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HOW FILMS ARE IMPACTING THE SOCIETY

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Abstract

Focusing on the lives of Individuals & how we have to look at cinema & current trends

To understand how Films are impacting the lives of Individuals we have to look at concept of *If we look at the History of Indian Cinema it is very diverse. Every decade has its own story, if we look from the 70s Parallel cinema wave was started but at this time the wave is low but there is a rise in new ways of filmmaking often called " Propaganda Movie ". In this paper I will look at over the decades how the writing of films shaped the society, their impacts & how in general trend india is witnessing a new wave of filmmaking that will be dangerous even I will also give a light on the Political Documentary. All of these will help us in answering the question: do films lie?*

INTRODUCTION

Cinema is a very diverse concept, to get into depth we have to understand it, we have to look at what does films refers to us most of the people living in society doesn't know about the term Parallel Cinema even many of individuals think that hindi cinema is diverse they don't look beyond that we have to move from this concept. Today we are witnessing how Pan Indian Cinema is growing & South Cinema has given us various gems. If we want to know how films impact society, we have to first understand about films. How films in different decades from the 70s to now have changed & what does cinema mean to us.

●1. How do we have to look at the films in Indian Cinema?

Recently I was watching a roundtable talk at the Hollywood Reporter India in a talk Payal Kapadia, the director of "All we Imagine as Light" shares her idea that what do we understand by the word "cinema", what do we understand by the word "film", she said whether it is a Instagram reel or a short clip of vlog or documentary they all comes under the umbrella of cinema we have to look at them as also cinema so when we are talking about the films in Indian Cinema we have to look at everything around our surroundings; if we look at the word Indian Cinema so it comprises of all Bollywood & Regional cinema.

Look at the decade starting from 1971-1981. In this decade something remarkable happened in the writing of Indian Filmography. Back to the 50s & 60s the writing of the films were different. A new era emerged that gave India its most Iconic Character known as "Angry Young Men". If we look at the writings of Salim-Javed they somehow reflect the society because during the 70s if we look back at the J.P Movement & Emergency days so the political environment was very hot. Most of the scholars argued why the name Angry Young Men was given, is injustice is seen by the lens of men only & I also agree on this point, the whole conversation look at Angry Young Men as the only pivotal change in cinema that gave us remarkable movies including Zanjeer, Dewaar, Don, Sholay, Kaala Patthar, Shaan & other ones but I don't agree at all with the statement that these movies bring the pivotal change in cinema.

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That's why I mention above that how do we have to perceive the cinema, how do we have to look at the filmography so recently on Amazon Prime a Documentary series came known as "Angry Young Men" in the series Jaya Bacchan said one of the beautiful things that Women centric cinema need was more important, I will look at the cinema from the point of view of the women centric cinema that gave us to the concept of Angry Young Women, see look at the movie Ankur & Nishant what do you see in them, a resistance & these movies shows us the path to Angry Young Women. Back those days look at the movies of Smita Patil, Shabana Azmi & parallel cinema wave started by Shyam Benegal. That was the Absolute cinema, I am not saying anything wrong about the writing of Salim-Javed, they did remarkable but while looking at them we have forgotten the cinema shown us by Ankur that's why I made the point that we have to look at cinema from different angles.

The Era of the 80s wasn't good for Hindi cinema. There was a sudden increase in B Grade Movies & special roles were started by Kanti Shah even those days we saw the rise of Mithun Chakrworthy known as poor man's Amitabh many remarkable things were happening at that time. Look at the 1984 absolute tense in the political landscape whether it is due to Operation Blue star or 1984 riots but at that time parallel cinema was doing a remarkable job. "Party" released in 1984, Ardh Satya in 1983, Aakrosh, Mirch Masala, Mandi & Ek Doctor ki Maut goes till 1990 even in 1992 we got Suraj Ka Satva Godha. Those days were amazing for the Parallel cinema movement. Films that were released showing repression, touching issues in society & movies such as Mirch Masala shows the perfect example of women centric cinema. It is up to us how we have to look at the films. We have to look at them from Kanti Shah films or we have to look at them from the lenses of Parallel cinema . It is our failure if we are not presenting parallel cinema movies to the gates of society where Mithun sir movies made a large impact. Movies such as Gunda made a large public appeal. At that time in late 80s Ramsey Brothers started the horror movie wave in India so it was a new experiment at that time whether it was veerana or Purana Mandir.

