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Commercial Cinema Effects on People in India in Modern Times

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ABSTRACT: In India's cinema market, several developments are taking place, that greatly effect the importance of cinema sound reproduction. Developments that are relating to the technical- , commercial- as well as the marketing side of the Indian cinema industry. On the technical side, the "buzz-word" over the last few years has been "Digital Cinema". Now with the long-awaited **Digital Cinema audio** standard being a reality in India, a new platform has been created with 24-bit resolution, non-compressed, audio over up to 99 channels; This offers tremendous opportunities to very significantly raise the quality of cinema sound reproduction. However, in order to meet the intentions of the standard, new thinking is required. Another (commercial) result of digital cinema is the changing role of the cinema from simply presenting movies, towards alternative programming• presentations, like live broadcast/transmissions, (video)conferences, global business seminars/presentations, musical events, and more. The marketing side of the Indian cinema industry sees increased competition between cinema exhibitors, both of single screen cinemas and multi-screen multiplex cinemas. In the increased competition, exhibitors are experiencing that emphasis of **quality over price** is essential for long-term profitability. They are thus demanding more than the obvious• , also in sound experience, to distinguish themselves from the next-door cinema.

KEYWORDS: cinema, commercial, quality, multiplex, digital, industry, business, price

I. INTRODUCTION

Commercial cinema is the most popular form of cinema in India. Ever since its inception the commercial Indian movies have seen huge following. Commercial or popular cinema is made not only in Hindi but also in many other regional languages of East and South India. Let's look at some of the general conventions of commercial films in India.

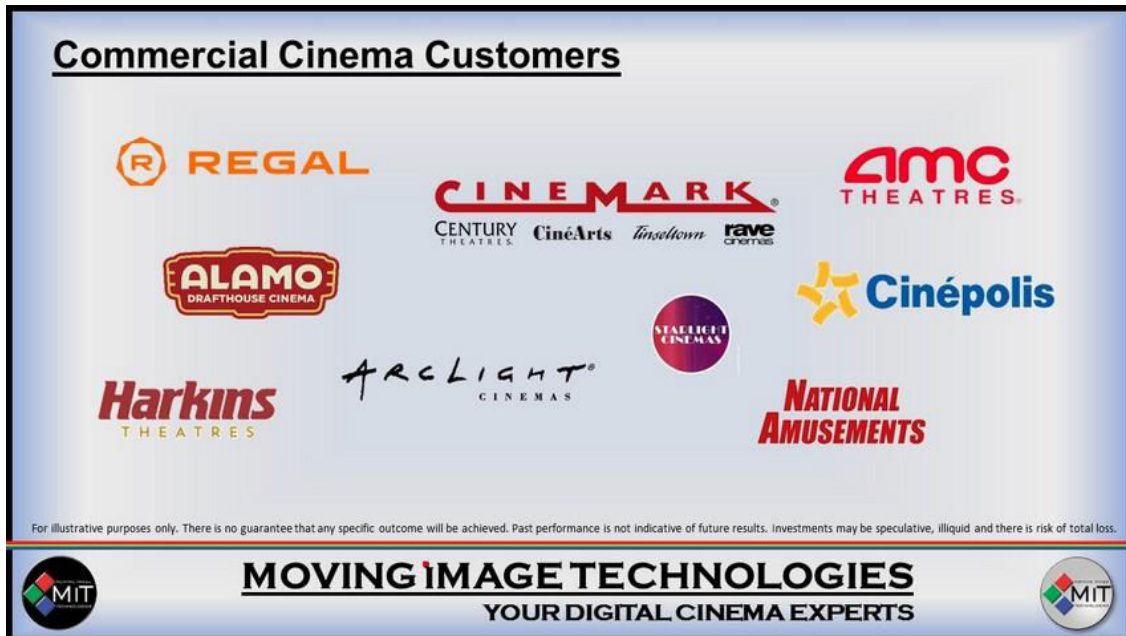


Commercial films, in whatever languages they are made, tend to be quite long (approx three hours), with an interval. Another important feature of commercial cinema in India is music. The action in commercial movies is periodically interrupted by song-and-dance sequences. Good movies use the routines to move the story forward; mediocre movies incorporate them to woo the audience. Songs are sung by professional play-back singers and lip-synched by dancing actors and actresses. The popular cinema in India is a mix of melodrama and sentiments. These movies have a mix of romance, comedy, action and suspense.[1,2]

