

Indian Cinema: Analysing its Impact Beyond the Screen and on the Indian Landscape

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Abstract

Is the impact of Indian cinema limited to the psyche of the moviegoing audience, or does it also extend to the country's ecosystem, including but not limited to, the Indian economy and culture? By reviewing scholarly literature on film theory and cinema as an identity in the Indian landscape, we establish and analyse the extent of Indian cinema's influence on key aspects of the Indian ecosystem – the economy, culture, and society. We further break down culture into fashion and tradition and add sociology as a counterpart to society. The primary variables being measured, through inference of scholarly literature on the topic, are the establishment of new trends or the influencing of already present trends through Indian cinema as a medium of stimulation. Upon our review of the literature, we have come across a multitude of real life examples where audience interest, stimulated by effective cinema, has led to movements and subsequent changes in the systems and norms that were present in the film industry. The analysis takes this symbiotic approach throughout the paper, discussing the influence of cinema on the audience, and of the audience on the kinds of cinema produced in the country (indirectly through the industry mostly). The takeaways from this analysis can be used to inform filmmakers and moviegoing audiences: the former on the style and purpose audiences want in cinema and how this can be used to make visual media that transforms society; the latter on the effect of their demand on the style and purpose of cinema produced, encouraging them to increasingly demand films that shape society in a socially desirable manner.

Keywords: Sociology; Film Theory; Economics; Culture

1. Introduction

India is a culturally rich and diverse country. It is home to thousands of languages and regions, each one with its own traditions of going about life, including marriage, funeral rites and celebrations. There is a significant amount of dedication shown towards following these traditions, reflecting the fact that Indian people look up to and celebrate things they have a deep-rooted love for. Cinema is one of the traditions that Indians follow religiously. It is the joy, escapism and relaxation cinema offers that has been keeping them returning to theatres for the past 75 years. There is a film for every emotion which they feel – a film when one is sad; a film when one is happy; a film when one is angry; a film when one is unmotivated and a film when one is seeking escapism, etc.

Given the large population of India and the strong attachment much of its population has with cinema, efforts by the

audience to show their love for the film result in massive trends and movements of various kinds – in the economy (consumer markets, fashion markets, etc.), in the cultural landscape, and in the society. In her book *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema*, Sumita S. Chakravarty states, “The Indian film industry is as old as Hollywood, with as complex a history” (Chakravarty 1996). This paper aims to explore that complexity through an interdisciplinary approach, looking at economic trends, human behavior, and societal impacts.

Regarding such trends, Chakravarty also discusses “change” and its prevalence in Indian film history: “Looking back over Indian film history, one finds that the rhetoric of change has been a constant in describing the industry and the film business by insiders and outsiders alike” (Chakravarty 1996). This implies an industry that is ever-evolving and constantly adapting to the changing landscapes of its country.

These changes arise from more than one place, but all ultimately affect the film industry. Mark Shiel, in his book *Cinema and the City in History and Theory*, explains this phenomenon:

“The cinema is widely considered a microcosm of the social, political, economic, and cultural life of a nation. It is the contested site where meanings are negotiated, traditions made and remade, identities affirmed or rejected. Today, cinema exists as part of a much larger global entertainment industry and communications network, which includes older cultural forms such as music and television, and newer forms of techno-culture such as digital, the internet, and information technology”

In short, cinema can no longer be understood in isolation, but rather as an ecosystem of people and phenomena. In the modern world, cinema is capable of engendering – and reflecting – economic trends, fashion movements, social transformations, and even uprisings by overlooked members of society. Accordingly, to understand Indian cinema – its importance and its impact on the country’s economy, society, and culture – it is necessary to consider it from an interdisciplinary perspective, effectively combining sociology and film studies while also incorporating approaches from the other social sciences (including economics and cultural anthropology).

