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Movies Reflecting Political Consciousness of India: A Case Study of Selected Indian Movies Made From 2010 To 2020

Mr. Abhishek Sarta

Research Scholar

Department of Public Administration
Panjab University, Chandigarh
abhisheksarta@gmail.com

Abstract:

The present study is an attempt to analyse how Indian cinema is drawing the attention of the audience towards the socio-political issues prevalent in the society. In this paper the researcher throws light on how the central idea or the themes of the movies are set around the ongoing issues to make people aware of the reality and improve their consciousness about the relevant problems affecting society at large and to inspire and educate them at the same time. Indian cinema, particularly Bollywood, has been an effective medium for highlighting political themes, historical events, socioeconomic challenges, and the intricacies of government. Movie can provide insightful analysis, spark discussions, and question accepted norms. Movies can reflect societal political consciousness in a variety of ways, operating as a potent medium for conveying social and political themes. Overall, films have the power to connect with audiences emotionally, intellectually, and morally. They can elicit empathy, a sense of duty, and encourage people to become more politically aware and active citizens. Movies, through their storytelling, characters, and narratives, reflect society's beliefs, worries, and goals, making them a crucial mirror of political consciousness. The paper is divided into three sections, the first section talks about movies highlighting socio-political issues, second section is about cinema which gives a message about patriotism and third section is about movies based on sports.

Keywords: Movies, Socio-Political issues, Sports, Patriotism, Political Consciousness.

Introduction:

Film, as a medium of educating public reflects societal narratives on screen and teaches society how to perceive others and think about the world. Individuals and groups perceive the world differently depending on their surroundings and stage of development. When people watch movies, their individual perceptions help them understand what they are watching (Mack, 2017). "Cinema is an edited reality and a mirror of society. While society decides morality, films are desperate to connect with the audience and fulfil what the society fancies. In turn, the film affects the society; thus, cinema and society reflect each other," said Javed Akhtar (V, 2020). Film is a form of expression: with its own distinct audiovisual language, film is a way to communicate ideas and feelings to others. Movies frequently act as political mirrors, reflecting the social and political problems that are common in society. And when we talk about political consciousness it is about how people are understanding the societal issues concerning them. And cinema has been playing a major role in developing that consciousness among people as it has the power to spark debate and discussion by providing people with an overview of the things going around them.

Objectives of the study:

The paper makes an effort to study how cinema is getting inspired by the societal problems. It will highlight how movie are becoming a medium to awaken the political consciousness of people.

Section I – Political and Social Issues

Rajneeti (2010) -It is the narrative of a hard-fought election campaign in which money and corruption are the accepted norms and betrayal and manipulation are common tools. As these conflicted characters' inner drama unfolds against this grim backdrop, love and friendship become mere baits, and relationships are sacrificed at the altar of political affiliations. Raajneeti is a narrative about Indian democracy and its dark side. It's all about Indian politics, democracy, and elections. The Rajneeti film attempts to portray the story of a few people who influence the fate of millions. The film focuses on the violent conflict and the political power in a democracy. The film Raajneeti depicts the dark side of democratic politics and beyond. Raajneeti says all about corruption, elections, violent battles, manipulation, personal drama, popular opinion, and so on. (Raajneeti Movie – Raajneeti Movie Review – Dynamics of Indian Politics Introduced in Rajneeti, 2010)

Udta Punjab (2016) - The film emphasizes the widespread drug usage problem in and its influence on society, particularly youth. Tommy Singh (Shahid Kapoor) is a rockstar who is extremely engrossed in drugs and a detrimental influence on Punjab's young. Alia Bhatt is a Bihari immigrant working as a field laborer when she is mistakenly ensnared by local drug traffickers, who turn her into an addict. Sartaj (Diljit Dosanjh) is a cop who engages in drug trafficking under the influence of his unscrupulous superior. When he learns of his younger brother's drug addiction, he becomes aware. He then resolves to battle the drug war with the assistance of Dr. Preet (Kareena Kapoor). Dr. Preet works tirelessly to rid her state of drugs and manages a rehabilitation center for addicts. The plot revolves around these four people's lives while showing the terrible and cruel reality of drug usage and abuse. (UDTA PUNJAB PLOT, 2016). It is set in Punjab and tells the story of drug misuse in the rich north Indian state of Punjab, and how the youth there have succumbed to it, culminating in a socioeconomic collapse.

