

Fashion on The Silver Screen: How Bollywood Transformed Indian Culture and Fashion

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ABSTRACT

No one knows when people first began dressing up for social occasions. Just as it is inherent for humans to appreciate aesthetic beauty, so too is the need to present oneself in a neat, beautiful manner. In today's society, it is the single most influential aspect of one's physical appearance. The need to always look one's best and make a good impression prompted several changes, one of which was the rise of the fashion industry. Merriam-Webster defines "fashion" as the practise of "giving shape or form to," "making," "constructing," or "creating" something, typically with meticulous attention to detail or by employing one's imagination and ingenuity. An outward appearance need not define a person. Films, which deal with the largest population on the planet, are the best medium for making this presentation or showcase. People congregate and form groups for sustained communication; as a result, a society develops with a set of shared cultural norms. The various Societies are distinguished by norms of interaction between people who share a common culture and set of institutions. Sharing requires a medium, and over time that medium has developed from sound and sign to hieroglyphics and eventually to formal language. The advent of cinema in the nineteenth century allowed people to engage their auditory and visual senses, as well as their emotions. The films of today are a reflection of contemporary culture. This study is an exploration of how Bollywood has affected fashion and culture in India.

Keywords: *Aesthetic Beauty, Contemporary Culture, Bollywood*

INTRODUCTION

Cinema and Fashion

Cinema and fashion are two creative realms that have long been intertwined. The world of cinema has consistently influenced fashion trends, shaping the way people dress, style themselves, and present their personal aesthetics. From the early days of cinema to the present, the silver screen has served as a powerful platform for showcasing fashion, influencing societal tastes, and reflecting cultural shifts. This paper delves into the dynamic relationship between cinema and fashion, exploring how Hindi films in India have influenced fashion trends and how fashion, in turn, has shaped cinematic narratives and aesthetics.

Historical Evolution: The connection between cinema and fashion can be traced back to the early days of Indian cinema. As the film industry grew, stars emerged as influential style icons, showcasing the latest fashion trends through their on-screen appearances and public appearances. In the black-and-white era, costume design played a crucial role in defining characters and conveying narratives. With the advent of color films, fashion became more vibrant and visually captivating.

Stars as Fashion Icons: Hindi film stars have always been trendsetters, with their fashion choices setting the tone for the masses. The glamour and charisma of actors and actresses have made them symbols of aspiration, leading to the emulation of their style and fashion sense by the audience. From iconic outfits to signature hairstyles, film stars have shaped fashion trends and influenced consumer choices.

Costume Design and Styling: Costume designers play a pivotal role in translating characters' personalities and narratives into visual aesthetics. They collaborate closely with directors, actors, and production teams to create looks that enhance storytelling and evoke specific emotions. The costumes in films range from traditional attires that celebrate cultural heritage to contemporary fashion that reflects changing societal norms.

Bridal Fashion: One significant aspect of fashion influenced by Hindi cinema is bridal fashion. Bollywood weddings depicted on the silver screen have had a profound impact on wedding

fashion trends in India. From extravagant bridal ensembles to elaborate jewelry designs, films have popularized certain styles, fabrics, and color palettes, shaping the choices of real-life brides. **Pop Culture and Subcultures:** Cinema has also influenced subcultures and niche fashion trends. Films portraying specific communities, regions, or eras have inspired fashion movements that celebrate cultural identities. These subcultures often develop their own distinctive fashion statements, from retro styles to streetwear, influenced by the cinematic representations of their respective communities.

Collaborations and Brand Endorsements: Fashion and cinema collaborate through brand endorsements and partnerships. Many fashion brands and designers collaborate with films to promote their collections or create exclusive looks for the stars. These collaborations blur the lines between reel and real-life fashion, reinforcing the influence of cinema on consumer choices.

Global Impact and Cultural Exchange: Hindi cinema has not only influenced fashion within India but has also made a global impact. Indian films, with their vibrant costumes and cultural aesthetics, have garnered international recognition and inspired fashion designers across the globe. The fusion of Indian and Western fashion has become a prominent trend, reflecting the cross-cultural exchange facilitated by cinema.

