The doctor reflects her lack of sensibility towards the labour pangs of a pregnant woman in this 'global age' where bodies are denied of human spirit with the increasing use of medical and biotechnological facilities [Schneider \(2018\)](#). The doctor with her western educational background fails to give an emotional response to Mimi. Her parents on the other hand are devoid of such influences of the western world. They rightly judge the credibility of the doctor who was more concerned about contacting the source parents and carrying forward the formalities rather than helping the one in pain. The given context brings Mimi into a peculiar position causing much trauma and retrospection. However, she never gives up on her child and continues to raise him even at the cost of several sacrifices. At this point, her values become her principal source of strength and identity. Perhaps, she starts imagining herself as 'Yashoda' when she changes her attire from western dresses to Indian sarees. She even decks up her child (who was a 'white') as Lord Krishna. However, she fails to understand the legal implications of transnational surrogacy and again becomes vulnerable to the manipulations of the source parents who start taking advantage of her legal unawareness. In his article, "Women Legal Literacy: A Brief Review in India", P. Firoz Babu claims how even literate women in India are not aware of their 'rights and entitlements under the law' [Babu \(2023\)](#). Among various factors, he identifies the 'lack of resources' and 'social backwardness' as two major factors. It is not wrong to assume that despite her upright nature, Mimi is not aware of her legal rights as a surrogate given her circumstances, where the very idea of surrogacy is foreign. This sort of legal unawareness renders many women vulnerable to such external threats. The issue is a matter of concern for both the government as well as Indian feminists. As such they have imposed so many regulations on surrogacy and have banned commercial surrogacy altogether [Gupta & Chaturvedi \(2020\)](#).

## 6. RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN CHILD

Though commercial surrogacy has now been banned in India, it was once very popular and always involved a transaction between source parents and the surrogate. Childbirth was naturally converted into a business deal. In such situations, the commissioning parents developed an obvious urge to acquire a perfect child. Sometimes, they also became choosy regarding the traits and sex of the child, thus literally converting the child into a designer baby [Das & Maut \(2014\)](#). The film, which is based in the year 2013, showcases how the American couple becomes upset after knowing about their child's health condition. They make a quick decision to discard the child. All they can say to an astonished Bhanu is "this isn't what we wanted" [Utekar \(2021\)](#). Their cognition of the child's disability leads them to take actions which were unjust for both- their unborn child as well as Mimi. It is also easy for them to declare "ask Mimi to get rid of the child" since they have never felt it alive inside them. This lack of physical attachment to the child leads the parents to forget about the rights of the unborn child. As they finalize their decision, Bhanu (who has intimately stayed connected with the baby) feels dismayed and says- "hum hotay to esey bacchey ko apne sar par bithakar rakhtey" (we would have taken extra care of such a child) [Utekar \(2021\)](#). A report on Child Identity Protection

produced by UNICEF on February 2022 records how children in surrogacy situations are often illegally deprived of multiple rights which negatively impact them [UNICEF \(2022\)](#). Although Mimi's character is unaware of all such nitty-gritty, her moral values prevent her from killing the foetus that was breathing and moving inside her womb.

Another problem associated with the rights of the unborn child pertains to its parentage. Since several people are involved in the process of surrogacy, the foetus in such cases is deprived of their parental claims [Das & Maut \(2014\)](#). The problem is evoked in the film through the presentation of a scene in which Mimi points at Bhanu on being interrogated about the child's paternity. Feeling responsible for her troubles, Bhanu says nothing to resist the claims. However, the issue of parentage continues to haunt them in different stages. In the first place, the doctor hesitates to proceed with the treatment in the absence of the commissioning parents. The convoluted status of the child's parentage is revealed when Mimi's parents exclaim "baccha iske andar hai to maa to yehi hui na!" (the child bearer is only the mother) and the doctor responds "ye surrogate hai!" (she is just a surrogate) [Utekar \(2021\)](#). The problem continues even after the birth of the child when people keep on persisting Bhanu to disclose how he had begotten such a fair child. Though the situation seemed hilarious on the silver screen, it doesn't fail to draw attention to the larger problem regarding the parental claims of an unborn child of surrogacy. Regarding this, the UNICEF report also mentions that different people and 'organizations' which facilitate surrogacy often fail to properly collect, store or preserve information related to a child's identity. It not only creates trouble during 'birth registration and certification' but also infringes on many fundamental rights of such children [UNICEF \(2022\)](#).