1.1 Discussion

The two streams of literature that apply to this paper are that of general film theory (including audience sociology) and Indian cinema in focus. On a sociological level, Chakravarthy’s *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema* and Shiel’s *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context* cite historically significant examples like that of post-independence and post-World War Indian audience’s changing tastes, which led to a changing industry (Chakravarthy), and detail specific interdisciplinary phenomena consisting of trends in audience preferences and industry outputs (Shiel). To inform the cultural and economic evaluation of Indian cinema, Beaster-Jones’s *Evergreens to Remixes: Hindi Film Songs and India’s Popular Music Heritage* was consulted mainly, to implicate the extent to which cinema and its counterparts are embedded in Indian culture and subsequently, in the economy. Data from economic trends were also taken to use as a metric and conclude on the economic impact of films on the Indian audience. The trends mainly show the correlation between

the time popular films released and how consumer spending changed in markets of products that the film indirectly or directly promoted. Additionally, Majumdar’s *Debating Radical Cinema: A History of the Film Society Movement in India* views cinema from a socially responsible lens, stating that cinema holds an educative role in shaping society and bringing the audience closer to reality, and also going on to state that cinema that divorces the audience from their surroundings, though enjoyable through escapism, is deemed socially irresponsible.

2. Sociology and Film Studies

Sociology and film studies have been seen as separate disciplines for far too long, leading to a lack of sufficient qualified modes of inquiry in the combined but complex field of study. To achieve this combined lens of inquiry, it is important to limit the extent of sociology involved to the context applicable to that of film; more specifically, the “mindset” aspect of sociological investigation, which looks at how mindset changes or influences lead to behaviour and choice change. A practical solution to this can be to work on contemporary fundamentals of sociology first, such as the urban demographic, which creates a model to work upon the more rooted elements such as traditions and culture. This view is supported by Mark Shiel in his book *Cinema and the City in History and Theory*, in which he states:

"This interdisciplinary challenge makes two interdependent propositions. First, it proposes that Sociology has much to gain by building upon its traditional interests in capital, economy, labor, demographics, and other issues by incorporating a greater interest in “culture,” “cinema,” and “films” through an investigation of their impact upon urban development, on the one hand, and their informative and influential allegorizing of objective social realities, on the other. Secondly, it proposes that Film Studies has much to gain by building upon its traditional interests in representation, subjectivity, and the text by working harder to develop a synthetic understanding of the objective social conditions of the production, distribution, exhibition, and reception of cinema and the mediated production of urban space and urban identity"

This provides a refined understanding of the purpose of cinema, and why it is modelled to cater to audiences in the first place. It does this by proposing a unifying methodology whereby the objective is to investigate the impact of film on the society, the impact of the society on the film itself, and the complex relation between those two things. This

approach yields a coherent understanding of the medium of cinema.

The interdisciplinary process of combining film studies and sociology and the importance of understanding it is further emphasised in the statement of the book's purpose, where Shiel states:

"One of the aims of this book is to recognize this history by proposing something of a challenge to Film Studies and Sociology to work to produce a sociology of the cinema in the sense of a sociology of motion picture production, distribution, exhibition, and consumption, with a specific focus on the role of cinema in the physical, social, cultural, and economic development of cities"

Shiel aims to dive into the sociology of the filmmaking process itself and how it is affected by people and their mindsets, and also how the eventual films themselves end up influencing larger populations. Additionally, he critiques the inability of the scholarly writing on cinema (at the time) to identify this two-way relationship between cinema and the social context. Shiel advocates for an approach that does not "speak of cinema simply in terms of the text and its reflection of urban and social change 'on the ground,'" but that instead promotes "an understanding of cinema (as a set of practices and activities, as well as a set of texts) as something which never ceases to intervene in society."

A practical example of this loop of influence between film and audience would be the middle and working class of India during the post-independence era (1947-1957), their influence on Indian cinema through their wants and needs, and, in turn, how they were influenced by cinema themselves. This example is detailed by Sumita S. Chakravorthy in *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema*, who quotes an industry figure as follows:

"Economically, this period was marked by increased returns at the box office due to the influx of the population to urban areas and inflationary conditions which prevailed during the war period. Control on production and producers gave financial prosperity to those who had a record of production before 1943, since licenses were not generally issued to newcomers. Production was marked by stability the likes of which has never been known in the Industry"

Chakravorthy then goes on to provide the the industry figure's more detailed explanation of why this change occurred:

"During and after the war, a larger number of the working class patronized the cinema than at any time before. Their economic conditions and standard of living improved, while the conditions of the middle class did not alter for the better. To meet the altered weightage in the patronage of the working class, the production trend also underwent a change. The need for light entertainment was increasingly felt and this was reflected in the pictures produced after the war. The new censorship policy after the Independence of the country had also much to do with a change in the production trends"

It can be inferred that the extent of the influence of the audience particularly was so wide and the intensity so strong that it forced an organisation such as the film certification board to change its own policy. This reveals the importance of considering an audience in the film industry.