From high fashion to street style, you can find evidence of cinema's pervasive cultural impact. In addition, there has been a surge in the desire for garments that look like those worn by the actors and actresses in Indian films due to the industry's meteoric rise in popularity. As the popularity of Indian movies has grown over the past decade, traditional Indian clothing has also gained acclaim around the world (Chakravarty, 2011).

The most generic definition of fashion is "the manner of dress, behaviour, or performance that is in vogue at a given time and place" (Merriam-Webster, 1984). The need to adorn oneself is hardwired into the human psyche (Adler & Press, 2020). In the city of Mohenjo-Daro, in what is now India, remnants of the Indus Valley Civilization date back to around 2300–1750 BCE. Dancing Girl, a 10.5 cm tall prehistoric bronze figurine fashioned from lost wax, is almost entirely naked save for bracelets, an elbow bracelet, and a necklace. She has twenty-four to twenty-five bangles on her left arm and only four on her right. Her long hair is pulled back into a bun and rests on her shoulder; she is wearing a necklace with three large pendants (Singha & Massey, 1967). Males also made an attempt to display themselves well, as evidenced by sculptures like Priest-King, which depicts a nicely bearded guy with pierced earlobes and a fillet around his head as a hairdo. A cloak and wristband with drilled trefoil, circle, and double-circle designs adorn his attire. This practise of adorning oneself persists to this day. Cinema, through the films it produces, is just as potent a medium as it was back then, when transmitting any type of self-presentation was difficult at best.

Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* premiered in 1913 (Dwyer, 2013), marking the beginning of Indian cinema. Two years later, Ardeshir Irani released the first sound film in India, titled *Alam Ara*, to critical and commercial acclaim. The first Indian colour film was made in 1937 (Rajadhyaksha, 2016), but it didn't become widely seen until the 1950s, the height of the era for romantic melodramas. Indian films have consistently impressed viewers over their long history. It has aided the Indian people in reviving their cultural traditions, and the international world as a whole. When viewed from the outside, Bollywood (Joshi, 2002), the name given to Indian cinema, appears to be highly lovely and glamorous nation. Between the years of 1940 and 1960, Indian film experienced its heyday (Britannica, 2003). *Pyaasa*, *Kagaz ke Phool*, *Awara*, *Shree 420*, *Aan*, etc. (p. 137) are just few of the films that came out of it. Afterwards, Bollywood produced films full of romance and action, a formula that is still popular today and was popularised by the likes of Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Dev Anand', Nargis, Meena Kumari, etc.

By modifying how we look to reflect our new identities, the latest trends allow us to take a fresh look at who we are. These manipulated pictures frequently depict cinematic idols we look up to.

Perhaps one can only aspire to be like them and never actually achieve that goal. One of these techniques involves adopting or mimicking the particular fashion styles linked to them (Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017). Occasionally, all it takes is a new pair of designer jeans. On the other side, this may entail diving headfirst into an unfamiliar society. As a result, Bollywood-inspired Indian fashions have begun to enter the global fashion mainstream (Medina-Rivera & Wilberschied, 2013). Prior to the rise in popularity of Indian cinema, western fashions were the norm. Popular culture loved the prevalence of Western-style attire in films. Native American clothing, on the other hand, was seen as unsexy and out of date (Sandhu, 2014). When films from Mumbai finally started getting some recognition, things started to shift. Hindi-style clothing was popularised in these films since the stars and actresses wore it.

This is proof of the influence that famous people have. Many people hold famous people in high esteem. The clothes they wear now carry more positive connotations due to their elevated status. Therefore, their admirers will want to model their behaviour after their own. They accomplish this by making use of the same products endorsed by celebrities. Accessories, footwear, and jewellery are all included. The way they style the clothing also has the potential to become its own movement. For instance, if they try something new or risky, their followers are likely to follow suit (Mader, 2018).

That "each film is a brand in itself," and that "with each film's release, we have a fresh new brand of fashion and lifestyle products pushing fashion among the masses," has been highlighted. However, films may have a more profound effect on young Indians. 'Increasingly these films are about the schizophrenic universes that contemporary viewer's live in' (Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017), hence the actors in them serve as role models because the films reflect topics that are relevant to them and society. Teens can tell the difference and react appropriately. They, too, yearn for autonomy and strength. By imitating their heroes, fans show their admiration and appreciation, and they also send a message about what they hope to achieve in life.

