

Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors on the Performance of Hindi Film Industry: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The Indian film industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of the Indian economy. It is riding high on the economic growth and rising income levels that India has been experiencing in the past few years. Over the last decade, India has registered the fastest growth among the democracies in the world and is now the fourth largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity. Naturally, when income rises, proportionately more resources get spent on leisure and entertainment rather than on necessities. The Indian film industry is growing fast due to the rising incomes of middle class of the society. The growth of Mall culture and Multiplexes experience has created a significant positioning in the Indian consumers, mostly urban in relation to spending patterns. The Indian economy is on the fast track and its 125 crore population gives it an economic potential which is hard to ignore. The Indian film industry is a vital part of the Indian socio-economic psyche and the most popular form of entertainment in the country. The film industry has an impact on various facets of Indian society including social norms, sartorial styles, personality traits and even political governance. Film personalities are worshipped like Gods and Goddess in few states of India and we even find temples dedicated to them, such is the craze of film culture on Indians. The major thrust of this paper is to study about the influence of the social and cultural factors on the performance of the Hindi film industry with the help of various relevant secondary sources of data.

Keywords: Hindi Film Industry, Social Factors, Cultural Factors Etc.

Introduction

Bollywood is not the formal term used for the Hindi-language film industry which is based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. It is derived from the combination of two different terms; Bombay (old name of Mumbai) and Hollywood. Unlike Hollywood, Bollywood is not a physical place. Bollywood is the largest film producer in India and one of the largest centres of film production in the world.

The first full-length movie in India was produced by Dadasaheb Phalke. Dadasaheb is the pioneer of Indian film industry, a scholar on India's languages and culture, who united components and elements from Sanskrit epics to produce his "*Raja Harishchandra*" (1913), a silent film in Marathi. The female roles in the film were played by male actors. The film denoted a notable benchmark in the film industry in India. Only one print of the film was made and shown at the Coronation Cinematograph on 3 May 1913. It was a commercial success and paved the way for more such films.

The first Indian chain of cinema theatres, "Madan Theatre" was owned by the parsi entrepreneur Jamshedji Framji Madan, who over saw production of 10 films annually and distributed them throughout the Indian subcontinent starting from 1902. He established Elphinstone Bioscope Company in Calcutta. Elphinstone merged into Madan Theatres Limited in 1919 which brought many of Bengal's most popular literary works to the stage. He also produced "*Satyawadi Raja Harish Chandra*" in 1917, a remake of Phalke's "*Raja Harishchandra*" (1913).

In 1927, the British Government, to promote the market in India for British films over American ones, formed the Indian Cinematograph Enquiry Committee. The ICC comprised of three British and three Indians, led by T. Rangachari, a Madras lawyer. This committee failed to support the desired recommendations of supporting British Film, instead recommending support for the fledgling Indian film industry. Their suggestions were shelved.

In 1933, East India Film Company has produced its first Indian film "Savitr" shot in Calcutta on a budget of INR 75 thousand.

The partition of India following its independence divided the nation's assets and a number of studios went to the newly formed Pakistan. The strife of partition would become an enduring subject for film making during the decades that followed.

After Indian independence, the cinema of India was inquired by the S. K. Patil Commission and this commission gave a major recommendation about the setting up of a Film Finance Corporation under the Ministry of Finance. In 1960, the institution started to provide financial support to existing and potential talented filmmakers of the country.

In the mid of the 90s, the Indian economy started demonstrating sustainable yearly growth, and Hindi cinema works as a commercial enterprise, grew at a growth rate of more than 15% annually. The salary of lead stars expanded extraordinarily. Many actors signed different contracts with same and other film makers for simultaneous work in 3-4 films. Few financial institutions such as the Industrial Development Bank of India also came forward to finance Hindi film industry.

As time moved, and the urban class expanded, for the hindi film industry, the upper middle class or upper class became the target audience, who related more with a hero who had money and big bungalows and bikes. So as to make a movie sell and successful, hero of the movie should not be a poor boy from a distant. Indeed now the rural audience is much more interested to watch movies where the dance sequel is shot in Switzerland or Egypt.

Almost all the movies like to show and deliver what the viewers desired, and therefore the main reason for the shift in the story and in the theme of movies would be the shift in the mind-set of the audience watching it.

The Indian film industry is now become more professional, where box office collections have a prominent significance.

Review of Literature

Gwendolyn Kirk (2018) in the study "Linguistic landscapes of cinema in Lahore: From Lakshmi Chowk to the Vogue Towers Super Cinema", studied about the 'linguistic landscapes' to examine the interplay between multilingualism, orthographic shifts, the urban built environment, and cinema going practices in Lahore, Pakistan. In Lahore, Urdu and to an even greater degree English are the languages of education and upward mobility, while Punjabi, despite being by and large the most common mother tongue in both the province and the nation, has remarkably low prestige and is generally looked down upon as a language of rustic crudity. By examining the connections between language and the built environment of the cinema, this study also explores the roles language plays in creating public spaces for socializing, consumption, and the enjoyment of film.