Love Sonia (2018) - A dramatic drama that reveals the grim reality of human trafficking and young girl sexual exploitation. Love Sonia, directed by Tabrez Noorani, is an extremely sad and unsettling film portraying some of humanity's most heinous deeds. The film portrays an honest voice and opinion about the underground sex slave trade. Yes, he displays a quite significant subject. Love Sonia confronts the reality of sex trafficking head on. Mrunal Thakur plays Sonia, a young girl who has been raped and abused but is still desperate to find and defend her sister Preeti (Riya Sisodiya), who has been placed into a brothel as a result of her father's (Adil Hussain) heinous crimes. The main focus of the narrative is on Sonia's tireless pursuit of her sister's reunion. The movie 'exposes' the misery of sex trafficking in young, defenseless victims. (Sanap, 2018).

Article 15 (2019) - A hard-hitting film about caste-based injustice and violence in rural India. The film portrays a true narrative based on the 2014 Badaun rape case, in which two adolescent women were murdered in Uttar Pradesh. The women belonged to the Dalit caste, which is regarded as the lowest on the social scale. The police claim that the ladies who were hanged in public were not raped, but their relatives continue to assert that they were. The plot revolves around the deaths of two sisters and the quest for their one missing cousin. The case begins soon as the protagonist, officer Ranjan, begins his new assignment in the remote region of Lalganj. As he investigates, he uncovers other forms of discrimination, including job quotas, untouchability, honour killings over intercaste romances, rape, and torture. The film forces

the spectator to consider how these issues play out in society. There are satirical moments, expertly performed by the trustworthy Kumud Mishra as Jatav, a lower caste police officer, and Manoj Pahwa, an upper caste senior Brahmdutt Singh. However, caste prejudice is a pervasive problem, particularly in the Hindi heartland (Shyam, 2019).

Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan (2020) - A comedy film that pushes for LGBTQ+ rights and questions societal standards surrounding same-sex partnerships. Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan, a film about two homosexual men who unintentionally come out to their bigoted families, makes a significant effort not only to bring to light the experiences of millions of LGBTQIA+ individuals and the hatred and violence they face, even inside their own homes. Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan is a culturally significant film that has the potential to facilitate discourse and a shift in homophobic narratives. The film may also hold the torch for increased LGBTQIA+ representation in cinema, and future queer-representative films may not find it as difficult to toe the line between comedy and nuance. Shubh Mangal's Zyada Saavdhan is innovative, yet it is merely the beginning. We must continue to push for more nuanced LGBTQIA+ representation in mainstream culture. Cinema has always been a powerful cultural tool. It is finally time to consider who and how we are telling stories. The toxic waltz between cinema and bigotry must end; films do not need to be misogynistic, homophobic, racist, or biased to work. Diverse, inclusive, and representative movie is more appropriate for our era. (Prasad, 2020).

Section II – Patriotism

The Attacks of 26/11 (2013) Based on the 2008 Mumbai attacks; the film depicts law enforcement personnel's valiant efforts to confront the terrorist siege. The film, which is based on the 26/11 terrorist attacks involving Ajmal Kasab and others, is about breathless, desperate action and startled powerlessness. It's a picture filled with overdone drama and sweeping emotions. Taking a strange, unforgettable, mind-boggling event like the Mumbai attacks on November 26, 2008, and turning it into a dramatic powerhouse film is, in one sense, impossible, it shows how more than 150 people got killed in this attack and how it has shaken the country and the countrymen (Sharma, 2013).