Returning to *Cinema and the City in History and Theory*, we note that Shiel reflects on the importance of looking at different aspects of the relationship between films and society. He states:

"True, statistical figures and on-the-scene accounts provide a sense of the parameters within which the movie business operates, but they still reveal little of the relationship between films and their viewers, or the notion of films as a cultural (not just an economic) system"

Statistical figures, such as economic ones, can and should be studied to infer the relation between films and the audience; however, they do not holistically convey the story of the relations between films and the audience. An effective analysis of films and society, then, requires discussion of economic as well as social, cultural, and traditional phenomena, which can be understood through the interdisciplinary approach that Shiel espouses as well as awareness of the multidirectional causality that Chakravorthy describes.

Accordingly, this article explores the various behaviours engendered by the influence of films, and how these behaviours have led to transformations in the film industry. In a combined quantitative and social (economic) sense, "transformations" relate to certain trends in employment, investment (consumers and firms), and other contributions which are data that can be used to directly infer the impact of cinema on society in a manner different from just sociology.

2. Economy

On the economic front, since 2015, Indian Cinema has begun taking significant strides in terms of box office numbers, the number of employment opportunities created, the industries being boosted through depictions of their products in films and the promotion of underdeveloped industries through their involvement in the movie-making process.

In the fiscal year 2019, direct employment in the Indian Film Industry was 848,000 people, and total employment (direct + indirect) was 2,662,000 people. This evidences the extent to which India's film industry has contributed to job creation in the country. Employment in the cinema sector is likely to increase further in the coming years as films' scales and budgets have begun increasing, necessitating and allowing for more manpower in the production of films.

significant benefits to the economy, as output increases without inflation, indicating economic growth.

In 2022 alone, Indian cinema as a whole had earned 15,000 crore rupees (which is 150 billion rupees, equivalent to US\$1.9 billion) at the box office. It has also been ranked first in the world in terms of annual output of film industries. The implications of such large figures are not only private benefit, but also social benefits. In terms of taxes, major earners such as the film 'Baahubali' (which was released in 2017 and earned 1800 crore rupees, equivalent to US\$212 million) end up paying 18 percent of their revenue to the government – in this case 324 crore rupees (\$37.4 million) in taxes. Such an amount can be highly beneficial, as much of it gets injected into the economy through government spending on public welfare. In the true economic sense, this can be modeled as follows:

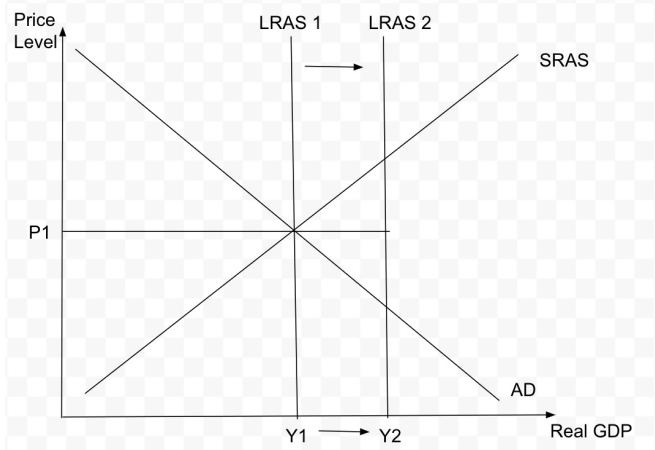


Figure 1 - The impact of increased film-related employment on India's economy

Figure 1, above, is the representation of the economic impact of increased job opportunities in the Indian film industry, using economic models. The graph represents the entire economy, with the general price level of the economy on the y-axis and the real GDP of the economy on the x-axis. Labour is a factor of production in the economy, and increased job opportunities result in an increased labour force in the economy. An increase in the quantity of a factor of production increases the productive capacity of an economy and hence the Long Run Aggregate Supply (LRAS). In the economic model, this can be seen as a shift of the LRAS curve from LRAS 1 to LRAS 2. Through this, the total output of the economy increases from Y1 to Y2, increasing real GDP, while the price level stays stable at P1. This poses

