3. The Contemporary period of Hindi Cinema

Each one of us today is aware of the terms, ‘Cinema’, ‘Bollywood’, ‘Films’, ‘Actors’, ‘Movies’ etc. So deep rooted are these terms in our society that even a five year old kid could explain you the meanings of the same. Films have by far become one of the most popular medium of mass communication and one of the biggest revenue earners for the country. This Journey began on July 7, 1896, when Lumiere brothers of France organized a show of their short films like ‘The sea bath’, ‘The arrival of a train’ and ‘Ladies Soldiers on wheels’ in Watson Hotel of Bombay. This event was described aptly by the Times of India as, “Magic of the Century” and has truly left the Indians hooked. The production, narration, technology, characters, advertising, exhibition and even the purpose of cinema changed yet the cinema remained. The Hindi cinema has crossed over many paths and bridges to
reach where it stands today. The contemporary period of Hindi cinema depicts the time frame from the late 1990s to the present 21st century. The word ‘contemporary’ literally means living or occurring in the present; modern or current. As is apparent even to a layman’s eyes the film industry has drastically changed from the 1980s-1990s to now. ¹ The film industry is now much more capitalized and regulated, the process of film production has become professionalized and rationalized as never before, filmmaking is now incorporating a lot of high-end technology, there is greater division of labor and the modes of movie distribution and exhibition have been drastically altered. Nowadays, the film business is more closely integrated with other sectors of the entertainment industry and the nature of the film audience has also changed dramatically. Not only has the modes of manufacture of films changed but the narrative style and the script of the movies have become more in tune with the present day demands and aspirations. Let’s take the case of Anurag Kashyap’s adaptation of Devdas in Dev-D (2009) which in itself depicts the radical alteration in the films of now and then. The new
Devdas is shown to have moved forward and carried on with his life with Chandramukhi while the old one is shown to have drowned in alcohol and dying at the altar of his beloved paro. The new adaptation matches more suitably to the contemporary times and provides a peek into the thinking and changing ideologies of the times.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CINEMA: NOW AND THEN

It is a universal truth that cinema is a powerful reflector of society. It mirrors the transformations, cultural tensions and new trends that are surfacing in society in interesting ways. In short, cinema captures the essence of life itself. As the Cinema is changing so is the perception about cinema. A look at the history of the nation will reveal that when the films entered the nation not all were happy and rejoicing in the art form, there were many who looked upon it as a social evil capable of destroying young minds and corrupting them. Even, the father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi (bapu) viewed cinema as a corrupting influence, and could not envisage a role for it in the construction of a swadeshi culture. In the modern day India
there would be very few who would shun cinema and label it as a social evil. On the other hand, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru recognized the potential of cinema from the very beginning itself and wanted to use the medium in a way which benefits the society. In a personal communication dispatched to the organizers of the first Indian motion picture congress in Bombay in 1939, he asserted:

*I am far from satisfied at the quality of work that has been done. Motion pictures have become an essential part of modern life and they can be used with greater advantage for educational purposes... so far greater stress has been laid on a type of film, which presumably is supposed to be entertaining, but the standard or quality of which is not high. I hope that the industry will consider now in terms of meeting the standards and of aiming at producing high-class films that have educational and social values. Such films should receive the cooperation and not only of the public but also of the state*
Thus, there were two ways in which the nationalist leadership approached cinema. First, as ‘low art’ which aimed to provide vulgar entertainment to the masses and second as a mode of mass communication which can be used for instilling and propagating good values among the people. The vision of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru held ground for quite some time and during those early days the purpose of cinema was not entertainment but education and value building. Nitin Bose, an Indian film director, cinematographer and screenwriter active during the years from 1930-60s in an interview in Cinema Vision India, Volume 1, Number 2, April 1980 Says:

“When we directed films, we tried to make pictures with messages that would wake people up, rouse them. They could see themselves in our pictures. Just entertainment had no value, in fact, the word ‘entertainment’ was not used. Debaki Bose, Charu Roy, Prafulla Roy, P.C. Barua, lat Bimal Roy, Hem Chander... all of us felt this way.”
This outlook is strikingly different from the modern times wherein the mantra of success for a film was accurately summed up by Vidya Balan in her 2011 blockbuster, *The Dirty Picture*, wherein she comments, “A film becomes a hit only because of three reasons....Entertainment, entertainment and entertainment”. This change in the way movies were being watched and perceived was not effected in a single day but gradually began from the 1990s.\(^5\)

**THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD**

The beginning of contemporary period is not certain and cannot be defined precisely But the decade of 1990s can fairly be said to be the time from where it all started. The 1990s gave a string of crude comedies like *Raja babu* (1994), *dulara* (1994), *hero No. 1* (1997), *coolie no. 1* (1995), *sajan chale sasural* (1996) and many more from Govinda- David Dhawan camp. In the decade of 90s the trend of middle class cinema which started from the late 1980s was carried forward by films like *Lekin* (1990 and *Rudali* (1993).\(^6\) This decade was also dominated by love stories and Realism which appeared in
bits and pieces. It was not the crude realism of serious and non-commercial cinema but a soft realism influenced by real life with a touch of fancy and imagination. This decade also brought some innovative trends like the trend of films based on anti-hero or negative hero as a central character such as *Baazigar (1993)*, *Dar (1993)* and *Khalnayak (1993)*. It was also a decade which witnessed the emergence of star-sons like Sanjay Dutt, Kumar Gaurav and Sunny Deol and star-daughters like Kajol, Karishma Kapoor, Karina Kapoor, Esha Deol and Soha Ali Khan as joining the Bollywood race. The development of 1990s was shaped by important factors such as Urbanization and the rise of the growing middle classes both of which have been crucially important in facilitating the creation of New Bollywood.

Thus we see that the popular films of the 1990s were often masala films, with a blend of many ingredients: broad comedy, improbable action, uncomplicated romance, and copious amount of melodrama. The broad story line would include the following phases: After the heroes traverse the plots full of
coincidence, sit through at least one item number performed by special guest star Helen, and have some dishoom – dishoom with a henchman or five, traditional family values would be upheld, greed and dishonor would be punished by legitimate authority figures, and the world would be set right.

It was from the 1990s itself that more emphasis was being given to the commercial and entertainment value of a film and less to its moral and ethical message. In this background the decade of 2000 began with the contemporary versions of old classics such as lagan (2001) and devdas (2002), both of which went on to become huge hits. The film lagan was also India's official entry to the 2002 Oscars. The beginning of the 21st century also brought with itself the first cycle of biopics in the Indian film culture which was mostly based on a revival of the historical genre. A biographical film, or biopic is a film that dramatizes the life of an actual person or people. Until the early 2000s, there were very few biopics in mainstream Hindi cinema except probably the 1982 Indo-British co-production about the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi, titled Gandhi.
(1982). Even in the 21st century, the trend was continued and these type of films were mostly about national leaders including *Ashoka* (2001), Bhagat Singh, an anti-colonial revolutionary whose story featured in the 2006 hit *Rang de basanti*; Mangal Pandey, a semi-legendary hero of the 1857 uprisings, featured in *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) and the great mughal, Akbar, who was the subject of *Jodha Akbar* (2008). The 21st century also saw the production of sequels i.e. the continuation of the previous films such as *Krishh* (2006), *Phir Hera pheri* (2006), *Lagey raho munna bhai* (2006, *Don* (2006) and *Umrao jaan* (2006). This was a time of experimentation with various subjects and innovation, people no longer wanted to watch movies with the same story line, thus the filmmakers arrayed diverse movies such as social films like *Baghban* (2003), love stories like *Veer Zaara* (2004), patriotic films such as *Rang de Basanti* (2006), *Mangal Pandey* (2005), *Swades* (2004); thrillers such as *Murder* (2004) and comedy like *Bunty aur Bubbly* (2005). It was also a time when Literary masterpieces such as *Pinjar* (2003), *Parineeta* (2005), and *omkara* (2006) graced the
celluloid. The time was also ripe for Technological advancement. This was just the beginning of the contemporary period of Hindi cinema and Hindi cinema was achieving new heights of excellence, the varied movies has proven that hindi cinema is now mature enough and has learnt to take risks. With the films like *Tare Zameen Par (2007)* and *Chak de India (2007)* which contains no heroine, no romance, no sex, no violence and yet they have become blockbusters, the success itself is testimony to the fact that the Indian audience has changed and so is the Indian filmmaking process.  

**IN TO THE CONTEMPORARY ERA**

As the times further progressed, we realize that the Contemporary films have a better variety to offer. There is something for everyone. If one wants to enter into a dream like sequence with happy endings and a lot of glamour and grandeur one can always opt for the lively films made by Sooraj Barjatya, Aditya Chopra, and Karan Johar which represent candy floss entertainment at its best. If one wants to
relive the good old days, one can opt for period films set in the retro era such as *Barfi* (2012), *Once Upon A Time In Mumbai* (2010) and *The Dirty Picture* (2011). Other movies set in the 1980s are *Special 26* (2013), *Himmatwala* (2013) and *Shootout At Wadala* (2013). If one is interested in historical dramas with special focus on costumes of the time one can go ahead with movies such as *Veer* (2010) and *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008).

