

Impact of Modern Indian Film on Societal Views and Psychological Responses Among Different Age Demographics

PhD Proposal Plan

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Abstract:

This study seeks to examine the impact of modern Indian cinema on the social perceptions and psychological behaviors across different age demographics. The Indian film sector, which includes both Bollywood and regional films, significantly influences cultural values, social norms, and behavioral tendencies. As cinema becomes more accessible through OTT platforms and social media, its psychological and sociological effects have grown stronger.

This research focuses on how film narratives, themes, and character representations affect viewers' perspectives, emotional responses, and social attitudes, particularly among youth, middle-aged individuals, and the elderly. The methodology employed is a mixed methods approach, utilizing qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys across three distinct age groups. It scrutinizes content from mainstream Indian films released between 2015 and 2025, assessing their thematic portrayals of gender, mental health, social justice, violence, and interpersonal relationships.

The anticipated outcome is to delineate the influence of cinema on perception development, emotional reactions, and behavioral modifications, particularly in relation to identity, empathy, and ethical values. By uncovering the patterns of influence and psychological effects, this research adds to the conversation on media literacy and the responsibility of film in shaping public awareness within the socio-cultural framework of India. The results are intended to assist educators, filmmakers, policymakers, and media psychologists.

Introduction:

- *Background:* Historically, Indian cinema has served as a reflection of its societal context, both mirroring and influencing prevailing ideologies. In the current digital age, platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar have significantly broadened the accessibility and immediacy of cinematic content. The youth are captivated by glamorous depictions, adults are drawn to lifestyle portrayals, and older audiences resonate with narratives that evoke nostalgia or emphasize traditional values.
- *Problem Statement:* Research on the impact of modern Indian cinema on audience psychology and societal views across various age demographics is notably scarce. This deficiency is particularly important given the psychological complexity and social realism depicted in contemporary films.

- *Rationale:* This study is essential for comprehending the role of films in influencing perceptions of mental health, gender roles, justice, consumerism, and self-identity. It connects the fields of cinema studies and media psychology, thereby enhancing interdisciplinary understanding that is critical in the era of digital media.

Literature Review:

- *Exciting Research:* Researchers such as Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Rachel Dwyer have examined the ideological aspects of Indian cinema. Additionally, other studies, including those by Shoma A. Chatterji (2014), investigate the themes of gender and class within film narratives. Furthermore, media psychology research indicates a significant relationship between media consumption and the development of beliefs, as illustrated by Bandura's Social Learning Theory.
- *Theoretical Framework: This study utilizes various theories of media and communication:*
 - *Cultivation Theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976): Proposes that extended exposure to media content influences an individual's perception of reality. In the context of India, frequent depictions of violence, hypermasculinity, or glamour may affect societal norms and expectations.*
 - *Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001): Underlines the process by which audiences acquire knowledge through observation and imitation. Film characters frequently serve as behavioral role models, particularly for adolescents and young adults.*
 - *Reception Theory (Hall, 1980): Stresses the proactive engagement of the audience in decoding media texts. Interpretations can differ significantly based on factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. For instance, a senior citizen may interpret a film addressing gender rights in a manner distinct from that of a college student.*
- *Gap in Literature:* Despite extensive research on the effects of media and the aesthetics of film, there is a notable lack of comprehensive studies examining the age-related psychological impacts of contemporary Indian cinema, particularly in

films released after 2015 that address themes such as mental health, LGBTQ+ issues, nationalism, and violence.

Research Problem:

Primary Research Inquiry: In what ways does modern Indian cinema shape societal views and psychological behaviors among various age demographics?

Sub-Inquiries:

- 1: What prevalent themes are depicted in Indian films produced between 2015 and 2025?
- 2: How do audiences from diverse age groups perceive and react to these themes?
- 3: What psychological or behavioral transformations are linked to the repeated consumption of particular narratives or character archetypes?

Methodology

Research Methodology: A mixed-methods approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

- *Data Acquisition:*

1. Content Analysis: Examine 20 notable Indian films released between 2015 and 2025, spanning various genres and languages (with subtitles).
2. Surveys: Administer structured questionnaires to a sample of 300 participants, with 100 individuals from each age category: 15–25, 26–45, and 46+.
3. Interviews: Perform comprehensive interviews with 30 subjects, allocating 10 participants to each age group.
4. Focus Groups: Facilitate three group discussions, one for each age category, to explore interpretive frameworks.

- *Sample:* Targeted stratified sampling conducted in metropolitan and semi-urban areas of India, ensuring inclusion of various linguistic and cultural groups.

- *Data Analysis:* Qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis, while survey responses will be subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

including ANOVA and regression. Additionally, a triangulation method will be employed to enhance the validity of the research.

Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of prevalent motifs in modern film that impact audience psychology.
- Mapping of generational variations in perception and emotional reactions.
- Exploration of the influential role of film in molding societal perceptions, particularly regarding gender, justice, and identity.
- Contribution to media literacy education and promoting ethical filmmaking practices.

Research Questions/Hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis 1: Younger demographics exhibit a greater degree of behavioral impact from film representations compared to their older counterparts.
2. Hypothesis 2: Movies that incorporate socially progressive narratives facilitate favorable changes in audience attitudes.

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