

**Impact of Indian Cinema: Influence of Films on Students in
Modern Times**

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Abstract

Films are one of the best means for provoking thoughts and ideas and engaging people to reflect on their actions and way of life. Films are therefore a prominent channel for student learning. Students take pleasure in watching films, imitating movie characters and grow fond of learning languages and scientific concepts through them. Films are very commonly used as a tool for students learning in higher education and they have significant positive impacts. In the recent years, there has been a significant transformation of Indian cinema not just as a source of entertainment, but, through portrayal of social and responsible cinema thereby having a stronger impact on the masses. Gradually the film fraternity is focussing on social issues and has created awareness amongst the students. However, the majority of the movie makers still have a backdated and stereotypical film making mind-set which may have opposing effects. Various cultural transformations have happened over a point of time in India owing to the contributions made by contemporary movies and films. There have been changes with regards to the ideas of love and marriage, instances of live in relationships have come of age and there has been a constant and continuous shift from the concept of joint families to nuclear families. Building on the changes in the cultural values; preferences have changed with regards to choice of career options, attitude, mental and physical health, ethics and belief system. The research paper focuses on the holistic effects of Indian cinema on students and their behavioural changes as a bi-product of films. It aims to showcase the impact of changing genres and portrayal of students in Indian cinema amongst the youth and encourages the film makers and media personnel to bring social issues on mainstream by implementing real aspects into the reel cinema.

Key words

Indian cinema, influential channel, film fraternity, social issues, cultural practices, genres.

Introduction

Cinema is a form of art and has been one of the greatest influences in our modern life. It's the combination of technology, business, entertainment and aesthetic. Film implies technology (picture taken in the celluloid camera and editing), movie is the business and entertainment, and cinema is the aesthetics. Cinema is a visual art of storytelling with rich inputs of music, screenplay, cast and script, mirrors the contemporary society in which it operates. From emotional dramas to action-thrillers, cinema derives its content, ideas and imaginations from its surroundings. Cinema has transformed itself from being a taboo to a virtual way of life through its journey. Social dynamics have always been reflected in the content of cinema. It also provides a platform that reflects the growth of economy, politics

and technological advancements. Besides, any movies have an important impact on its viewers as it has a lot of influence on our viewpoint

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about everyday life. Youth is the time when people want deal with the polluted environment of the society and youth is the best time to work for it. We have watched youths specially students taking part in every major incidents of our nation. From the protests to the language movement. This active youth knowhow to lead and speak up against injustice. A lot of efforts of making movie were inspired by them. The Indian cinema is one of the most effective tools in addressing various social issues by the medium of a screenplay. Since its origin in 1913, movies have been a vital medium to convey social insights and change perceptions, while continuing to function as an crucial mode of entertainment to the masses.

1. Clichés and Breaking Stereotypes

The Indian cinema is the world's largest producer of feature films, producing about 800 to 1000 films annually, two times the numbers that Hollywood works on. "Bollywood", has a major share in Indian cinema industry, focuses on Hindi-language films, with its headquarters in Bombay, now Mumbai. Movies are produced in regional languages as well, including Bhojpuri, Bengali, Tamil, to name a few.

Sometimes, it is very intriguing to comprehend whether it is the films that are shaping the society or vice versa. Issues such as gender inequality, female feticide, caste system, dowry, awareness on sensitive issues such as stigma related to mental illness has been very well brought to the forefront in form of cinema. The following are a few such aspects that cinema has managed to shed light on:

1.1. Speaking in English as a style statement

Bollywood depicts Indian who do not know English as illiterate, dumb and a theme for comedy. People who know English are given more importance, as it is one of the global languages and it has become a part of a trend. A modern person speaking in Hindi is not so

much desired in Indian society and it has become a class statement and people are judged based on knowledge of English. The movie “English Vinglish” depicts the character of a small entrepreneur (housewife) who does not know English. English as a language is so much given significance that her own daughter in the film is embarrassed about the fact that her mother cannot speak English and thus, she is not respected because of this very fact. At the ending eventually when she learns English in order to stand up for herself, her family members; her daughter and husband start to respect her and feel that what they did was wrong. Thereby showing that English is just a language and not knowing English does not make someone less of a person. This aspect is very important in modern day for students who come from rural areas or have received schooling with a regional language as their medium of instruction throughout schooling. Moreover this highlights that it is never late to learn.

