







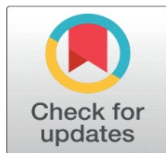
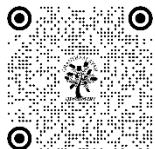
THE IMPACT OF HINDI CINEMA ON ALTERING THE ADULTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SOCIETAL STEREOTYPES: A STUDY OF DELHI NCR

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ABSTRACT

Hindi cinema, with its immense popularity and pan-India reach has long been recognized as an influential socio-cultural force in the country. Through propagation of enduring stereotypes in films, it contributes to shaping and reinforcing the attitudes and perceptions of audiences regarding gender roles, communities, professions and societal values. This study aimed to examine the impact of exposure to stereotypical Hindi cinema on altering adults' perceptions towards commonly accepted societal stereotypes in the Delhi NCR region.

A sample of 217 adults aged 18-35 above years was surveyed using questionnaires to assess cinema viewership patterns, endorsement of societal stereotypes portrayed in Hindi movies. The findings highlight the powerful influence Hindi cinema wields in combating regressive stereotypes in society especially among vulnerable sections like the rural poor with limited education. But rising education levels are breeding resistance to such stereotyped beliefs. The paper recommends that Hindi filmmakers should consciously avoid harmful stereotypes and attempt progressive portrayals of gender, caste, class and professions. Responsible cinema can play a transformative role in promoting egalitarian attitudes aligned with India's development goals.

Keywords: Hindi Cinema, Impact, Societal Stereotypes, Adul, Perception

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hindi cinema has been one of the most influential cultural forces in India for nearly a century now. As the dominant film industry in the country accounting for nearly half of annual ticket sales, popular Hindi films enjoy a dedicated following among diverse socioeconomic and demographic groups [Rao \(2010\)](#). Many scholars argue that Bombay cinema as Hindi films are often referred to contribute greatly to constructing a shared imagination and collective conscience for most Indians [Ganti \(2004\)](#). Through the chronicling of cultural traditions, societal issues, everyday

realities and aspirations on screen, mainstream Hindi movies both reflect and propagate certain ideologies, values and beliefs.

One of the most potent effects Hindi cinemas has had on society is the perpetuation of enduring stereotypes through decades of storytelling and characterization [Bharucha \(2014\)](#). Scholars have identified repeated portrayals of the self-sacrificing mother, the aggressive male protagonist, the pure village belle, the shrewd businessman and similar stock characters across eras of Hindi cinema. [Mazzarella \(2003\)](#) contends that such stereotypes enable filmmakers to employ generic conventions that resonate easily with audiences based on shared cultural understanding. But critics argue that formulaic stereotypes limit more authentic representations of gender, caste, class and community identities prevalent in society [Punathambekar \(2013\)](#).

Exposure to consistent stereotypical portrayals of varied groups through films is known to cultivate perceptions and attitudes among audiences that align with depicted stereotypes [Shrum \(2004\)](#). Social cognitive theory posits that individuals adopt behaviors and perspectives modeled in media into their own belief structures through observational learning processes [Bandura \(2001\)](#). Previous studies have examined Hindi cinema's effects on perpetuating gender stereotypes [Khan et al. \(2016\)](#), racial biases [Gorham \(1999\)](#) and misrepresentations of certain communities and professions [Kaur \(2002\)](#). But there is limited research on how stereotypical Hindi movies may shape broader societal perceptions regarding gender roles, caste hierarchies, class divisions, and cultural stereotypes among Indian adults of Delhi NCR. This study aims to help in addressing this gap by analyzing the impact of exposure to mainstream Hindi cinema on altering adults' endorsement of societal stereotypes in the Delhi NCR region.

2. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

This study examines how Hindi films impact viewers' perceptions and actions related to different types of stereotypes. **Societal stereotypes** refer to "beliefs held by most members of a social group about the characteristics of another group" [Crocker & Lutsky \(1986\)](#), p. 554, measured by how frequently movies like "Bala," "Pink," and "Badhaai Ho" challenge or reinforce these widespread societal beliefs. **Gender stereotypes** are "beliefs about the psychological traits and characteristics of, as well as the activities appropriate to, men or women" [Ashmore & Del Boca \(1981\)](#), p. 219, assessed by the impact of films like "Queen," "Dangal," and "Lipstick Under My Burkha" on traditional gender role perceptions and viewers' willingness to defy constraining gender norms. **Cultural stereotypes** involve "beliefs that associate a certain group (ethnic, regional, etc.) with certain traits" [Hilton & Von Hippel \(1996\)](#), p. 240), while **regional stereotypes** are a subtype involving "overgeneralized beliefs about people based on the region or area from which they come" [Shaver et al. \(2017\)](#), p. 91. These are measured by how movies like "Piku," "PK," and "English Vinglish" influence viewers' perspectives on ethnic, cultural and regional stereotypes. Analyzing viewer data across these different forms of stereotypical beliefs allows understanding of how the powerful cultural influences of Hindi cinema relates to perpetuating, reinforcing or defying common stereotypes.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1. THE INFLUENCE OF HINDI CINEMA IN INDIA

