

Role of Indian Hindi Cinema in Spreading Social Awareness

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ABSTRACT

Through its subtle satire and sarcasm, it represents the reality of society. It invokes the deepest emotions of individuals. It is the un-sanitized and explicit portrayal of reality. Take movies like ‘Super Deluxe’, ‘Lipstick under my Burkha’, ‘Aligarh’, ‘Ardha Satya’, ‘Jane Bhi Do Yaaro’, ‘Peepli Live’, ‘Article 15’ that are masterpieces dealing with homosexuality, women’s sexual desire and eroticism, police brutality, politics, and marriage. They have the power to influence the masses towards a particular trend, thought and ideas in the most subtle way. They have the ability to bring in the hardest topic on the table, the conversations that are either brushed under the carpet or talked in hushed voices, weaving stories and narrating them through its cinematic marvels without any moral posturing. These films talk on topics surrounding same-sex love, menstruation, mental health, discrimination, human trafficking, child abuse, sperm donation, impotence etc. These “woke films” break taboos around social issues, exploring lives, stories, experiences of marginalised people. They are a tool through which people can connect with themselves; these are stories that have existed in reality in the audience’s life, stories that is their own. ‘Toilet: Ek Prem Katha’ or ‘Padman’ for example portray issues faced by women are brought in public which leads to conversation forward around women’s health issues leading to a significant change in the society.

KEYWORDS: movies, conversations, social, awareness, cinema, hindi, Indian, change, society

INTRODUCTION

Movies like ‘Nagarkirtan’, ‘Qissa’, ‘Moothon’, ‘Aligarh’ are stories revolving around same-sex love, normalising the concept of queerness through their natural portrayal of the character and breaking the stereotypes about how gay men are assumed to look like or behave. These movies break open the forced gender identities, sexualities and showcase how it is normal to be gay and is a real insight into the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community. Mental Health is an issue that Indian society is not well equipped to handle. They will turn to exorcism, brush it off, poke it, make fun of it, but will not address the issue or have a one-on-one conversation over it. So a film like ‘A Death In The Gunj’ took on the responsibility and portrayed the mental health implication of toxic masculinity through the horror genre. There are other movies too covering mental health issues like depression, anxiety, panic attack, schizophrenia such as ‘15 Park Avenue’, ‘Kaasav’, ‘Dear Zindagi’ and many more.[1,2]

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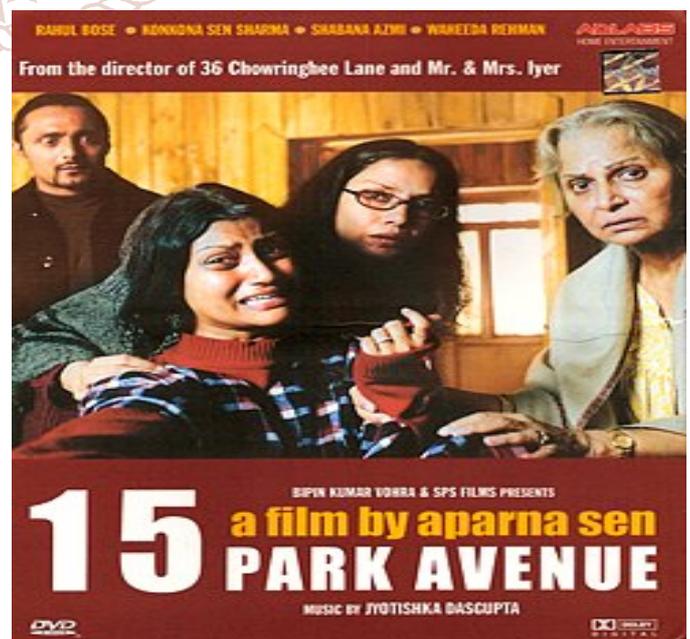
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It should not be mistaken that ‘wokeness’ is a recent thing in Indian cinema. Rather it goes back before the

