

Introduction to Human Sciences (HS8.102)

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Cinema

Cinema began in the early 20th century in India, and stuck to mainly mythological and religious stories in the 1920s. This was influenced by traditional forms of storytelling, like *jatra* and Parsi theatre.

The 30s and 40s saw movies on social evils like dowry, untouchability and polygamy. By the end of this period, there was a studio system in place for many of the vernacular industries. These movies reflected the Hindu and Muslim reform movements of the time.

The aforementioned studio system was deeply affected by Partition, causing migration of artistes and division of studio properties between the countries. Individual contracts became more popular, which led to the *Golden Period* of the 1950s and 60s.

Socialist nation-building concerns are evident in these movies, through the villainising of the rich man.

The films of the 1970s show a resentment and frustration towards the government and the authorities – the “angry young man”.

The rising popularity of TVs in the 1980s pulled audiences away from theatres into consuming movies in their homes. This also enabled the growth of piracy. Cinema began to be funded by dubious sources and its infrastructure suffered. The Government began to provide funding for a particular kind of cinema, *i.e.*, art cinema, perceived to be “high” culture.

As this progressed, cinema started to cater to the TV in the 1990s. Independent producers suffered heavy losses. In addition, liberalisation brought global industry players into the scene.

Filmmaking gained industry status in the start of the 21st century. It allowed investment from various institutions, including banks and corporate entities. The popularity of cinema was augmented by mall culture, and the presence of multiple platforms for screening. Ancillary rights are another phenomenon that contributed to this.

The themes around which cinemas were built also changed from the 1950s to the 21st century – the portrayal of the rich, for instance. The socialist stereotype of the evil rich man has shifted to a value system which lauds personal wealth.