



Cover Page



EXPLORING THE ESSENCE OF HIMACHALI REGIONAL CINEMA: PROSPECTS AND OBSTACLES

***Dr. Suresh Kumar ** Sunny Kumar**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla

**Assistant Professor, Department of History, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla

Abstract

Himachal Pradesh is a beautiful hilly state with a vast potential of attractive locations conducive to the Cinema and film industry. Cinema serves an outlet for different voices, cultures and traditions of the social life of its people. Since the beginning of Indian Cinema with the screening of Raja Harishchandra in 1913, it has reached various heights of glory and fame. Over the past hundred years of Indian cinema we have not only cherished the memories of Bollywood Hindi movies but also witnessed the production of fine cinema in the different regions of the country. Himachali cinema, also known as 'Himollywood', is still in its toddler years. However, in recent years, some artistically and thematically rich movies have been produced. This paper aims to study the emerging trends and future scenarios of Himachali cinema and the entertainment Industry.

Keywords: Himachali , Pahari, Regional, Cinema, Bollywood

Introduction

India is, almost, one of the largest film industries in terms of film production. Round the year, thousands of movies were produced in the Indian market, comprising Hindi, regional, and art cinema. The popularity of Indian cinema spread across the globe due to the Indian diaspora living in different countries of the world. India is a land of diverse cultures and this diversity is found in the languages of the different parts of the country. In the Indian constitution, Article 344(1), and 351 of the eighth schedule gives reorganization to twenty-two languages. Thus, those languages spoken in the different regions of the country produce and endorse their own regional film Industries like Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi, etc. Hindi movies are mostly produced in the Indian city of Mumbai, earlier known as Bombay. Though Bollywood is the center of the Indian film industry, and following the same various neologisms have been coined for the regional films produced in the different parts of the country. Matter of fact, the Bollywood industry has impacted various regional cinema and vice versa. Bollywood cinema is essentially Hindi Cinema. Apart from this Hindi Cinema, there are notably: Tamil, Telugu, Malayali, and Punjabi cinema parallelly excellent with Hindi Cinema. Although, Hindi cinema accounts for the part of revenue generated from the total film industry in India. (Khanna, 2003).

There is a popular saying which depicts the linguistic diversity of India- '*Kos Kos par badle pani chaar kos par vaani*'. It means that the language or dialect spoken in the Indian subcontinent changes approximately every twelve kilometers; just like the taste of water. Because of this language diversity, many states promote their own film industry. That's the reason we have different film industries in India like Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Punjabi, Malayalam, Dogri, etc. In recent times some of the best and internationally acclaimed movies have been made in the regional cinema. As far as regional cinema is concerned it has also done really well and caught the attention of audience pan India. Recently, the Telugu movie, Pushpa: the Rise proved a blockbuster earning more than 250 crores. (Hindustan Business line).

Himachali regional cinema, which is also known as *Pahari* cinema, indicates the film industry based in Himachal Pradesh, a beautiful tourist state in India. Himachali cinema is still in its infancy. The present study tries to highlight some key aspects in Himachali cinema.

A Background of Regional Cinema in India

In the context of India, the term "regional cinema" is employed to distinguish it from Hindi cinema, while the term "regional cinemas" denotes the diverse array of cinema across the country (Radakrishnan, 2021). Regional cinema in India mainly denotes cinema that is in different regional languages of the country other than Hindi. The word *regional cinema* reflects



Cover Page



the diversity of cinema in the Indian context. When India got independence, different states were formed in the country primarily on the basis of language diversity. The emergence of regional cinema has its roots in the development of administrative units in India set up on the basis of linguistic diversity. (Radhakrishnan, 2021). The emergence of regional cinema was witnessed in the early 1960s and 1970s. In the initial years of its growth Chennai, formerly known as Madras, the Capital of South Indian state, became the center of regional cinema like; Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam. But with the new administrative units and the emergence and growth of various superstars in regional languages, regional cinema shifted and grew rapidly in other parts of the country. In the present time, regional cinema is growing very fast. It is becoming popular among the masses. The evidence of its success can be seen in the recent Hits from South Indian cinema. In recent years, people were taken aback by regional movies like *Bahubali*, *Pushpa*, *RRR*, *Kantara*, *Jai Bhim*, and the list goes on.