Indian commercial cinema, from the 1960s onwards - when Technicolor became affordable and a regular feature of **Indian films** - cinema had become the primary source of entertainment for the urban masses. The numbers were daily increasing in leaps and bounds. With changing times television had become an integral part of every household and the cinema halls mushroomed almost everywhere. To a certain extent, it was also a vehicle for educating and modernizing the customs and practices of these masses which had outright serious social themes. There were huge



investments in the film industry and the scenario altered more in the 21st century when the corporate houses started investing in the Indian film industry.



A new trend began in the 1970s when the producers and audience became the decision makers as far as the form and content of escapist films were concerned. But there were **directors, producers** and **actors** who wanted to make 'quality' films as well. At one point of time **Indian cinema** got divided into two genres - the hard-core commercial movies and parallel cinema. This phenomenon, however, is however losing its ground. The difference between the two has been bridged as the audience today is only looking for good films. The 1970s witnessed the making of some of the biggest films and the rise of the finest stars in **Bollywood**. During these crucial years, the definitive evolution of Hindi commercial cinema was taking place towards the star system, escapist films, successful formulae and these features were adopted with some variations by all regional commercial cinemas as well. It is in commercial cinema that one gets to see the 'Indianness' of Indian cinema most vividly. In terms of the exploration of complex and multifaceted human experiences, depth of psychological motivation and social vision, popular films may be found wanting. However, in terms of popular response and how popular imagination is shaped, they are highly significant. With their unique combination of fantasy, **action films**, song, dance and spectacle, Indian commercial films constitute a distinctively Indian form of mass entertainment.[3,4]

Indian commercial films are basically morality plays, where good triumphs over evil, and the social order, disrupted by the actions of immoral and villainous people, is restored by the power of goodness. Entertainment and moral edification are combined in a way that has direct appeal to the vast masses of moviegoers and the idea of evil is central in Indian commercial filmy discourse. Indian commercial films are, as already noted, basically melodramas, and the idea of evil plays a central role in melodramas. As many commentators on melodrama have pointed out, the polarization between good and bad, the clash between moral and immoral, the antagonism between what is whole-some and what's evil is an inescapably dominant ingredient of melodrama. Melodramas, by definition, deal with characters who are easily recognizable - often stereotypical and who incarnate the forces of good and evil. Evil is a vital ingredient because melodramas seek to establish the authority of a moral universe. By vanquishing the villain, and the evil he or she embodies, melodramas seek to reassert the moral authority of a world that for a while threatened to fall prey to the dark forces of evil. While examining popular Indian films, this becomes very clear.



This concept of evil, so central to Indian commercial cinema, has been evolving over the years in response to diverse social, cultural and political forces. This is readily illustrated in three of the most well known commercial films: *Kismet* (1943), *Awaara* (1951) and *Sholay* (1975). *Awaara*, was directed by **Raj Kapoor** and a smash hit not only in India but in foreign countries such as the former Soviet Union, whereas *Sholay*, is one of the most popular films ever made in India.[5,6]

II. DISCUSSION

There are a number of genres associated with Indian commercial cinema. Most significant are: mythological films with the fantastic narrations of ancient stories and devotional films that foreground the diverse forms of union with divinity. There are also the romantic films dealing with erotic passion as they confront social conventions; historical films with fanciful stage settings and costumes, social films that explore important social problems and issues; and family melodramas that seek to explore tensions and upheavals within the matrix of the family. There is nothing specifically Indian about these genres. What is distinctive are the ways in which they have been handled by **Indian Film Directors**, investing them with a characteristically Indian cultural imprint. Indian Commercial films play a central role in the construction of popular Indian consciousness; they are the most dominant and pervasive force responsible for creating in the public mind the notions of heroism, duty, courage, modernity, consumption and glamour. The relationship between Indian commercial cinema and modernity is extremely close. Presently bilingual films are also in vogue. The audience has been looking for a change for a long time and films like *Dil Chahata Hai*, *Life in A Metro*, *Dor*, *Mr. And Mrs. Iyer*, *15 Park Avenue*, *Rockford*, *Iqbal* and others are a welcome change. There are a number of significant genres associated with Indian commercial cinema. Romantic love, friendship, motherhood, renunciation, relationships, social issues are some of the most compelling among them. As with the genres so with the themes - a distinctively culture-specific approach is adopted, giving these Indian commercial films a characteristically Indian outlook. So when examining what is unique about Indian commercial cinema we need to pay particular attention to questions of theme and genre like Mythological Films, Devotional Films, **Action Movies**, **Patriotic Films**, Social Drama, **Comic Genre** and Romantic Genre.[7,8]



