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An Analysis of Violence in Hindi Cinema

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ABSTRACT

One thing that is very much objectionable in violence and expression is to show the glamour of violence and to show violence getting rewarded. Hero or Villain spreads violence throughout the film but they do not get punished by the law, even in the end of the film when the villain get punished, the villain get murdered by the people or by the hero of film which again a violent activity and an illegal activity against the law. After watching such kind of activities, especially adolescents started to think that doing violence is a matter of pride and by doing violence in the society they can get power or special status. And by doing so, the law will not punish them. The present research is an attempt to know what kind of violent activities are being shown in Hindi cinema and what is the use of weapons in doing such activates. Apart from this consequences of violence are also analysed.

Key Words : Violent Cinema, Violence, Depiction of Violence, Impact of depicted violence.

INTRODUCTION

Cinema is the most famous medium of entertainment today. The audience often identified themselves with the characters depicted on the silver screen. The impact of cinema on the audience can be traced back to the very beginning of the cinema itself. For instance, the Editorial Board of Sudha magazine (a renowned film magazine) written in its first issue of 1927, raising concerns about the cinema's impact on Indian youth and recommended the control over films content saying:

"*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"*

Furthermore, Central Board of Film Certification is a statuary body in India which aims to ensure the good and healthy entertainment in accordance with Cinematograph Act 1952. Undoubtedly cinema has crept in our lives so much and had such a great impact on our lives, that if it is not regulated it can create havoc. Former Prime Minister Nehru in his speech stated that, "the influence in India of films is greater than newspapers and books combined."

Supreme Court of the country in a milestone judgment, dwelling on the question that why certification for the films is necessary before public exhibition, says 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 behaviour. 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

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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.

Impact of films on children:

Children are the future of the nation. They have the responsibility to shape the future of the country, the country which is known as the youngest country in the world. But unfortunately these young minds are the most vulnerable and susceptible to influence of cinema. Their minds are not mature enough to differentiate between the reality and virtual reality. They start believing whatever they see in cinema and sometimes start imitating what their favourite actors do. We have listened many stories where children being influenced by the superheroes (such as Krish and Shaktimaan) start committing fatal acts. Sometimes children found involved in heinous crimes, probably learn from the movies. Apart from these impacts language and behavioral influences of cinema are also very common among the children. Nowadays parents allow children to watch films as they do not have much time for other creative things. If regulated Films can teach children many skills in easy and enjoyable manner such as moral values, speaking skills, language etc. Cinema can play a vital role in nourishing their imagination but cinema now-a-days become significantly more violence in the recent years, which may lead the children behaviour aggressive.

Films 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.

Violence in cinema and its influence:

Concern about violence on television and cinema can be traced back to the earliest days of the medium. In tracing the history of research into questions about violence in the media, a number of historical milestones can be identified over a period spanning more than sixty years. With the arrival of motion pictures in the 1920s as the first of the mass popular media, there began an almost ritual like invoking of experimental, quantitative social science to investigate about media influences. At different times, public anxieties cantered on the potentially harmful effects of a particular mass medium, with television being the focal point of the public attention since the 1950s. The most frequent source of concern was the portrayal of violence in programmes which, according to television's critics, could undermine the moral values of young people, teach lessons which encouraged delinquent behaviour, play a significant role in contributing towards rising levels of crimes in society.

In 1928 William H. Short, executive director of the motion pictures research council, invited a group of university psychologists, sociologists and educators to design a series of studies to access the influence of the movies on children. The research was funded by a private philanthropic foundation called Payn Fund. The research findings were published in the early 1930s in ten volumes and represent classic works. Among the questions they tackled were whether the movies eroded moral standards and had an influence on conduct. Findings indicated that many scenes of crime and sex could be found in the movies that were contrary to moral standards of the day, but no conclusive evidence emerged that the movies actually had degenerating effects on their audiences.

Dale (1935) reported an analysis of the major themes of 1500 films as part of the Payn Fund research and found that about one in four films had a major themes of crime and in an in depth analysis of 115 films, found an average or 3.9 crimes per film. His conclusions, like so many later studies of television violence, were suffused with assumptions about the harmful effects due to this excessive and dramatic way of presenting crime.