The inclination towards remakes and biopics still remain a popular choice for several makers, but the biopics have shifted their concentration from the freedom fighters to the people who have achieved success in a particular field like business or entertainment or sports, some examples of the same can be *Guru* (2007), *Paan Singh Tomar* (2012), *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* (2013) and *Mary Kom* (2014). The one issue with biopics has been that they are often looked upon by the mainstream audiences as ‘Documentary’ movies and thus devoid of any entertainment value. Tigmanshu Dhulia, who directed the biopic on the runner turned bandit *Paan Singh Tomar* (2012) also pointed out that audiences would think
that a biopic without stars would be classed as a ‘documentary’. All this shows the dynamism and vitality of the Indian cinema and its tremendous capacity to keep abreast of changes. It is because of these features that the Indian cinema influences the dominant urban culture in more ways than one. It exercises its influence on all other art forms such as television, theatre, advertising, music, information technology, journalism, architecture, fashion and even the profiles of goddesses on calendars and in Puja pandals.

**THE MULTIPLEX CULTURE**

In the contemporary period of Hindi Cinema there has been a recent transition to multiplex exhibition of films. The multiplex theater is an exhibition space designed for multiple screenings. India’s first multiplex, opened in New Delhi in 1997 and from then on the Multiplex sector in India has seen phenomenal growth especially over the last few years. The advent of Multiplexes has been like a hard blow to the single screens. The Multiplexes which generally open inside big Shopping malls seek a middle class audience primarily located
in urban areas. India’s multiplex screens are forecast to number more than 2,200 by 2016, according to the 2012 media and entertainment report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) lobby group and consultancy KPMG. Multiplexes are also garnering a higher share of exhibition revenues from films, compared to standalone theatres. In 2010, multiplexes accounted for 21 per cent of film exhibition revenues while in 2011, they accounted for more than 30 per cent. As the multiplexes are entering deeper into smaller towns, it seems the single screens are losing the battle. With the rising young population, more and more people are attracted towards the multiplexes. The movie exhibition business is expected to rise to Rs 10,800 crore by 2016, increasing 9.5 per cent in the last five years.

In the face of threats from Television and Internet, the Multiplexes have essentially been a key player in reinvigorating the theatrical market. The movie viewing experience in a multiplex has added a new dimension to urban leisure. Watching a movie in a multiplex located almost always
in the middle of a shopping mall and in its lavish surroundings has altered the way in which people view movies. It has given both a social and economic push to the Movie watching market. In the coming times, Multiplexes are more likely to succeed than the single screens.\(^8\)

![Figure 14: Snapshot of PVR Cinemas, one of the biggest Multiplex chains in India [Source: Internet]](image)

### THE AUDIENCE OF THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

The audience of the contemporary period has become more mature and adventurous, he is no longer satisfied with one
story being presented in novel ways, the need for different issues, angles and narratives has grown. The audience now looks for a combination of genres in a film, movies with a good script and an entertainment value is appreciated, for instance the best example can be 3 Idiots (2009) which was a blockbuster. The movie had everything be it comedy, friendship, romance or a social message all of which were blended in a way to create the perfect mix of a Hindi Blockbuster. The Audience profile has also diversified in the contemporary period, with a growing middle class population and an increase in the young populace, these people have become the main targets of the filmmakers; apart from them Western audiences, film research scholars and film critics also have started to take a keen interest in Bollywood. After the year 2001 when Bollywood was accorded the legal status of an industry under the Industria Disputes Act of 1947 in India, things changed further. This meant that the film industry which was earlier privately funded could now be funded by national banks. Not only had this been beneficial to Bollywood in terms of fund raising but had also increased its stature
Films and movies are unarguably one of the most powerful medium to put an idea across. With the growing viewership this medium has become all the more potent. According to one global consulting firm, by 2025 the middle class in India will comprise more than 40% of the population and it is this middle class which are the target audience for most of the filmmakers. The contemporary hindi cinema has become a reflection of the desires and aspirations of the growing middle class. This class is spending and is willing to spend more and more on entertainment and leisure. As per the International Goldman sachs report of October 2003, which states that over the next 50 years, four countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China (the BRIC economies)- will become key players in the world marketplace. ‘India could emerge as the World’s third largest economy and of these four countries; it has the potential to show the fastest growth over the next 30 to 50 years’, the report states. Rising incomes may also see these economies move through the sweet spot of growth for different kinds of products, as local spending patterns change. It goes on to predict that the ‘Indian
entertainment industry would significantly benefit from the fast economic growth as this cyclically sensitive industry grows faster when the economy is expanding’. Since the opening up of the economy in the early 1990s, the boundaries of Bollywood cinema are getting blurred. Never before has there been such a worldwide awakening towards Bollywood cinema and cross fertilization of film ideas and talent from the subcontinent. In effect, mainstream hindi filmmakers are beginning to realize that it is possible to intelligently design films which can prove profitable both for the Domestic and the overseas market.

