



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCE RESEARCH, IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY

ISSN: 2454-132X

Impact Factor: 6.078

(Volume 7, Issue 3 - V7I3-2093)

Available online at: <https://www.ijariit.com>

Emerging Trends in Films in Creating Eco awareness among People

Niji Nelson

niji.nelson@ifim.edu.in

IFIM College, Bangalore, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Dr. Jaya Patil

jaya.patil@ifim.edu.in

IFIM College, Bangalore, Bengaluru, Karnataka

ABSTRACT

Movies have become an integral part of human life, from telling stories to emphasizing rituals, culture and history, having mentioned that cinemas are milestones when awareness quotient comes into picture. Films are most impactful channel to spread the news as they have both audio and video content which would help to bring massive response from larger audience. A film is therefore a wonderful and most effective medium to create an eco- awareness among all walks of people in the society. As we are already facing depletion in ozone layer, global warming and environmental problems like acid rain, air pollution, water pollution, etc. can affect every human, animal and nation on this planet. The researchers strongly believe that cinemas, web series, documentary etc. play a vital role in awareness creation among people. Current comprehensive research study says that the impact is more when it comes to cinema as compared to other medium. The present research work is focusing on the following objectives like (i) analyze the impact of movies in creating eco awareness, (ii) to do a comparative analysis of impact of the movies created, (iii) to suggest policies that can enhance the effects of movies on respective theme. Three movies from International and three movies from Indian Film Industry are chosen for the study. The research is conducted on the basis of reviews from IMDB (Internet movie data base). The study shows that the movies under review had positive effect on the society in creating eco-awareness. According to current research it can be said that movies play crucial role in creating eco-awareness.

Keywords: Cinemas, Eco-Awareness, Effect, Research, Medium

1. INTRODUCTION

The need of the hour is to save the planet and it is very important in today's situation to create each one aware of the crucial environmental situation of the world. But the entire world is concerned of the question 'HOW?'. Films are the most powerful medium that can convey any messages in a very impactful manner, which can also bring in a huge response from the audience. A film is therefore a wonderful and most effective mode to create an eco- awareness among the various sections of people in the society.

Today, the biggest threats endangering the global environment mainly in 2020 are basic necessities like food and water, ⁸ Biodiversity, plastic pollution, deforestation, air pollution, agriculture, global warming. Even the rising problems from Fossil Fuels, Melting Ice Caps, etc; are posing a ⁷threat to the land, air, water and the creatures living and this degraded environment is posing a serious threat to human health and people's welfare.

2. ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN FILMS ON ECO AWARENESS

From scientific to environment disaster movies to animated movies, the climate change has been one of the touching topics in film industry and these kinds of appearance can be seen in Hollywood and French movies. The best example can be "Before the Flood" (2016),² narrated and co-produced by Leonardo Di Caprio, and as an actor he has also evinced keen interest in environment. In 2014 he was nominated as "Messenger of Peace for Climate Change" by the then Secretary of the United Nations. Another movie "Ice and the Sky"³ directed by Luc Jacquet tells about the life and experience of a French glaciologist Claude Lorius. This movie was screened in the Cannes Film Festival in 2015. These films tell about the various propositions of climate change, sharing an awareness about the current situation of this planet and provokes human being to do address this.

Some films have been controversial like "An Inconvenient Truth"⁶ that was released in 2006 is a good example of one such controversial movies. Though the star of the movie Al Gore, the former United States Vice- President was criticized for using the movie for promoting in political side, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize Award in 2007. AL Gore was criticized for misusing

this movie for campaigning for his political party rather than focus his attention on educating people concerning global warming. But till date, this film remains the eleventh highest revenue making documentary film in United States. Most importantly, "An Inconvenient Truth" received wide acclaim for creating public awareness about global warming

Another French documentary movie "Home"⁷ directed by Yann Arthus was a huge success and won the Cesar for best documentary. But this too underwent some criticism regarding its funding. The film was financed by Kering at French Multi-National retail shop holding luxury brand; therefore the focus was deviated from global warming towards promotion of the products of the company. These two movies are the best examples of to what extent some movies get into the political bondages to deal with such global issues.

The imagination of the fictional films re-write the reality of climate change. Several variations of such kind can be seen in lots of Hollywood's disaster themed movies. Climate change was the major focus in Ronald Emmerich's movie "The Day After Tomorrow" (1) (2004), which was later directed by Emmerich as "2012"⁴ which tells a violent climate change in the planet and it changes into new ice age.