The study reported evidence of media effects. Research into movies influences on delinquency suggested that there might be a link. One study of delinquency prone youngsters reported that motion pictures played a direct role in shaping delinquent and criminal careers. Although much of this research has been focused upon the potential impact of violent television on children, who are regarded as especially susceptible to media effects, there has been wider public concern about television violence and its influence on the audience as a whole.

Since 1970s when television broadcasting and cinema became widespread, the attention of social science researchers has been predominantly drawn to these mediums, particularly with reference to the possible impact, its depictions of violence might have upon viewers. Despite of censor board guidelines for not showing violence in access, the filmmakers of India keep making films full of violence and featuring fast paced

actions and with themes commonly centered around violent solution of the problems.

In the past few decades there have been a series of reports from different parts of the country of alleged media influenced acts of violence by children. In 1998 we had the most famous and controversial case concerning Shaktimaan. Newspapers printed stories that children were seriously injuring themselves by imitating dangerous stunts from Shaktimaan. Jumping off rooftops, swirling around for a take-off were amongst them. These reports led to a court case against the producer of the serial and its hero, Mukesh Khanna. In view of this, DD temporarily withdrew the serial. The Court appointed a panel of three people of eminence who found that the media reports were unsubstantiated by subsequent investigations. Thereafter, the case was dropped and the show reinstated on DD. Taking the criticism of his show seriously, Khanna responded by providing cautionary messages on the show and explaining the nature of his stunts. He asked children not to copy him. This had had a salutary effect. However, parents continue to complain that their children do imitate the super hero.

Aaj Tak, reported that young children in video parlours play games depicting aircraft flying, air bombing and crashing. Children interviewed said, they enjoyed it, and that it needed skill and concentration. The older ones revealed that when they accomplish their sorties successfully, it gives them a sense of achievement. Latest figures indicate there are now approximately 2 million PC owners in the country. For obvious economic reasons, this ownership is concentrated in the metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, and amongst the more affluent sections of society. But cyber cafes exist all over the country, urban and rural. Thus, these media are generating their own, discrete problems. Taken in its totality, we have a situation where the concerns about media violence are real and have increased.

The unprecedented exposure to various media has occurred at a time when we are experiencing tremendous material and attitudinal changes. The nineties have witnessed economic liberalisation, rapid urbanisation, increased commercialization, and a communication revolution which has driven media explosion. These developments have generated greater prosperity but also increased disparities and led to intense pressure on modern life. The media said to have created and aggravated these problems. High levels of consumerism are blamed on the media. Aggressive behaviour, inexplicable deviations increasingly displayed by children are being attributed to the growing impact of the media in India and its disproportionate mind share amongst children. Studies indicated that children admire aggressive superheroes like Terminator, Krish, and Shaktimaan.

There is a general perception that today children watch much more violence that those of previous generations. They are exposed to violent portrayals through the cinema and television. With more than 150 television channels being available in India, children are turning couch potato. Today films depict realistic torture scenes and murder, computer games enable the user to actively simulate the mutilation and killing of enemies and the internet has become a platform for watching gruesome violence. Violence capture the attention of the viewers including adolescent and youth. Most television and movie producers, who export their products, need a dramatic ingredient that requires no translation, "speaking action" in any language and fits any culture. That ingredient centres round violence. As Gerbner points out: "Formula driven media violence is not an expression of freedom, popularity or crime statistics. It is a de facto censorship that chills originality and extends the dynamics of domination, intimidation and repression domestically and globally. The media violence overkill is an ingredient in a global marketing formula imposed on media professionals and foisted on the children of the world."

With the technological advancement and digitalization any media content has now become global. The different types of the media have varied impact than the print media. Audiovisual media due to its graphical presentation of violence has greater impact on the viewers.

The new means of digital media such as three dimensional technologies which provide a feel of virtual reality and interactivity, computer games have enhanced the impact of the depicted violence. Violence has now become an integral part of the cinema and television globally. Programs made for children and adolescents are not free from violence. Numerous studies have been carried out to know the extent of violence being depicted on television. In a study conducted in the United States, it was found that violent scenes occur about 5 times per hour in prime time and between 20 and 25 times per hour in Saturday morning children's programs.