Goode (2011) in his study titled "Cinema in the country: the rural cinema scheme – Orkney (1946-67)" explored about the act of transporting cinema to

and exhibiting films for the rural communities of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland has attracted a fair amount of press attention at home and abroad.

Wang et al. (2010) in their study "Why do moviegoers go to the theatre? - The role of pre-release media publicity and online word of mouth in driving movie going behaviour" examined the effect of online word of mouth and pre-release media mentions on box office revenue for movies in China. This article provides a better understanding of the decision making involved in movie going, as well as effective ways to market and release new movies in emerging markets.

Redondo and Holbrook (2010) in their study titled "Modelling the appeal of movie features to demographic segments of theatrical demand" proposed and illustrated a new approach for modelling the appeal of movie features to market segments via the use of appropriate individual-specific data and canonical correlation analysis. Specifically, through demographically detailed movie-attendance data available in Spain, they build a model of how movie features influence the demographic composition of audiences. Via a canonical correlation analysis, they identified four dimensions underlying the relationships between several movie features (country of origin, genre, objectionable content, stars, promotional effort, and critical evaluations) and audience demographics (gender, age range, presence of children, education, social class, and size of municipality). These dimensions represent the strong pairings between four moviegoer demographic profiles and four movie-feature profiles.

Collins et al. (2008) in their study examine instances where film consumers choose to consume the same film a number of times at the cinema. They found that children's films were most likely to be viewed more than once at the cinema, while repeat viewing for films aimed at older audiences were less likely. The most likely to repeat view were 10-14 year olds.

Yamamura (2008) explored in his study "Socio-economic effects on increased cinema attendance; The case of Japan" that the recent revival process of the film industry in Japan using panel data of 47 prefectures from the period 1990-2001. Author found, through fixed effects and Conditional Logit estimations, the following. First, decay of informal social networks is less likely to increase a film's attendance numbers, while multiplexes are more likely to increase those numbers. Second, new cinemas tend to be built in locations where the market is less competitive and are less inclined to be located in areas where informal social networks are weaker.

Hughes and Stephen (2006) in his research paper "Urban Mobility and the History of Cinema-Going in Chennai", considers the historical relationship between public transportation and film going in Chennai. It briefly plots the development of public transportation and then discusses its relation to the early history of film going in the city. In particular it compares how the introduction of the tram system coincided with the growth and success of cinema exhibition. Both opened up and institutionalized new

kinds of public space allowing for greater mixing at close proximity among different castes, classes, and religious communities that would otherwise not normally interact. This paper argues that the success of the cinema in Chennai must, among other things, be understood in relation to the increasing and new possibilities of urban mobility.

Collins (2005) explored in their study "Analysing Movie going demand: an individual-level cross sectional approach" that multiplex cinemas tends to be incorporated into a shopping mall complex containing retail outlets and restaurants to form an integrated entertainment complex. People can enjoy not only cinema, but also various kinds of entertainment when they attend multiplex cinemas. Multiplexes are thus more alluring than non-multiplex cinemas to various kinds of consumer groups such as students, families with children and couples.

Florian Stadler (2005) in his research paper "Cultural Connections: Lagaan And Its Audience Responses" studied that over the past few years, South Asian culture has crossed over into the mainstream as never before with fusion projects across various genres as well as bollywood films enjoying considerable success at the UK box office. Focusing on the bollywood cinema hit "Lagaan", this article examined how directors play with the tested bollywood formula in order to generate a broader appeal not only within India but increasingly across the globe. The film raises serious issues and questions about the nature of a globalised world since, for many years, globalisation has been regarded as a euphemism for Western cultural domination.

Papandrea (1998) studied in their paper "Protection of domestic TV programming" that Film industries with large home markets can easier impose their culture upon other countries, and consolidate an cultural advantage related to language and style preferences, and the bigger the cultural differences between different export markets, the more advantageous the bigger country.

Lloyd and Duffy (1995) discussed in their study "Families in transition, in Families in Focus: New Perspectives on Mothers, Fathers, and Children" that the declining capability of men to earn a 'family wage' along with the growing need for cash for family maintenance has resulted in an increasing number of female members in the family engaging in economic activities.

Need for Study

Film is a reflection of society. Movies are stories which are made by people who come out with ideas about something they want to say something they want to tell someone. Movies are a form of two way communications between the narrator and society and have been that way and would continue to be that way. Films, more than any other form of popular culture, have been reflecting the socio- economic milieu and changes in policy.

Movies have come to be key social collectibles that offer a window into advancing socio-cultural and social history. Films are a blend of craftsmanship, business and popular entertainment,

they give a number of insights into shifting ideals, fantasies, and pre- occupations like any socio-cultural artefact, the movies can be approached in a number of different ways. Many films like dealt with issues of casteism, urban dehumanization economic and gender roles and mass migration from rural areas and subsequent plight in urban slums, and basic human values. Till date no extensive study has been done on the socio-cultural impact of films on society and vice-versa. My study tries to fill this very gap that exists in literature.

Objective of the Study

To study the influence of socio-cultural factors on the performance of the Hindi film industry.