Neerja (2016) - Based on the true story of Neerja Bhanot, a flight attendant who gave her life to safeguard passengers during a hijacking, the film honors her bravery and patriotism. The film is based on the life of air hostess Neerja Bhanot, who was killed by terrorists who hijacked a Pan Am flight in Karachi on September 5, 1986. Sonam Kapoor plays the lead role in this film,

which follows the story of a 23-year-old flight attendant who risked her life to save the lives of 359 passengers. Neerja is India's youngest Ashok Chakra award for bravery. She also received the Tamgha E Insaaniyat Award from Pakistan and the Special Courage Award from the United States. (Iyer, Neerja Plot Summary , 2016).

Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran (2018) - The film, based on true events, depicts the Indian government's secret operation to conduct nuclear testing in Pokhran. Almost 24 years after Smiling Buddha, India's first nuclear tests, the country was ready to put its mettle to the test once more. The location of the nuclear testing stayed the same - Pokhran in Rajasthan, roughly 350 kilometers from New Delhi - as did the secrecy surrounding the tests. The entire operation was kept under wraps because the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government was under intense international pressure not to conduct the tests, and US satellites were tracking every action in India. Nonetheless, the tests were completed successfully in May 1998, resulting in a logistical victory. (HT, 2018).

Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019) - The film depicts the Indian Army's retaliatory surgical strikes in 2016 following a terrorist attack on an Indian military base in Uri, Jammu & Kashmir. The film is based on the Indian Army's surgical strikes in 2016 targeting militant launch facilities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). In response for the terrorist strike in Uri that killed 19 Indian soldiers, the covert operation reportedly killed 35-50 militants. Pakistan has since rejected the occurrence. No words can express or repay the sacrifices made by our soldiers for our country. Uri shines a light on the arduous task they do with fire in their belly and passion in their hearts. The film is a fitting tribute to the Indian Army. (Vyavahare, URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE MOVIE REVIEW, 2019).

Sardar Udham (2021) - It is based on the life of Udham Singh, a freedom warrior who was responsible for the assassination of Michael O'Dwyer, the previous Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, in order to revenge the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Sardar Udham Singh (Vicky Kaushal), an Indian rebel who assassinated Michael O'Dwyer in London (in 1940) to avenge the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, is honored in the film. At the time, the former British colonial authority was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab (British India). Dwyer had claimed that the massacre of hundreds of protesters in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, Punjab, was acceptable. He glides like a shadow, unrelenting in his chase of Dwyer and freedom from British oppression. (Renuka, 2021). It is story of an unsung hero who was less known to people

and movie makes an honest effort made to make people aware of the heroic and the charisma that this man had and how to very courageously did what he always wanted to do.

Section III – Sports

Bhaag Milkha Bhaag (2013) - Milkha Singh, the famed Indian athlete known as the Flying Sikh, is the subject of this biographical sports drama. The film follows him from a divided childhood to becoming a national champion and representing India at international contests. The film depicts Milkha Singh (Farhan Akhtar) from a little boy who loses his family during the India-Pakistan partition to his ascent as a sprinter who represents India at international sporting competitions and wins multiple medals for the country. The film has all it takes to be a fascinating sports picture, from the key aspects of the rise-of-the-underdog to the spirit-of-winning (Malani, 2013).

Mary Kom (2014) - This biographical sports film portrays the amazing story of Indian boxer Mary Kom, who overcame adversity to achieve greatness in boxing and bring glory to her country. The film is based on the true story of a boxing champion from a distant village in Manipur, whose hard work, challenges, and final victory served as the recipe for success. In a male-dominated world, the film urges women to fight and succeed. Despite her father's displeasure, a girl's willingness to follow a sport. She enrolls in coaching classes in her village. The master over there makes fun of Mary Kom regarding the game as well. Mary kom regularly visits him and he forces her to attend coaching lessons. And from there the story unfolds into a gripping journey of an Olympic medal winner (Iyer, MARY KOM MOVIE REVIEW, 2013).

Dangal (2016) - Inspired by true events, the film depicts the journey of veteran wrestler Mahavir Singh Phogat and his efforts to coach his daughters, Geeta Phogat and Babita, to become world-class wrestlers. Father gives up on his dream of becoming an international wrestler. Father wishes for a son who will fulfill his goal for him. Father eventually has four daughters. Father learns that two of his daughters are skilled brawlers. "From now on," Father proclaims, "they will only wrestle." In defiance of the villagers' tut-tutting and assumptions about women's responsibilities, Father trains those girls to mud wrestle and instills in them a feminism spirit. Based on the true story of Geeta and Babita Phogat, who went on to compete in the Olympic Games (Kenigsberg, 2016).