The depiction of violence is disguised in humour, so it is difficult for common viewers – especially children and adolescents to understand what is being served to them. In the United States, young people spend 6 to 7

hours each day on an average with some form of media. In a study conducted in the year 1999 reveals that one third of the young children of the U.S.A. and two third of the older children and adolescents have a television set in their own bedroom. And those television sets are equipped with the cable television and video cassette recorder sets (Roberts, 2000). Sexual talk and erotic scenes are increasingly frequent and explicit in the world of mass media. One content analysis finds that sexual content ranging from flirting to sexual intercourse increased from slightly more than half of television programs in 1997-1998 to more than two-thirds of the programs in the 1999-2000 seasons. Depiction of intercourse occurs in one of every 10 programs. Such depictions may fuel the inclination among adolescents for sexual violence.

One fifth to one half of music videos, portray sexuality or eroticism (Du Rant *et al.,* 1997). Two thirds of Hollywood movies made each year are R-rated; most young people have seen these movies long before they reach the required age of 16 years (Greenberg *et al.,* 1993).

During the past few years interest of the researcher has increased to study the relationship between the exposure to the media violence and aggressive behaviour of young people in India. In the context sexuality and sexual behaviour of young people the research has arrived at the findings that the media is a significant source of information on reproductive and sexual health matters, and is an important influence in young people's lives, particularly with respect to their interaction with the opposite sex.

Recently, a youth based survey conducted in six states of India has found that substantial proportions of the youth are exposed to the media; that for many youth, the media constitutes a leading source of sexual and reproductive health information; and that many youth, particularly men, have watched blue films or seen blue magazines (IIPS and Population Council, 2010). Yet, very few studies have explored media use patterns among young people in India in terms of their media preferences, how they perceive violence and what is their perception about the violence depicted in the media. Another study on young people of India suggests that research should be conducted in India to assess the media influence on young people and how young people negotiate these influences towards their safe adulthood.

Review of literature:

The available literature on the topic is very vast as studying the impact of cinema is as old as cinema. Violence is part of cinema since the birth of the cinema and this caught the attention of the scholars to investigate if there is any relationship between the depicted violence and aggressive behaviour. Various studies established this relationship and several theories came into existence such as social learning, cultivation analysis etc.

Shoma A. Chatterji (2008) conducted an Analysis of Violence in Hindi Cinema. She says any discussion on violence in cinema remains confined within a discussion of its purely physical aspects such as rape, fight scenes, murder and mayhem, blood and gore. The audio visual aspect of cinema is far more powerful in impact than is outlined and fleshed out in the script. The audience in any case, remains ignorant about the script. The fact is that the presentation, interpretation and reflection of violence in cinema remains largely confined to its physical manifestations. The hidden, subtle, invisible undercurrents that define certain kinds of violence remain marginalized and neglected.

Bobbi Jo Kenyon (2002) conducted a study on "The Effects of Televised Violence on Students". He observed American children for 40 years to know how televised violence can lead to aggressive behaviour. He selected Ottawa Hills summer school's students and conducted a survey containing 50 questions. The researcher like George Gerbner categorized the respondent in three categories on the basis of television watching habits – light viewers, medium viewers, and heavy viewers. After conducting-depth interview students the researcher concluded that the heavy viewers felt that the world was a dangerous place and they were bothered by violent content they see in television.

American Academy of Paediatrics (2000), presented a joint statement on "The Impact of Entertainment on Children, Congressional Public Health Summit". The report concluded that children who see a lot of violence are more likely to view violence as an effective way of settling conflicts. Children exposed to violence are more likely to assume that acts of violence are acceptable behaviour. Viewing violence can lead to emotional desensitization towards violence in real life. It can decrease the likelihood that one will take action on behalf of a victim when violence occurs. Entertainment violence feeds a perception that the world is a violent and mean place. Viewing violence increases fear of becoming a

victim of violence, with a resultant increase in self protective behaviours and a mistrust of others. Further they assumed that viewing violence may lead to real life violence. Children exposed to violent programming at a young age have a higher tendency for violent and aggressive behaviour later in life those children who are not so exposed. Although more studies need to be conducted to prove that there is a direct relationship between watching violence on television screen and aggressive behaviour.

