

Role of Films in Societal Change

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Abstract: Films are our cultural artifacts, a means of creative expression. It is the most powerful medium for mass communication. It has tremendous potentialities to entertain as well as educate. Films are popular for their audio-visual nature that provides them with a pervasive efficiency for social influence. Films provide a mirror to our society because they depict reality. People ideas, hopes, aspirations, perceptions, feelings, experiences etc. are well reflected through films. Films exert a profound influence on the mind and thought process of the people and they have a direct impact on societal reconstruction. Often films stereotype various things and create false notions of people and communities. It has good & bad impact on young minds. As some movies give valuable message which change the life positively however some movies don't teach something valuable, are considered to be waste of time and money. Thus, films hold both positive and negative effects on society. Films are medium/agent for societal change because it directly affects the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of the mass.

Keywords: Films, Indian Society, Role of Films, Reflection, Societal Change

Introduction

"Movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood."

Walt Disney

In the era of machines and technology, science has provided humans various means to do great things conveniently & effectively. It has also provided opportunities for entertainment in our free time and for this film/cinema/movie is the best medium. Cinema has perhaps the greatest potential to be the most effective mass media instrument. Besides proving cheap

entertainment for the masses, it can easily become a means of mass instruction and mass education (Bahadkar, 2010).

Cinema is such a powerful tool. A person who is tired of the day gets refreshed by watching a movie by paying few rupees. Cinema is a source of entertainment for millions of people around the world. It serves as a tool against boredom and a medium of getting rid of the tiredness of life. A good movie provides a relaxing and entertaining experience. It takes you away from all the troubles, into a new world of imagination. It has the power to refresh your mind and a way to relieve stress. Innovations in the cinemas world flashlight on the human mind which brings a revolutionary change.

While watching a movie, a person forgets his/her real-life problems, difficulties and tensions and starts wandering in the imaginatively pleasant world. The monotony of his life goes away. The life of an ordinary person is full of struggle and boredom. Cinema plays a very effective role in removing this dullness. It is a means to entertain people of every section of society. On seeing the beautiful script, plot and theme of nature amazing work, innovations, creativity, imagination, world of joy, romance and beauty etc., all the people get happy and receive the message for what purpose they plan to see that particular movie.

A movie is the combination of various activities like; Acting, Singing, Choreography, Directing, Designing etc. Each person sees and observes the movie according to his/her own interest. Movie is not only for entertainment but it silently informally educate and aware the mass. Some aspects which adult not learn formally but through movie they learn it unknowingly. As housewife and decorator learn how to decorate the house and particular places that are related with particular event. Old age male and female learn how to behave with new generation by which peace can be maintain in their home and also it gives message to old generation how to increase self dependency. Other professionals also receive the education from movies as; musician learn musical aspects, singer learn singing style, lyrics writer get the vision for writing a new song, tailor receive the knowledge

about new fashion tailoring, tourist identify their visit site and plan for tour. Each aspect related with movie gives valuable message to each one with entertainment. Here learning and teaching is informal, learner self try to learn, content is in front of learner, he/she can choose their area of interest and learn according to their need.

A film making creates the job opportunities to actor, director, singer, story writer, dress designer, musician, technology expert, cameraman, play boy and others. This also changes the socio-economic status of individuals who are associated with film.

Major Elements of films:

1. **Plot-** The main event of a play, fiction, films and similar works, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence. It is the soul of any film.
2. **Structure of a film-** It is how the plot or the story of a film is laid out, including a beginning, middle and end.
3. **Characters-** Characters of any film is the representation of a person (or other beings or creature) in narrative and dramatic works. The term character development is sometime used as a synonym.
4. **Scenes-** Scenes are the sections that make up the acts. It is a subdivision of any script.
5. **Visual-** Visual used in image retrieval systems, refer to small parts of an image that carry some kind of information.
6. **Dialogue-** Dialogue is an exchange of spoken words between two or more characters in a book, play or movie.
7. **Conflict-** Conflict is a literary device characterized by a struggle of two opposite forces. Conflict provides crucial tensions in any story and is used to drive the narrative words.
8. **Resolution-** Resolution is when conflicts are resolved and the story concluded. The resolution is also known as the denouement that is the conclusion of any story's plot.

A film has its three important components

Art, Literature and Science are the three major components of a film. Art and literature gives base to the film, literature gives a story and art makes it presentable. Science and technology support to art and make its presentation conveniently and effective. Science & technology role is too much important in making a film. Total imaginary concepts are picturised with the help of science and technology. Adding of different location suiting, sounds different pitch arrangement, background of the film and different effects etc are impossible without science and technology.