After Liberalisation we saw different genres of movies including Romantic films, comedy films by Priyadarshan but what happened during the last 10 years is a matter of concern & we have to look at this very carefully to see some of the movies that were released in the past few years. I am sharing the table below.

The Kashmir Files	Jahangir National University	Swatantra Veer Savarkar
The Sabarmati Report	Bastar: The Naxal Story	Buddha in a Traffic Jam
Godhra accident or Conspiracy	The Kerala Story	The Sabarmati Report
Mai Atal Hoon	The Accidental Prime Minister	Hamare Barah
Razakar	Ajmer 92	72 Hoore

The list can be more so these are some of the moves to which I gave a spotlight in this paper so, the first question is why do we call these movies as a part of Propaganda Cinema so there are various reason, In these movies there is a current trend when we look at the time of release of movies such as Mai Atal Hoon, Razakar, Jahangir National University, Bastar the Naxal Story & other other ones, these movies

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released during the time of the election & the content in these movies somehow reflecting a strong dissentiment towards a particular group & these movies focuses on the ideals of Hindutva.

The ultimate motive of the movies is to give a rise in bringing hate among the communities based on incidents that happened in past years during the release of movies such as The Kashmir files & The Kearala story, reaction that came out from audiences outside the cinema halls was shocking.

So, firstly we have to make a very clear distinction on how we have to look at the movies because it will help us to understand how films shaped the narrative in society.

●2. How does writing impact the society through their films

Authoritarian & Fascist Regimes had use cinema for their benefit & even they also repressed cinema to sustain brutal power, let us look at the movie JNU (Jahangir National University), in 2016 there was a massive protest happening in JNU & the President of JNUSU kanhaiya kumar who has contested from North-East Delhi in 2024 Lok Sabha Election, was present & giving his speech after the speech a long debate started eventually after that till now that Incident is not leaving Kanhaiya Kumar because during the election campaign a person in North-East slaps him & he said on camera, "Jis Kanhaiya Kumar ne JNU mei desh virodhi nare lagaiye the mene usko uska jawab diya hai" why I am mentioning these incidents here because the filmmaker of Jahangir National University wanna to use kanhaiya name in the movie & what were they projecting in the movie is clearly seen & I think the audience give answer to it by its collection in Box offices. The writing of these films create a impact on society because on social media a debate goes that JNU is this, JNU is that even I can see personally many individuals in DU campus who calls JNU as Jawaharlal Nehru university are now not using the name of our first Prime Minister "Jawaharlal Nehru" but naming it as Jahangir national university so what was the motive behind this writing. Look at "The Kerala story" where director Sudipto Sen shows in the movie that 32.000 girls are being taken into the camps of ISIS in syria. The movie was a proper Propaganda but saw the collection at box office. The students from DU colleges Debsoc were quoting this movie as original with the facts later on Supreme Court had to come & said please add the word "Fiction" in the Disclaimer of movie. These are examples of how writing affects cinema. If I would call it not merely writing but as a proper propaganda, Look at Gadar 2 the movie is seen by most individuals of the country but the writing of the movie was weak. It was used to create a wartime effort to boost the national spirit. Choose one option from both religious holy books, such kind of weak writing impacts society. If we look at what happened in Nazi-Era Germany so Propaganda cinema plays a huge role in it.

Today the writing in the movies is ideologically loaded & PM narendra modi & the accidental prime minister are the examples of it even look at the sabarmati report, during the first half most of the discussion goes around on the battle between hindi & english.

The signs of weak writing shows that the movie will focus on two topics deliberately.

1. The movie will talk more about muslims
2. The movie will be obsessed with history

Samrat Prithviraj was released in theatres by YRF & Dr Chandraprakash Diwvedi was the director of film even he also wrote the whole storyline of it he focuses on one para in his film at last that after the death of Prithviraj Chauhan in India the hindu kingdom ended & later on after a long years on 15 august 1947 india regain its freedom so, after few days I saw a post on social media about the king of Bharatpur Maharaja Surajmal where on poster it is written Hindu Hiteshi samrat surajmal and words such as Hridya Hindu Samrat were used on social media associated with Maharaja Surajmal even

same thing goes with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, most of the times Govind Pansare talks about it. So these small things bring a change in society which is dangerous to the social fabric of India. When Sanjay Leela Bansali made Bajirao Mastani so in the writing of the film Peshwa Bajirao character played by Ranveer singh said,"Hamari ladai mughalo se hai unke dharam se nahi".