Groebel (1998) conducted a study comprising 5000 adolescents from 23 countries in all regions of the world to know the how media violence increases aggression. The researcher investigated various factors such as media uses preferences of the participants, level of aggression in their environment, and perception of the participants. Surprisingly 91 per cent of the children universally have the access to the television set at their home, and the children spent an average of 3 hours daily in front of the television screen globally. The research reveals that media violence is universal and media portray violence as getting rewarded. The study also found gender differences and region differences in terms of the perception about the depicted violence on television.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, content analysis is used to ascertain violence in the selected films of the popular Hindi cinema. A sample of 25 top grossing Hindi films during of period of 2000 – 2015 has been selected in this study. Sampled 25 films amounts to 3740.46 minutes which were analysed. Because we were interested in examining only violent scenes and acts were coded in this study. The entire films were watched to locate the violent scenes. Four hundred twenty three scenes (423 scenes of violence) and six thousand five hundred thirteen (6513 acts of violence) acts which contain violence were identified and included in this study. Acts of violence was coded according to the different violent activities in a violent scenes, for example if A hits B and then B hits A back, this is counted as two acts of violence. A commits a violent act and then B commits a further violent act, is counted as separate violent acts and counted as two violent acts. A codebook is prepared for the content analysis. Acts of violence were included that were seen as well as inferred though harmful consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types of violent act were coded under 15 categories. The violence shown in films may take on many different forms and involve a variety of different instruments or techniques of aggression. In this Table 1 the violence analysed in films is classified according to the activity and instruments of aggression. Table given above highlight the wide range or variety of the violent acts depicted in the selected films. Of the total 6513 acts of violence shown in the films, 29.43 per cent violent acts are perpetrated with gun shots. 4.59 per cent acts of violence are concerned with slapping while 8.91 per cent of violence is committed by hitting with some objects, punching represents 9.70 per cent violent act.

Table 1 : Classification of violent acts

Violence Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Shooting	1917	29.43
Verbal Threat	976	14.99
Kick	900	13.82
Punching	632	9.70
Hitting with object	580	8.91
Slapping	299	4.59
Supernatural Violence	245	3.76
Car/Bike Damage	250	3.84
Explosion	160	2.46
Stabbing	142	2.18
Property damage	120	1.84
Strangulation	110	1.69
Kidnapping	98	1.50
Touching	79	1.21
Rape	5	0.08
Total	6513	100.00

1.50 per cent acts of kidnapping are also shown in the sampled films. 3.76 per cent violent activities are carried out by supernatural elements in films such as Ra One, Krish and Krish3. Crimes through stabbing are committed in 2.18 per cent cases of violence; strangulation in 1.69 per cent cases while touching with sexual leaning is done in 1.29 per cent cases.

Audience research has indicated that viewers may be especially sensitive to acts of violence involving sharp instruments in which someone gets stabbed (Gunter, 1985). The current study found 142 stabbing incidents across the 25 films under study.

It was further found that more often stabbing incidents resulted in someone's death or at least being

seriously hurt. Wanted film contains scenes of extreme violence. This film is certified as Adult film and is suitable for persons of 18 years and over. There are 15 stabbing scenes in wanted film which contain use of sharp instruments, and generous amount of blood do occur on the screen several times.

Another type of violence acts which involves strangulations of victims. In total 110 violent acts were found which involve an aggressor putting his or her hands around a victim's neck or using a rope, wire, scarf or some other item to choke the victim. No physical injury was shown in 69 strangulation nine, while death was shown as an outcome of the strangulation in remaining 41 cases. Blood was rarely shown in the acts which involves strangulation. There were only four acts coded where blood was shown in moderate or large amounts as resulted in strangulation. A scene of Wanted film was coded as being potentially the most disturbing scene of strangulation, where Salman Khan was the perpetrator in the scene. Salman Khan strangles the victim who is a criminal with the help of a wire. Blood was shown in this scene and the victim was clearly seen to be suffering and the strangulation was shown in close up for many seconds. As a result the victim was died and crashed heavily on the floor.

Table 2 deals with the classification of the violent acts in terms of weapons used for violence in the selected Hindi films. It reveals that out of the total act of violence depicted in the selected Hindi films no weapon is used in 14.99 per cent violent acts. In 27.87 per cent acts of violence, gun is used as a weapon which ranks number one among the weapons used. We may say that the gun is the most frequently used weapon for enacting a violent scene in Hindi films. 1.50 per cent violent acts are perpetrated using knife as a weapon. Many acts showing the aggressor slitting the throat of victim or issuing a threat to murder. Sword follows knife in the selected films for violence as a weapon. In 0.68 per cent acts of violence sword is used by the aggressor. Rod, stick, and machine gun are also used as weapon in the selected Hindi films.