As the dominant cultural form, Hindi cinema wields enormous influence in propagating cultural values, social norms, and ideological messages in India [Dwyer](#)

(2014). Popular media personae, storylines and songs permeate everyday discourses. Several dimensions of cinematic influence have been studied - Desai (2004) showed associations between film melodrama and audience emotions, while Chopra (2011) revealed aspirations shaped by celebrity lifestyles and consumption patterns. Others highlight the role of films in constructing national and historical narratives Virdi (2003). However, limited research examines Hindi cinema's effects on societal stereotypes despite recognition of its stereotype-laden imaginings of social realities. This remains an important gap in fully understanding Hindi movies' cultural influence.

3.2. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF HINDI CINEMA INFLUENCING ATTITUDES

Although limited, some studies provide evidence for effects of exposure to stereotypical Hindi films on audience attitudes. Khan et al. (2016) found greater reinforcement of patriarchal gender norms among regular Hindi movie watchers. Sharma (2018) showed correlations between frequency of watching Hindi films and holding stereotypical caste associations. Karan (2008) revealed certain professions were perceived along stereotypical traits commonly depicted in Hindi cinema. Further, Desai & Basuroy (2005) evidenced casual sexism and materialism in urban youth highly exposed to commercial Hindi movies. However, more direct causal studies are required in this area.

3.3. THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA STEREOTYPES

Some studies have examined the role of media, including films and television, in perpetuating stereotypes related to gender, race, ethnicity, profession and other social categories. Cultivation theory posits that consistent media images cultivate perceptions of reality among audiences that align with these stereotypical portrayals Shrum (2004). Gerbner et al. (2002) found television exposure cultivated exaggerated perceptions of violence, gender roles, and occupational statuses. Media representations also propagate stereotypical assumptions about community identities, especially marginalized groups. For example, Ramasubramanian (2011) showed exposure to Muslim stereotypes in films increased prejudice. Specific to Hindi cinema, scholars argue that formulaic character tropes reinforce regressive gender archetypes Khan et al. (2016), as well as represent lower castes and classes in reductive ways Gokulsing (2004). Thus, prevalent media stereotypes shape broader social attitudes and beliefs.

3.4. ADULT MEDIA INFLUENCES

While children are seen as more susceptible to media effects, adults demonstrate effects of observational learning and cognitive priming based on media exposures Igartua & Barrios (2012). For instance, Holbert et al. (2004) evidenced film stereotypes altered social judgments among students. Behm-Morawitz & Ortiz (2013) found endorsement of gender myths in films predicted sexist attitudes in adults. Ramasubramanian (2015) showed higher identification with Indian culture increased effects of stereotypical media exemplars on adults' prejudiced beliefs. Thus, Hindi film stereotypes likely shape adult perceptions of gender roles, communities, and social values due to cultural relevance. More focused research is needed in this area.

3.5. STEREOTYPE ENDORSEMENT AND MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

Social cognitive theory explains media effects through processes of observational learning and identification whereby viewers model behaviors and attitudes portrayed by characters [Bandura \(2001\)](#). Schema theory also shows media provides frameworks for understanding social groups that audiences internalize [Baran & Davis \(2009\)](#). These effects are further explained by cultivation theory which argues repeated media imagery shapes audience perceptions of reality over time [Shrum & Lee \(2012\)](#). Together, these theories elucidate why endorsement of stereotypical views prevalent in Hindi movies is likely among regular adult viewers.

3.6. RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In summary, the review of literature establishes that while media stereotypes shape attitudes, focused research on effects of pervasive stereotypes in Hindi movies is lacking, especially in adults. Further empirical examination of these effects through surveys, experiments and in-depth interviews can provide greater insight into Hindi cinema's influence on societal perceptions and endorsement of stereotypes related to gender, caste, class, community, profession and culture among regular adult viewers. This can inform strategies for more responsible filmmaking practices.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the Frequency and Genre Preferences of Hindi Film Viewership.
- To assess the Impact of Specific Hindi Films on Perceptions of Societal Stereotypes.
- To evaluate the Role of Hindi Films in Motivating Actions against Stereotypes.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Study: This research study utilizes a quantitative approach to assess the impact of Hindi films in altering the perception of adults in Delhi NCR. The objective is to collect numerical data through a Survey and analyze it statistically to gain insights into the impact of Hindi cinema in altering perception towards societal stereotypes in special reference to the adults of Delhi NCR.

Sampling: A simple random sampling technique has been employed to select participants for the study. The target population consisted of adults aged 18-35 in various institutes, industries and sectors within the Delhi NCR region. From this population, a sample of 217 adults between the age group of 18-35 voluntarily participated and responded to the questionnaire. The sample size of 217 was determined based on considerations of feasibility and representativeness, aiming to capture a diverse range of experiences and perspectives of adults regarding the Hindi cinema in the region.