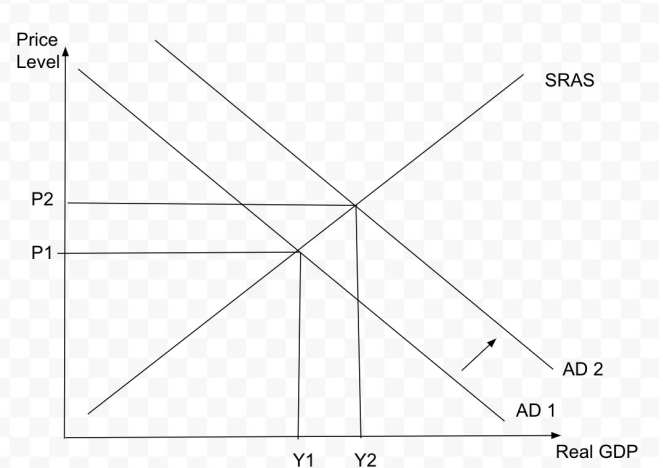


Figure 2 - The impact of tax revenue and government spending on the economy

According to our inference of a higher revenue from films implying a higher tax revenue, which can in turn be used for government spending, the model can be explained through the expenditure method formula for calculating GDP (Gross Domestic Product) $\rightarrow C + I + G + (X-M)$. In this formula, the component G stands for government spending. Through increased movie revenue and tax revenue, government spending also increases, thereby increasing the component G in the formula and, as a consequence, increasing overall GDP as well. This is modelled above, in Figure 2, as a shift outward of the AD (Aggregate Demand) curve, from AD 1 to AD 2. This increases output, as an increase in real GDP from Y1 to Y2 can be seen, as well as an increase in price level

from P1 to P2. This shows positive economic growth through higher output in the economy.

In tandem with the Indian film industry, film songs — even outside of the context of the films — play an equally vital role in contributing to India's economy. Jayson Beaster-Jones, in his 2009 article “Evergreens to Remixes: Hindi Film Songs and India's Popular Music Heritage,” explains this phenomenon:

"In addition to visual storytelling, the broadcast of film songs in diverse media plays a vital promotional role, selling tickets to cinema halls and multiplexes, while the sale of soundtracks generates profits for the music labels that purchase the distribution rights"

In this way, film songs are an essential component of Indian cinema and of the country's economy. The success of film songs also serves as a yardstick for predicting the success of films, even prior to the theatrical release of the films themselves.

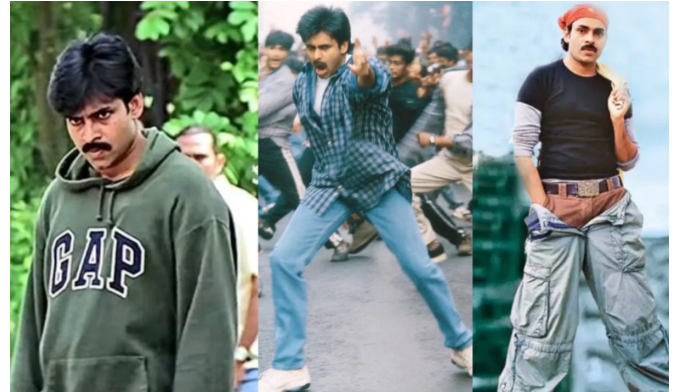
3. Fashion and Culture

The moviegoing audience constantly looks up to actors on screen to get informed about fashion trends, and if the actor is sporting the outfit in the intended way, it can inspire the audience to be as glamorous as those on-screen, driving people to buy these outfits that will make them feel special, just like the actors they look up to. This attachment being on a personal level – with the actors on screen, the message of the film, the story being told and the way it unfolds – ultimately transforms a mere viewer into a fanatic, sometimes wanting their life to be just like that of the protagonist in the film they are watching. This drives them to go out and do something to bring themselves and their lives closer to the films they watch – they try their level best to imitate the film.

