

Political Correctness in Films

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ABSTRACT

There is no question that political correctness has become a hot-button issue in today's society. And, it seems that nowhere is this more evident than in the world of film. Whether it's the casting of a white actor in a historically black role or the use of offensive language in a movie, there is no shortage of examples of how political correctness (or the lack thereof) can be a major factor in the filmmaking process. Some would argue that political correctness has no place in film. After all, movies are meant to be entertainment, not a vehicle for a particular agenda. But, others would say that political correctness is essential in order to ensure that everyone is represented fairly and equally on the big screen. No matter what side of the fence you fall on, there is no denying that political correctness is a major factor to consider when it comes to film. There are a number of reasons why political correctness in films is important. First and foremost, it ensures that everyone can enjoy the film without feeling alienated or offended. In a world where there is already so much division, it is important that films can be a source of entertainment for all. Secondly, political correctness in films can help to challenge existing stereotypes and prejudices. By presenting a more accurate and realistic portrayal of different groups of people, films can help to challenge the negative preconceptions that many people have. Ultimately, political correctness in films is important because it helps to create a more inclusive and tolerant world. In a time when the world seems to be increasingly divided, films have the potential to bring people together and remind us of our common humanity. This paper focuses on the importance of political correctness in films.

KEYWORDS

Political correctness, Films, Politics, Freedom of expression, Art, Offensive, Representation

INTRODUCTION

Media is undoubtedly the most powerful weapon in the modern era. It has proven to be highly effective and influential when it comes to delivering a message to a large group of audience. It can shape people's perceptions, beliefs and opinions. Using it effectively can alter any course of action. 'Media' is an umbrella term for a group of communication mediums. Films in general are the most popular communication tool. Films can have a powerful effect on society. The influence of cinema on society can be both positive and negative. It can introduce people to new cultures and ideas, and inspire them to be more creative and open-minded. It can also desensitize people to violence and encourage them to believe in stereotypes. On the positive side, cinema can be a force for good. It can open people's eyes to different cultures and ideas, and inspire them to be more tolerant and understanding. It can also help people to appreciate the arts, and to be more creative themselves. On the negative side, cinema can have a harmful effect on society. It can desensitize people to violence, and make them more likely to accept aggressive behavior as normal. It can also encourage people to believe in stereotypes, and to judge others by their appearance rather than by their character. Overall, the influence of cinema on society can be both positive and negative. It is important to be aware of the potential effects of cinema, and to use it in a way that will benefit society as a whole. There is no doubt that art, especially cinema, has certain social responsibilities. This becomes the most essential responsibility or duty for an artist. If we look at cinema as just cinema, we will only see the spectacles created by those with cultural capital. Those dominant ideologies will be communicated in many forms and will hold back the progressive advances that this society has somehow achieved because cinema is such an influential medium. Political correctness is a "term used to refer to language that seems intended to give the least amount of offense,

especially when describing groups identified by external markers such as race, gender, culture, or sexual orientation. " In short, the language you use should not be offensive or portray your attitude on the basis of any community's race or caste or their physical orientation. Therefore, it can be said that being politically correct is a value system of modern society. Let's check the extent of political correctness and how much political correctness can be in a movie.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of political correctness and movies is covered only in a small number of articles, journals, and other types of literature. These literary works provide a quick overview of the different issues that have been raised in relation to the topic, as well as its importance, any connected flaws, the present situation, etc. These studies of the relevant literature make it easier to conduct a study of the situation with regard to political correctness and films in India but when it comes to the movies all around the world, the number of literature available online is limited. Most of the existing papers have given primary focus to Indian films and political correctness. The Conversation between Film and Ideology by Qijun Ye explores the different levels of capitalism's characteristics and ideological positions in two particular films. There are some youtube videos which are really helpful to conduct a study on the topic of political correctness and films. Based on the collected data and pieces of information from articles and youtube videos, this research is conducted to reach the conclusion that films should be politically correct.

METHODOLOGY

For this research paper, data is collected using qualitative research methods largely based on references from film magazines, articles, youtube videos, etc. The primary purpose of this research is to understand the influence of cinema on society and the need for political correctness in films. The study is done by conducting in-depth research on national and regional cinema and how they have changed over the past few years. A few regional movies have been categorized and taken into consideration for this research purpose.

LIMITATIONS

Since the topic came to discussions in recent times, the number of reading materials and references available was very limited. Also, since it is hard to get the contacts of filmmakers, getting opinions of popular filmmakers on the topic was difficult.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The question is often raised why political correctness is mandatory only for cinema. The answer is that not only cinema but also literature, music and politics are being audited. But the glamor of the film is giving it more visibility, including on social media. A perfect example of how much a movie influences society is the amount of stardom that its hero gets. The adoration for their character's attitude and personality is what makes the audience adore them even outside the film. Most of the people cannot see the movie as a movie and it affects their life. The books we read and the dramas we read, the reels we watch and even the YouTube videos have a positive effect on us. There are many people who have chosen that profession because of their admiration for the police army characters in the movies. Every right and wrong shown by the movie becomes a part of our life like this. This is where a film needs to be politically correct. When does a movie become politically incorrect? When the characters in the film are politically incorrect or when the hero himself is not politically correct? Not both. In that case, there should not be a villain in the movie. A movie can be politically incorrect when it is presented to the audience knowingly or unknowingly normalizing something wrong.