And last, but definitely not least, the consumers and patrons **expectations have raised tremendously**; The combination of CD-quality sound/vision (Blue-Ray, DVD, flat-panel TV), together with the sensitive-priced surround home-theatre systems, make cinema compete with the living-room experience. Cinema has to do utmost efforts to exceed customers expectations. With these new (digital) developments entering the cinema market, new challenges have arrived for existing equipment; Requirements of the sound system have changed; Speech, music and effect should be reproduced with finest detail and fullest dynamics. With the digital cinema sound standard stating ænon-compressed sound formats, current loudspeaker reproduction systems, utilizing compression-driver technology, are not capable of reproducing all digital cinema has to offer.

III. IMPLICATIONS

Economy has taken over art as far as Indian films are concerned. It's more about six packs and `100 crore today than the storyline, said speakers while debating the topic 'Writing for a visual medium' on the second and concluding day of Odisha Literary Festival, 2014. Chairing the session, filmmaker Nilamadhav Panda said new age scriptwriters in Bollywood are scared to write a good story fearing their work would not fetch good money. In fact, this fear psychosis is crippling creativity. "It is mostly about the business dynamics ... will a story click in the entertainment market and take the fastest route to the `100 crore club or not," he said, adding people are now being forced to watch a movie. "A big banner film releases in 4,000 theatres and Bollywood crazy viewers have no other option, but to watch it as there is no better alternative available," Panda said. [9,10]

Joining the discussion, novelist and diplomat Vikas Swarup said, unlike the West where story for a film is considered supreme, in India, the story comes last as far as filmmaking is concerned. "Take the example of the latest release 'Happy New Year', it had no story, but it was a massive hit. Films like these have no repeat value. We know that people have watched 'Sholay' at least 100 times, but today no one will watch new releases more than once. It is through aggressive marketing that people are being attracted to theatres but after that, filmmakers and distributors are not bothered if their film is appreciated by the audience or not," he said.



Television personality and poet, Lavlin Thadani, however, blamed the audience for the dismal state of affairs with regard to writing for the visual medium. "We as audience do not think before watching a film. We see whatever is shown to us. This inertia of watching anything and everything that Bollywood offers is a deep-rooted conditioning. This is why producers, filmmakers and distributors are dictating the market now," she said adding that it is the art that should dictate instead. Swarup blamed it on the reading habits of people. He said the common man is now mostly reading books that are easily adapted into films. "No one is bothered about a good story. In fact, books are being written with the purpose of converting those into films because that means big business. It's a vicious cycle that needs to be converted to a virtuous cycle through good writing." Stating that India is a land of billion stories, Swarup said it is an irony that no one is ready to tell these stories.

Panda felt Bollywood also lacks good cinema criticism today. "Here too, business has crept in affecting the quality of writing for films." Both Thadani and Swarup said another problem area in screenplay is the line of difference drawn between art and commercial cinema, over the years. "Writing for art cinema is any day better than commercial cinema, but people do not watch them as art films do not engage. It has to be a marriage of a good story and an interesting portrayal of the story," concluded Thadani. [11,12]