The Functions of Film in Society

- ❖ Delight and inspire the audience
- ❖ Instruct people
- ❖ Act as a means of communication
- ❖ Provide an outlook towards the present and past issues
- ❖ A powerful vehicle for culture, education, leisure and propaganda
- ❖ Depiction of reality
- ❖ Recreation
- ❖ Social and political reconstruction
- ❖ Mould the opinion and change the system

Some Specific Film theories

Film theories developed to explain how films produce emotional and mental effects on the audience.

Cognitive film theory- Cognitive film theory tends to focus on the experience and response of the film viewer or audience, on the relationship between film content, and viewer psychology. David Bordwell, Noel Carroll, Per Persson, Carl Plantinga, Gerg M. Smith are the prominent scholars of cognitive film theory.

Marxist Film Theory- Marxist film theory is best represented by the works of Sergei Eisenstein. It promotes collective over individualism. It is highly related to class consciousness and according to it history of society was based on class struggles and materialism. The Marxist film doesn't aim to distort the reality of the oppressed class rather they work to actively show reality.

Structuralism film theory- It emphasizes to how films convey meaning through the use of codes and conventions (semantic and content). Structuralism uses a sequence of images to convey an idea. Music, dress, color, type of characters, expressions etc. are used as signifiers to understand the deep meaning of a text.

Psychoanalytical film theory- This type Film follow psychic process. The film expresses and projected subjectivity and repressed wishes, desires memories of the unconscious mind. It asserts that early childhood sexuality and experiences stored in the unconscious can be responsible for further development of the adult emotional state.

Feminist Film Theory- It focuses on how women are portrayed in a film, experiences and function of women characters in a particular film narrative, how females are objectified for the pleasure of the male viewer in a film, the stereotypes, the extent to which women were shown as active or passive.

Some specific characteristics of films:

1. Films are made not only for entertainment purposes but it educates the masses also.
2. Every film has a hidden message for the society
3. It promotes cultural diversity and national integration.
4. Films for different ages tend to change the thought process of a particular group.
5. It promotes democratic values among citizens
6. It creates an imaginary world that helps a person to go out from the real world.

7. It gives direction/vision to various stakeholders for their job and basis for their imagination

Effect of films on society:

Positive effect: In the present time, the world is mostly dependent on the internet, media and information technology. In the generation of technology, people are influenced by movies, short series films, television serials, thrills, fiction etc cinema addresses the problem of all the age groups and all the sections of society. Films have power to clang heart, mind and society more widely. It brings a change in people and positive development of society. It helps to mould, influence and sharpens the human minds to create a better society. Movies like Rang De Basanti, Three Idiots, Tare Jameen Par, Avatar, Sara Akaash etc. has changed the perception of mass. Movie Three Idiots throws light on the man's capability, not on perfection, it leaved a message for our society that you are perfect as you are, don't change yourself to make you according to the society. It influences the students and their parents to understand their interest in choosing their career. Some of the positive impacts of films are as follows:

Films have been hugely influential, creating social awareness and bringing positive change in society.

Films unite audience in a commonsense of humanity and shared responsibility.

Films contribute towards various issues like; Provides moral messages like respect towards elders, being generous to the disabled person, animals etc.

Inspires about the ways of life, providing rights to the women, diminishing discrimination in the matter of gender, caste, race, color.

Scope to provide informal education

Films are made for any specific purpose, it reflect the every stages of life of men and women. In educational sector it plays significant role that encourage the society to learn, to teach and increases the literacy rate of the nation. Like in English Vinglish

movie an ordinary housewife mocked by the family for not knowing English. Then she decided to learn language and her attempt and dedication to learn English help to make her own identity. In Note Book a female teacher Firdaus who spread awareness among the Kashmiri children to go school and get them out of the fear of terrorism, she taught her students in very innovative way make her teaching learning interesting which attract students so they came to school regularly and complete their basic education. Another example is Freedom Writers where a teacher (Erin) teaches in a classroom whose students are divided by their race and ethnicity, she decided to unite them and pursue education beyond their prejudice.

Scope to provide Employment

Movie has potential to encourage the people and influence their decisions. Movies inspired us to enhance the work power and productivity. Within few hours, movies produce new ideas and help to lift up your spirit to get job or start a new occupation. The pursuit of happiness is the story of a man how he becomes a firm owner from selling portable bone scanners. High fidelity is the best example for beginners to fulfill their dreams and life goals.