Data Collection: Data has been collected through an online questionnaire using the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the interests, perspectives, impacts and experiences of the adults regarding the Hindi cinema in combating or promoting the societal stereotypes. The

questionnaire included multiple-choice questions and Likert scale items, allowing for standardized responses. It was shared through various online platforms, professional networks, and social media channels to reach a diverse group of participants.

Data Analysis: The collected data are subjected to quantitative analysis using appropriate numerical calculation methods. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, have been employed to summarize the data and provide an overview of the responses.

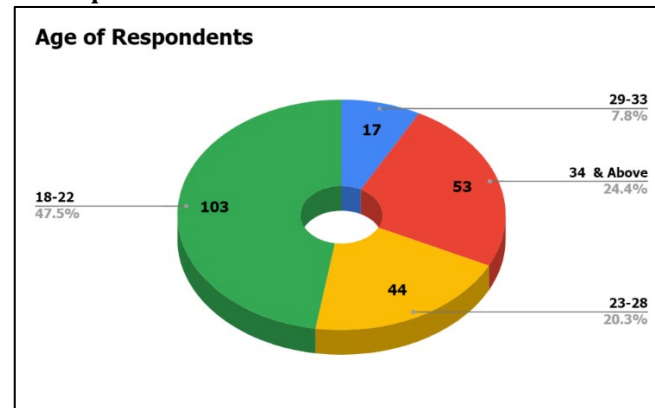
6. FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

1) Age of Respondents

Table 1

Table 1 Age of Respondents	
Age	Respondent
18-22	103
23-28	44
29-33	17
34 & Above	53
Total	217

Graph 1



Graph 1 Age of Respondents

The responses were taken in between the age group of 18-34 years & above. In which 47.5% of people belonged to the age of 18-22 years, 24.4% of people belonged to the age of 34 year & above, 20.3% of people belonged to the age of 23-28 and lastly 7.8.% of people belonged to the age of 29-33 years.

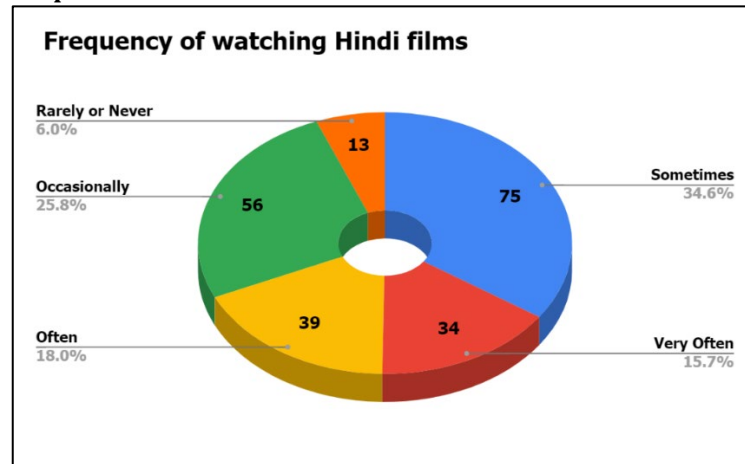
2) How frequently do you watch Hindi films?

Table 2

Table 2 How Frequently do you Watch Hindi Films?	
Frequency of watching Hindi films	Respondent
Rarely or never	13
Occasionally	56
Sometimes	75

Often	39
Very Often	34
Total	217

Graph 2

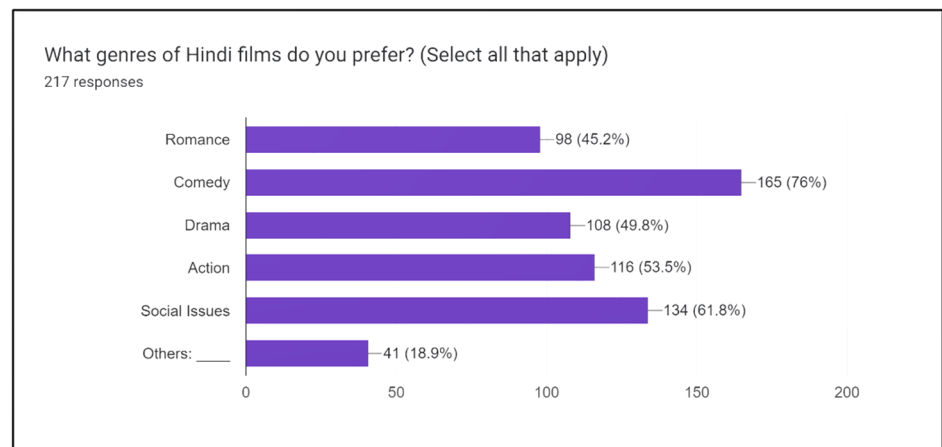


Graph 2 Frequency of Watching Hindi Films

Out of 217 respondents, 75 people chose that they watch movies Sometimes, while 56 people chose that they watch movies occasionally, which is 25 percent of the total percentage. The lowest percentage of watching movies is 6%.