Writing plays an important role in shaping narrative, the propaganda movie distorts the meaning of disagreement & leads it to a bad stage, in these films people who oppose narratives that parrot government policy are shown as Traitors. In movies such as The Vaccine War the sceptical reports are called terrorist & in The Bastar story civil societies are shown as shadow outfits of foreign powers, using words such as "Amnesty International" in The Kerala story. Even debate between Hindi and English defines Intellectual as threat. How in the movie The Bastar story one advocate speaks only in hindi & another one the lady uses english. Vivek Agnihotri also uses the word "Intellectual Terrorism".

The writing of these movies produced a rage, if we look at the 70s decade & the writing in the films that were from the 1970s so, Amitabh Bacchan embodied the anti-establishment films. His "angry young men" personna defined the decade. If we look at the writing of films in the 70s, they were excellent. In the movie Deewar, Amitabh Character didn't believe in god but he also carried his number 786 which he got when he was working in a mill. Apart from it in Zanjeer how they show police character & rift between teja played by Ajit sir.

The writing of salim-javed didn't possess the angry young women wave but if we look at Shyam benegal films & other parallel cinema movies such as mirch masala so somehow they bring out the angry young women wave. If we look at Mrinal sen films so their films weren't out of the political landscape but somehow Mrinal sen movies bring out the voices. If we look at Lapata ladies so the movie writing is so strong it creates a huge impact in society look at one scene where deepak went outside to ask for his wife phool & one shopkeeper ask the photo of his wife but the photo of phool is covered; it resembles the purdah system in society & when shopkeeper says that "chehra dakhna matlab identity dakhna". At that moment the shopkeeper's wife came in a burqa. So this kind of writing makes the film strong because it is talking about the most common things in society. Even look at movies such as "Saand ki Ankh" based on the lives of two women in baghpat named chandro tomar & prakasho tomar, the movie creates a impact in society & I will call them far better than "Mai Atal hoon' & "The accidental prime minister".

●3. How films change conventions & impact new thoughts in society & culture.

Indian society saw a very rigid face & still it continues whether it is caste system, dowry system or other ones, films always come to reduce them. The film support various things including family planning, eradicating illiteracy even they also highlight topics including LGBTQ+ & others

If we look from cultural studies lenses so a film provides values to the audience , shows power structure, try to connect masses with social justice if we look at films such as Article 15, Bheed so they somehow portray a bitter truth of Indian Society, if we look at the idea of social justice so from last 10 years very few examples of movies came out to bring this topic on table but with the help of Ott some movies came on board such as Bhakshak on Netflix & Afwaah by sudhir mishra.

Article 15 raises a strong point on the caste system that exists in society, if we look at films changing conventional beliefs so in this movement a lot more work has to be done.

There are some bollywood actors who are bringing out some movies that helped in understanding the notion of LGBTQIA if we look at movies such as Aligarh, Kapoor & sons other ones so somehow they are bringing awareness

regarding the whole movement. ⚫4. Looking at cinema through a sociological approach, focusing on culture & what are the impacts.

When a film is released in a society so most of the time is judged by the seniors members of that society if we look at the areas of western uttar pradesh where I conducted a sample size and asked people about cinema how do they perceive it. Most of the replies were based on merely entertainment, they perceive it in a form of entertainment even though many of the people couldn't imagine that cinema can shape their beliefs and lifestyle but it got impacted, most of the people didn't know about the term "parallel cinema".

Some of the individuals believe that cinema impacts culture if we broadly look at it. Does cinema impact the culture or not so we have to go into depth of this concept.

Oxford Learner's dictionary defines the word culture as the customs & beliefs, way of life and social organisation of a particular country or group. Taylor (1871) in his book, "Primitive culture" has defined culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, moral, custom and habits acquired by a man as a member of society. I looked at Indian cinema as a binding force which together brings culture.

If we look at Hindi cinema, a central question arises: does Hindi cinema affect culture or not, merely a third assumption also generated that does it influence culture to a certain degree. To get its answer we have to understand Film Theory, because it helps us in understanding the approach how the movie affects or the components of the movie affected by the society as whole. It also helps us in understanding the behaviour and how spectators interpret it.

