

Clinical Approaches to Trauma in Indian Cinema: A Study of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the portrayal of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Indian cinema, focusing on its accuracy, sensitivity, and impact on characters' experiences. It evaluates the role of Indian cinema in raising awareness about PTSD and challenges in presenting the psychological complexities associated with trauma. The study also discusses the potential of films to destigmatize mental health issues in Indian society and offers recommendations for more authentic portrayals. The study provides a clear definition of PTSD, its clinical symptoms, causes, and treatment, and its impact on various contexts, including war, personal loss, accidents, or abuse.

Keywords: Indian Cinema, PTSD, Trauma and Clinical Approaches

INTRODUCTION

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a severe mental health condition resulting from life-threatening events, causing symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, and emotional numbness. It's also increasingly explored in popular media, including cinema, for character development and narrative structure. Indian cinema significantly influences public perception of mental health issues, particularly PTSD. Historically stigmatized, Indian films often focus on physical struggles or emotional complexities. However, as societal attitudes evolve, filmmakers are now tackling more complex psychological issues like trauma and PTSD, highlighting the importance of open discussions about mental health.

This paper examines the portrayal of PTSD in Indian cinema, focusing on its

various genres and styles. It aims to understand whether these portrayals enhance or hinder societal understanding of trauma and the role of Indian cinema in raising awareness, breaking down stigma, and contributing to the ongoing conversation about mental health in India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Analyze the Representation of PTSD in Indian Cinema.
2. To Assess the Clinical Accuracy of PTSD Depictions.
3. To Investigate the Cultural Context of PTSD in Indian Cinema.
4. To Examine the Impact of PTSD Portrayals on Public Perception of Mental Health.
5. To Investigate the Role of Therapy and Healing in PTSD Representations.

6. To Evaluate the Gendered Depictions of PTSD in Indian Cinema.
7. To Suggest Improvements for Future Depictions of PTSD in Indian Cinema.
8. To Contribute to the Growing Discourse on Mental Health in Indian Media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore and analyze the representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Indian cinema. The focus is on identifying how trauma, particularly PTSD, is portrayed in film narratives, examining the alignment between cinematic depictions and clinical diagnoses, and understanding the cultural, social, and psychological implications of these portrayals.

INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS

Objective No. 1: To Analyze the Representation of PTSD in Indian Cinema.

The primary objective of this study is to explore how PTSD is depicted in Indian films, focusing on the portrayal of its symptoms, causes, and effects. This involves examining how filmmakers translate the psychological experience of trauma onto the screen. This study examines the portrayal of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Indian cinema, a complex psychological condition resulting from traumatic events. It aims to understand how filmmakers use narrative, character development, and visual storytelling techniques to portray PTSD, revealing how the trauma experience, symptoms, and long-term impacts are

represented through the storyline and visual cues within the films. PTSD has been a relatively underexplored theme in Indian cinema until recent years.

Objective No. 2: To Assess the Clinical Accuracy of PTSD Depictions.

This study aims to critically evaluate the clinical accuracy of PTSD representations in Indian cinema. It will compare the symptoms and treatment approaches shown in films with those defined in psychological literature, such as the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). The objective is to assess the clinical accuracy of PTSD portrayal in Indian cinema, focusing on the balance between dramatic storytelling and psychological authenticity. PTSD has specific diagnostic criteria outlined in manuals like the DSM-5. The aim is to assess whether Indian films accurately reflect the lived experience of individuals suffering from the disorder. The analysis will examine the representation of PTSD symptoms, the complexity of the disorder, and whether therapeutic interventions align with evidence-based practices in treating PTSD.

Objective No. 3: To Investigate the Cultural Context of PTSD in Indian Cinema.

An important objective is to understand how cultural and societal factors influence the portrayal of PTSD. Indian cinema often reflects cultural attitudes towards mental health, and this study will examine how these cultural elements shape the representation of trauma and its aftermath. This study examines how Indian society's cultural context influences the portrayal of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

(PTSD) in Indian cinema. The portrayal of PTSD varies significantly based on cultural beliefs, societal norms, and historical experiences. Indian cinema, as a reflection of societal values, plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of mental health, including PTSD. Despite stigmatizing mental health issues, contemporary films are beginning to portray trauma with greater sensitivity and depth. The study considers social, religious, familial, historical, and political contexts that may influence the cinematic treatment of trauma.