The fashion industry has long looked to Indian films for inspiration (Kanesan, 2018). Mughal-E-Azam's Anarkali-style clothing is still popular today; it is a long dress with a fitting bodice below the chest and a flowing skirt that typically falls to the knees. The Anarkali, like the Salwar Kameez before it, features a frock-style top, pants, and a scarf. Indian films have a significant impact on the lives of Indians. For example, after the release of the film *Tere Naam*, Salman Khan's hairstyle became a cultural phenomenon among Indian youth. Dresses worn by celebrities on screen are worn with a certain amount of pride, and the names of actors and actresses are frequently referenced while deciding on a new hairstyle. Women should wear jewellery that sparkles like it does in an advertisement, and our homes should look like they do in a certain commercial. The films are supposed to be realistic depictions of life (Assomull, 2020).

"The films certainly do mirror what's happening in society," said Javed Akhtar, a famous author. But they also mirror our hopes, values, and customs. Women at Indian weddings often wear elaborate gowns and elaborate jewellery that were inspired by Bollywood films, and the bridal procession sometimes include a live band playing upbeat versions of popular songs (Bhatia, 2013).

Bollywood has long been an important source of inspiration for Indian street style. When an actor or actress wears an outfit in a popular film, it instantly becomes a sartorial trend that many others want to copy. Some examples of this phenomenon include the "famous anarkali gown" (Dwyer, 2006), "jewellery in movie *Jodha Akbar*" (2008), and "masakali gown" from *Delhi-6* (2009), all of which were produced by the ready-made industry after the realisation that people would want to wear the similar clothes from the popular movie they saw in theatres. The fashion industry has taken advantage of this fad by debuting new clothing lines and lines of jewellery in films. Famous actors are often paid to represent particular brands in the fashion industry. Madhubala's anarkali outfit from *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960)—a long, flowing dress that falls below the knees and is matched with fitted pyjamas called churidars in Hindi—was one of the earliest

movie effects on Indian design. The anarkali style of dress is still widely worn today. Dresses worn by Madhuri Dixit in *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (1994) were so well received that they were copied by women all over India for special events like weddings. Rani Mukerji's Indian outfit from the film *Bunty Aur Babli* (2005) was also a major trend for a while (Sen & Basu, 2013). Girls in India are more interested in learning Bollywood dance than classical dance because of the prevalence of musicals in Bollywood films. The Indian diaspora also stays connected to their culture by watching Bollywood films and mimicking the dances they see on screen (Morcom, 2017). Mumtaz's orange-stitched sari left an unforgettable mark. For many years, it was an integral component of India's fashion culture. The Mumtaz drape was made for curvy Indian women since it accentuates their curves. The song "Aaj kal tere mere pyaar ke charche." from the film *Brahmachari*, which featured Mumtaaz wearing the sari in various styles, is credited with kicking off the sari-wearing fad (Sen & Basu, 2013). Bollywood films of the era were a major influence on 1960s Indian fashion, which included shorter, tighter blouses, a hint of skin, and bright makeup. The youth culture was all about the huge puffy hair and winged eyeliner. Bhanu Athaiya and other costume designers dabbled in cinema fashion in the 1960s, creating period costumes for films like *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* (1962) and *Amrapali* (1966) (Mazumdar, n.d.).