The third concern relates to the issue of detachment from the gestating mother. Even though the surrogate is only treated as a carrier for the child, issues of attachment are bound to arise when the mother-child relationship is in question. If the child is handed over immediately after birth, the pangs of detachment are likely to remain low. However, sometimes due to medical or legal issues, the child might be left with the gestating mother for some more time [Saxena et al. \(2012\)](#). In those circumstances, the situation becomes even more complex as breaking the tie a few days after childbirth becomes even more difficult. In the film, the character Mimi had to stay with the child indefinitely. She even started raising him as her own son when suddenly after four years the original parents reappeared. After knowing of the perfect health condition of the child, they wanted him back. At once their claims were against the natural rights of both- the child and the gestating mother who by that time had developed a strong bond of affection with each other. The financial arrangement made before conception in cases of surrogacy often creates a lack of clarity with regard to the terms and conditions of the contract [UNICEF \(2022\)](#). It often leads to trouble for both the child and the gestating mother. Detachment from the child is already a taxing process for any gestating mother who tends to attach to the child emotionally after carrying it physically through the entire tenure of her gestation [Das & Maut \(2014\)](#). In case of Mimi, the problem intensifies further as she rears the child for almost four years after giving birth to him.

## 7. THE PROBLEMATIC CHOICE OF MOTHERHOOD

Reproduction has always been an area of much contestation in the realm of feminism. While some feminists reject it on the ground that it becomes an anchor point for discriminatory practices in society, others believe that it performs the task of uniting different women through their shared experience of giving birth [Nayer &](#)



[Bernardi \(2011\)](#). Motherhood can also be considered a source of strength, especially when it involves a woman's choice. In the film, Mimi makes a bold decision to continue her pregnancy even during the absence of the commissioning parents. In the next instance, the film portrays how this physical state of her brings together women belonging to three generations- herself, her mother and her grandmother. Though horrified initially, the three women unite in an empathetic bond. Her grandmother even goes to the extent of scolding her own son-“galti to thaari hai” (it is your entire fault) ([Utekar \(2021\)](#), 01:04:53) instead of rebuking Mimi who was already suffering from the pains of pregnancy. Although presented in a positive light, the commercial aspects of the film whitewashes many problems associated with motherhood. Mimi's choice of motherhood was devoid of any social pressure- given her unmarried status. However, her preference of motherhood above her personal dreams and ambitions tends to raise question. Society has a tendency of imposing the responsibilities of motherhood as natural in women [Nayer & Bernardi \(2011\)](#). Likewise, the film also showcases Mimi who enjoys her role as a mother at the expense of her own dreams. After the delivery, Mimi sits confused with the child and her best friend. At this point, her friend advises her to accept life as it arrives. Though such advice sounds philosophical in the context of the film, a question that arises is whether she would have given similar advice to her male friend or not. Nayer & Bernardi also comment on how motherhood is idealized in every society. By creating an ideal image of the mother figure, their role as subordinates is legitimized in the society [Nayer & Bernardi \(2011\)](#).

Some critics have also criticised the film for presenting motherhood as a sacrificial choice [Shaji \(2021\)](#). After delivering the child, Mimi aborts her mission to become a Bollywood star. Not only does she stop receiving phone calls from her Mumbai-based agent of Bollywood, but also miserably fails at applying powder- a basic component of the makeup. This symbol represents a bigger problem faced by Indian women. As per the patriarchal perspective, a mother is not supposed to be happy outside the realm of motherhood. A single and independent woman is still free to make choices of her own, but not a mother. For a mother, her child is expected to be her single source of happiness and all her choices should anchor around the concerns of the child. The idea has been further elaborated in the film through the projection of Mimi's change in terms of her personality and dress. From an extrovert character, she suddenly becomes more reserved and restrained. Also, she is spotted wearing a saree most of the time post-childbirth. The change of her attire from semi-western to completely Indian is again problematic since it tends to establish motherhood through a patriarchal image rather than a subjective experience of the woman. The patriarchal society everywhere connects 'motherhood with nature' [Nayer & Bernardi \(2011\)](#). Doing so, establishes a problematic picture of motherhood in masochistic terms and eliminates any space for Feministic reflection on the idea. As such, they blur the distinction between 'biological' and 'social motherhood' and continue to exploit and dominate them [Nayer & Bernardi \(2011\)](#). Above all, the issue has been white-washed in a romantic light. It forces one to believe that women are expected to embrace the choice of motherhood while making numerous sacrifices for the same. It not only reinstates the ideal image of a woman but also ensures the smooth upbringing of children who are supposed to be productive and contributing agents of the future society.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The title of the film has layers of meaning attached to it. While Mimi is a very common name for every third girl from India, the term is also frequently used by

children to address their mothers. Thus, every ordinary Indian girl is expected to become a caring mother at some point of time. It is this aspect of care that invokes several problems in the lives of women. In the film, the problem intensifies further with the inclusion of the aspect of commercial pregnancy and the semi-urban status of the woman. It is based on the year 2013, which was a time when commercial surrogacy was still legal in the country [Gupta & Chaturvedi \(2020\)](#). However, the government had to ban it because most of the cases were infringing upon the rights of women, besides giving rise to several complications in society. However, in a country like India with numerous illegal clinics and poor legal awareness among people, a question lingers regarding the outreach of its benefits to the concerned women.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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None.

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