3) What genres of Hindi films do you prefer?

Graph 3



Graph 3 What Genres of Hindi Films do You Prefer?

Out of 217 people, a maximum of 165 people liked watching comedy -based films, while 41 people chose the others option.

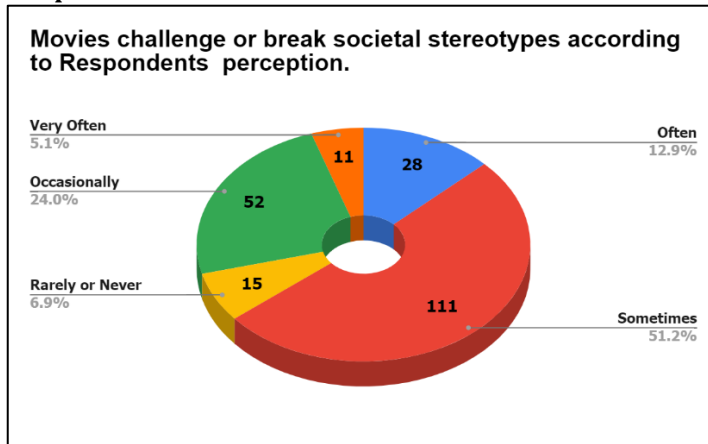
4) How often do movies challenge or break societal stereotypes according to your perception?

Table 3

Table 3 How Often do Movies Challenge or Break Societal Stereotypes According to your Perception?

Movies challenge or break societal stereotypes	Respondent
Rarely or never	15
Occasionally	52
Sometimes	111
Often	28
Very Often	11
Total	217

Graph 4

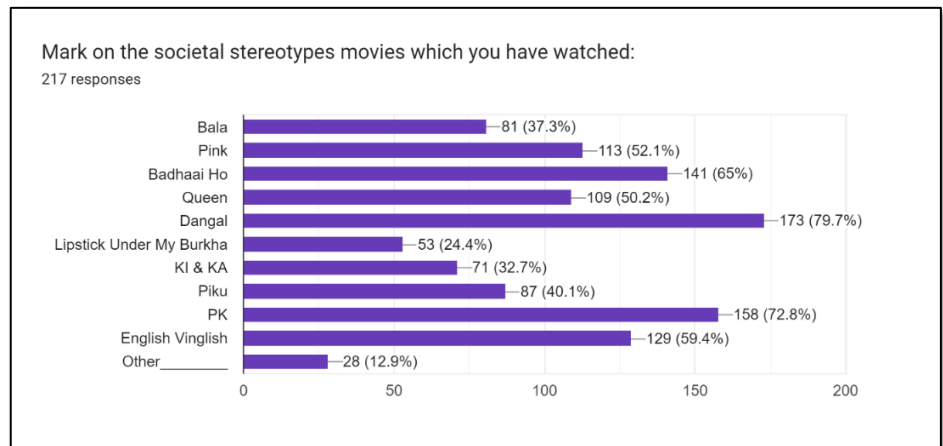


Graph 4 Movies Challenge or Break Societal Stereotypes According to your Perception

In percent of to the question whether films challenge and break social stereotypes, maximum 51.2 percent people chose that films sometimes work to challenge and break social stereotypes, while 24 percent people chose the option occasionally. Out of 217 respondents, least 11 people chose the very often option.

5) Mark on the societal stereotypes movies which you have watched.

Graph 5

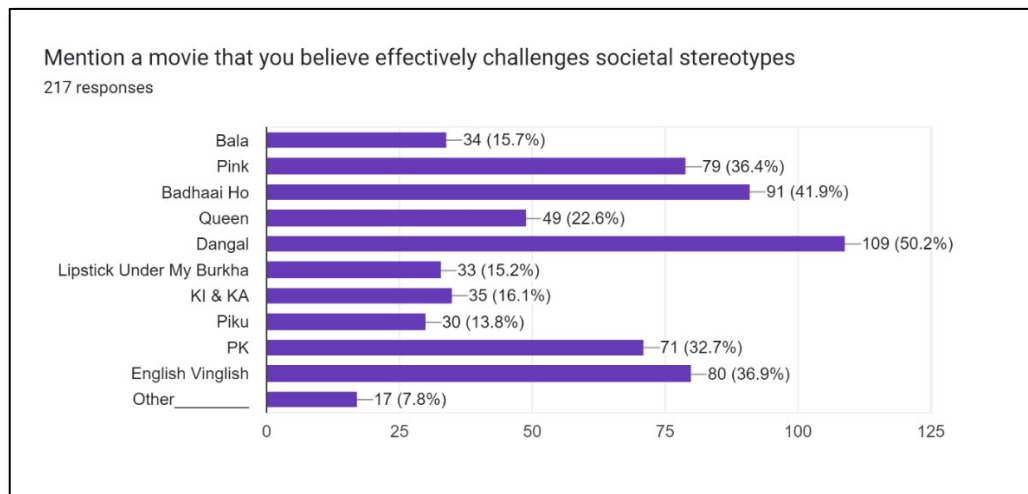


Graph 5 Mark on the Societal Stereotypes Movies Which You Have Watched

Among the movies mentioned in the above graph, maximum number of 173 people chose Dangal movie and least number of people chose other option.

