Violence in Hindi Movies: A Comparative Study of Two Movies

Sonalee Nargunde*, Iliyas Ahmad**

Abstract

Cinema in India has developed to a large extent and movies are its significant tool. Movies not only provide entertainment to the large audiences but also play some additional roles. The message provided by this medium is more impactful than any other medium because of its reach and easy accessibility. The content provided by the Indian films plays an important role in shaping up its audience. After, reviewing some of the movies, the researcher found a consistent theme of violence in almost all the films and found it important to share it with larger audience. Indian film industry produces more than 800 films annually and almost story line of all the movies is weaved around love, revenge, mafia wars and all this is supported by heavy dose of violence. Critics say that the Indian cinema nowadays is churning out films with persistent theme of violence because of the transplantation of the western ideas resulting in the portrayal of extreme vulgarity on big screen. Film makers follow the steps of Hollywood where most of the movies are much more violent than the bollywood. Movies released in the last few years have seen a continuous increase in the portrayal of violence both in content and subject wise.

Keywords: Film violence; Bollywood; Movies.

Introduction

A film is a form of entertainment based on a story where different artists perform different characters allotted to them. The story is supported by sound mixing, choreography, cinematography, playback music, and perfect dialogue delivery. A story is usually shown in sequences' where one track follows the next track which gives the illusion of continuous movements. Usually story begins with a problem or an issue and in mid way, it is mixed with romance, suspicion and finally reaches a conclusion where good is shown overpowering bad.

Violence in films can be portrayed in many ways depending upon the taste the script of the story demands. The unapologetic use of blood and gore presented in the form of entertainment seems to have become the mainstay of bollywood releases especially since last decade.

Film violence means something which causes viewers to modify their perception regarding any particular event or thing they may be or may not be familiar with. Violence in films is not a single entity. It is shaped by the story of the film, by the nature of its theme, by the sensibilities of filmmaker and by a number of other factors that contribute in making a film success. It is shaped by the story of the film, by the nature of its theme, by the sensibilities of filmmaker and by a number of other factors that contribute in making a film success. It includes exhibition of violence in the form of stereotyping, rape scenes, action packed scenes, melodrama, irritating background effects, horror scenes, provocative display of the sex body & its movements displayed only in order to ensure sails. Nowadays movies portray humans as super powerful heroes; bring more '*masala*' (spice) than facts, display gory and fantasy. Since the

Author's Affilation: *Professor, Devi Ahalivya Vishva Vidyaliya, Indore, **M.Phil. Student, Devi Ahalivya Vishva Vidyaliya, Indore.

Reprint's request: Dr. Sonalee Nargunde, Professor, Devi Ahalivya Vishva Vidyaliya, Indore.

Email: iliyasahmad21@gmail.com.

Cinema in India is considered as one of the biggest entertaining tool by means of the films, it surely is producing the movies intended to cater a larger audience. The scenes of violence are on increase with almost every new film produced.

Feeling challenging to check violence in the movies, the former chief justice of the supreme court of India said, "Indian society faces a situation worse than a war, on account of the rampant vulgarity and violence in the mass media, especially Cinema and television. It was an undeclared and insidious war, an onslaught without notice. Values which had held Indian society together from Rigvedic times, with an ethical discipline governing men and women and different segments of society are being eroded." Today more and more films whose themes are dominated by unrelated sex and excessive violence are being churned out and circulated out. Crime is increasingly becoming the main theme of the story of films. It is projected in a manner giving the impression that violence, theft, robbery etc are normal incidents in normal life. A prime example of violent films both in terms of physical and sexual violence include Raaz(2002), Aetbaar(2004) (full of physical and sexual violence), Sarkar(2005), kidnap(2008), Prince(2010), Blue(2009), Zeher(2005), Fareb(2006), Qayamat(2003), Chocolate(2005), Jism(2003), Masti, Aitraaz(2004), Kaante, Race(2008), Awarapan(2007), Nishabd(2007), The Killer(2006), Murder(2004), Criminal(1995), Dhoom(2003), Plan(2004), Ek Ajnabee(2005), -all carrying on a theme of stereotyped sex roles, extra marital affairs, old rivalries, romantic scenes, illustration of offences like murder, rape, teenage pregnancy and what not.