Scope to provide awareness about Population education

rising population is becoming a great problem day by day in our country. It decreases the job opportunities for all. Govt. tries to get rid of and make policies to control it. In the era of cinema, people are inspired by the film stars and follow what they said as in interview Film star Akshay Khanna gave his suggestion to control population explosion that we should adopt child from orphanages which promote the nurturing of orphan kids in better family environment and it also helps in reducing the birth rates. Film became strong medium to spread message among people to control population. In Logan's run the increasing number of population and more consumption of resources were correlated. It presents the future world how people kill everyone for consuming resources to survive. The age of stupid is a warning against overpopulation and climate change which leads to destruction of earth in future.

Scope to provide Environmental and pollution awareness

Films are a good platform to spread awareness regarding environmental issues, climate change and pollution. Bollywood raises the issues to control pollution like in *KadviHawa* it raises the problem of villagers who face the problem of drought and committed suicide. 'Jal' is another example of water scarcity on earth. In 2.0 the main focus is on how mobile tower's radiation harms birds and other animals. A flying jati is based on the air pollution, how people polluted their environment face the evil power (pollution). A plastic ocean is best example that present how plastics create danger to under water species.

Scope to develop the vision to raise the voice to overcome the Poverty issues

According to UNICEF there are billions of people living below poverty and thousands of kids are dying everyday due to hunger and poverty. Poverty became a global issue and it is raised in millennium and sustainable goals to reduce poverty. Television Media takes initiatives to raise the issue of hunger, poverty and how to tackle it. Films and mass media presents a view as in *Slumdog Millionaire*, presents the realistic view of poverty and life of slums that the children of slums forced to beg for food. *Midnight Cowboy* is the story of two friends who survive with poverty in streets of New York City.

Scope to develop the vision to raise the voice to overcome the Dowry

Dowry is initial part of Indian society; many people accept it as a tradition. Now people are aware about the bad impact of dowry and how it affects their life. Women are affected with dowry, they are exploited by their in laws. High rate of dowry increases the death rate of girl child. People are started dislike of having girl child, it causes the huge difference in sex ratio in India. Government started many schemes and policy to save girl child and for their future. Indian movies also present the domestic issues like *Dahej* was a family drama which is based the cruel dowry system, in the story a young girl faces the violence, humiliation

and sufferings for not bringing a big amount with her. Lajja movie is another example in which a bride speaks against the dowry demanded by her in-laws.

Scope to develop the vision of Women empowerment

Women empowerment, women education and their rights are global issues. As time changed, the condition of women is also changed. It is an essential part in development of any family, community, society or a country. Women are equal to men in society, they have equal rights, so issue of gender equality raised in SDG. The status of women is raised in Indian cinemas where they are represented as leader, role model, and mentor. They turned into strong, independent, capable ladies who raise their voice against exploitation, injustice, equal rights. They are also capable to fight against for their rights, dignity, self-respect and identity. Mardani, Jesica- The murder case, Panga, Chhapak, Pink, Mom, Mother India are the best examples to change women's perception to think beyond their chain.

Scope to culturally affect

Since 19th century audio-visual cinemas were in trend and it is the integral part of culture that reflects a particular culture, their customs, beliefs and myths, concerns and attitudes. Films shape our culture so the filmmakers are aware about the influences and consequences that promote cultural values. For example, in Padmavati, director Sanjay Leela Bhansali reflect the historical scenario of Chittoud Jauhar Kand which convey a message that the self-respect of women is more important than their lives. Scene of the mass suicide of Rajputana ladies was in their belief to save themselves from the enemies. The other example is Matribhoomi that present the tradition of polygamy of a small village of Haryana state. Girls were forced to marry more than one person.

Scope to socially affect

Most of the Bollywood films were made to present the social problems and create awareness among the people to know that particular problem of the society and how to deal with it. Padman, is the one example in which it focuses on women health and

hygiene and the need and supply of sanitary napkins. About the movie *Padman* Divya Rajgopal wrote in her article, the fact is sanitary pad market size in India is only 20% is very low as compared to other countries due to its price. But after that a change came to see, people are aware of the hygiene of girls, schools and colleges distributed napkins at minimum costs and market rate of sanitary napkins were also reduced. The short movie *period house* reflects the women exploitation and harassment during their menstruation. In Indian films, social issues and problems are always being in centre like the problem of poverty, unemployment, social class and untouchability were shown in the movies, *Do Beegha Jameen*, *Coolie*, *Pyasa*, *Sujatha*, etc. *Mardani*, *Pink* and *Talvar* present the woman empowerment against rape, molestation. Another example is the *Toilet* movie which brings a revolution to clean the city and stop going out for the toilet. Some autobiographies are there in Bollywood which encourage the youth to change their attitude and explore themselves in games and sports.