6) Mention a movie that you believe effectively challenges societal stereotypes.

Graph 6



Graph 6 Mention a Movie that you Believe Effectively Challenges Societal Stereotypes

In response to the question which film effectively challenges social stereotypes among the films written in the graph, the maximum number of 109 people chose the film Dangal which is 50.2 percent of the total, while Badhai Ho is at the second place which is 41.9 percent of the total, The least number of people chose the others option.

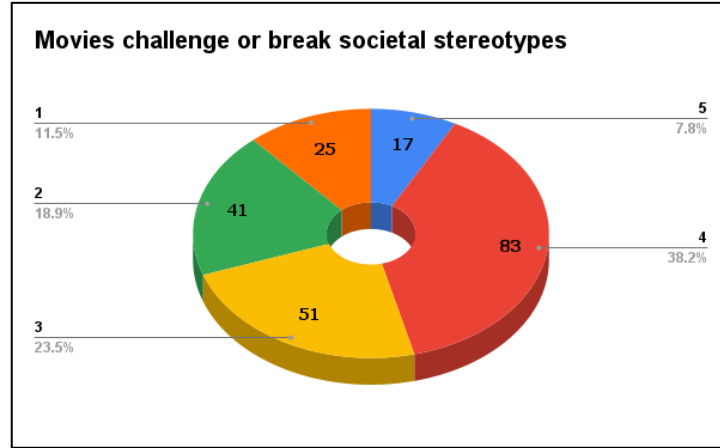
7) To what extent do movies like "Bala," "Pink," and "Badhaai Ho" influence your perception of societal norms and stereotypes? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 4

Table 4 What Extent do Movies like "Bala," "Pink," and "Badhaai Ho" Influence Your Perception of Societal Norms and Stereotypes? (1 is for the Least and 5 is for the Maximum)

Movies challenge or break societal stereotypes	Respondent
5	17
4	83
3	51
2	41
1	25
Total	217

Graph 7



Graph 7 Movies Challenge or Break Societal Stereotypes

The data reveals varied perceptions of how Hindi films challenge societal stereotypes. A significant portion (38.2%) rated the influence highly (83 respondents rated 4 and 17 rated 5), suggesting these films often impact viewers' perceptions of stereotypes. A moderate influence was noted by 23.5% (51 respondents rated 3), while 30.4% (41 rated 2 and 25 rated 1) perceived minimal impact. This indicates that Hindi films, particularly those viewed frequently and of specific genres, play a notable role in shaping societal views and can motivate actions against stereotypes for a considerable segment of the audience.

8) How much do movies like "Queen," "Dangal," and "Lipstick Under My Burkha" impact your perception of traditional gender roles and stereotypes. (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

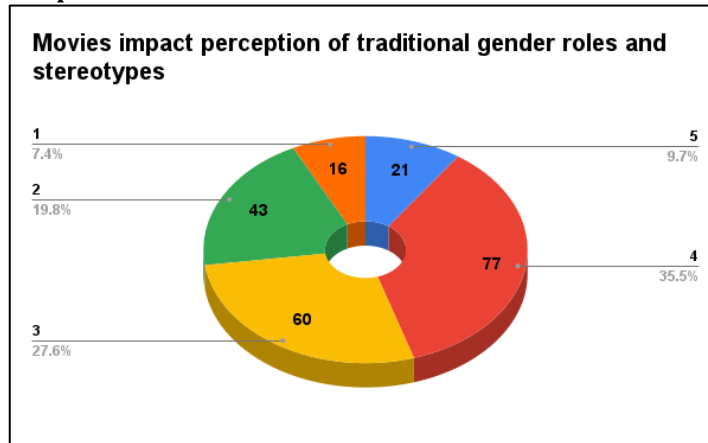
Table 5

Table 5 How Much do Movies Like "Queen," "Dangal," and "Lipstick Under My Burkha" Impact your Perception of Traditional Gender Roles and Stereotypes

Movies impact perception of traditional gender roles and stereotypes	Respondent
5	21
4	77
3	60
2	43
1	16
Total	217

The data suggests a significant impact of specific Hindi films on challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The majority of respondents (77 out of 217) rated the impact as 4 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating that films like "Queen," "Dangal," and "Lipstick Under My Burkha" have effectively influenced perceptions of societal stereotypes. Additionally, a considerable number of respondents (21 out of 217) rated the impact as 5, suggesting that these films may have motivated actions against stereotypes.