Thus, Hindi Cinema has become a global entertainment power with lots of help from the extensive media coverage and the thriving online celebrity culture. The only blot in the current progressing scenario is the piracy and counterfeiting of films. With the growing access to internet and ever expanding reach of technology, it is very convenient to find duplicate and pirated copies of the films which can affect the movie industry. But as one writer puts it, “the coming of Camera pictures are
no threat for the Paintings” similarly, the film culture is so engrained in India that it is unlikely to affect the audiences from reaching the theatres to watch a film, but can slower down the progress.

THE EFFECT OF TELEVISION AND RADIO ON THE CONTEMPORARY HINDI CINEMA

The fact that almost half the population in India owns a television set and 90% of them own a cable connection cannot be disputed. Television has in recent times become the biggest driver of entertainment in India. The Indian populace gets access to cable connection via three means: Direct Satellite, Terrestrial channels and Direct to Home services. The face of Television has undergone a sea change from the 1980s; it has come a long way from the monopoly of the state-run Doordarshan to the extensive choices offered by the private channels. These private channels aim at luring the viewers by whichever way possible. It is these channels which have been acting as a catalyst for film marketing and promotion. We can
easily find Film actors and celebrities appearing as guests in TV Talk shows and Serials for the promotion of their films, not only this but nowadays even news and music channels run a segment on recent films and provide movie reviews. All this has added a new dimension for the advertising of the film and creating a buzzword for the same has become easier. As we say ‘Finance is the lifeblood of a business’ the same adage for the film industry would go something like this, ‘publicity is the lifeblood of the film industry’. In the movie world, Good or bad, any kind of publicity is desirable, it is like oxygen, it keeps you in the limelight and ensures longevity of your career and Television has become one of the primary sources from where you can seek publicity. As is the case with television the monopoly of the government broadcaster, All India Radio has been shattered by the coming of private FM radio stations. These FM radio stations have become quite popular among the youth in a very short span of time and you can easily observe people playing FM in their cars and buses while travelling. The popularity of these mediums has added new
vistas for the Marketing and advertising of a film which seems to be growing in the near future.

We can thus conclusively say that the contemporary period of Hindi cinema has changed a lot of things and has brought in a lot of changes. Bollywood has now come a long way from ‘Wannabe Hollywood’ to a major competitor and a force to be reckoned with. So dramatic have been Bollywood’s journey that it is hard to predict any conclusive turn towards which the Hindi cinema may turn but one thing can be said for sure, the ride would be an entertaining one.

3.2 Hindi Cinema and Our Society

The impact of Hindi cinema on society has been recognized from the very beginning of cinema itself. For instance the Editorial Board of *Sudha* (*A movie magazine*) had, in its first issue of 1927 voiced this concern when it studied the impact of cinema on Indian youth and had recommended strict control over films that were corrupting young minds:

*The bioscope-cinema tamasha is becoming very popular in India. We have seen ourselves that in Benares, children aged*
eight to ten years- who cannot get good education but can easily acquire bad habits- buy two anna tickets and watch cinema daily. We have even seen that because of this habit.......students of Sanskrit are selling lemonade soda inside....in this situation it is imperative for the government to exercise control over cinema”

In a 1963 report for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization looking at Indian Cinema and culture, the author (Baldoon Dhingra) quoted a speech by Prime Minister Nehru who stated, “..the influence in India of films is greater than newspapers and books combined.”

Furthermore, the fact that we have a statutory body, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) with its vision being, ‘To ensure good and healthy entertainment in accordance with the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952 and the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules 1983., is testimony to the undeniable fact that cinema has crept into our lives so much and has had such a profound impact that if not regulated, it can create havoc.
Also, the apex Court of the country (Supreme Court) in a 1989 judgment dwelling on the question that why is it necessary to obtain film certificate before its public exhibition has gone on to say that, ‘A film motivates thought and action and assures a high degree of attention and retention as compared to the printed words. The combination of act and speech, sight and sound in semi-darkness of the theatre with elimination of all distracting ideas will have a strong impact on the minds of the viewers and can affect emotions. Therefore, it has as much potential for evil as it has for good and has an equal potential to instill or cultivate violent or good behavior. It cannot be equated with other modes of communication. Certification by prior restraint is, therefore, not only desirable but also necessary’

The recognition that Bollywood has the power to impact society has dawned on us from the early days itself, but people have different notions on how to use this piece of information. For instance, Gandhi says that films can corrupt young minds and should be shunned while Nehru was of the view that they
can be used for education purposes. In the modern day context, films have obtained a cult status; they have entered into every part of our lives, and have even hijacked our imagination. The present section deals with the impact of Hindi cinema on various sectors of society such as impact on Children, youth and the general populace; impact on culture; impact on fashion and music; impact on television and other areas of life where films have entered.