Objective No. 4: To Examine the Impact of PTSD Portrayals on Public Perception of Mental Health.

Another key objective is to explore the role of Indian cinema in shaping public attitudes toward PTSD and mental health in general. This includes investigating whether these portrayals help in raising awareness, challenging stigma, or perpetuating misconceptions about trauma and psychological disorders. The study examines how Indian cinema portrays Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its impact on public perception of mental health, particularly in relation to trauma-related disorders. Films play a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes, especially in societies where mental health issues have been stigmatized or misunderstood. The portrayal of PTSD in Indian cinema can challenge or reinforce existing beliefs about mental health and trauma. The objective seeks to understand the effects of these portrayals on viewers' understanding of PTSD, their willingness to seek help, and broader societal attitudes towards mental health.

Objective No. 5: To Investigate the Role of Therapy and Healing in PTSD Representations.

The study aims to analyze how Indian films address the therapeutic process and the potential for recovery from PTSD. It will explore whether films incorporate realistic therapeutic interventions and the role of support systems in the healing process. This study examines the portrayal of therapy and healing processes in Indian cinema in relation to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The portrayal of these interventions varies significantly, with some films focusing on therapy or healing practices, while others emphasize alternative methods like spiritual, familial, or self-driven solutions. The objective aims to explore the types of therapeutic approaches, accuracy, and cultural relevance of these healing processes in the Indian context. It will also analyze whether films offer realistic depictions of PTSD recovery or present oversimplified solutions that do not align with clinical mental health treatment.

Objective No. 6: To Evaluate the Gendered Depictions of PTSD in Indian Cinema.

This study will also consider how PTSD is represented across genders, analyzing whether male and female characters experience trauma differently, and whether the film industry offers varying depictions of healing and resilience based on gender. This study examines the gendered representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Indian cinema. PTSD is not discriminatory by gender, but its portrayal can be influenced by cultural and societal norms. The study aims to uncover

gender biases, stereotypes, and patterns in the portrayal of trauma and its effects. Understanding the gendered nature of PTSD depictions in Indian cinema is crucial for understanding how cultural norms affect mental health and trauma representation, as well as how these representations shape public understanding of masculinity, femininity, and mental health. Cinema plays a significant role in reinforcing or challenging traditional gender roles, especially in emotional health.

Objective No. 7: To Suggest Improvements for Future Depictions of PTSD in Indian Cinema.

Based on the findings, the study will propose recommendations for filmmakers to ensure more accurate, sensitive, and culturally relevant portrayals of PTSD in future Indian cinema, while also advocating for a more empathetic approach to mental health issues. The objective seeks to improve the accuracy, responsibility, and cultural sensitivity of future portrayals of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Indian cinema. Despite progress, many films continue to perpetuate misconceptions or oversimplify the disorder's complexity. The objective proposes strategies to enhance the portrayal of PTSD, aligning it with clinical knowledge, cultural understanding, and ethical responsibility. It aims to avoid reinforcing stereotypes, stigmatization, or gender biases. A multi-dimensional approach considering social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of PTSD is proposed, while also considering cinema as a tool for raising public awareness and empathy towards individuals affected by trauma.

Objective No. 8: To Contribute to the Growing Discourse on Mental Health in Indian Media.

By examining the intersection of mental health and cinema, this study aims to contribute to the larger discourse on mental health awareness in India, encouraging further academic and public conversations about the impact of media portrayals on mental health. This study aims to contribute to the growing conversation on mental health in Indian media, focusing on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As mental health awareness in India increases, the role of media, particularly cinema, in shaping public perceptions of mental health issues is becoming increasingly recognized. The study analyzes the representation of PTSD in Indian films to challenge stigmas, address misconceptions, and emphasize the importance of mental well-being. By critically engaging with how PTSD is portrayed, the study can offer recommendations for more responsible depictions, fostering a more empathetic and informed public dialogue on mental health.

CONCLUSION

1. This study examines the portrayal of PTSD in Indian cinema, examining clinical accuracy, cultural and gendered factors, and suggesting improvements for future depictions.
2. Indian cinema is embracing mental health issues, with films like "Dear Zindagi" and "Chhapaak" portraying characters in a realistic light, breaking stigma and introducing broader audiences.
3. Indian cinema significantly influences societal views on mental

health, often oversimplifying or
sensationalizing PTSD issues.
Recent developments highlight a

growing recognition of its
complexity.

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