Clothing also gained prominence and style during this time due to the advent of colour cinema, which allowed for an explosion of colours, prints, and novel silhouettes in the movies (Asaikkannu, 2019). Dimple Kapadia's outfit from the 1973 smash hit *Bobby* (p. 68) inspired a number of iconic fashion trends, including bell bottoms, cropped shirts, oversized glasses, high platform shoes, and polka dots, which became known as "bobby print." *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (1971) featured an outfit worn by Zeenat Aman that was clearly influenced by the Hippie fashion of the time. The fashions seen in this video, such as bell-bottom pants, wide tinted glasses, hoop earrings, marigolds, and middle-parted wavy hair, continue to influence contemporary fashions (Dawar, 2006). Sridevi's ethereal sari in *Mr. India* was a major fashion inspiration in the '80s for women all around India. Leg warmers and wild hair were in, as were neon hues and crimson lipstick. The first wave of Indian fashion designers, including Rohit Khosla and Satya Paul (Bhandari, 2012), emerged in the 1980s. With his first leading role as Prem in *Maine Pyar Kiya* in 1989, Salman Khan sparked a movement towards male fitness. A few years later, Karisma Kapoor sets the standard for portraying women's fitness by playing the vivacious dancer Nisha in the film *Dil to Pagal Hai*. Sportswear as informal daywear in the era of brand consciousness was popularised by this musical romance and the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. Pants were replaced with skirts and bare midriffs became acceptable in the 1990s. Nonetheless, the sari maintained its dominance as evidenced by Madhuri Dixit's embroidered purple sari in *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (Wilkinson-Weber, 2005). More Indian fashion designers like Tarun Tahilani, Manish Malhotra, and Neeta Lulla used film stars as a platform to spread their ideas to the audience in the 21st century. Who you dress is a status symbol in today's society (Gehlawat, 2015). It became common practise to create specific "looks" for characters rather than the individuals playing those roles. The fashions incorporated elements from many different cultures. Popular fashion trends from Bollywood films include Amir Khan's elaborate jewellery from *Devdas*, the wedding dress worn by Preity Zinta in the film *Veer Zaara*, especially the golden round tassels stitched at the hem of her heavily embroidered headcover or scarf called dupatta in Hindi, and the casual urban styles worn in *Dil Chahta Hai*.

Hum Aapke Hai Koun, a Rajshri production, was responsible for redefining Indian fashion trends with Madhuri Dixit's backless blouse and Salman Khan's three-piece suit. The tailors were instructed to create blouses with a scooped back, precisely like Madhuri's, and the white-and-green colour set, consisting of a fitting green blouse below waist length and an ankle-length white skirt, was the season's newest colour combination film (Ghosh, 2000) was shown to the public. After the release of *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, a maroon jumpsuit like the one Kajol wore

became trendy. The movie made going to college hip again for a generation born in the 1980s (Kuch kuch hota hai, 2005).

Indian culture has been profoundly influenced by the Hindi film industry. Movies like Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham (2001) and Baghban (2003) praised the value of respecting one's elders, and films like Baabul (2006) brought up the topic of widow remarriage. Angry young people in India were given a platform in the critically praised film Rang De Basanti (2006) (Kaur & Sinha, 2005). Filmmakers in contemporary India, such as Madhur Bhandharkar and Prakash Mehra, have used their work to bring attention to pressing social issues. Political and societal issues were explored in the films Rann (2007), Corporate (2006), and Gulaal (2009).

In the 1989 film Maine Pyaar Kiya, the heroine Bhagyashree wore a blue skirt and a top with polka dots that quickly became a fan favourite among young women everywhere. They all wore matching black caps that read "Friend," which had been designed especially for them. After the movie came out, Salman Khan's leather jackets were in high demand, and dorm rooms all across campus began to look like they had been plucked straight from the film (Bose, 2006).

Manish Malhotra, a renowned Indian designer, is best known for dressing Urmila in form-fitting Lycra outfits in the film Rangeela. The work was continued when the designer styled Karisma Kapoor for the film Dil To Pagal Hai. These styles quickly permeated popular culture and are now firmly established in urban lexicons (Punathambekar, 2013). Women attending weddings and other formal gatherings sometimes take fashion cues from Bollywood films, and hence dress to the nines in expensive fabrics and elaborate accessories. The 'Shararas' worn by Kareena Kapoor in Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham (Joshi, 2015) were practically the de facto wedding dress of the day. After Deepika Padukone sported a jumpsuit and flowy palazzo trousers in Cocktail (Vasudev, 2012), the trend took off. In her film 2 States, actress Alia Bhatt revived the classic elegance of long skirts. While Huma Qureshi, in a way that has become infamously alluring, has transformed aviator sunglasses into a hip and trendy fashion accessory thanks to the film Gangs of Wasseypur.

THE TRESS TRENDS: UNVEILING THE INFLUENCE OF CINEMA ON HAIR STYLES AND ACCESSORIES

Throughout history, cinema has played a remarkable role in shaping hair styles and accessories, reflecting the changing beauty ideals and fashion trends of each era. From the early days of silent films to the present digital age, the silver screen has been a powerful source of inspiration for hair fashion. This paper delves into the historical influence of cinema on hair styles and accessories, highlighting iconic moments that have left an indelible mark on the world of beauty.