**Impact of films on children**

Children are the young minds of a nation and its future citizens on whose shoulders rest the responsibility to shape the future of the country. These young minds are the most vulnerable and susceptible to influence of cinema. Children are immature and ape what their favorite actors do, we have heard many stories of children being influenced by superheroes such as Krishh and Shaktiman and committing fatal acts. Not only kids harm themselves but can also harm others, for instance many a times kids commit heinous crimes as learnt in the movies. Apart from major impact such as the
above, minor influence such as on the language, behavior etc. can always be found. Nowadays, parents allow kids to watch Films as it gives them a little breathing space, but it can make a huge effect in a child’s mental development. If regulated Films can teach children many skills in an easy and enjoyable manner such as language skills, moral values, difference between right and wrong, it can act as a social tool which can help to prepare the child for the big bad world. On the other hand, there is conclusive evidence that films for young children have become significantly more violent in recent years and are contributing in inculcating negative values in the children.⁹

For children movies can be a portal which can nourish their imagination, take them to places they have never been, make them understand different facets of human behavior, different cultures, and the value of money and make them appreciate whatever they have yet at the same time it can also have negative impact on their young minds. Nowadays the movies contain explicit sexual scenes which can result in premature
sexual awareness, crude language and violence can instill the same in them. All in all the extent to which cinema can affect the children depends heavily on the parents who can regulate what their kids watch.

**Figure 15 : Picture depicting the impact of movie Krishh on Children [Source: Internet]**

**Impact of films on the Youth**

This is the segment most powerfully affected by the movies; youth mimics the language in the movies, the clothes and even the food. The movies shape the ideology with which the youth abides by, one of the surest ways to put an idea across their minds is through films. This is the power of films on the youth. In this day and age, films have increased showcase and even glorification of violence, premature and adulterous
sexual behavior is no longer a sin and the characters in Hindi movies are more often than not larger than life itself, imprinting on the young minds the image to ‘make it big’ as getting rich, having flashy cars and going on exotic holidays. Achal Bhagat, a New Delhi psychiatrist who runs a counseling center for troubled youth, offered the following explanation for increasing youth crime rate:

“In a world where cutthroat competition begins from Kindergarten and the concept of having ‘made it’ is defined by TV and films images of the rich and famous, most children today prowl tirelessly for a better deal that will free them from the restraints that their parents faced. Ambitions soar and images of making it big (cars, exotic holidays) constantly play on the mind. But when failure strikes, most can’t handle it. A squeeze in the job market and the general lack of opportunities frustrate them. And soon the tremendous pressure to succeed builds up anger.”

Not only the growing crime rate be attributed indirectly to films, but also the acceptance of promiscuous behavior and
vulgarity in the language a gift from the Hindi Cinema. Indian film actress Deepti Naval said that “vulgarity in Hindi songs today shows that filmmakers take the audience to be buffoons and even a little retarded. I call today’s age as the ‘Pelvic age’ where hero and heroine simply gyrate to the music”. The Hindi film industry is heavily influenced by the Western films and as such the influence of western culture can be traced from the attitudes and behavior of young adults. This varies from food habits to sexual orientation. In 2002, 2004, and again in 2005 the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named tobacco in the movies a major factor in teen smoking. The research explains that non-smoking teens whose favorite stars frequently smoke on screen are sixteen times more likely to have positive attitudes about smoking in the future. Equally important, exposure to smoking in the movies quadrupled the chance that non-smokers’ kids would start. As per the Indian law, India enacted a legislation called “Cigarette and other tobacco products Act 2003” which specifically called for an end to direct and indirect form of tobacco advertisements as such advertisements encourage
youth to smoke tobacco. This legislation is an indication of the fact that the Indian legislature is not blind to the affect of tobacco and drugs on screen. As we have seen that Bollywood has an effect on almost every part of our lives, so how can our thinking, ideologies remain unaffected. The Hindi films affect the nation’s moral fabrics. Ten years back, Live-in relationships would not have been tolerated by the society but today the same is acceptable, although not wholeheartedly; earlier alcohol and smoking was considered to be a sin but today it has gained acceptance as a choice, although people are still discouraged from doing the same citing health reasons. We see that the society has become more tolerant and western ideas have gained acceptance, West is no longer depicted as evil in the movies. Nowadays, a typical Indian movie will contain group dancing with music set to foreign arabic/urdu lyrics while semi clad girls gyrate as pole dancers in bar scenes watched by the leading actor playing the role of a drunkard or contract killer. This has had the negative impact of increasing violence in the country. But it would be wrong to see only the negative impact of the movies on the youth, as is rightly said,
there are always *two sides to a coin*, similarly the films can inspire the youth to do something worthwhile, there are films such as *Baghban* (2003) which can instill family values in an individual;, other inspiring movies can be *Rang de Basanti (2006)* and *Nayak (2001)* which motivate us to fight against corruption.