Research Methodology

This current study has been exploratory in nature where pertinent information has been gathered from various secondary sources of data, such as, journals, books, websites, industry reports, Government of India reports, etc. In the present study, seven most dominating social and cultural factors which are influencing the performance of Hindi film industry have been examined through the review of literature.

Factors influencing the performance of Hindi film industry:

Social and changing social factors

Social environment differs from country to country and also from place to place within the same country or region. It may also change significantly over time. A complete understanding of the demographic features of a country is very necessary for designing the appropriate strategies.

There are a number of key factors, which make the Indian film industry today an attractive proposition. Favourable Indian demographics, growing population, urbanization, rising income and education levels, change in life style, etc. have led to an increased demand for entertainment and the willingness to spend for entertainment has also increased exponentially.

Some factors have been pointed out as social factors in many studies such as: Yamamura, 2008; Redondo and Holbrook, 2010.

Age of the people

Age variable is effective in performance of hindi film industry as many studies show that young people go to cinema more than the other age groups. Yamamura (2008) in his study has categorized the people who go to cinema from age of 20 years to 60 years and has investigated this matter.

Increase in Population and Emergence of Young Population

The increase in the size of population with middle and high income group has resulted in increased demand for entertainment and leisure manifold. According to the provisional reports released on 31 March 2011, the Indian population increased to 1.21 billion with a decadal growth of 17.64%. A country where the population growth rate is high, youth constitute a large section of population resulting in more demand for the products or services which are meant for the young population. Now mostly all the film production houses are trying to read

the demographic changes accurately and monitors

them continuously for better opportunities.

| Year | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Population(in millions) | 361.09 | 439.23 | 548.16 | 683.33 | 846.42 | 1028.74 | 1210.19 |

Source: National Sample Survey Office.

People's occupation

Another variable that affects the performance of hindi film industry is people's occupation. It is clear that many people who have social prestige and have more occupational prestige, encourage the family members to go to cinema more than the people who have less occupational prestige. Social and occupational prestige means the average prestige that people of the society consider for one person or one group because of the characteristics that they link those people have. People's or group's prestige can be due to their job in the society.

Income levels of the people

Households income can also affect the family's demand for going to cinema due to the fact that income of one family is effective on lifestyle of that family and type of their demand for goods and services.

There is an increase in women's economic participation in the past two decades. Due to increase in the employment of women in India, the income of a family goes up. It leads to more consumption and positive changes in living standard of the family. According to India's National Sample Survey, the proportion of the working women in urban areas has increased from 11.9% in 2001 to 15.4% in 2011.

| Year | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Urban Women in Workforce | 6.68 | 8.31 | 9.19 | 11.9 | 15.4 |

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India; National Sample Survey Office.

Therefore, it is important to study and consider this variable as due to more earnings people are ready to spend more on the entertainment.

Urbanization

India continuous to have a predominantly rural population though the proportion of people living in urban areas has progressively increased since

1951. The increase in urbanisation of population in India has led to the growth of slums with unhygienic living conditions and various other problems as well as increase in the demand for watching movies in the cinema hall as most of the cinema halls are situated in urban areas.

| Year | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Urban Population of India (in percentage) | 17.29 | 17.97 | 19.91 | 23.34 | 25.71 | 27.8 | 31.16 |

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India.

Cultural Factors

Every society has its own way of life which comprises of the traditions, values, frames of mind, convictions, propensities, dialects and different types of collaboration between the different members of the society. In the era of globalisation, no industry can survive and grow without social harmony and without understanding the impact of demographic changes in the country. Cultural factors have been pointed out in many studies such as: Colins and Hand, 2005; Walls, 2005; Yamamura, 2008; Redondo and Holbrook, 2010.

Values

The values identify those objects, conditions or attributes that members of the society consider significant and valuable. Values can be characterized as expansive inclinations concerning suitable plans or results. In that capacity, values are presenting an individual's feeling of good and bad or what "should" to be. Values impact attitudes and behaviour of the people of the society.

Changing social values are beginning to question the basics of the age old social institutions and systems. Customs, traditions and conventions are not rigid anymore. Now the film production houses take special care of the social values and attitudes in a particular economy while planning to produce and release their movies. Even at present, the social

implications are seen in marketing and promotional campaigns of the movies.

Beliefs

People's belief differs with each other based on culture and traditions of that society. For example, it is possible that in one society and its culture consumption of one particular good or even thing have value while in another society based on their cultural, religious, and the things alike consumption of those goods be against the values of that society and even use of those goods can be considered as a crime according to their law. So it is the social responsibility of the hindi film industry towards the various sections of the society that film production houses should take care of the beliefs of the people and should not mislead the audience by showing untruthful and wrong facts or history in the movies. There are so many examples such as "Jodha Akbar", and recently a movie "Padmaavat" which was based on Padmavati.

Conclusion

Hindi film industry must understand the social, changing social and cultural factors for the bright future of the industry. In modern times, socio-cultural factors directly influence the performance of the film industry in a positive as well as in a negative way. With rise in young population, rise in income of the people, more urbanization and also with the

construction of more multiplex theatres, the performance of the hindi film industry will definitely improve in the coming future, but hindi film industry should take care of these socio-cultural factors as these factors are changing time to time.

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