The Golden Age of Hollywood (1920s-1950s): During the Golden Age of Hollywood, glamorous hair styles were synonymous with the leading ladies of the silver screen. The finger waves of the 1920s, popularized by stars like Louise Brooks, defined the Jazz Age aesthetic. In the 1930s, the elegant updos and romantic curls of stars like Vivien Leigh and Bette Davis became iconic symbols of sophistication. The victory rolls and victory curls of the 1940s, donned by actresses such as Veronica Lake and Rita Hayworth, exuded timeless elegance. Finally, the 1950s witnessed the rise of the classic and glamorous hairstyles, exemplified by the pin-up girl looks of Marilyn Monroe and the polished bobs of Audrey Hepburn.

The Swinging Sixties and Seventies Revolution: The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a revolution in hair styles and accessories, influenced by the counterculture movements and changing societal norms. The pixie cut popularized by Audrey Hepburn in the film "Roman Holiday" symbolized the freedom and rebellion of the 1960s. The long, flowing locks of Farrah Fawcett in the television series "Charlie's Angels" became an iconic symbol of the glamorous 1970s. Additionally, films like "Hair" and "Easy Rider" embraced natural and bohemian looks, influencing a generation to embrace afros, braids, and headbands as fashion statements.

The Punk and New Wave Era (1980s): The 1980s witnessed the emergence of punk and new wave culture, which had a significant impact on hair styles and accessories. Films like "Blade

Runner" and "The Hunger" showcased futuristic and edgy looks, characterized by brightly colored mohawks, spiky hairstyles, and asymmetrical cuts. Accessory-wise, hair bands, scrunchies, and bold statement clips became popular choices, allowing individuals to express their unique style and rebellion.

Contemporary Cinema and Modern Trends: In recent years, contemporary cinema has continued to influence hair styles and accessories. From the romantic braids of "Game of Thrones" to the intricate updos of period dramas like "The Great Gatsby," films have inspired a resurgence of vintage-inspired looks. Furthermore, bold hair colors and unconventional styles showcased in fantasy and sci-fi films have sparked experimentation and a sense of daring among trendsetters.

The Glam Rock and Disco Era (1970s-1980s): The glam rock and disco era of the 1970s and 1980s brought forth extravagant and flamboyant hair styles and accessories. Films like "Saturday Night Fever" and "Grease" showcased voluminous hairstyles, big curls, and elaborate updos adorned with glitzy accessories. Feathered hair, headbands, and sparkly barrettes became popular choices, embodying the spirit of disco and excess.

The Influence of Period Dramas: Period dramas have played a significant role in popularizing vintage hair styles and accessories. Films like "Pride and Prejudice" and "The Great Gatsby" have brought attention to classic and elegant looks, such as romantic updos, finger waves, and intricate braided hairstyles. The timeless allure of these period-inspired looks continues to inspire fashion trends.

Cultural Influences and International Cinema: Cinema from different countries and cultures has also influenced hair styles and accessories. Bollywood films, for example, have popularized long, flowing hairstyles adorned with ornate hair jewelry, reflecting traditional Indian aesthetics. Asian cinema, with its emphasis on natural beauty, has inspired trends such as straight and sleek hairstyles and delicate hairpins.

Celebrity Endorsements and Red Carpet Influence: The red carpet has become a platform for celebrities to showcase cutting-edge hair styles and accessories, which often trickle down to mainstream fashion. The looks worn by stars at prestigious events like the Oscars and Cannes Film Festival generate immense attention and influence trends, from glamorous updos to unique hair accessories.

The Digital Age and Social Media Influence: With the advent of social media and digital platforms, the influence of cinema on hair styles and accessories has become more immediate and widespread. Celebrities and influencers sharing their on-screen and off-screen looks on platforms like Instagram and YouTube have a direct impact on beauty trends, creating a faster and more dynamic cycle of inspiration.