**Impact of films on Fashion and Culture of a Nation**

One look at the recent movies will tell us that however far Bollywood has reached, however modern it may become, there will always be depiction of the Indian Culture in the Hindi movies. Taking some recent releases, we observe that the movie *Goliyon Ki Rasleela: Ram-leela (2013)* portrays the Gujarati culture from outfits to languages to food; Bengali culture was portrayed in *Gunday (2014)* and *Bullett Raja (2013)* and Lucknowi culture in *Dedh Ishqiya (2014)*. Bollywood films have always been a huge part of Indian culture. These films traditionally feature different aspects of India, its culture, and religion. Although, Bollywood films and music have become more westernized in the recent years yet
the fact that movies are a great reflector of the culture in a country still stands true. These movies play a role in constructing a global identity for our nation.

Not only this, the film industry is the backbone for the fashion industry. The clothes worn by lead protagonists of hit movies are immediately manufactured and sold. Even the fashion designers design clothes keeping Bollywood as a benchmark, there is no denying the fact that people in India are largely influenced by the style and glamour of the stars and we can always listen to the shopkeepers saying, “Mam, this is the sari which was worn by Katrina Kaif in so and so movie or award night”. Another example can be the trademark Salman Khan Bracelet with Blue stone and Chains which has become an instant hit among the boys and can be seen on the hands of many young boys. Many such other examples can be easily found. In short, the Hindi Cinema is responsible for the way people dress across the country and also for the way Indian culture is reflected globally.
Impact of films on Television

The social impact of the cinema in India is also seen in the nationwide popularity of film-based programs on various television channels. We can always hear popular songs from the films playing in the background music in serials. This further goes on to show that films have gone very deep into the Indian collective memory and conscience. The small screen and big screen have become complementary to each other, with the recent increase in the small screen stars making big in the movies, for instance Sushant Singh Rajput who started his career with Television serials such as *Kis Desh Mein Hai Meraa Dil* and *Pavitra Rishta* can now be seen as lead in movies such as *Kai Po Che!* (2013) and *Shuddh Desi Romance* (2013). Another such example is Prachi Desai who began her career with TV serial *KasamhSe* and went on to do several movies, the latest being a cameo performance in the movie *Ek Villain* (2014).
3.3 The Reach of Hindi Cinema

“One of the reasons that IIFA is happening in the US is because there is awareness about Indian cinema, which is popularly identified here (in the US) as Bollywood, People here are now more aware of what Indian cinema is than before. They also know the reach of Indian cinema. They know how in one stroke so many eyeballs are going to watch the IIFA.” - Anil Kapoor (Actor)

The 15th International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) ceremony, presented by the International Indian Film Academy was held between April 23–26, 2014 at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida, in the United States. This fact alone is evident of how far the Indian Cinema has reached and how powerful it has become in the Global entertainment sector. In a span of little more than half-a-century Bollywood has secured international recognition and in essence has become the prism through which the rest of the world sees and in many ways experiences the Indian nation, society, culture, and its people.\textsuperscript{11} With the coming of New Economic
Policy i.e. Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization policy (LPG) in 1991, it opened up the global market for Indian cinema; this in turn helped in the development of Bollywood as a global brand. The opening up of the overseas market and the explosion of multiplexes in big cities led to the wider box office successes of films in India and abroad. Producers became concerned with creating a movie which would do well internationally and not just locally. They started to give Bollywood flicks a western look by importing of western actors in Indian movies, such as Rachel Shelley in Lagaan. Indian movies was now being made keeping in mind the NRIs and some of the biggest hits portray their lives such as DDLJ. In terms of capital, star quality and technology, Bollywood cinema is now competing on the international market. The Indian film industry is projected to grow at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 10.1 percent to touch INR 150 Billion in 2016. The Indian cinema has reached a long way from its humble beginnings. IN 1958 the film —Mother India was nominated for an Oscar, and its director, Mehboob Khan, wanted to go to Los Angeles for the awards. In those time,
India was short of foreign currency, and according to a book about Bollywood by Mihir Bose, Mr Khan had to beg the government for money for the trip, writing, “I should be able to show that our government is also backing me. Otherwise, I will look small and lonely.” It is apparent that things have changed dramatically from there. The CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of Reliance MediaWorks, Mr. Anil Arjun says, “Earlier, Indian film distribution in the US used to be disorganized due to limited number of prints, inadequate marketing and lack of screens but ’3 Idiots' has acted as a game changer and penetration has doubled with BIG Cinemas reaching out Indian films to south Asian audiences across US”. Currently, prominent Hollywood studios such as Fox Star Studios, Disney UTV, Viacom, Sony and Warner Bros. have entered into Bollywood, the entry of such international names confirm Bollywood's popularity and its emergence as the new world market. Not, only has Bollywood succeeded in reaching across the Globe but has also succeeded in deeply penetrating the nation itself, with screens opening in small towns and villages. Especially with the
coming of Television the films have entered into every nook and corner of the nation, even the low income earners can be found to enjoy this luxury once in a while. The reach of Hindi cinema has become Universal in the truest sense of the word.