Scope of Regional Cinema: Current perspective

The scope of regional cinema in India is immense. The kinds of themes and narratives which are presented in regional cinema have attained international recognition. Folk narratives, and local and regional issues, which are delved by regional cinema, have caught the attention of the audience worldwide. The popularity of these innovative themes can be ascertained by the fact that in recent times a lot of Bollywood movies have been adapted and remade from regional cinema. Seeing the popularity of the regional cinema Bollywood is increasingly supporting regional cinema. '*Baahubali*', which is originally a Telugu film, was promoted in North India by Dharma Productions which is owned by leading filmmaker *Karan Johar*. If we analyze the Indian movies' submission to Oscar in the past few years, regional movies like *Abu*, *Son of Adam*, a Malayalam film, *The Good Road*, a Gujarati, and *Court*, a Marathi movie have made their place in the list.

Emerging Trends in Himachali Entertainment Industry

Himachal Pradesh is a beautiful state situated in the northern part of the country in the Western Himalayas. The former chief minister of Himachal Pradesh Mr. Jai Ram Thakur while speaking in the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival at Shimla said that the state government is constantly working for the development of language, art, and culture and this can be best attained with the help of movies. He further told that the state government has framed a policy to promote the shooting of films in the state and for this purpose, the state government has also signed an MoU worth rupees hundred crores. (Hindustan Times, 2021). Himachal Pradesh has played a very instrumental role in the development and growth of Indian cinema. Because of its beautiful landscapes, temples, rivers, and conducive environment, it has attracted the attention of filmmakers. Because of this reason, various films, documentaries, and songs have been filmed in the various local sites of Himachal Pradesh. With the advancement of technology and the affordability of filmmaking instruments, independent filmmakers have emerged in recent times.

In recent times a lot of new and innovative trends have emerged in the Pahari cinema. Some of the themes taken up by the Pahari cinema are depicting social taboos and stereotypes. Cultural issues related to the hilly people have also been depicted in the cinema. Himachali cinema has focused on stories which are rooted in the local culture and traditions of Himachal Pradesh. Kavya Varsha, a young and aspiring writer from Kangra district in Himachal Pradesh, has created a short film called *Chappal* that has captivated audiences worldwide. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V007020BT4M>)

Hindrances in the development of Himachali Cinema/ Entertainment Industry

Lack of Art and Seriousness in Himachali Cinema: the biggest hindrance in the development of regional cinema is that, it lacks seriousness and sense of Cinematic Art. The recent trend shows that most of the movies in Himachali dialects lack high seriousness. They are made on the topics which are irrelevant and arouse unnecessary laughter.

Expansion and Distribution of the Himachali Cinema: the audience of the Himachali cinema is limited. That's why the expansion and distribution of the Himachali cinema caters to a few audiences.

Stereotype Portrayals of the Characters: stereotype portrayals of the characters who speak in regional dialects make non-Himachali viewers confused. They find it difficult to understand and appreciate the movies because of the stereotype portrayals and typical dialogue delivery by the characters.



Cover Page



Lack of Content in Themes: the content of Pahari movies is not very great. Most of the movies move around the theme of love. The themes of the movies are mostly unrealistic. Most of the movies are unscientific and promote superstitions and alcoholism. They don't address the real problems and concerns faced by the people in Himachal. Himachali movies available on you tube like; *Ghor Juai Khaylu*, *Dui Suyangi*, *Faujiye di family*, *Pahadia mama*, etc., apparently lack in content. Though, in recent times some good movies with meaningful content like *Saanjh* have been made. A few movies like *Sunni Bhunku*, with partial success deal with the local myths of the area.