Sustainable and Ethical Trends: As the world becomes more conscious of sustainability and ethical fashion, cinema can play a role in promoting eco-friendly and ethical hair styling and accessory choices. Films that highlight natural, organic, and cruelty-free hair care products and sustainable accessories can inspire viewers to make conscious choices in their own beauty routines.

In the 1960s, Indian film actress Sadhana Shivdasani popularised the fringe haircut. In her first picture, 1960's Love in Simla, she debuted with the short cut. Nayyar, her husband and the film's director, made the suggestion.

He hoped that by giving her a fringe, he could make her forehead appear less wide (Stringer, 2013). Nayyar used Audrey Hepburn as an example, and the Hollywood starlet ended up being the model for the new style. In homage to the actress who made the fringe fashionable in the '60s, a whole generation of young women adopted the 'Sadhana cut' (ch.17).

The effect of Hollywood on style is felt by both sexes. Men, too, have obviously taken cues from their favourite Hollywood stars when it comes to fashion and grooming. From the 1960s until the 1990s, Amitabh Bachchan impacted millions of young Indian men with his reintroduction of the

French beard and the iconic hair puff popularised by Dev Annand and Alvis Presley. From the film Dil Chahta Hai, Amir Khan sported a goatee and spikes that made quite an impression (Gibson, 2013). The hairdo Salman Khan sported in the 2003 film Tere Naam also became a major talking point. The haircut was first popularised by young boys and quickly spread across the country. Since the 1998 release of the film Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, friendship bands have come to represent the annual celebration of Friendship Day. Both the 'POLO' T-shirts and the 'COOL' locket that Shah Rukh Khan released were huge sellers.

After the release of Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Kajol's short, blunt cut from the film also gained popular. In 2008, men sought out barbershops in droves to imitate Aamir Khan's Ghajini hairstyle (Arora, 2014).

HINDI CINEMA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Hindi cinema, popularly known as Bollywood, has played a pivotal role in shaping social change in India. Over the decades, Hindi films have not only entertained audiences but also acted as a catalyst for societal transformation. This paper delves into the historical aspects of social change brought about by Hindi cinema, highlighting key milestones, influential films, and the impact of cinematic narratives on Indian society.

Early Years: Portraying Social Reform (1930s-1940s): In the early years of Hindi cinema, films were often used as a medium to highlight social issues and advocate for reform. Films like "Achhut Kanya" (1936) and "Sujata" (1959) addressed caste discrimination, challenging societal norms and advocating for social equality. These films sparked conversations around the deeply rooted social biases and helped initiate dialogues on social change.

Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (1950s-1960s): The 1950s and 1960s witnessed Hindi cinema portraying women in more empowered and progressive roles. Films like "Mother India" (1957) and "Bandini" (1963) showcased strong female protagonists who challenged traditional gender roles and societal expectations. These narratives encouraged women's empowerment and triggered discussions on gender equality.

Youth Culture and Rebellion (1970s-1980s): The 1970s and 1980s marked a period of social change and youth rebellion in India. Hindi cinema reflected this zeitgeist, with films like "Sholay" (1975) and "Rang De Basanti" (2006) depicting the struggles of the youth against corruption and injustice. These films ignited a sense of activism and inspired a generation to question the status quo and demand social transformation.

Love and Interfaith Relationships (1990s-2000s):

The 1990s and 2000s saw Hindi cinema exploring the theme of interfaith relationships, challenging societal prejudices and promoting communal harmony. Films like "Bombay" (1995) and "My Name Is Khan" (2010) depicted love stories between individuals from different religious backgrounds, highlighting the importance of acceptance and unity.

LGBTQ+ Representation and Acceptance (2010s-present):

In recent years, Hindi cinema has been instrumental in promoting LGBTQ+ representation and advocating for acceptance. Films like "Kapoor & Sons" (2016) and "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan" (2020) brought LGBTQ+ stories to the mainstream, normalizing same-sex relationships and contributing to the broader conversation on LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance in Indian society.

Social Issues and Activism (Throughout History):

Hindi cinema has consistently portrayed social issues and raised awareness through its narratives. Films have addressed topics such as corruption, communal harmony, education, poverty, and environmental conservation. By depicting these issues in a relatable and engaging manner, Hindi cinema has influenced public discourse, encouraged activism, and promoted social change.