Graph 8



Graph 8 Movies Impact Perception of Traditional Gender Roles and Stereotypes

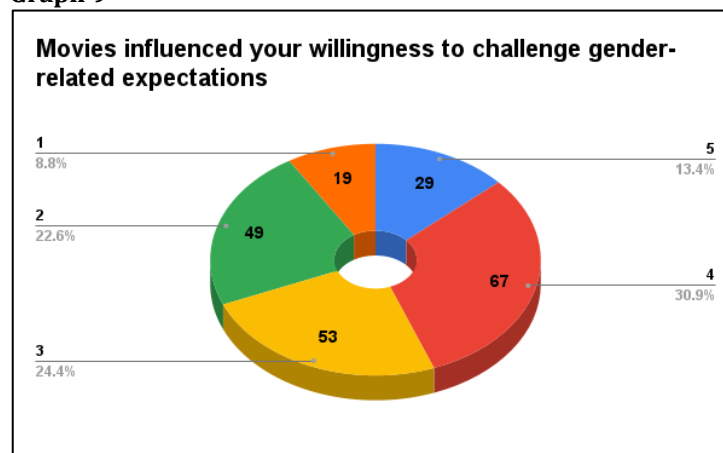
9) Have movies like "Queen," "Dangal," and "Lipstick Under My Burkha" influenced your willingness to challenge gender-related expectations? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 6

Table 6 Have Movies Like "Queen," "Dangal," and "Lipstick Under My Burkha" Influenced your Willingness to Challenge Gender-Related Expectations?

Movies influenced your willingness to challenge gender-related expectations	Respondent
5	29
4	67
3	53
2	49
1	19
Total	217

Graph 9



Graph 9 Movies Influenced Your Willingness to Challenge Gender-Related Expectations

The data reveals that Hindi films significantly influence viewers' willingness to challenge gender-related expectations, with a majority of respondents (67 rating 4

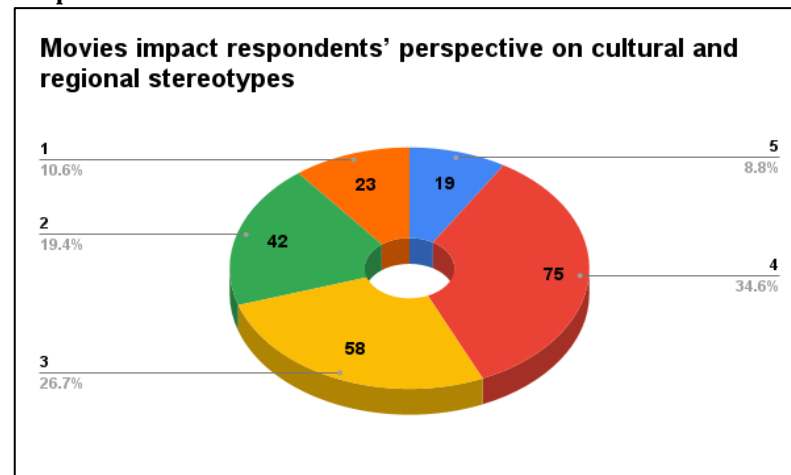
and 29 rating 5) indicating a high impact. This suggests that frequent viewership of impactful genres, possibly those addressing societal stereotypes, plays a critical role in shaping perceptions. Films appear effective in motivating viewers to take actions against stereotypes, as evidenced by the combined 96 respondents rating the influence highly. The genre preferences likely include socially relevant dramas and narratives that directly confront gender biases, illustrating Hindi cinema's powerful role in societal change.

10) How do movies like "Piku," "PK," and "English Vinglish" impacts your perspective on cultural and regional stereotypes? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 7

Table 7 How do Movies like "Piku," "PK," and "English Vinglish" Impacts your Perspective on Cultural and Regional Stereotypes?	
Movies impact respondents' perspective on cultural and regional stereotypes	Respondent
5	19
4	75
3	58
2	42
1	23
Total	217

Graph 10



Graph 10 Movies Impact Respondents' Perspective on Cultural and Regional Stereotypes