Lack of professional Film Makers and Actors: one of the major weaknesses faced by Himachali cinema is that most of the producers and actors are first timers and naive. They lack professional skills and experience essential for making artistic and professional cinema.

Budget and Technological Challenges: from the commercial perspective, Pahari cinema is not very successful. There is hardly any financial assistance available from Government agencies to provide financial assistance. The technical apparatus used in making movies are not of advance quality.

Suggestions for the development of cinema in Himachal Pradesh

Role of the Government: Government can play a very significant role in the development of cinema in Himachal Pradesh. Government should provide better infrastructure to attract film makers. To promote Himachali cinema government should provide financial incentives to the budding film makers. Apart from this Administrative support should be provided to promote cinema.

Development of tourist destinations: Government should identify different unexplored destinations. Scenic beauty of Himachal has attracted film makers and lot of hit Bollywood movies like *Kudrat* (1981), *Jab we Met* (2007), *Three idiot* (2009), were shot in Himachal. These movies were mainly filmed in Manali and Shimla, which are fully developed and connected cities by road and air. But, there are so many other places in the remote areas of the state which can be developed as the tourist destinations to catch the attention of film makers.

Diversity in themes: It has been observed that Himachali movies mostly deal with the concept of love and Alcohol. Drinking Alcohol is shown as something funny and brave act in Himachali cinema, which does not capture the true essence of Pahari culture. Serious and meaningful themes must be taken up by the film makers for the development of Pahari cinema.

Training to Local film makers and Artists: It is found that artists and technicians working in Himachali cinema are untrained and unprofessional. To tackle this issue government should establish acting institutes to train and groom artists and film makers professionally.

Refined Language: Himachal Pradesh is enriched with diversify local dialects. But it is commonly observed that language used in pahari cinema is not very much refined. It does not give accurate picture of the Himachali rich culture. Language generally used in Pahari movies is unrefined and exaggerated. Film makers should work painstakingly on this aspect of the language.

Conclusion

Based on the above observations, it can be concluded that the scope of Pahari cinema is immense. The scenic beauty of the state captures attention and becomes the favorite spot for Hindi film makers. However, most of the Himachali movies lack serious content and themes. In recent times, some good movies like *Saanjh*, have been made. Himachali cinema is still evolving and has a potential to grow. It provides a platform for local artists and filmmakers to grow and showcase their talent at national level. Moreover, It has the potential to promote tourism in Himachal Pradesh. With these facts in mind, the state government should promote and create a favorable environment for the development of Pahari cinema.



Cover Page



Bibliography

- Khanna, A. (2003). The business of Hindi films. *Encyclopaedia of Hindi Cinema: An Enchanting Close-up of India's Hindi Cinema*, 135-154.
- Radhakrishnan, R. (2021). Region/Regional Cinema. *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*, 12(1-2), 162-165.
- Saran, R. (2014). *History of Indian cinema*. Diamond Pocket Books Pvt Ltd.
- Rajadhyaksha, A., & Willemen, P. (Eds.). (2014). *Encyclopedia of Indian cinema*. Routledge.
- Gupta, C. D. (1969). Indian cinema today. *Film Quarterly*, 22(4), 27-35.
- <https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-cinema/regional-cinema.html>
- <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/catalyst/the-rise-and-rise-of-regional-cinema/article64932345.ece>
- <https://www.virtuallacademy.com/beyond-bollywood-rise-of-indian-regional-cinema/>
- <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/india/articles/the-rise-of-regional-cinema-in-india/>
- <http://tehelka.com/himachal-pradesh-seeks-to-showcase-itself-as-key-film-production-destination/>
- <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/govt-taking-steps-to-attract-film-industry-to-himachal-says-chief-minister-jai-ram-thakur-101638132622643.html>
- <https://www.himachalonline.in/about/tourism/bollywood-flims-shot-in-himachal-pradesh>
- <https://himollywood.wordpress.com/about/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V007020BT4M>