90s. The evergreen saga like 'Mother India' transcends beyond time and space. It depicts the stark reality of the socio-economic-cultural life of the people living in villages and the glorious representation of Indian woman through the character of Radha. 'Pakeezah' is yet another marvellous movie that focuses on prostitution as a career. We are aware how difficult the society is for the sex workers, and hence, a movie like 'Pakeezah' tries to show the inside world of sex workers and their lives and tragedies in a different era from today when they were looked at very differently. It changed the mindset of people towards the profession. We all remember or are probably are a fan of the dialogue, '*tareekh pe tareekh pe tareekh*' from 'Damini'? It is a hard-hitting movie that has conversations around rape, its victims and the social structures around the legality of social justice which hits viewers at the right spot on their conscience.[3,4]

On the other hand, 'Prem Rog' touches upon the sensitive issue of widow remarriage in times when they were boycotted and widows were pushed out into a life of misery. 'Achhut Kanya' is a film that deals with the social position of Dalit girls and is considered a reformist period-piece. Movies like 'Kya Kehna', 'Salaam Namaste' are based on premarital sex, live-in relationships that were and still somehow a mystery for Indian society. In India, there are countless movies made on social awareness and on breaking taboos which have been breakthrough moments for the Indian society. Cinema has played a huge role in changing the social structures of our society because of its ability to impact the minds of its audience through its visuals, seeping deep into the emotions and conscience of the viewers. Cinema is the most effective and efficient way to send a message to society. Films like 'Badhai Ho', 'Shubh Mangal Savdhan', 'Highway', 'Massan', 'Udaan', 'Manthan' address one or the other social issue that poses a challenge in the holistic development of the society and human civilization. Though these movies face a lot of obstacles like censorships, protests or blockage through commercial movies, they overcome all these obstacles and do what they ought to do to appeal to the conscience of the audience. I will end with a dialogue from the movie 'Roti' which depicts Mangal's struggle for a piece of bread to make his living, revolving around the struggle to earn and survive in this world: "Insaan ko dil de, jism de, dimag de, lekin ye kambakht pet mat de"[5,6]

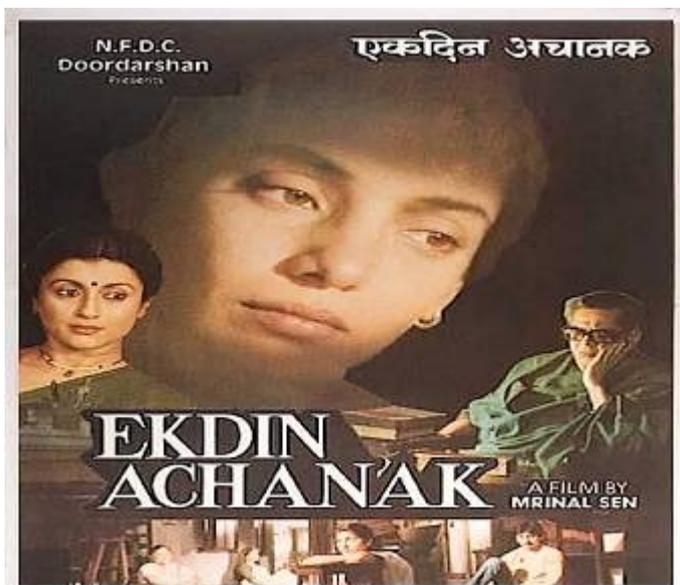


Discussion

Indian Cinema or Bollywood is playing a major role in creating awareness among the society. We all should appreciate Indian Cinema for its devotion toward Social Problems.

1. Nowadays, Most of the films are based on social problems. They mainly spread the message of social cause in the society.
2. Advertisement regarding Tobacco-Alcohol prevention is added in almost all the films.
3. National Anthem is now made compulsory before Starting a film in Cinema Halls.
4. Also, Films like 3 idiots, Dangal, Chakravyuh, Jai Gangajal, etc are being made which spread the message of upliftment of weaker section of the society.