Classic examples of this are the iconic fashion trends set by Telugu superstar actor Pawan Kalyan — in movies such as *Kushi* (2001) and *Gudumba Shankar* (2004), his characters can be seen wearing GAP hoodies and flannel shirts (both in *Kushi*) and wearing a layer of double pants (a pant over a pant) with the outer pant's zipper opened — all these were fashion sensibilities quite unknown and unseen for the Indian audience of that time, and given that these films were blockbusters, the trends immediately caught on.

Hence, these outfits deeply entrenched themselves among the audience, giving rise to a pop culture phenomenon, which

also reflected the devotion and admiration the audience has for Indian movie stars.



The iconic GAP hoodie, flannel shirt and double pants by Pawan Kalyan (in that order)

Picture 1 - The iconic GAP hoodie, flannel shirt and double pants by Pawan Kalyan (in that order)

Many Indian viewers worship and revere Indian actors and cinema, getting heavily attached to and mimicking the attributes of the characters that actors play. This fandom leads to a major shift in trends to imitate the styles presented in films, leading to a significant change in consumer patterns: people start buying items that were used by the actors in popular films. This serves to maximise the audience's perceived benefit of being like their heroes.



A super fan (right) replicating his idol Shah Rukh Khan's (left) iconic pose; in a bid to look like him

Picture 2 - A superfan (right) replicating his idol Shah Rukh Khan's iconic pose (left), in a bid to look like him

An example of this is the film *Dhoom* (2004) and how it impacted consumer spending patterns and lifestyle. The film follows a gang of biker thieves, who pull off massive, seemingly impossible heists, using sports bikes as their getaway vehicles, all with flair. This film genre — the purely high-octane action entertainer — was relatively new in the

Indian Cinema landscape. The slick editing and the style showcased in the film inspired an entire generation of youngsters to sport long hairdos like the protagonist (played by John Abraham) and rev up to every place on Hayabusa bikes. A large, unmistakable transformation was observed in the market for sports bikes, in which sales surged.

Film songs are equally significant in shaping India's cultural landscape. Just as film songs have a sizable economic impact, they are also one of the elements of a film that audiences take away with them and perpetuate. They can be shared independently of the films in which they are featured. As Beaster-Jones states, "This symbiotic relationship between cinema and music expands the film's cultural reach" (Beaster-Jones 2009). Describing the magnitude of the importance of film songs in Indian culture and India's global image, Beaster-Jones writes:

"Moreover, Hindi film songs have come to be metonymic of "India" itself, serving as a cultural identifier both within and beyond national borders. Traditionally ornamented with lyrics derived chiefly from Urdu poetic traditions, these songs are still widely broadcast across media, their rich histories evoked in nostalgic newspaper articles, and are sung by fans regardless of their generation or musical training"

Film songs have become such a widely accepted aspect of Indian cinema that films produced in the country are commonly identified by their songs. At the same time, Indian film songs are considered representative of the country's image, both domestically and internationally.

Though significant in determining a film's success, the success of the film's songs, independent of the film, is a function of the convenience with which the audience can sing those songs. This ease of recollection entrenches the songs into the minds of the audience, achieving the goal of making the viewers and listeners connected — or in some cases addicted — to the songs. The resulting ubiquity of the film songs causes them to form an integral part of the country's cultural fabric. As Beaster-Jones puts it, "This singability has helped embed them into daily cultural life, reinforcing traditional forms and emotional expressions even in modern, urban settings" (2009). Even though the songs impact India's culture as a whole, the meaning and significance of each song depends on the experiences, perspectives, and preferences of different segments of the audience. Because of this dynamic, the production and landscape of Indian films and Indian film songs — and their contribution to Indian culture — is ever-changing.

4. Society

The major takeaway from the context of Indian cinema is the strong relationship with it that India's population has cultivated. Given the level of attachment that can be brought about in the Indian audience towards cinema, the extent to which they are influenced by cinema — and influence cinema — is especially high; this relationship has resulted in numerous trends, transformations and movements in different aspects of Indian society as well as in the culture and economy.