Scope to economically affect

Each industry has a great impact on the economic development of a country. Similarly, film industry plays an important role in economic growth. Industries run through the process of input to output, where at the first stage film industry employs the people like cameraman, videographers, lightman, script-writer, dialogues, artists, etc. their employment helps in increasing human capital and economic as well. Plots and scenes of the cinema are the sources to promote the heritage and advertised them as tourist spots to increase the economy of that particular place, country and local markets. Like Lake palaces of Udaipur, desserts of Rajasthan, the valley of Kashmir, Kachch valley, mountains are advertised by the film city and people are attracted towards these places and fond of to go there that raises the income of that geographical areas. The numbers of movies were made on some famous business tycoons which helps the individual to create a business idea and develop the market. Like *Miss India*, *businessman*, *Wallstreet*, *Bazaar*, *Band Baja Barath* are the movies that promote entrepreneurship among the people.

Scope to politically affect

Film influence viewers political opinions. Films possess the capability to change attitudes on political issues. All films are based on a set of ideas that have impact on the audience, some of those, ideas carry out state order and propagate characters, values, and behavior favorable to the state. The film also contributes to general social and political education (socialization) and affects the knowledge and behavior of specific groups (political elites). Give a voice to youth against the nation's corrupt politics and politicians. Films can be a powerful tool for political mobilization. Political movies and the actor's political affiliations can be quite crucial for attracting people. Aandhi is a movie believed to be based on Indira Gandhi. Gulaal is a movie about legitimacy, injustice and hypocrisy. The movie is about a law student who gets elected as general secretary in his college and had to witness the struggles of the Rajputs, deception, homicide and crime. Raajneeti is a movie which stories about the thirst for power and mixed-up relations. Nayak is a best movie that motivate to young one to enter in politics. Right politics is the requirement of current scenario and films can depict the real role of politics for the development of country.

Negative effect-

Films are promoting western lifestyle. Youth follow it at any cost. According to them if they are not drinking, smoking, going to a bar, they are not enjoying life. Films are presenting women as an object for men pleasure, showing things that are unreal and impossible. Films are without stories, logic, and completely vulgar, which affect the youth a lot. Bad languages and abusive words are used in films.

The Film shows unsocial behavior, violence, extramarital affairs, smuggling, gambling, corruption etc. The scenes of violence, crime, corruption etc, causes fear and also lead to abnormal social behavior in children.

Children learn a tendency to use violence in their life, if they continued viewing crime scenes because the impression created

by the films on the minds of the audience is strong and lasting. These are the characteristics of cinema that add to its social obligations.

Role of films and their implications on education:

Films are the sources of informal education. We can know about different society, culture, norms, values, civilization and way of living through films.

Films have potential to shape our personalities and change the way we perceive and understand the outer world. It develops consciousness among people.

Through films one can learn so many things like language, politics, economy, religion, business etc.

Films provide value added knowledge. They update our knowledge.

It helps to understand cultural diversity.

Movies like Aarakshan, Article 15, Newton helps to understand the rights of an individual.

Tare Zameen Par, Barfie, Mommy, Rush hours helps teacher and parents to understand the learning disability of their children. These movies present a deeper understanding of the diagnosis and remedy of different-different learning disabilities.

The film promotes social awareness and encourages people for a social change. Films tell us current position of the world like corruption, terrorism, global pandemic, etc.

It encourages scientific temperament among kids and generate curiosity discovery and learning new things. Jurassic Park, The Hidden figure, mission Mangal, A Beautiful mind, robot, 2.0, etc. Children learn the concepts of science and technology.

Conclusion

Films work on the various critical issues of society and then provides a conceptual framework for gaining insight towards the reality of society. Films are always been a mirror reflecting the

real image of society. Recreation of human society is mostly dependent upon the development and implantation of films. Films through their inputs like drama, screenplay, casts, scripts, narration, music etc. reflect contemporary society. It provides a basis for the formation of peoples' outlook towards social issues. Films have a responsibility to provide proper direction to society. But unfortunately, it has deviated from its social responsibility causing great harm to society. It impacts our life both positively and negatively. Sometimes in place of showing or teaching valuable things films demonstrate violent and sexual content with no logic, which has a bad impact on young minds. Every movie has good and bad things and it depends on our mind how we perceive it.

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