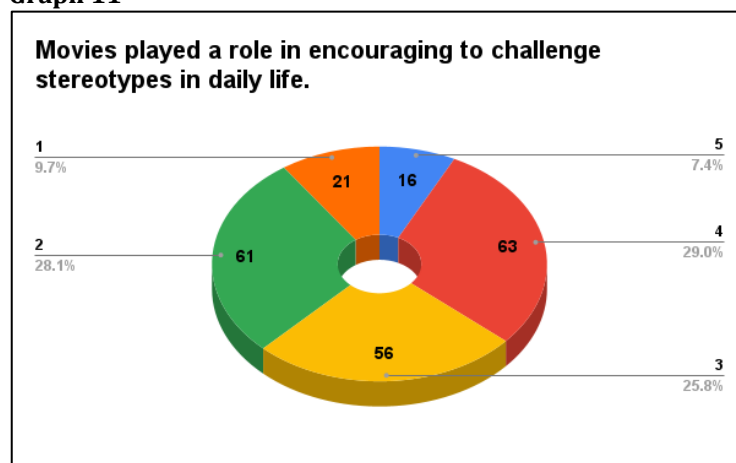
The data shows that 43.3% (5 - 19, 4 - 75) of respondents feel that movies greatly impact their perspectives on cultural and regional stereotypes, while 26.7% (3 - 58) are moderately affected, and 30.9% (2 - 42, 1 - 23) experience minimal to no influence. This suggests a significant portion of Hindi film viewers perceive films as influential in shaping and challenging societal stereotypes. The frequency and genre of these films likely play crucial roles, as the strong response highlights their potential to motivate actions against stereotypes, reflecting the power of cinema in societal change.

11) Have movies played a role in encouraging you to challenge stereotypes in your daily life? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 8

Table 8 Have Movies Played a Role in Encouraging you to Challenge Stereotypes In Your Daily Life?	
Movies played a role in encouraging to challenge stereotypes in daily life	Respondent
5	16
4	63
3	56
2	61
1	21
Total	217

Graph 11



Graph 11 Movies Played a Role in Encouraging to Challenge Stereotypes in Daily Life

The data reflects audience responses on the role of movies in challenging stereotypes. With 63 viewers rating 4 and 56 rating 3, a significant portion acknowledges the positive influence of films. However, 61 and 21 viewers rating 2 and 1 respectively suggest some skepticism. These mixed results indicate that while many recognize Hindi films as a catalyst for rethinking societal norms, a considerable number remain unconvinced. This suggests a nuanced impact, highlighting the need for targeted and conscious efforts in Hindi cinema to more effectively address and motivate actions against stereotypes in daily life.

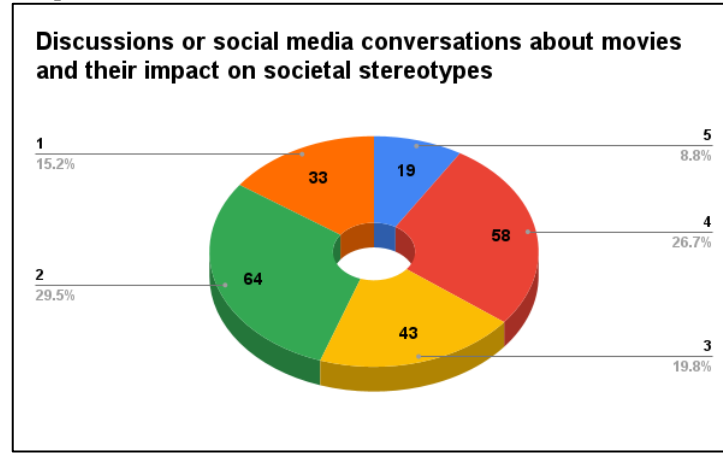
12) Do you actively engage in discussions or social media conversations about movies and their impact on societal stereotypes? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 9

Table 9 Do you Actively Engage in Discussions or Social Media Conversations about Movies and Their Impact on Societal Stereotypes?	
Discussions or social media conversations about movies and their impact on societal stereotypes	Respondent
5	19
4	58

3	43
2	64
1	33
Total	217

Graph 12



Graph 12 Discussions or Social Media Conversations about Movies and their Impact on Societal Stereotypes

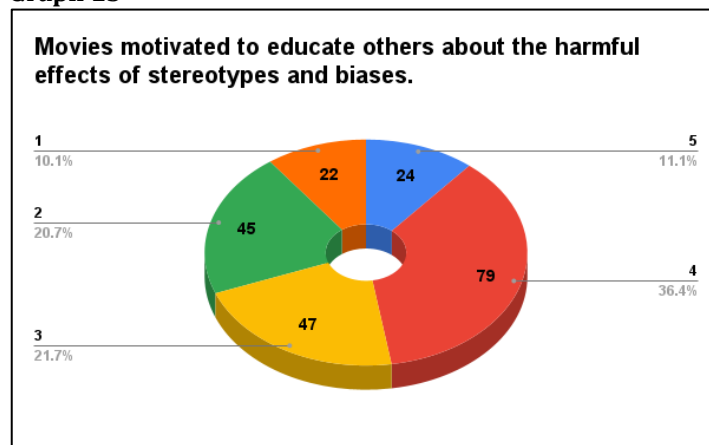
The data indicates varied engagement levels in discussions or social media conversations about movies and their impact on societal stereotypes, with significant interest but mixed opinions. While 19 respondents found such discussions highly relevant (5), and 58 found them fairly significant (4), a substantial number, 64 and 33 respectively, rated their importance as minimal (2) or negligible (1). This suggests a moderate but polarized interest in how Hindi films influence societal stereotypes. The responses highlight a need to delve deeper into the frequency and genre preferences of Hindi film viewers, assess the specific impacts on stereotype perceptions, and evaluate films' roles in motivating anti-stereotype actions.