The mid-to-late 2000s era produced films that mainly focused on society and presented narratives that vied to change the harmful stereotypes, masked as "traditions", that were present in Indian society. It also presented stories of India's countrymen working hard to make their motherland a better place.

A fitting example of narratives that aimed to transform society is the film *Rang De Basanti* (2006). It follows a group of college-age friends making a film set during the Fight for Independence era in India, with each of them portraying a significant freedom fighter. As the young men go on the journey of making this film, they themselves come across the unavoidable corruption and social injustice around them. The film shows the protagonists' efforts to use cinema, specifically their own film, to change the uneven social landscape of their country. The after-effect of that film was an impactful movement among Indian youth to battle injustices in the societal system. From resurfacing older dismissed cases that were dealt unjustly to organising protest marches, the purpose of the youth and what they stood for significantly transformed into a wider social purpose of achieving a better society.



A poster of the film Rang De Basanti (2006), that shows all the characters in the film

Picture 3 - A poster of the film Rang De Basanti (2006), that shows all the characters in the film

An example of the social aspect which deals with the efforts of making one's motherland a better place is the 2004 film *Swades*, starring Shah Rukh Khan. It depicts an NRI — Mohan Bhargava (played by Khan) — who returns from his job at NASA to his village back in India, where he identifies significant lapses in the understanding and routines of people. With a newfound sense of wanting to better his hometown, he sets off on a journey to change the traditional but “backward” mindsets of people while introducing them to the wider world. For example, the film shows the act of casteism in an Indian village, where the villagers' castes impact their daily lives, particularly those of the lower-caste villagers. This is also implied through Mohan's interactions with the villagers, as he converses with people of higher caste, who mainly criticise people of lower caste in disgust. The close-up framing of the shot and the lack of background music brings the viewer's attention to the conversation between the two characters and the intensity with which two mindsets are clashing.



Swades (2004)

The protagonist, Mohan Bhargava (played by Shah Rukh Khan) is showing the kids a way to the moon, symbolising his role in the film of his showing his village the way to a better life.

Picture 4 - The protagonist of *Swades* (2004), Mohan Bhargava (played by Shah Rukh Khan), showing the kids a way to the moon. This is a symbolic image of his role in the film, that of guiding the village towards a better way of life.

Although this film was unsuccessful at the box office and among the Indian audience at the time, since the early 2010s it gradually gained cult status among the new Indian audience, which is generally more sensitive to issues of social and economic inequality. Hence, the impact of such socially critical films that are released today is much more profound than in the past. With such backward mentalities still existing in Indian society, it calls for more films like *Swades* to be made in order to call upon the young Indian population, which is more socially aware than before, to drive change. In this sense, such films are needed now more than ever, as they can achieve their intended impact.

On a similar note of spreading awareness, films can be and have been used to expose audiences to the concept of law and order, and of using the same to one's benefit. Mostly under the category “courtroom drama,” films have begun to focus on stories of individuals who have faced injustice and fought independently with low odds against a stronger opposition. The protagonists prevail in the end, and justice is served. The medium of film reaches audiences who cannot read books or papers on law, and it informs them on such topics so that they are aware of what can and cannot be done according to law — either concerning them or in general.

Apart from stories that thrill and excite audiences, Indian cinema has begun to embrace stories that also inspire. In all the sectors of India — particularly sport, education, and government — there have been countless stories of citizens rising from severely underprivileged backgrounds and going on to achieve groundbreaking positions in various fields. For

example, the films *Super 30* (2019), *12th Fail* (2024), and *Jai Bhim* (2021) feature protagonists who are successful in achieving upward mobility against the odds. Given the affection and respect the Indian audience has for films, such stories compel viewers to try to make a positive change, regardless of how impossible doing so may seem.

The telling of such stories implies a shift in the purpose of Indian cinema, which is now not only commercialism and profit, but rather to reveal and critique the sociopolitical landscape of the country. Rochona Majumdar, in her article “Debating Radical Cinema: A History of the Film Society Movement in India,” details the questions that earlier audiences of Indian cinema were asking themselves, which led to the shift in focus. Majumdar considers this matter of purpose:

"Film society activists struggled with the meaning of what constituted a 'good' cinema. Was it something whose foremost commitment was to the uplift of the Indian people, a task in which mainstream 'commercial' cinema, driven by profit motives, had failed? Or was it, as an early film society activist put it, to 'mirror the aspirations of common people' through the medium of cinema?"