![Figure 16: 15th International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) ceremony in US [Source: Internet]]

### 3.4 Gender Reflections in Hindi Cinema

Representation of gender and gender roles in the mainstream Hindi cinema has always been a matter of concern as such depiction can shape the way gender is perceived in the society. The Hindi film industry has been predominantly male
dominated from the earlier days of cinema, propagating a patriarch society with the patriarch as the head of the family who cannot be defied and who has the rights to take all the major decisions in the family. The girl has always been shown to be meek or submissive and succumbing to family pressures. Hindi Cinema has restricted itself to defined sketches of womanhood. Women in Bollywood have been one-dimensional characters, who are good or bad, white or black. There are no shades of grey. The woman is either docile, domestic, honorable, noble, ideal or she is the other extreme — wayward, reckless and irresponsible. This dichotomy was reinforced in popular films which distinguished between the heroine and the vamp, the wife and the other woman. Films have also been inspired to a large extent from religion and mythology whereby women characters were seen as the epitome of virtue and values, those who could do no wrong. In India an ideal wife has always been portrayed as loyal and obedient to the husband, caring for the In-laws and sacrificing her career for the family. In short, the Hindi cinema has successfully institutionalized patriarchal values through the
ages. Films like *Dahej (1950)*, *Gauri (1968)*, *Devi (1970)*, *Biwi ho to Aisi (1988)*, *Pati Parmeshwar (1988)* has successfully depicted women as passive, submissive wives and as perfect figures and martyrs for their own families. In the earlier days of Hindi cinema Women were largely treated as decorative objects. For Instance in the film *The River (1951)* directed by Jean Renoir and filmed in India, the protagonist explains the arranged marriage of an Indian girl: “*Then her father told her that she must marry a man of his choice.....that’s the ancient custom.*” In this film, Harriet, an English girl, talks about how Indian parents are disappointed when they have a girl baby because they need to get a dowry. Although times have changed, the statement still stands partially true. Similarly in the Movie *City of Joy (1992)* which depicts poverty in then-modern India and the slum life in India, the main Indian character, Hazari, says several times how important a duty it is for a father to save money for his daughter’s dowry. Each phase of Hindi cinema had its own representation of women, but they were confined largely to the traditional, patriarchal frame-work of the Indian society.

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The situation was slightly altered in the 1970s which was known as the year of ‘New Wave cinema’. The decades of 70s and 80s did try to explore women’s subjectivity, her familial and civic role. But such films were not very successful in the Box office. As the Women started to gain independence and feminism gained strength in India- a series of women film makers brought women from the margins to the centre of their texts. A number of films were made by Aparna Sen, Sai Paranjpye, Vijaya Mehta, Aruna Raje and Kalpana Lajmi - which were sensitive portrayals of women and their struggles.

Apart from all this the mainstream Hindi cinema largely concentrated on the depiction of Masculinity, which was identified as having a muscular body with lots of physical aggression. It is from the movies wherein we have obtained the Phrase, ‘Mard ko kabhi Dard nahi Hota’ which means that a man feels no pain. Masculinity was portrayed in a way which frowned upon men showing their emotions and weeping was the department of only women who were reflected as the weaker sex. The only place wherein the actress
was given the upper hand was the glamour aspect which was displayed with the heroine wearing different clothes hairstyles and jewellery, all of which were craftly planned to gain a commercial advantage.

