

## **West-orient Memsaaabs of Indian Films in Colonial period: The history, heritage and hegemony**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The growth of Indian cinema and its messages under British colonial rule significantly parallel the political and societal atmosphere of the country of the time thus asserting its historical and cultural identity. Certainly, there was a significant contribution of western community and their technology in this evolution. The pre-colonial period generation invariably benefited from each other with cultural wisdom of one, and the modern integration of the other. Due to societal prejudices women of Indian origin were discouraged to become part of film industry. We so find the preliminary female actors in Indian films being of foreign origins.

They may be considered as leading female entrepreneurs of Indian Film industry. They were integral part of decision making working in different capacity as an Actor, Director, Music composer and prominently Proprietor of film Production house. The journey for them was not simple but extremely challenging. However, they prolifically emerged as indispensable part of what we today understand as 'making of modern Indian woman'.

This study aims to analyse historical and social stature of Anglo-Indian female actors, their stardom, accomplishments- failures and contribution in shaping the imagery of modern Indian women. The paper will consider the physical and virtual migration and assimilation of western filmic individuals into mainstream modern Indian cultural premise. Further, a review will be made of trend setting phenomenal transition where 'modern' Indian minds were conditioned to appreciate western ideas, white-skinned heroines and related aspects of modernisation. The film themes, orientalising of heroines of western origin, their contribution to Indian society and censorship in colonial India will further be discussed.

*Keywords: Anglo-Indian actors, cultural identity, contribution, modern Indian woman, orientalising.*