These questions laid the groundwork for ideas representing sociopolitical themes to be incorporated into cinema in India. In the pursuit of defining “good cinema,” the questioners steered Indian cinema towards a more multifaceted, thoughtful approach in terms of the themes its films try to convey.

The subsequent questions that arose about the role of cinema helped “reorient cinema from a medium of mass entertainment into an art form for changing social and political consciousness” by the mid 1960s, as Majumdar explains in her detailed analysis of Indian film societies. Beyond just appraisal of the struggling population, the eventual definition of “good cinema” incorporated commentary on many more aspects and pressing issues of Indian society. As Majumdar affirms, “Good cinema could not be so-called if it was divorced either in its form or content from problems such as unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, violence, war, the plight of refugees, class differences, and other such issues that were seen as corroding the Indian social fabric.” (Majumdar 2012) Indian cinema thus came to have a greater purpose than mere entertainment, cementing the industry’s role as a driver of social awareness.

5. Tradition

The influence Indian Cinema has over the audience can be used to integrate long-lost traditions into the urbanised lives of people. Regardless of how busy their lives are, people still devote time to watching films. This presents an opportunity for filmmakers to make films which showcase said traditions to people who are immersed in fast-paced urban lives.

Since the 2000s, film in India has been transformed by a rustic wave of sorts, whereby the backdrop of films has shifted from urban settings to rural villages and depicts raw people in their everyday, traditional lifestyle — thus showcasing traditions that have been long forgotten in society and buried under modern thoughts in people’s minds. Such films attract people to the idea of respecting culture and following traditions. Viewers are metaphorically woken up to their cultural backgrounds, histories, and the personal benefits of connecting to their motherland by way of following traditions.

6. Conclusion

Indians are known for their hard work and their headstrong nature to always overachieve. In the modern world, and ever since the liberalisation of the economy in the 1990s, most Indians have been consumed by the demands of working tirelessly. Regardless, a new movie release still attracts the same amount of hype and eagerness every time. This reveals a want for relaxation and detachment from the real world, which is also the reason for the highly exaggerated nature of the majority of Indian films — over-the-top comedy, action, and performances. These elements help transport audiences into the world of the film and connect them to the characters on screen, which is why the actors portraying those characters are seen as familiar figures and revered by the populace.

This kind of attachment at such an intimate level is what makes Indian cinema unlike any other in the world. Hence, the societal pressure for filmmakers to make content-based films to accompany the changing mindsets of people are being heeded. In recent times, this has been seen in the form of the resurfacing of films that had failed in the early 1990s or late 2000s — films that are now being rediscovered and appreciated by a more mature audience of today that can understand them better. This phenomenon suggests that Indian cinema, on the whole, has been evolving along with its audience. Accordingly, this has compelled filmmakers to make films that focus on societal issues and motivate people

in a positive manner by conveying socially responsible and encouraging messages. Films such as *12th Fail* (2024) and *Super 30* (2019) do this by offering examples of people who had been virtually unable to achieve any greatness yet ended up doing so, defying all odds.

On the whole, Indian films are diverse and vibrant, like India and its people — no two people and no two films are the same. Meanwhile, Indian cinema allows filmmakers of all types to shine, resulting in a multitude of films of many genres that cater to all types of viewers. The Indian film industry creates jobs and livelihoods while reviving fallen markets and boosting already strong ones. The films help people escape from reality, in one sense, but at the same time they bring reality close up to people's faces and aim to direct the populace to do the right thing. The Indian film industry is arguably the most robust and balanced in the world; it has become increasingly economically efficient, socially responsible, and representative of its roots, all at the same time.

Given this potential of Indian cinema, it would be highly beneficial to investigate how much of this potential remains or gets enhanced when it comes to more modern styles of filmmaking: web series (OTT platforms), social media content, independent short films. Though a niche sector of the industry for now but has been on the rise since 2020, this sector is predicted to grow to dominate in the future. Hence, an understanding of this section's dynamics would largely benefit filmmakers of the future and modern generation(s) to identify a style and purpose for their cinema.

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