1. Cultural Film Theory focuses on how films reflect the culture in which they are made, how a meaning is constructed in a societal context.
2. Marxist Theory which is also known as Abstract Film Theory argues that films are based on ideas because they are created to represent reality.

If we look at those theory we have to dilute it in context of Indian Culture, societal norms are formed in different phases of history so if we look at Indian society there were different norms present such as Patriarchy, women are subordinate to men even other things are also included if we look at the 1980s era so at that time Roop Kanwar case was in highlight which was regarding sati & journalist Kalpana Sharma had prepared a report on it so these cases show that evil practice sati which once was banned still present in some sections of India & among that practices in Indian villages Purdah system was most common & still it is present.

If we look at the statement of Politicians made in public that sometimes mistakes happened by the kids, these statements were said in public rally for those who did Rape & atrocities on women & when the Rape debate started another statement also start to circulated in the sections of society that clothing is not good. When we talk about the reference of clothing so this clearly points out due to the impact of cinema the clothing pattern in society gets impacted. These all thoughts marched to Patriarchal thinking. If we look at Impact of movies on clothing, these statements are completely vague & nullified. The movie doesn't impact clothing. Yes it's true a fashion sense is starting to emerge but it is different & who in society will define the right to clothes, it is our mood & we are completely free to choose it no one can tell us what to wear.

If European fashion is shown so we are free to choose it, looking at european fashion and saying that it is impacting indian culture it is a false statement, it is our choice that we wanna to have sadhana cut or we wanna to wear madhuri unusual green choli & white lehenga that was shown in "Hum Aapke Hain Kaun". It is a matter of choice & it doesn't impact at all. Another point is also made by quoting the example of Aisha that Sonam kapoor gets her modern look when she chooses european dress

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& bollywood shows indian ethnic wear as behenji type so these are statements that are misinterpreted. Most of the time clothing depends on the need of shot & how its narration has to be followed.

Desensitisation of Violence which is portrayed through movies shows that it will impact in society if we look at Animal so, definitely it will impact the society even Aggressive cues theorists points out that watching violence on screen does not mean he will act violently but it will increase the chances of happening even how the movie show Ranbir character relationship between Trpti character & Rashmika character will impact.

●5. How do documentary shapes the society, focusing on Truth & Lies in Cinema Virtues

If we look at documentaries, a documentary is a collective and relentless process of selection when we are talking about a documentary so a general question arises are they true or false. If we have to look at documentaries, we have to divide it into different areas. Whether we are talking about Political Documentary or we are talking about documentaries based on the lives of other people it may be a famous cult personality, Filmmaker or it can be related to science.

Documentaries somehow reflect the true image in front of masses. It is a general notion among the minds of people but it is not true, Documentaries Filmmakers had a worldview. Every documentary filmmaker has its own political affinities, social upbringing & economical background all enter into the filmmaking process. The Product is a reflection of his own distinct world so a documentary film lies in a grey area of truth & false. If we look at political documentaries, most of the documentaries show somewhere what they want to tell the masses, but there are various different ways that worked while working on it because truth is important.

The ethics are determined by the four ways as said by Hsham Aburghif in his paper.

The Participant	Degree of Social Base
The Place	The Audience

It is always essential to consider all ethical, psychological & behavioural conditions of targeted audiences. If we look at how documentary shapes society because above we talked about false & truth biases. Political documentaries shape society because at last they bring out the voices of all the sections; if we look at Anand Patwardhan & Nakul Singh Sawhney films, somehow they are trying to bring out the true voices of Indian society in their ways. Nakul Singh Sawhney "Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai" talks about the riots happened in the city & they had covered every point even if we look at Anand Patwardhan sir "In the name of God" & "Reason" so these documentaries bring out the voices, they shaped the society give them another chance to look back & decide what was right & wrong. It also shows an image of what happened & how in future we can change it, how society gets fragmented & it can be joined. The voices of subalterns were always in Political documentaries.

●Conclusion

While looking at every broad aspect I tried to cover everything that were important so, films impact society & it is very important for us to bring out the women centric cinema more, today the threat is propaganda cinema we have to stop it at any concern because it is creating rift & documentary are the backdoor they shapes our thinking helps us in understanding, today we are not witnessing the cinema that was back in 70s or parallel cinema but today we are witnessing propaganda cinema & it is very dangerous for society because it create divide.

Cinema also brings out the voices. It depends on us how we perceive it. We have to come out from the notion of entertainment & we have to move to Infotainment.

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