1.2. Effect of Bollywood on dance forms and music

India has had a rich tradition of music and dance and they are an integral part of narrative expressions. Mainly, Indian tradition relies on oral tradition mainly to create images and this trend has been encouraged by producers and film makers while creating a story. In earlier Bollywood films, the style of dancing was derived from the classical art forms of Bharatnatyam and Kathak. However, in recent trends, Due to globalization we can see Bollywood dances have been influenced by various dance forms around the globe: Hip hop, Jazz, Ballroom Dance and other western dances. Thus, there is little craze for classical dances among the youth. They are keen towards western free style dance form so as to fit in amongst the crowd. Music is an integral part of Indian tradition and culture. In earlier times, elements from Carnatic and Hindustani music were used. Calm and peaceful songs were composed. Later it was greatly influenced by Western Music. If music of last two decades is observed, they are of Indian pop music. They include rap songs which originated in America. Moreover, nowadays new “remixes” of old Bollywood songs are produced. The youngsters become fonder of these songs as they are more catchy and shorter than the original songs. This is how the essence of the original music is lost.

1.3. Public display of affection

Indian society has never been keen on expressing love publically. Showcasing love in public has always been criticized largely and scene as action of obscenity which is against the Indian Culture. Public display of affection became a taboo. Scenes showcasing the feelings of love and intimacy were shown in an undisclosed manner. In Bollywood movies, the couples are shown romancing and being somewhat intimate in public places. In reality, this is now being observed in colleges and other public places. Colleges of Bollywood movies are often shown as places where students have fun, sing, dance but do not study. Thus, creating this view in teenagers’ mind who are entering college life that life in college is all about fun and adventure. Public Display of Affection is now a popular concept in India especially among youth. Bollywood plays a significant role in promotion of this fact. Young people often feel it is okay to express their love for their loved ones in public but it is still not acceptable in country like India. There is a difference between the thoughts of today's youngsters and the age old prevailing cultures, traditions and values.

1.4. Glorification of consumption of toxicants

Bollywood shows alcohol consumption as a style statement or a means to overcome failure in lives. These failures include: Love failures, failures in professional life, crisis in personal life, and so forth. Similar trend can now be observed among the youth of India. Youngsters try to imitate the characters of the movies with when they relate with them. In most of the movies, Bollywood shows the people who drink and smoke as so called “cool” people. Teenagers seldom start to drink and smoke at the age of 15–16 years, in order to prove themselves superior in their friend circle and also to look nonchalant. The depiction of concept of Women empowerment can also be questioned here as in most of the films, either an independent or a “bad” woman smokes or drinks. In Bollywood movies, no celebration is complete without alcohol and it has shown that in college life is essential to do such things and enjoy life. It is the means to have pleasure in life.

1.5. Depiction of the LGBTQ+ community

Bollywood has been insensitive toward the community of homosexuals. Homosexuality has been a taboo in India until today's time when Article 377 has been a much needed breakthrough in Indian society. Homosexuals are often picturised as a separate part of community due to the cultural built of India. Homosexuals have never been included in the society but have always been seen as a set of a separate entity. Bollywood promoted this by depicting them in a separate manner. As in “Dostana” (2008) and “Student of the year” (2012) displayed homosexuality as an element of comic relief. It is hard to find any Bollywood movie which has a homosexual protagonist. Bollywood has always played a vital role in construction of stereotypical images of homosexuals. Example: Fashion Designers in Bollywood movie are shown as homosexuals as done in movies like “Partner” (2007) and “Fashion” (2008). Bollywood promoted the stereotypical image of LGBTQ+ community has gone to the extent of making negative views in association with it as in movies like “Welcome” (2007) and “Heyy Baby” (2007). Certain movies like “Fire” (1996), “Girlfriend” (2004) and “Aligarh” (2016) have tried to bend rules but have faced controversy and severe criticism. These movies received huge amount of public backlash due to stereotypes which have prevailed in the society related to homosexuals. Nonetheless they have managed to alter social standards and have affected the minds of a smaller fraction of people in a positive way at the same time. Acceptance and appreciation of movies like “Padmavat” (2018), “Margarita with Straw” (2014), “Kapoor and Sons” (2016) shows the initiation of the much needed change in Bollywood.

2. Realism

This taste of Indian cinema began to create a new wave, both for the movie makers who had the potential to go beyond just entertaining musicals to bring a social cause or message to the big screen. Various new gen movie makers follow more innovative ways to convey the social message.

Considering the diversity and outreach, films are tools to comprehend and communicate social norms, attitudes and cultural derivatives and behaviours to the audiences. Films play a vital role in reflecting the society that they are catering to, yet subtly shaping and influencing the society. Gradually the film fraternity is focussing on social issues and has created awareness amongst the students via experimentation. Sometimes these experiments failed, while at others, they appealed to the masses so much so that they set new standards.

The following are a two such movies that turned out to be chartbusters while having a lasting impact on audiences and at least left them pondering on bringing a change in the society.