A committee formed to look after the film content in one of its reports published in December 1994 said, "A gradual decline is manifest in the quality of commercial films, both subject-wise and content-wise. Scenes of crime, excessive violence, cruelty and unrelated sex are on the increase in Indian films, which cast an adverse influence on the people, particularly the youth."[1]

It is perhaps due to irrational approach of film fraternity in India that continuously and increasingly relies on such scripts where they can portray anything to make them a success. In contemporary times when almost every house hold has an easy access to television with scores of channels running day and night, the chances of viewers getting affected are more as compared to seventies or eighties when we had only one channel aimed to provide entertainment. Film producers are well aware of the fact that the sight of violence makes the negative impact on society by evoking fascinating attention even from those who are normally gentle in real life. A film running for two and a half hours most of the time depict negative values and only after reaching a climax positive values are shown by which time the damage is done. For movie makers it may be a climax ending with positive note but for the viewers it is the beginning of a negative feeling that inadvertently gets pasted on their minds and certainly it will have long lasting pessimistic effects. We have number of incidents where films have incited people especially the youth to copycat the violent scenes or animated stunts in their real life. There are various instances which prove the above given statement.

Scope of the study

The research project is intended to analyze the portrayal of violence in the Hindi cinema. Therefore this study is purely planned to examine whether the portrayal of violence in the Hindi cinema over the past two decades (from1990's up to 2010) has increased or not? As the project deals with "violence in movies" the researcher will draw a comparison between the two movies, Baazigar (1993) and Ghajini (2008). Since both the movies are based on Revenge and Love and possess a good number of similarities viz-a-viz the story line and mood, therefore they will help to find

out whether violence in films over the years really has increased or not.

Why Baazigar versus Ghajini

• Both are weaved on revenge and romance storyline.

• In both the movies the main male protagonist has a dual character. In Baazigar it is Ajay and Vijay (Role played by Shahrukh Khan) with two different characters while in Ghajini, we confront a man (Aamir khan) with extreme contrasting characters. It will be a good experience to analyze the scale of violence depicted in a movie (Baazigar) made in 1993 in comparison to a movie (Ghajini) made in 2008.

• Technological advancement Hindi cinema had seen during past two decades.

• Both movies were blockbusters.

• Both movies were made on experimental basis. Because when Baazigar was screened, it shocked the audience and so did Ghajini.

• The male characters in both the movies are super stars.

• Baazigar was a debut for Shilpa shetty while as Ghajini marked the entry of Asin Thottumkal in Hindi cinema.

• Both are the remake of Hollywood movies. Baazigar made from *"A kiss before dying"* while as Ghajini was a remake of telgu film also named Ghajini which again is a remake of an English movie *"Memento"*.

Research findings

Violence in films has changed over the time in its portrayal and presentation. Its construction of reality has seen a shift over years.

*Qualitative analysis*

Overall Mood of Violence

In Baazigar, the theme of revenge required the protagonist to commit violence visibly and

for that the character sketch was done accordingly. As for during those times, a hero could not have inclination towards violence without being a negative character and so Shahrukh Khan is shown in a way which presented him in a negative sense i.e. grayish. While as in Ghajini, the case is different as the audience have become comfortable with the idea of 'hero' taking to violence. So there is no necessity on part of the film makers to paint the character black. Aamir Khan can kill and injure his opponents while overwhelmingly being the hero of the film.

In Baazigar Shahrukh Khan had an appearance of a young man, who looked like a gentle man, wearing business suits and spectacles. This gave us an impression of how the circumstances lead an individual to assume a role which commands vengeance. It again speaks of the difference in the audience behavior vis-a-viz their absorption levels, which for baazigar meant that improper to have Shahrukh still be the hero of the film, he had to have a soft side to his personality, which would include gentleness, care, affection, romance, responsibility etc. For the protagonist in Ghajini, the time at which it released signals that he could be only involved in inflicting violence while taking his revenge in a particular period of time, though a flashback was used to fulfill the requirement of back grounding. Also, it was deemed necessary to have his physique developed accordingly, which signifies power, strength and

Direct violence

Films	Physically violent scenes	Time allotted to violent scenes	Verbal abuses	Murders	Punching & kicking
Baazigar	11	27 minutes	05 times	11	92
Ghajini	22	74 minutes	26 times	34	163
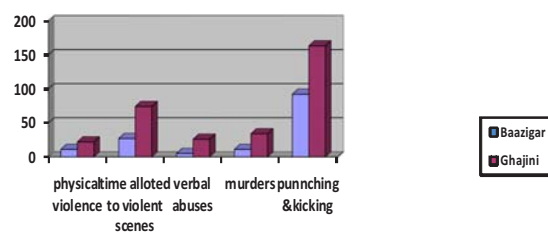
determination, which again is an evolved indicator these days.

Baazigar is a movie which is more of suspense and less of action as compared to Ghajini which is very violent, adrenaline pumping hyper drama loaded with physical and psychological violence. Realism is something which one shouldn't expect from Ghajini however with Baazigar, it is partially accurate.