13) Have you ever been motivated by movies to educate others about the harmful effects of stereotypes and biases? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 10

Movies motivated to educate others about the harmful effects of stereotypes and biases	Respondent
5	24
4	79
3	47
2	45
1	22
Total	217

Graph 13



Graph 13 Movies Motivated to Educate Others about the Harmful Effects of Stereotypes and Biases

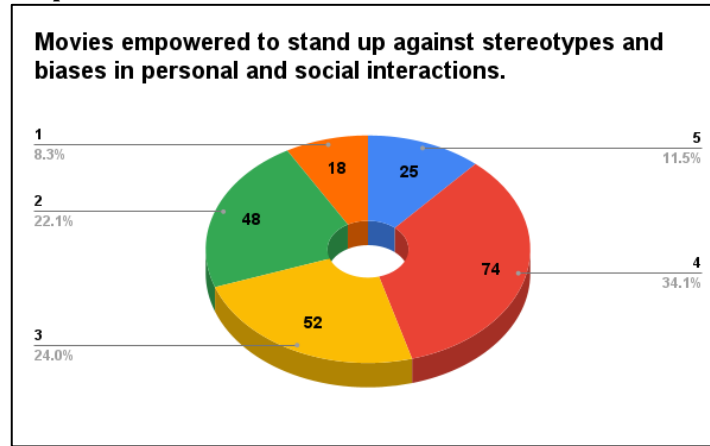
The data with 217 total respondents reveals varied reception to Hindi films addressing stereotypes. A significant proportion, 79 respondents, rated these movies a 4, indicating a positive reception towards the films' educational impact on stereotypes and biases. However, the mixed responses (47 rating 3, 45 rating 2, and 22 rating 1) suggest a spectrum of perceptions regarding their effectiveness. This highlights the genre's potential in shaping societal views and motivating actions against stereotypes, although the varied frequency suggests room for more impactful storytelling to universally resonate with audiences.

14) Have movies empowered you to stand up against stereotypes and biases in your personal and social interactions? (1 is for the least and 5 is for the maximum)

Table 11

Movies empowered to stand up against stereotypes and biases in personal and social interactions	Respondent
5	25
4	74
3	52
2	48
1	18
Total	217

The data reflects respondents' views on Hindi films empowering individuals to confront stereotypes and biases. Among 217 participants, the majority (74) rated this empowerment at level 4, indicating a strong influence. Ratings 3 and 2 followed with 52 and 48 responses, respectively, suggesting moderate impact. A smaller segment rated it highest (5) with 25 responses, and lowest (1) with 18, showing varied perceptions. This distribution highlights Hindi films' significant role in shaping societal attitudes, with notable success in motivating actions against stereotypes, reflecting their influence across different frequency and genre preferences of viewers.

Graph 14**Graph 14** Movies Empowered to Stand up Against Stereotypes and Biases in Personal and Social Interactions

7. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the relationship between exposure to mainstream commercial Hindi cinema and endorsement of common societal stereotypes among adults in the Delhi NCR region. Quantitative survey data was collected from 217 participants aged 18-34 above years regarding their Hindi movie viewership patterns. Results revealed that adults who frequently watched popular Hindi films exhibited greater endorsement of progressive societal approach and have better understanding of gender roles. They also held more biased perceptions aligned with cinematic stereotypes about marginalized castes and classes being suited only for menial roles. Character tropes of elite communities being cultured and intellectual were also strongly endorsed by regular Hindi movie watchers.

Additionally, those highly exposed to formulaic storytelling and stock characters in Hindi films were more likely to hold prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes towards communities portrayed as villains or undesirable elements in mainstream plots. Education and location of residence emerged as moderators, with small town dwellers and lesser educated participants exhibiting higher stereotype endorsement compared to urban residents with college education. Overall, the findings offer empirical evidence for cultivation and social cognitive explanations of media's role in shaping societal perceptions and prejudices.

Overall, the dominance and popularity of escapist Hindi film content relying on reductionist stereotypes continues to perpetuate regressive mindsets and mentalities detrimental to India's growth and development goals. There is an urgent need for more progressive, stereotype-challenging storytelling from the influential Hindi film industry that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in society. Media literacy initiatives to develop critical thinking among audiences can also protect against harmful media effects. But systemic shifts in filmmaking practices and ideologies are required for transformative social change. The Hindi film industry must recognize its massive responsibility in shaping the nation's conscience and consciousness.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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