2.1. Rang De Basanti (2006): Igniting Patriotism in Youth

Released on the iconic day of January 26th 2006, which happens to be India's Republic Day, this movie is an apt example of showcasing history. The movie typically was a mix of all the ingredients that a stereotype Bollywood flick would contain. But what set it apart was the youth awakening and youngsters standing up for justice. When the group of students felt that the government took no stringent action against injustice, despite their silent protests and candlelight wakes, they decided to avenge the death by gunning down the then corrupt people. Further, the movie also revealed, though a fine, but visible streak on varied opinions on Hindu Muslim friendship, owing to generation gap, somewhere conveying, that the modern generation chose friends independent of religious background. The storyline highlights the powers held by present day young students and the mass, and their right to demand justice. It also illustrates the trustworthy friendship and sense of belonging among college students.

2.2. Taare Zameen Par (2007): Appreciating Special Abilities

This movie, based on the medical condition of dyslexia, was successful in bringing out the traumas of a dyslexic child, who until the age of eight, is unable to read and write and is mistook as being lazy and dull and hence is severely penalized by the parents and the school. The sheer ignorance and stubbornness of the parents about their son's condition makes them decide to forcefully send the child to a boarding school, where he meets his arts teacher, who rightly identifies the child's actual problem and urges the parents to understand why their child is different from other kids of his age.

The movie conveys a very strong message about this mental condition and how love, care and more attention could help the such people improve and flourish. Simultaneously conveying the message that such disabilities should not be looked down upon as a social stigma of mental illness and how such patients may be so specially gifted.

3. Illustration of Student Life

During 20th century most of the films portrayed student life as fun and carefree, with groups of people dancing and singing in the background while the protagonists have the time of their lives. However, in recent times, various films like "3 Idiots"(2009) and "Chhichore"(2019)

have depicted a part of the real picture Students' self-centred learning, critical, creative and reflective thinking are the outcomes of authentic education. Through its depiction, these films have a powerful impact on its audiences. Extraordinary expectations from parents are often based on ignoring the facts, and *Three Idiots* features the many dialogues and scenes which reflect the negative effects of parents' undue pressures and expectations on their children's academic performance. It tries to emphasise that one who enjoys and has interest in the subject is more successful than others who do not. This pressure may lead to depression, anxiety and can often cause suicidal thoughts among the students as it derails their mental health.

Student and teacher interaction is one of the most important elements in education. Student learning through these interactions can be either facilitated or hindered; and here teacher attitudes are important and have a immediate impact on students. Harsh attitudes degrade questioning abilities, confidence, decision-making capacities and negatively alter the learning styles and mind set of students towards education. Treating students in an authoritative and inconsiderate way reduces their confidence levels. The harsh attitudes of teachers in the educational context depicted in many films are portrayed as ridiculous and at the same time detrimental. The practice of bookish learning and motivating students for this are harming education. The movies depict positive and negative examples of peer influence. The camaraderie of college life has positive effects not only on students' life but also in their adult life. That association helps them to realise their strengths and weaknesses; it helps them by offering opportunities for group learning and also supports the concept of learning for intellect and excellence rather than for success or money. Movies like *Three Idiots* can be utilised to stimulate awareness of the need for an alternative conceptualisation of education among parents and other community members. They can help students to develop different approaches to their learning, based on their own preferences, and can also be utilised in modifying teachers' attitudes. The movie presented such a situation where these hindrances to learning have been recognised. Inauthentic approaches to education, unnecessary pressure on students, negative associations between students and harsh attitudes of teachers crucially impact on students' overall educational performance. There is a need for change in these areas in order to provide an education that supports the stability and strength of the next generation.

4. Conclusions

Various studies have outlined the influence of movies on Indian culture. It's not only the Bollywood movies but also the Hollywood movies play a significant role in creating an impression among the minds of young generation. From the above sections it is aptly clear that movies tend to influence the minds and thought process of people. The influence movies create is seen in the changing patterns of behaviour by the members of the society. It should not be presumed that Bollywood movies create a negative impression of Indian culture. However, the basic idea of the paper was to demonstrate how subtle changes are introduced in Indian culture through films and how it affects the youth and students. Whether the

changes are positive or negative is the reader's intellect to decide and judge. To sum up it can be said there are pertinent changes being witnessed in Indian culture as an outcome of the deep impact created by the movies. Change is the only unchangeable law of nature. So in consonance with that culture is also not static in nature it also keeps changing. There have been numerous instances where various movies have faced several degrees of protests; with an idea that movies have a direct attack on Indian culture with completely destroying cultural ethos of India or at certain points show Indian culture in poor light. Cinema is observed as a powerful medium of information, education and entertainment results in process of opinion building in various social groups. Impact of films are damaging for society and morality. Considering the deep impact and impression Bollywood movies create in the minds of young generation consisting of students, the need of the hour is to have a proper policy to safeguard the same and ensure the kind of movies screened do not have any content that can have a far reaching negative impact on the nascent minds.

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