In Ghajini the story of this film is such that it requires the high frequency of violence and related elements. The entire movie deals with one form or the other form of violence and when one finishes watching it, he/she is left with an unending impression of violent images and portrayal. 'It is an extravaganza that works! We have had our romantic movies, our comic bock busters and *masala* entertainers. This one is three hours of all those with a strong undercurrent of action. Unpretentious, it goes out all to keep the audience on the edge of their seats'. (dna india)

In a more interesting way, Hindustan times describe Ghajini as: ouch, call the ambulance. Wile as the Times of India evaluates Ghajini as a movie where the hero switches from a shy, business tycoon to a vulnerable killing machine that moulds his prey like a wounded tiger. Roars and grunt's included! All in all Ghajini is a thoroughbred bolywood film which celebrates the formula with panache. Enjoy the unadulterated desil! It is a sleek album of dark memories.

In Baazigar Presence of violence is slightly overshadowed by other aspects dealt with in the film. This film has the various themes like those of drama, action, suspense, romance, thrill intermingled.

Therefore it can be understood that Ghajini is far more violent movie than Baazigar.

Analysis

Analysis of the scenes related to violence in both the movies reveals that:

• Ghajini movie displays more than 22 physically violent related scenes as

compared to Baazigar which has only 11 of such scenes.

• These physically violent scenes span over a time period of 74 minutes in Ghajini while it is only 27 minutes in Baazigar.

• Only 5 times a viewer can come across with abusive language in Baazigar in comparison to Ghajini where insulting language is brought into play 26 times.

• In presenting murder scenes, Ghajini is far ahead than baazigar. Baazigar has only 11 such scenes while as Ghajini has 34.

• In order to make Ghajini more violent, the punch and kick sounds in it are also more. Ghajini has 193 such sounds while as Baazigar only has 92.

Analysis

• Fearful expressions displayed in Ghajini are 34 while as Baazigar only constitute 20 such expressions.

• In terms of crying and weeping scenes, Baazigar overshadows Ghajini which has only 22 such scenes while as former have 32 such scenes.

• Baazigar has 6 rude scenes compared to Ghajini which has 19.

• Scenes connected with blood display are 5 in Baazigar while in Ghajini, they are 23
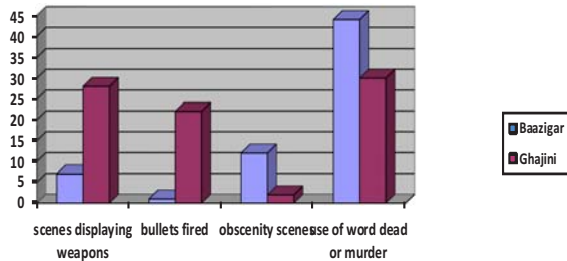
Analysis

Related Violence

Films	Fearful expressions	Crying & weeping scenes	Hooliganism scenes	Scenes displaying blood
Baazigar	20	32	6	5
Ghajini	34	22	19	23
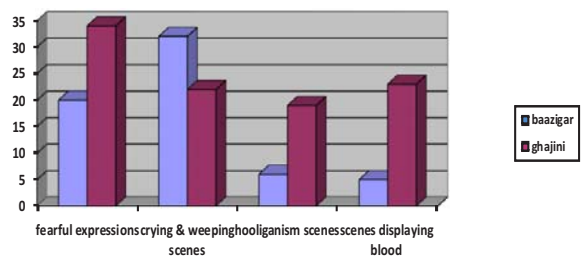
Symbolic Violence

Films	Scenes displaying weapons	Bullets fired	Obscenity scenes	Use of word Dead or Murder
Baazigar	7	1	12	44
Ghajini	28	22	2	30

- The scenes demonstrating Characters fighting with weapons are 7 in Baazigar in contrast to Ghajini which has 28 such explicit scenes.

- In Baazigar only once a bullet fire can be observed more than 22 times the sound of bullets being fired can be felt.

- Like crying and yelling scenes, Baazigar also is ahead in portraying obscenity. It has 12 obscenity scenes compared to Ghajini which only has 2 such scenes.

- Ghajini being more violent than Baazigar has makes its characters to utter 44 times the word Dead or Murder. These kinds of words are lesser in Bazzigar, only 30.

Conclusion

Violence is the foundation of many films and these two films "Baazigar" and "Ghajini" are no exceptional. It is perceived through these movies as if without violence there would be no story! A crime, a murder or a fight are used to launch film plots. On one hand we have Baazigar weaved on a story of revenge and betrayal and on the other we have Ghajini structured on the same idea though with a bitter and exaggerated taste of violence indicating that Violence in films has changed over time in its portrayal and presentation. There is no denial of the fact that violence does occur in each and every society but the way it

is portrayed on big and small screens is what is making one worried. On an average Indian film industry produces more than 800 films annually and surprisingly most of them reflects violence & by one means or the other audience associates it with themselves especially youth who by and large get affected.