Even as the film industry has had a significant impact on Indian culture, Indian culture has also affected and altered the film industry, as evidenced by the transition from silent films to the

current action and violent film landscape (Banaji, 2006). According to Sarkar's (2009) book, Indian films have helped bring attention to societal concerns like child marriage, the dowry system, and the exploitation of the powerful and the untouchable. 'Chipko Movement' and other environmental rights movements in India are cited by Sarker (2018) as exemplary cases of participatory democracy that compelled their respective governments to make changes to their constitutions and realise they needed to better protect their citizens.

It's worth noting that India is the world's largest film producer (Dastidar & Elliott, 2019). Movies are the most exciting way to tell your own story the way you want it told. As previously indicated (Bruzzi, 2012), it is often regarded as the most effective means of expression and enjoyment available today across all demographics.

Indian cinema's use of music to inspire patriotism and national unity among the country's citizens throughout times of conflict and subsequent national and economic unification is discussed by Sarkar (2009). Despite India's major problem—extreme poverty—the country's film industry has attracted both international talent and audiences, as seen by its success at international award shows. Bandyopadhyay (2008) notes that India's cultural variety is reflected in the country's literature and film.

It's not just different traditions; there are also different faiths. Many experts agree that Hinduism, also known as Hinduisim, is one of the world's oldest faiths, having practises that go back at least four thousand years. During the Vedic period, society was hierarchically divided into four classes (Varna) based on Dharma or the 'Work,' with the priestly Brahman on top and the labouring and serving Shudra at the bottom. Eventually, the castes (jati) system became more prevalent than dharma because of inheritance and place of birth (p.352). The working or service class were labelled "untouchables" because they were seen to be morally deficient. During British administration in India, in 1936, Bombay Talkies released the Hindi film *Achhut Kanya* (Untouchable Girl), directed by Franz Osten. Girls from the untouchable caste are given centre stage in this film. According to Dwyer (2006), the film fits the criteria for a "reformist period piece." Shiraz, a potter's kid who falls in love with Selima of a royal lineage and sacrifices his life, was Himansu Rai's 1928 silent film adaptation of Franz Osten's attempt to mirror society and achieve an idealistic solution of equality.

When India gained its independence in 1947, its legislators tackled the problem of discrimination based on inhumane practises in society when they drafted its constitutions. Modern India's constitution reclassifies the untouchables as Scheduled Castes. According to the law (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998), the practise of untouchability is now illegal. Although the regulations are in place, centuries of tradition and custom make it difficult to change. Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal, and others in the film industry captured the complexities of the fight against this social stigma. Hindi films have long been used to shed light on the oppression of India's Scheduled Castes (also known as Dalits) and other hitherto unrecognised socioeconomic groups. In the 1970s and 1980s, a kind of cinema known as "parallel cinema" emerged that presented audiences with an authentic ethnographic portrait of Dalit life. Most cinema tales have portrayed the Dalits as a miserable people who must endure harsh societal conditions. *Dukhi*, the protagonist of Satyajit Ray's *Sadgati* (1981), succumbs to exhaustion, hunger, and stress before his unchallenged Brahmin superiority leads to his untimely demise. Again, in *Aakrosh* (1980), the protagonist chooses suicide to escape the awful circumstances in which he and his companion, Nagi, have been living. In these stories, the chaotic and deplorable socioeconomic conditions in which Dalits have lived for millennia were on full display. Everyone knows and accepts the routine practise of upper caste members thrashing untouchables.

Dalit people have never quite fit the mould of a civilised human being. In *Mrigaya* (1977), Naurangia and Rama, a malnourished couple; Sanjeevan, a dark and pale man; Kishtayya, an alcoholic; *Ankur* (1974); Nathadas, a corrupt and immoral man; *Peepli Live* (2010); and on occasion, a physically disabled man named *Kachra* (2001) are all examples of Dalit characters

portrayed in films. Few fictional depictions of Dalits exist in which they are depicted as happy, successful, and leading a typical family life (Wankhede, 2017). However, as depicted in Manthan (1976), Dalit has occasionally displayed aggressive behaviour when defending his constitutional rights. When a young Dalit man named Moti is elected to lead the village's Milk Cooperative Society, you know the Dalits are on the rise in this film. After more than seven decades of independence, perhaps the issue of untouchability, as depicted in one scene where the Sarpanch (Village Head) orders the Dalits to make a queue separate from the upper castes to sell milk to the cooperative society, has softened.