UK based Conservationist Richard Edwards suggested that Bollywood should indulge in making more movies on the similar lines like Hollywood to present issues on environment and wildlife, then cinema can reach a larger audience. He cited examples like "The Day After Tomorrow" and "Avatar"⁵ to highlight on issues raised through acclaimed movies it will help the masses to understand environmental issues in a wider perspective.

We see the same theme going around in the other countries as well. The Spanish movie "Extinction"⁸ (2015) and Emmerich's film "2012: Ice Age"⁹ (2012) visualizes go around the same theme speaking about the end of world giving birth to a renaissance.

We might be contemplating how films can really work on creating awareness about the challenges in the eco system. Many mainstream films have lost their charm in creating awareness. The reason is the thought they bring in or the story line that they write is similar and there is no newness in them. The familiar style of narrative is also a reason behind their fall.

3. ANALYSIS OF INDIAN FILMS ON ECO AWARENESS

The Indian Film fraternity boasts of producing the largest number of films in the world which is in terms of number, be it, Hindi or any Indian Languages. The major advantage is that the reach of the films as a medium of communication is large and profound, and the films produced do teach us a valuable lesson and one such is concerning Environment. There is an urgent need of the hour is to save Environment due to global warming ringing alarm bells heading towards a disaster due to recurring floods, droughts and earthquakes.

Bollywood's gross neglect of not focussing on environmental problems needs to be addressed seriously and film makers need to involve in big measures to promote climate change, and give greater exposure to the harmful effects of global warming. The films have ignored the y to showcase the reality. We can find irreversible damage to our ecosystem and the topic of climate change on the silver screen has never been given due weightage.

The world is witnessing serious damage to environment and we are unconcerned about the sea levels rising, and there is a constant rise of global temperatures and we conveniently tend to ignore the truth without thinking about the future repercussions.

Every year Bollywood is churning out 1200 movies and billion of tickets are sold every year record breaking box office collection above 100 crores. Unfortunately, we have only a handful of films about environment. Most Bollywood or Tollywood movies do not depict the real issues or reality. Hollywood has steadily shifted from the fantasy culture to more relatable science fiction, but the same is not the case with Bollywood Industry and some of the stories have no logic whatsoever and no connection with the reality. Some Bollywood movies send out a valuable message on environment like - *do not take nature for granted* on environmental disaster ranging from water scarcity, floods, drought striking the earth at a rapid pace impacting people's lives, wildlife conservation, sustainable technology and climate change etc; Some of the those movies are: Mother India (10) on Floods (1957), Waqt¹¹ on Earthquake (1965), Tum Mile¹² dealing with Maharashtra Floods (2005), Jal¹³ dealing with droughts The film story is about two villages and their journey towards finding water. the movie highlights how lack of water leads to stress and strain people face physically and mentally.

Kedarnath (2014)¹⁴ is a classic example of making interesting movies on cloudburst, landslides, and floods. Kadvi Hawaa¹⁵ (2017) a film in Bollywood is based on actual true events from the drought-prone area of Bundelkhand. In this film, Mahua is a village affected by scanty rainfall, barren land, crop failure, and climate change. Apart from farmers huge debts, some of the farmer committing suicide is a serious cause of concern when they cannot pay back the debt.

Another noteworthy film depicting environmental disaster is Bhopal Gas Tragedy that took place in 1984 and a movie was produced titled The Bhopal Express¹⁶ - which was released in 1999 gives a closer focus highlighting on the Bhopal Gas Tragedy the real incident in 1984 was an eye opener. The night of the tragedy shook the world the very next morning with poisonous gas leak, clouds from the Union Carbide factory enveloping over 20 square kilometres and killing a large number of persons. Irada¹⁷ (2017) is another movie which depicts on environmental issues with a backdrop of Bathinda on thermal power plants and other chemical elements mixed with the groundwater the investigating reporter collects information on the case and he portrays on the effects of selfish motives taking a toll on the environment and health of people.

Kaun Kitney Pani Mein¹⁸ (2015) deals with the issue of water affecting people's lives on how people can take initiative to save water and preserve it. In Today's world population is growing at a very high speed. Equally the needs, desires and expectations of people is growing and cutting down trees from areas close to their living areas, and also forest it is definitely having an impact on environment.

Bollywood films can play a big role and has the potential to create and build environmental awareness because of its reach to large population and has considerable impact. There is an urgent need to address climate change and major environmental issues about our eco system which is endangering the whole world. The films can represent community problems and convey to the people the aftermath of their current deeds.