For example, when the character Induchutan in the film *Narasimham* (2000/Malayalam) says that he needs a woman to fulfill his needs, the film itself becomes misogynistic. But in the film *Kumbalangi Nights* (2019/Malayalam), when Bobby says what is the need to buy a tea plantation to drink tea, that is the misogyny of that character only. What is the difference between these? The difference lies in the way these two films are presented. In the movie *Moothon* (2019), the prostitute who shows sexual attraction to Moothon is an acquaintance as well as intimate with Moothon. This is one of the scenes that drives the movie forward. The location, setting and character of the characters do not make the viewer feel wrong. And that scene is not glorified there. But Mammooty in the film *Kasaba* (2016) wearing a police uniform and groping a woman in the same position with stylish background music and glorifying that scene is different. That is problematic. This is where we have to look at the political correctness in the movie. The impact of a scene on the audience should be taken into consideration. If it affects a society in a negative way, it is a mistake that must be corrected. Everyone celebrated the hugely successful movie *Chanthupottu* (2005) but no one remembered how much it hurt a certain section of the society. That movie spread a misconception and created a bad mindset among many people. The *Chanthupottu* movie was a mistake. But over the years, the film *Njan Marykutty* (2018) has changed that perception of the audience. Films are completely within the scope of freedom of expression of the writer and the director. The story emerges from their imagination or the light of life experience, dialogues are formed, plots are formed and it becomes a film. Because of that, the truth is that every movie has its own politics, some will be hidden and some will be openly expressed. Every movie has something to say to society and at least some people try to imitate it. The director has freedom of expression. But it is also necessary for an artist to have social responsibility. Because a work of art like a movie is one of the most influential things on people. Although the film does not convey a message, it is important not to convey the wrong message. From a time when black people, fat people, thin people, bald people, short people, and people with mental retardation were made fun of, today, at least to some extent, the change has come about because of criticisms like this. Every viewer should not only enjoy watching the movie but also think whether it is affecting us, our children, the society or the growing generation in a wrong way.

CONCLUSION

It is said that cinema is a powerful medium that influences a lot of people as a visual media that is very popular and may even become a reference in history. If you understand that once the dramas have influenced the society as much as the society, you will understand the current importance of the cinema. When anti-women, anti-Dalit, caste and religious discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-queer jokes, physical insults etc. are glorified, and all these things are naturalized and brought into the minds of everyone, the discussion of political correctness comes in. Regardless of the content of the movie, it is true that we cannot agree with portraying the misogyny of the characters as heroism. That is where the relevance of political correctness is. People who have experienced discrimination can immediately understand and relate to it, while those who don't will probably ask the question of not seeing the movie as a movie. That's how privilege works. Such glorification, ridicule, and otherization in cinema can have a profound effect on its victims in social life. Its impact is greater as a form of popular art that can be enjoyed without explanation by anyone who can see and hear. Gone are the days of weeklies and newspaper magazines, when film criticism was only possible for the academic elite of society, now all the aforementioned politically incorrect films are subjected to constant criticism by the audience via social media. This discussion was carried forward by the people who were portrayed as politically correct, including Dalits, women and Muslims. Women started to comment widely on all the films that asserted the authority of the man from knee to knee. Political correctness was a popular word at that time. Being politically correct alone does not make a good movie. There are many movies with similar slogans to make it politically correct. Attempts to be politically correct can have an impact on time value. Among the visual media, cinema has influenced the people the most. Because of that, the big and small misogyny, body shaming and casteism in the film will affect the audience, to a large extent. There is no point in the debate that what is in the society or what is reflected in the film is what is shown in the film or what is taken up by the society. Through cinema, the evils happening in the society are reaching the people again. Don't fall for it. This does not mean that the film should not show any ugliness. Bad things should not be glorified or normalized when they are shown on screen. Let bad things be shown on screen as bad. Even the small advertisements that we see influence us. Then it is needless to say how much the movie

influences us. The point of view that what the hero does is right... should change... even if the hero does wrong, it should be shown as wrong. There are a number of ways in which films can be politically correct. Firstly, they can avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes. For example, films that feature black characters should avoid depicting them as criminals or drug dealers. Instead, they should be shown as a diverse group of people with a wide range of interests, careers and aspirations. Secondly, films can help to break down barriers between different social groups by depicting them in a positive light. For example, a film about a group of Muslims could show them as kind, hard-working and law-abiding citizens, rather than terrorists or extremists. There is no doubt that films can have a significant impact on viewers, shaping their perceptions of the world and of different social groups. With this in mind, it is important that filmmakers strive to create films that are politically correct, in order to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes and instead promote understanding and respect. Ultimately, it is up to filmmakers to decide whether or not to make their films politically correct. However, if they choose to do so, they can help to create a more tolerant and understanding world.

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