Table 2 : Classification of weapons

Weapon	Frequency	Percentage
Use of body	2599	38.12
Gun	1815	27.87
Machine Gun	102	1.57
Knife	98	1.50
Sword	44	0.68
Stick	92	1.41
Rod	88	1.35
Other objects	400	6.14
Explosive	160	2.46
Car	103	1.58
Other Vehicles	147	2.26
Chemical	4	0.06
Electricity	1	0.02
No weapon used	976	14.99
Total	6513	100.00

Consequences of violence were classified in terms of type of injuries caused to victims. Six codes were applied: death, serious wound, minor wound, psychological damage, no injury and cannot code. In 5.94 per cent violent acts death was shown as a consequence of the violence, whereas serious wound have been shown violence consequence in Hindi films which amounts to 35.38 per cent of the total violent acts. Minor wound have shown in 15.92 per cent violent acts while no injury is shown in 12.19 per cent violent acts. Some injuries could not be codified, as the consequences were not clear and which amounts to 16.69 per cent of the total violent acts (Table 3).

Table 3 : Consequences of violence

Circumstances	Frequency	Percentage
Death	387	5.94
Serious wound	2304	35.38
Minor wound	1037	15.92
Psychological damage	904	13.88
No injury	794	12.19
Cannot code	1087	16.69
Total	6513	100.00

Table 4 throws light upon the reasons which trigger violence shown in the selected films. 25.52 per cent violence in the selected 25 films enacted from the evil nature of the characters. Violence is perpetrated only to create terror in the society. This kind of violence is generally committed by the antagonist or by the goons forming the gang of the antagonist. Anger is also a major reason which sparks off violence in Hindi films. 18.69 per cent of total depicted violent acts are attributable to the volatile and furious temperament of the character. These acts of violence are mainly performed by the protagonist.

7.58 per cent violence portrayed as having been committed for self defense from the aggressor or the villain, while 7.09 per cent acts of violence are committed

Table 4 : Classification of violent acts according to causes

Reason of Violence	Frequency	Percentage
Evil	1662	25.52
Anger	1217	18.69
Upholding the Law	1094	16.80
Desire For Money	540	8.29
Self Preservation	494	7.58
Revenge	462	7.09
Well being of society	338	5.19
Well being of family	260	3.99
Sexual	91	1.40
Ambition or Power	78	1.20
Other	277	4.25
Total	6513	100.00

to seek revenge on some conspirator or evil character. 5.19 per cent violence is perpetrated to promote the well being of the society, followed by 3.99 per cent violence depicted to have been committed for safeguarding the interest of the family. 4.25 per cent of violent acts fall in the other category, under which various causes such as saving the life of actress, fight between brothers are covered. 1.40 per cent violence follows in a bid to satiate sexual lust. 1.20 per cent acts of violence can be attributed to the pursuit of realization of ambition or gaining power.

Conclusion:

It is found that violence and aggression is portrayed as a desirable and indispensable thing in Hindi films. It is true that in real life also, the police officer has to confront violence; police encounters are also executed. But the way violence is perpetrated by the hero in the film 'Wanted' that seems far removed from reality. Sometimes even the violence committed by the villain is also extremely glamorized. For instance, in the film 'Wanted' Parkash Raj in the role of Gunny Bhai is depicted as the main villain. His dialogues seem to be glamorizing violence. It is shown that after committing violence, he remains unconcerned and unruffled. Moreover, a deep impact is left on the minds of the audience due to the powerful dialogue delivery and acting. Besides this 'Wanted', 'Bang-Bang', 'Singham', Singham 'Returns' and 'Rowedy Rothore' are the films which are soaked in violence and the hero is depicted to be very furious and violent. Usage of different instruments of aggression are frequently shown across all film under study, the most commonly used weapons comprised various parts of the body. Except body as a weapon, in general use of gun either by police, military or criminals dominated in the violent acts in the films under this study. Films such as Bang – Bang, Singham, Singham Returns, Ek Tha Tiger, Baby, and Holiday portrayed guns as a weapon most commonly.

On the whole, it could be concluded that Hindi films are coming us with good subjects and stories and films are growing very popular among adolescents, although the depiction of violence is a debated issue when it comes to being viewed by adolescents.

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