Apart from Hindi films, there are other Indian Languages mainly focussing on love stories ignoring the real issues like Global warming and climate which are the current topics which needs to be addressed to sort out and to come out of the grim situation and film producers have to produce more films to create awareness among people so that we can expect a clean, safe and healthy environment.

The Indian National Film Award for the Best Film on Environment Conservation and Preservation was established in 1954 for feature films by the Directorate of Film Festivals to present the awards annually. At the 37th National Film Awards in 1989, a new category of awards were introduced for Best Film on Environment Conservation and Preservation.

In 2016, the time the award was Instituted and presented to only nineteen times in eight languages with the highest being six in Malayalam, five in Kannada, two each in Assamese and Odia, and one each in Bodo, Manipuri, one in Marathi, and one in Tamil. One of the Kannada film Director Mr. P. Sheshadri, received award in 2005 for his film Thutturi¹⁹ and won another award for the film Bettada Jeeva in 2010²⁰ produced by Basanta Kumar Patil. Dr. Biju, a Malayalam film director went on to receive the award in 2013 for his film Perariyathavar²¹ and won another award in 2015 for the film Valiya Chirakulla Pakshikal²² produced by A. K. Pillai. Recently, actress Priyanka Chopra produced Marathi film Paani²³ which won an award for the best film. Environmental education is very important factor in the successful conservation and to create educational awareness among the people of younger generations.

Environmental films do help to raise awareness on few of the issues and initiate the viewers to rethink on their commonly held beliefs. The most dangerous and biggest worry is water pollution because water is not only polluted but a huge financial setback causing damage to environment.

4. CONCLUSION

Even though there are a very few international movies dealing with environmental issues, but it is commendable that their focus completely and the efforts of the film makers and the artist should be applauded for the selfless devotion to not to divert away from the theme but rather give complete focus and create awareness on the issue. The foreign film makers are attracting even the younger generation towards the current situation of the earth through films like 2012 :Ice Age.

The Hollywood film industry boasts of highly talented artists, film makers and advanced technology which is no match to any other film industries round the globe. But the number of films released every year related to environmental issues is not even handful. So they need to increase the number of films to be released that speaks about the current global warming and climate change.

At times, the foreign film makers deviate from the global scenario and get into promoting political parties or personal relationships which needs to be avoided. The good examples of such deviation is visible in The Inconvenient Truth (2006) and Home (2007). Though the planet is heading towards irreversible damage, there is hope if stringent measures can be implemented today; we can save ourselves and the planet which we call 'Home'.

The study highlights on 7 Bollywood films and 19 films in various Indian languages which were produced to create eco awareness, but unfortunately the quality of these films remain questionable. The people in India are avid watchers of films and they evince keen interest in watching different kinds of films and therefore it is vital to maintain the people's momentum and motivation. The film makers must initiate to focus on making quality films that reaches out to the public and create sympathy to protect our globe. The environmental factors will help to change many lives and many cities for creating better the living conditions.

Now the major revenue generators in Indian film industry and exponential growth can be found in digitisation. The infusion of over-the-top (OTT) platforms (applications and services that are accessible over the internet) and ride-on operator networks offering internet access services has been a big boost to the film industry with new movies churning out huge profits. There is huge rise in consumption of content and heavy investment in cinematographic films, such as Netflix.

Most importantly, the film makers should be environmental conscious and sensitive so that they feel encouraged to do produce more number of films on environment to create eco awareness. As far as quantity of films produced in India is the highest by any standards but they fall short while producing current topics on environment. It is extremely sad that the Indian filmmakers focus more on the popularity of the artist rather than on the theme by giving more importance to the actors and actress, songs etc. Even though most of the Indian movies cited in this research paper should be speaking of only on issues dealing with environment, it is disheartening to see romance and tragedy being given prominence over the global environmental issues.

The film makers understanding of Indian audience has been wrong mostly as they believe that colourful songs and romantic-emotional dramas are the only way to pull the audiences to the theatre and make their films successful in box office. This trend has

been in existence since the beginning of cinema to date. This trend needs to be reversed by the film producers by understanding the pulse of the audience and knowing their film preferences, desires and expectations. Today's generation is inclined towards films that speak reality but not the emotional dramas and meaningless glitch and glamour. Infact, the audience look forward for movies which are rich in reality based subjects and highly technology driven. Therefore, we see the young audience watch and are inclined towards International movies as the film are rich in quality and highly technology oriented. So the Indian film makers need to think out of the box to produce exceptional movies to retain their audience to watch their piece of art.

To conclude the research it is evident that films are on of the best medium to create any kind of awareness among the people, but the quality of films is drastically reduced over sentiments leading to the theme being diluted.

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