IV. RESULTS

Cinema inevitably believed to be a medium and platform for entertainment. Every medium has played a role in injecting thoughts and ideologies into the minds of people, especially when it comes to cinema. Even people of the cinema industry who are the entertainers through television gain popularity, for instance, motivational speakers and trendsetters tend to get popular irrespective of belonging to the small screen community. There is always an enormous fan following for silver screen since the addiction and affinity that the public has towards cinema hasn't changed a bit since the day it got established. Certain films divert and transform the thoughts of the viewer while watching the film, whereas some films focus on the unrealistic and dramatic flow of the film. The diverse facets of commercialisation and business in Indian cinema observed through the evolution of Indian cinema. The growth is tremendous from where it was, to where it has shaped up to in terms of grandeur in the technology implied to the budget quoted in making a film, everything has refashioned and redesigned .[13,14]



To be crisp and precise whatever concept the script may hold, the intention of a director and the production house lies on the box-office collection of the film to a high degree. These days they organise an event for releasing the music album of individual films to create a sensation among the youngsters to attract them to the theatre. When the topic of Indian cinema briefly dug back in the days, it was a process where they took one step at a time. The pioneer of Indian cinema is the renowned Dadasaheb Phalke. The first full-length motion picture in India produced by Dadasaheb Phalke named Raja Harishchandra. It undeniably went on to become a commercial hit. Phalke observed as the pioneer of the Indian cinema industry and a renowned scholar of India's languages and culture [11]. He applied fragments from Sanskrit epics to produce his Raja Harishchandra which released in 1913 as a silent film in Marathi. Approximately 1600 films are being made in various languages every year. After the first full-length motion picture came to the first Indian sound film Alam Ara which was directed by Ardeshir Irani. Followed by the first Indian colour film Kisan Kanya which was in turn directed by him, gained a considerable critical response due to the effort invested in taking the Indian cinema to the next level as he has obtained rights from the American Cinecolor Process.

Live dramas used to be on the run before films. The actors couldn't opt for retakes, and they could hardly commit errors. As a whole, the Indian film industry segregated into north and south film industry; hence it has been subdivided into many parts naming it as a regional cinema which has termed as snippets of Indian cinema. The south Indian film industry incorporates five film cultures: Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Tulu. Another prominent film culture is Bengali cinema, known as Tollywood, which was primarily associated with the parallel cinema movement, in contrast to the typical dramatic films which are more prominent in Bollywood and Tamil films.

Indian films focus on the concept of thriller, crime, romance, comedy, social problems and horror. Since people inclined towards these concepts, the filmmakers add the elements that are related to these themes to get people involved and to gain an instant connection. The interest they show in plunging into the genre and concepts can also be segregated to the dramatic screenplay which rolls with it as they focus on it predominantly. People search for dramatic essence, and the script in the Indian cinema has a peculiar format which is followed by movie makers and directors. They prepare the text for dramatising scenes and exclusivity of the artificial background setup which invented of grandeur and pomp. Currently, Indian cinema has partly adopted the western style and culture, especially Bollywood when scrutinised, the screenplay and the culture has a tinge of Hollywood in it .[15,16]

V. CONCLUSIONS

Cinema has become a mainstream activity today.



World's first rooftop, open-air, Jio drive-in theatre to open in Mumbai

Even politics which decide the future of a country is in the grip of cinema. It is well known that cinema actors and actresses become politicians after their career in cinema, making use of their black money and fame. Millions and millions are spent in making commercial films, the world over, almost having a parallel economy. The mega scenes and other glamorous aspects, which people cannot think of in their mundane life, mesmerise people and people become addicted to it. In the process, the negative aspects of cinema get ignored. The so-called educated people are no different from the ordinary laity in their addiction to the cinema. Most of the people in politics are also found to be fans of actors and actresses. We also find that the media is the greatest patron of this money-making industry. The musical melodies in cinema is an added attraction to everyone. [17,18]

Psychological impact: Besides its impact on the economy, society, politics, rationalism etc. it exerts a tremendous effect on people's psychology. People are exposed to all kinds of emotions in cinema within a short span of 2 to 3 hours. Love, hatred, vengeance, savage violence, rape and many other undesirable activities are shown within such a short period of time. But for the cinema, many people would not have had occasions in their real-life to experience the kind of scenes such as murder, rape, vengeance shown in the cinema. But such scenes are shown to everyone without any hesitation or restriction in the name of what the cinema people call entertainment and this can have serious repercussions on people's attitude and life. The children and youth may get desensitised and become insensitive to crimes subsequently in their life. [19,20]

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