"The truth of Kashmir has come out in this way and it is necessary for social awareness. Everyone should know about it to make sure that whatever happened in Kashmir, doesn't get repeated again. Researchers also believe that even if movies do not intend to contribute to the formation of values, they most assuredly do. By virtue of its interactive nature and arousing content, movies are influencing our values and expectation of reality, regardless of our willingness to be influenced. Although the learning is unintentional, it is just as effective as intentional learning and influences our thoughts and behavior.[7,8]



The impulse to celebrate the impact of movies is understandable—all that glamour, glitzy visibility and cultural panache. Movies can be seen as a source of diversion in people's everyday lives. They are loved by one and all, irrespective of gender and age. It cannot be out rightly denied that movies influence us and affect our behavior in some way or another. The impact can be either good or bad. Thus at the societal level, movies are assumed to play a role in transmitting, maintaining, and reinforcing the societal and cultural consensus. They cultivate images of society by interpreting the world in terms of "what is" "what is important" "what is 'right'" and "what is related to what else." In other words, movies generally show a view of reality. Films affect perceptions that people hold about the world at large and its inhabitants in particular. Even though some people may like to disregard cinema as only a frivolous means of entertainment and nothing beyond that, one cannot ignore the fact that there have been film makers who have managed to lift veil on a hidden plight. It might be about an injustice to a minority, or the courageous story of change by a single individual, but either way it raises awareness about the issue at hand.[9,10]

A lot of film makers are making full use of the social power of the internet to drive their social campaigns. Not only are viewers being encouraged to visit and discuss the movie on online forums after having viewed it ,but, a lot of filmmakers are also using websites to create a community before the film has been released. This is slowly becoming a critical strategy to deepen the reach and impact of films. Engaging a pre release audience increases their investment in the film and logically increases the likelihood that they will see the film and take some

action. The film makers are expanding their digital reach to the likes of Facebook, YouTube, MySpace and Twitter to draw in new and diverse audiences who generally may not have been interested in a movie of that particular genre or issue.

Results

Social awareness is a kind of abstract idea. It enhances a person's ability to effectively read the criticality of a social situation and further react in the most appropriate manner. This helps in administering the situation in the best possible way. Government and other social activists have been making continuous efforts to promote social awareness among the people through various modes of communication in this modern age. [11,12]



One such effective way is through the motion picture technology, the cinema. Cinema, along with its forefathers has always been regarded as the splendor of civilization. Apart from establishing entertainment as a basic need it also broadcasts some eye catching plots which reflect on the peculiar aspects of society and help in creating awareness. And now, as we have a booming film industry comprising of dozens of languages, I think we should focus on its national impacts. Today's cinema has far reaching roots. Almost all kinds of people, be it villagers or the city people, have access to it and in every language. Our cinema has played a very crucial role in changing the society's common perception about most sensitive social issues. Cinema acts as the mirror reflecting the hopes, aspirations, frustrations and contradictions of the society. Through its powerful screenplay of ideas, it presents the legitimate actions that one must take in a given social situation. Cinema helps in informing and persuading people while moulding their opinions. The visual display of a social issue is very impactful. [13,14]



It remains etched in one's memory for a longer time. The idea of inspecting an issue through the medium of movies fascinates people and they are manipulated to change their perspective. This indirectly helps in spreading social awareness. It has not only presented but tackled many sensitive issues like freedom, child labour, female foeticide, women empowerment, human rights, law and order, globalisation, terrorism, etc. They send a strong message in the society about the ways of dealing with social issues. Madras cafe, a movie on terrorism, perfectly portrays that the fight against terrorism cannot be fought by the army alone. Society also plays an important role in foiling the terrorist attacks. Queen, a movie on women empowerment, is a tale of an indian woman discovering that she can and she should lead her own life.[15,16] It shows how an indian woman adds meaning to her life through her own sensible efforts. Rang de basanti, a movie on youth power, depicts the fight of today's youth for justice. It inspires the youngsters to be more responsible towards their country and its issues. Udaan, a movie on child abuse, deals with the issues of child abuse by family members. It also shows how salvation can also rise from within the family. Peepli live, a movie on condition of farmers, is a tale of an impoverished farmer, who threatens to end his life due to the poor treatment of farmers in the country.[17]

Conclusion

Cinema has the power to influence the people in several ways. It has changed the society and social trends and has rather introduced new fashions in society. Films can go a long way in arousing national consciousness and also in utilising the energy of the youth in social reconstruction and nation-building. Cinema has not only released the feelings, insights and impulses possible but also employed and encouraged thoughts and ideas that help in transforming the society as a whole.[18,19]

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