M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story (2016) - This biographical film explores the life of Indian cricketer and former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, highlighting his challenges, tenacity, and

ascent to become one of India's most successful cricket captains. The biopic of India's legendary captain, MS Dhoni (played by Sushant Singh Rajput), is the cricketer's dedication to his well-wishers, friends, and family, who stood by him through success and adversity. Their enormous role to realizing his dream, his belief in himself, and his capacity to overcome professional and personal obstacles. (Vyavahare, MS DHONI: THE UNTOLD STORY MOVIE REVIEW, 2016). The film traces the career of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, a young cricketer from Ranchi who rose to become India's most successful captain. Before he became a cricketer, he worked as a ticket collector.

Soorma (2018) - Based on the life of hockey player Sandeep Singh, the film depicts his path from near-fatal accident to becoming one of India's most promising hockey players. In more ways than one, Sandeep Singh (Diljit Dosanjh) is a late bloomer. Kartar Singh (Danish Hussain), an obnoxious bully of a coach, turns Sandeep off hockey as a boy. Sandeep's ability to flick the ball off the ground and slam it with incredible strength and speed at the goalpost gets him a spot on the Indian squad, and his coach Harry (Vijay Raaz) praises him. Harry anticipates that the lad will eventually tear a hole in the netting, but a misfired weapon ensures that this accomplishment will be difficult. Sandeep is paralyzed from the waist down after a bullet is mistakenly fired by a Railway Protective Force official during a train travel. He can walk and run after a year of therapy in Europe, and his next steps are all toward the hockey field. Every sports biopic relies on a simple metaphor. It is the act of getting back on one's feet in Soorma. (Ramnath, 2018).

Discussions

If we look at the subjects of all these movies, they are inspired from the current happening of the society, issues prevailing in the society which are an integral party of the social fabric. And efforts have been, made to portray these situations in way that people understand the idea behind making of these films, at the same time have a thorough understanding of the issues behind it. If we will have a closer look at the movies that are being made in the present times, they revolve around two three main themes one of those being sports, there are lot many biopics of sportspersons that are being taken up by the film makers. India has a wider range of sports films for the younger generation to influence, develop leadership characteristics, find a new role model and motivate them, improve involvement, and, most importantly, maintain health, fitness, and wellness. Gender discrimination, doping, injury, match fixing, sports politics and corruption in the federation, sports industrialisation, sexual harassment, socioeconomic barriers, and other concerns exist in Indian sports. But there is a bright side to Indian sports:

patriotism and togetherness in diversity, Indian people's interest and emotion in sports, the transmission of love and faith between sportsmen and Indian sports fans. Sports personalities strive, but their performances inspire the Indian people. (Ghosal, 2018).

Similarly other issues are also being taken up like women hygiene and health, equality, Child labour, trafficking, LGBTQ discrimination, Human Right, role of judiciary, political and administrative corruption are few to be named. And if we will closely look at the societal functioning these are the issues we encounter in our daily lives. Films are being made on these issues just to create that awareness and initiate a dialogue amongst people which can bring about a change and can help in overcoming these issues. Cinema being a powerful media has the potential to initiate a change by changing the way people think or act. From a larger perspective it can be concluded that good cinema, storytelling can create a better society for people to live in.

Conclusion

Movies are clearly incredibly influential in today's environment. And, because the beneficial effects outweigh the disadvantages, it is our responsibility to select the appropriate information for the appropriate audience and to shield young minds from content that will corrupt their feelings and opinions (Elezaj, 2019). The movies can spark a debate in the society by about any particular issue that is affecting people at large. At the same time good cinema can act a medium to disseminate information which can help in perception building and educating people. As we continue to embrace the power of cinema, it becomes increasingly vital to approach films with critical thinking, openness, and a desire to engage in constructive discussions about the themes they represent.

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