

LIGHTS, CAMERA, POLITICS!

The Politicisation of Indian Cinema

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If one wants to taste the blend of arts he must watch cinema once. Most people believe that movies are the mirror of society, certainly, they are but what if this sacred abode for artists stoops low just to support a special ideology, or I should say "political ideology"? Well, it might be beneficial either to some politicians or some cinema players but not to the society looking for their image. It needs to be mentioned that I am not saying that cinema should stay away from politics, we need cinema to dig deeper into it, just so the mass can know more about it. But, we should be aware that the combination of cinema with some tilt toward a specific ideology is lethal.

THE BIGGEST CINEMA INDUSTRY IN THE WORLD

'Raja Harishchandra' the first full-length feature film of India in 1913 produced and directed by Dadasaheb Phalke led the foundation of the world's biggest cinema industry in terms of annual output or film produced and the third in the box office with a gross of more than US\$2.5 billion. It is an industry of various regional languages dominated by Hindi, followed by Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada with a fan base spread over 90+ countries all over the world. Indian cinema got its name 'Bollywood' by blending 'Bollywood' and 'Hollywood' together.

By watching Bollywood, one can tell about the history of India as it has traveled a long journey from stories and depictions of poverty, starvation, women as the epitome of sacrifice, and other socio-economic issues via stories related to corruption and an angry young man, to the modern movies about which we all know. But in the past few years, Bollywood has seen a trend of making politically motivated movies and web series streaming from the nearest movie theater to different OTT platforms.

WHY ENTERTAINMENT GOT POLITICS?

It originally depends upon the creators, producers, story writers, and directors of the movie about the message they want to deliver to society. The movies are a reflection of film maker's ideology about our society, sometimes the movies are based upon some specific issues only.

These movies are reflecting harsh reality of the prevailing social and political scenario in the country. One example is Article 15, a movie that depicted caste discrimination in rural areas. This movie succeeded in conveying its social message to audience to far extent. Certainly, it needs political and grass level understanding, motivation, and ideologies to make such movies. The movie article 15, was a great hit and earned double its budget. But, it seems like most filmmakers have copy-pasted the trick to involve their controversial political views to make their work get success, the list is long enough of such movies to fill pages. Also, movies related to major and minor political events should or must have some subtle touch of politics and political ideologies in them, or they will be art without entertainment and truths. This relationship between politics and the film industry has been strengthened with the actors joining different political parties. This phenomenon is not new though, it happened quite earlier in the south.

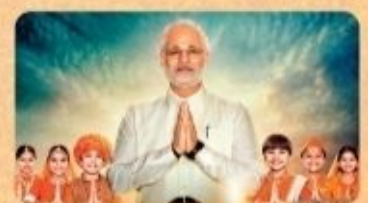
TAKING CARE OF THE RULING PARTY

It has been seen that many filmmakers tend to satisfy the right-wingers at the center and states in India with their works, by making biographies and movies about events that glorify the life and opinions of leaders of the ruling party. It is worth noticing, that these movies may have been based on real events, but it still has some part of fiction in them. In many cases, it acts as a way to clear the image and brainwash the masses, about something that has gone wrong or is questionable. There are numerous films about political leaders, some of the examples are as follows :



- **PM Narendra Modi** :- A film about India's 14th Prime Minister, Narendra Modi starring Vivek Oberoi.

- **Thackeray** :- A film based on Balasaheb Thackeray who formed Shiv Sena. The protagonist was played by Nawazuddin Siddiqui in 2019.
- **An Insignificant Man**:- A sociopolitical documentary of 2016 centered on Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal.
- **Thalaivi**:- A biographical drama about the life of late politician-actor Jayalalithaa played by Kangna Ranaut in 2021.
- **The Accidental Prime Minister**:- 2019 film, based on Sanjay Baru's book 'The Accidental Prime Minister', starring Anupam Kher as then Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in 2019.



CONSEQUENCES

Just like anything else, there are no foreseen consequences of the politicization of Indian cinema and vice-versa but, the creators of films and other broadcasts should be very careful and conscious while doing their work, as it can ignite the rebellious nature of humans by hurting their sentiments intentionally or unintentionally. We all have seen the horrible consequences of the movie about Kashmir in recent days, although it will be a narrow minding to blame everything on that movie alone. Politicians either leftists or rightists made the movie Kashmiri Files a huge controversy, while the leftists criticized it or argued that the movie shows only one side of the situation, rightists didn't move their step back to blame the ruling party for all that had happened in Kashmir in the 90s, both the sides could be right or wrong, but the question is why is that? Why politics and cinema can't resist mixing themselves? Well, maybe money, power, and fame are the answer in some cases. It is not a bad thing that politics get involved in the different sphere of the life, but what kind of politics, is the important question to be addressed? Political participation and civic republicanism are noble instruments for the betterment of society but we should consume the every political and social information cautiously with rational mindset and same applied to the Indian Cinema.