In movies, characters are always shown as beautiful looking women and handsome men with perfect makeover, hi-fi dresses, costly costume, mind blowing jewellery, perfect life style and magnificent locales making the audience feel inferior even if it has nothing to do with the reality. It is not the reality it simply is the construction of reality and it is deliberately designed to persuade the viewers and most of the time the viewers make the sense of the world through these mediated realities and once encoded and accepted by the audience according to their own perceptions, these meanings get freezed in their minds.

Films actually are a provocation to enter into a world of beauty and glamour and once you enter, you are bound to get affected one way or the other. This surely has a great influence on viewer. Women after watching their role models in a glamorous and condescending way definitely assign new meanings to the concepts of beauty. Male try to imitate their role models and hence they also get affected by assimilating newer means to masculinity.

Most of the movies produced over the last few years are unnecessarily loaded with such violent scenes which always look convincing despite the facts that various Bolywood movies like Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Dilwale Dulhaniya le Jayenge, Devdas, Lagan, Tare Zameen Par and various others which are less violent in their theme have been the massive blockbusters. However, it seems that the film makers are becoming more interested in the values of western cinema and it has resulted in the remakes of Hollywood films designed to cater for the Indian audience. Since most of the Hollywood movies are highly violent therefore the remake of Hollywood movies in Bollywood intended to promote violence will

result in the production of more & more violent movies.

Cinema as is said is the reflection of a society. It reflects many of the trends, current virtues, social struggles and patterns of living in a society. It has been doing it since decades and it will continue to carry the same work though with a drastic change as the available evidence indicates that films released over the past years are heavily loaded with each form of violence.

The films made in early sixties and mid seventies not only promoted the multi dimensional culture of India but also focused on highlighting the issues concerning our society which needed a prior attention however, in a modest, ethical and sensible way.

Since then Hindi cinema has come a long way. It has seen a gradual change over the past two decades, both in their theme and in the presentation of social evils as well. No doubt the society over the years has seen a change both in positive and negative aspect. Positive in the sense that it has observed a technological development and negative in the way that our society is full of such criminal and heinous activities that even to talk about them makes us embarrassed. Whether to talk about corruption, unemployment, and sex rackets, ragging issues, rape incidents or drug smuggling-all are prevalent in every society. Therefore getting stimulated from these issues, film makers try to portray these issues however always in an exaggerated way and this trend surely is resulting in changing attitude and belief of the viewers.

Film critics say that it is the adoption of western ideology by film makers that has resulted in increase in crimes, degradation of moral values, generation gap, and decline in ethical values and so on. But we cannot completely blame the westernization. There are other factors like poverty, unemployment, urban rural divide, castism, regional as well as religious divides which are equally contributing to erode our society, as a result Indian cinema along with the change in society

has also seen a gradual change in its portrayal of violence as it portrays the changing face of our society. While doing so, most of the films have crossed the barriers of ethical and moral conduct. Repeated projection of improper scenes creates dehumanizing effect on the people and makes them insensitive to the cruelty, perversion and corruption in society. Since eighties and especially during last few years, Indian cinema has a mixed record, with negative feature outweighing the positive. The films made portray social evils in a glamorous way, they stereotype in a convincing way, they give prominence in depicting crime only to make it a success at box office, they promulgate sex and sexual desire to widen the already existing generation gap, they are filled with scenes which show a promiscuous life style, they peddle sexism, sadism, vulgarity, hooliganism and lewdness just for profit and all this is made in the name of entertainment and under the nose of a governing body- the Censor Board(Board of Film Certification).

Baazigar during its release was considered as the violent movie. It was followed by the movies which were consistently showing a graph of increasing violence. The movies like *Jigger, Shera, Yashwant, Ghatak, Ghayal, Salaakhen* and many others were churned out with many heavy violent scenes than Baazigar. The same trend continued in the following years and the movies like *Ghajini, A Wednesday, Satya, Murder, Fashion, Love Sex aur Dhoka* and other like movies came on the scene which almost broke all the previous records when it came to obscenity and violence. And today the situation is such that the recently released anurag kashyap's film *Gangs of Wasseypur* is considered to be the most violent movie bollywood has ever produced thumping Ram Gopal Vermas film *Rakt Charitra* ,which carried the tag of *most violent movie* till the release of the former movie.The film fraternity in India needs to revive the thought before producing films which cast an adverse impact on the society. The earlier they realize, the better it will be.

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