**Engaging community in ethical discourse: the use of cinema in India**

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Bioethics, a branch of applied ethics, is “a practical ethics applied to situations in health, and based on the description of consistent facts, conflicts, and existing moral problems”, and is used as a tool to discuss and debate various issues of human life concerning human rights, citizenship, the consolidation of democracy, and social justice **(1)**. There are several means and channels of incorporating bioethical discourse in medical education such as the formal education, online courses, blogs, social media etc. The use of cinematography (films, documentaries and drama) in teaching bioethics to medical education is relatively a new phenomenon **(2)**. Moreover, movies and drama not only help learn different aspects of professionalism, humanitarianism, and ethics but also are useful for showing public opinions and myths about medical problems **(2)**. Although the first paper describing the use of films to teach psychiatry was published in 1979 by Fritz and Poe, recent reviews suggest that these tools have been increasingly used as a teaching tool in healthcare education in recent years **(1-3)**. Now there exist even full-fledged books on the use of movies in medical ethics **(4)**. However, all these sources have come from the Western societies and negligible contribution in medical ethics from East by means of cinematography exists to date.

In the recent years, Indian cinema has been doing a tremendous job for creating awareness among the general public about issues related to medical ethics. Recently, a 1-hour feature film named “*Ek Naya Din* (A New Day)”, which was based on a real story, conceptualized by Vijaya Nath Mishra was released to portray myths and stigma related to epilepsy. The paper by Sharma has cited this movie and stated that “In a country where doctors and scientists rarely engage with the general public to raise awareness about medical issues, this film is a laudable effort to focus on a neglected health concern” **(5)**. This is just an example and we would find a lot of such examples in Indian cinema that have taken bioethical issues to the public. *Ankur Arora Murder Case (2013)*, *Munna Bhai MBBS (2003),* *Anand, Guzaarish (2010), Piku (2015), Chori Chori Chupke Chupke (2001), Traffic (2011), Phir Zindagi (2015), Vicky Donor (2012),* *I Am Afia (2010), Padman (2018),* *Phir Milenge (2004)* and several other movies have also been released to discuss issues like medical negligence/error, humanitarianism in healthcare, patient-physician relationship, euthanasia and end-of-life care, patient autonomy and medical decision-making, and social stigmatization.

Instead of having lengthy movies on the topics concerning medical ethics, Sony Entertainment Television's has started a new reality show “*Zindagi Ke Crossroads*” (<https://www.setindia.com/pk-en/shows/crossroads/46>) hosted by Ram Kapoor. The show discusses different ethical dilemmas concerning healthcare. The first episode of the show was about aborting an abnormal child, and keeping him/her together later. The fictitious story was plotted in a way that it raised ethical dilemmas at different points, and people were asked to debate on which way to go. Moreover, there were public opinions on social media also shared to see what other people of the country have to say about the issue. Such initiative is admirable since it would not only create awareness among the community about bioethical issues but also would tempt them to think and logically decide which way to go. This way, medical ethics will not be limited to a schools and curricula but would reach the common people.

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