The constitutional abolition of untouchability in India, foreshadowed in Aamir Khan's film Lagaan (Bhatkal, 2002) is finally here. Socially, India is a society where the traditions of arranged and in-caste weddings have been passed down from generation to generation. The implications of many relationships, however, can be taught in a more comprehensive fashion through Indian play. Films that portrayed happy intercaste marriages in India also helped normalise the practise (Hogan, 2009). Movies have been essential in educating audiences about how to articulate complex emotions like love and anger. Each and every Indian has found solace in the music from Indian films. Indian film music is an essential part of each celebration. When Indian youth are happy or sad, they turn to music to share their feelings with others. It helps them even if they have trouble falling asleep. The youth of India are negatively impacted by the social shift brought about by popular films, whether they are uplifting or depressing.

Many cultural norms and customs are rooted in uninformed but long-standing traditions, which may have stifled innovation and development. Female oppression in the form of the prevalent caste system, untouchability, dowry system, and veil system has had devastating effects on society. Films are the most effective tool we have today for spreading information about and working to end harmful or inhumane practises. The media can be used to advance causes related to national unity, such as inter-caste marriages, population control, the fight against illiteracy, and so on. Filmmakers have long been inspired by the opportunity to address pressing social problems through their work. Film, a dynamic medium that draws its inspiration from culture, is being harnessed as a tool to combat ignorance and drive social change. It has the potential to aid in the fight against widespread ignorance. Furthermore, film has been instrumental in bringing forth some much-needed societal reforms (Kanesan, 2018).

In 2012, the media played a pivotal role in disseminating the news of a mob demonstration over the gang rape of a 23-year-old woman in Delhi. Protests were ignited on a national and worldwide scale as a result of the tragedy, which received extensive media coverage. There was significant outrage and condemnation of the Indian government for failing to adequately protect women in the wake of this tragedy. In the face of mounting public outcry and political pressure, the government must act swiftly and decisively to forestall a repeat performance. Leslee Udwin, moved by the events, made a documentary called India's Daughter in 2015 (Roberts, 2016). On International Women's Day (March 8) of 2015, the movie was supposed to premiere on television networks around the world. However, the BBC was unable to run the movie for a number of reasons, including the involvement of the court. However, it was shown internationally on March 4th, uploaded to YouTube, and quickly became a social media phenomenon. On March 5th, the government of India requested that YouTube remove the video from the country. Films continue to reflect society and be influenced by it. Everything has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, just like a coin. Anything done in excess is bad. Movies have had both beneficial and harmful effects on Indian culture. Movies are a mirror of our culture, both past and current. It's accepted that the film industry, and its inventions, will inevitably lag behind social norms at times. Films tell tales, and those who make them have something to say, something they wish to convey to an audience. Films are a means of expression, and it is societies that provide the material for the stories they tell just the present

state of affairs and the activities of modern society, but also its historical trajectory and its desired future state. For the duration of film history, that has always been the case.

CONCLUSION

Movies have a profound impact on the way people think. It's entertaining, yes, but it's also quite instructive. It has the potential to produce outstanding outcomes in the sphere of educational expansion. Cinematic examples, such as those advising people to stay indoors during the Covid epidemic of 2020, can be used to teach important lessons to both students and the general public. Multiple nations have conducted fruitful studies on the effectiveness of films as a teaching tool. College and university students can profit from the production of feature-length films for educational purposes. Movies can sway public opinion and how people think about the world. This influential media has helped alter social norms and patterns, or at the very least, it has stimulated the idea of alteration. Whether it's a pressing social or environmental problem or a person's charming, well-groomed appearance. Cinema has been credited with not just ushering in new trends, but also being a driving force behind a number of significant cultural shifts. By skillfully adapting good moral, social, and educative themes, and by introducing popular sentiments, cinema greatly helps to formulate ideas and to some extent guide public opinion. Films have a direct impact on our social life and go a long way towards arousing national consciousness and in utilising the energies of the youth in social reconstruction and nation-building.

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