The coming of the contemporary age has been a harbinger of change for the representation of women in the Hindi cinema. A few courageous filmmakers are conjuring female protagonists whose stories deal with the traditionally deemed taboo subjects such as Incest, lesbianism, sexual liberation, toy boy, unwed motherhood and live-in. Some recent examples can be, the depiction of lesbianism in *Dedh Ishqiya* (2014), incestuous rape and child abuse in *Highway* (2014), boy toy in *Revolver Rani* (2014) and small town girl entering into a live-in relationship rather than in the socially acceptable institution of marriage in *Shuddh Desi Romance* (2013). Although, Cosmetic beauty and the trappings of affluence still remain one of the most important aspects in the contemporary Hindi Cinema. The item song culture prevalent in the present times is an indication of objectification of
women. But today Bollywood does not shy away from scripts with strong female protagonists. The movies *kahaani* (2012), *The Dirty Picture* (2011), *No one Killed Jessica* (2011) can all but be a few examples. Also, there is growing awareness of women’s independence and a rising acceptance of modern women not tied to the stereotypes of the society. Even the film regulatory body, the Censor Board of India has adopted a stern attitude on the depiction of violence against women in films and their objectification in songs. With rising feminism and independence of women, the stereotypical women of Hindi cinema is likely to be vanished in the coming years to be replaced by a more self-confident and independent version.

![Figure 17](image.png)

**Figure 17**: Depiction of Mothers in mainstream Bollywood over the years [Source: Internet]
3.5 Indian Film Critics
Film criticism is the analysis and evaluation of films and the film medium. In general, it can be divided into journalistic criticism such as appears regularly in newspapers and other popular mass-media outlets and academic criticism by film scholars that is informed by film theory and published in academic journals. The beginning of film criticism can be traced back to the beginning of film news and columns as regular features in newspapers, magazines and periodicals. The 1920s brought with itself the need to publish magazines exclusively devoted to cinema. The first among those to be launched was the Gujrati magazine *Mauj Majah* (1924). In the early days film criticism was viewed as a serious business. For example, Lakshman Prasad Gargya, discussed the method of Gajanand Sharma, a contemporary critic whose reviews, Gargya suggested, helped shape viewer preferences.

‘In the early days of talkies Gajanand Sharma, drew much respect as a critic. It has been my experience that cinema lovers decided to see a certain film only after they had read Sharma’s review in the Delhi periodicals ‘Chitrapat’ and
'Movies'. Sharma’s style was as follows – He began with plot description so that readers could understand the sequence of events. This was followed by a description of the characters and their roles in the film. Finally, Sharma focused on....the technique of direction, acting etc. Sometimes Sharma also made a funny comment about a certain character'.

In an essay published in the *chand* of 1938, Gargya laid down the principles for good film criticism. Gargya insisted that good film criticism meant placing the least emphasis on plot illustration and description of characters. What needed to be attempted instead was a comparative evaluation of all aspects of cinema. This was possible if a psychological approach was adopted. Finally, identifying the reasons and the categories of audiences who derived satisfaction in watching certain kinds of films formed the last component of Gargya’s enquiry. Kamalkumar Sharma attempted a classification system for Indian films by dividing them into 10 genres. These were:

1. Ballad Films

2. Play films and musical films

3. Cartoon films
4. Comic films
5. Story films
6. Epic films
7. Church films
8. Art films
9. Jungle films and
10. Fantasy films

This standard of film criticism has gradually gone down in the recent years. As pointed out by Adoor Gopalkrishnan, “There is hardly any good film criticism in India”. He further points out that the people who think they do critiques are hardly equipped to do so, he suggests them to first equip themselves and then only attempt to write a review. Trade analyst Amod Mehra is also of the same view, he says. "Most of the current lots are film buffs who are given fancy designations by their employers. They aren't really qualified". The weight attached to film critics has also gone down as the box office collections have remained largely impassive to such criticism. Filmmaker Rakesh Roshan comments on the show Koffee with Karan, “I never read reviews. I call up my exhibitor in the morning and
ask him about audience reactions. Which songs did they walk out in? When did they clap? That's my feedback”, Jaya Bachchan had bristled, "Are there any?" when Karan Johar asked her in the rapid-fire round to respond to 'film critics'. Such comment goes on to show how little significance is attached to film criticism.¹⁴

Nowadays, it's not a big deal to hear about paid criticism, the audience no longer knows which film critic to trust. But yet the importance of the role cannot be denied, viewers still turn to movie reviews before making the decision to watch a film. Some of the trusted film critics of the contemporary times are Khalid Muhammad, Nikhat Kazmi, Mayank Shekhar, Janhvi Patel, Sonia Chopra, Komal Nahta, Anupama Chopra, Rajeev Masand, Omar Qureshi and Taran Adarsh, who have succeeded to raise the bar of Film criticism in the country. Although the significance of Film criticism has blurred yet there is still hope for more refined and unbiased criticism, such critic is appreciated and the Directorate of Film Festivals, also accords The National Film Award for Best Film
Critic annually from 1984 for films produced in the year across the country, in all Indian languages to such critic.