

Impact of Cinematography in the Society

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Abstract: Cinematography plays a significant role in shaping social attitudes, values, and cultural identity. It acts as a powerful medium of visual storytelling that reflects social realities and human emotions. Through films, social issues such as poverty, gender inequality, crime, and justice are highlighted. Cinematography influences public opinion by presenting ideas in an engaging and persuasive manner. It contributes to the preservation and promotion of cultural traditions and heritage. Films also serve as tools for education and social awareness among different age groups. Cinematography has the ability to inspire social change and reform by questioning existing norms. It impacts youth by shaping aspirations, lifestyle choices, and moral perspectives. The film industry creates a platform for dialogue on political and economic issues. Technological advancements in cinematography enhance realism and audience connection. Cinema bridges social gaps by connecting people from diverse backgrounds. It also influences language, fashion, and popular culture in society. Cinematography provides entertainment while simultaneously conveying meaningful messages. Thus, it remains an influential force in molding and transforming modern society.

Keywords: Cinematography, Society, Perspective, Entertainment and Ideology.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cinema has long occupied a central place in the social and cultural life of Tamil Nadu, shaping not only modes of entertainment but also public thought, language, politics, and identity. In this region, visual storytelling evolved from traditional art forms such as Therukoothu, Yakshagana, stage dramas, and mythological performances, which were deeply rooted in social values and collective experience. Before the arrival of cinematography, these dramatic traditions served as the primary medium through which moral lessons, religious beliefs, and social concerns were communicated to the masses. The people of Tamil Nadu were already familiar with performance based narratives, making the transition from stage drama to cinema both natural and impactful. With the advent of cinematography in India during the late nineteenth century, Tamil Nadu quickly emerged as a fertile ground for cinematic growth.

The recording and screening of dramas in the early nineteenth century created a bridge between live theatrical performances and motion pictures. As cinema technology advanced, the Madras Presidency (now Chennai) became a significant hub for film production, earning its place as the heart of South Indian cinema. The establishment of studios such as AVM, Gemini Studios, and Prasad Studios transformed cinema from a cultural activity into a structured industry. These developments allowed cinematography to reach even the rural masses, transcending barriers of literacy and class.

In Tamil Nadu, cinema has never remained a mere source of entertainment. It has functioned as a powerful social institution capable of influencing public opinion and collective consciousness. Tamil films have historically addressed themes such as social justice, caste discrimination, women's rights, labor issues, and political ideology. The strong connection between cinema and politics in the state is a unique phenomenon, where actors, screenwriters, and lyricists have

shaped political movements and ideologies. Dialogues, songs, and visual narratives from films often find resonance in everyday conversations, public speeches, and social debates, highlighting the deep penetration of cinematography into social life. The evolution of cinematography also brought significant economic and professional opportunities within Tamil Nadu.

What began as a simple form of visual recording gradually transformed into a commercial and profitable enterprise. The industry created employment not only for actors and directors but also for technicians, cinematographers, editors, musicians, graphic designers, costume designers, and numerous off-screen professionals. This expansion contributed to the growth of allied industries and enhanced the state's cultural economy. The emergence of star culture and fan associations further demonstrates how cinema influences social behavior and collective identity. At the same time, technological advancements have continuously reshaped Tamil cinema. From black-and-white silent films to sound, color, digital cinematography, and high-definition visuals, each phase introduced new story telling techniques and audience experiences. Contemporary Tamil cinema has increasingly embraced content-driven narratives, realism, and experimental themes alongside commercial entertainers.

The rise of streaming platforms has further revolutionized the way films are produced, distributed, and consumed, allowing Tamil filmmakers to reach global audiences while addressing locally rooted stories. However, the impact of cinematography in Tamil Nadu is not without complexity. While films have contributed to social awareness and cultural pride, they have also raised concerns regarding the influence of violence, stereotypes, unrealistic expectations, and excessive hero worship on the minds of the public, especially the youth.

The dual nature of cinema as a tool for both enlightenment and distortion makes it a subject of serious academic and social inquiry. Thus, understanding the impact of cinematography in society, particularly in the context of Tamil Nadu, requires examining its historical evolution, cultural roots, technological growth, economic significance, and social consequences. This background provides continuity to the discussion on how cinematography evolved from recorded dramas into a powerful global medium and how, over time, it has shaped—and continues to shape—the social fabric, thought processes, and collective imagination of society.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As stated by Deren Maya in the “cinematography: the creative use of reality”.... Says that the futurist cinematograph will sharpen and strengthen perception, quicken the creative imagination, it will produce a prodigious sense of simultaneity and omnipresence in the mind. The futurist cinematograph

will therefore will contribute to the general renewal by taking the place of literacy review(always pedantic) , the drama (always predictable) , and by killing the book (always tedious and oppressive). The necessities of the propaganda will force us to publish a book once in a while.

As stated by Siegfried Kracauer in *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947) as Kracauer critically examines German cinema to explain how films reflect the collective psychology of society. He argues that cinematography acts as a mirror of social anxieties, fears, and aspirations prevailing at a particular historical moment. According to him, recurring cinematic themes unconsciously shape public perception and normalize certain ideologies. The author highlights that cinema does not merely entertain but subtly conditions societal thought patterns. He establishes a strong connection between film narratives and political tendencies. Kracauer's work demonstrates how cinema can prepare the public mindset for large-scale social transformations. His study remains foundational in understanding the psychological impact of cinematography. This work proves cinema's power in influencing societal consciousness.

As stated by Carlos Rivera in *Film and Social Change: Exploring the Influence of Movies on Society* (2022) as Rivera emphasizes cinema as a catalyst for social awareness and reform. He explains that films possess the ability to highlight marginalized voices and challenge dominant social norms. According to the author, visual storytelling creates emotional engagement, making social issues more relatable to audiences. He argues that cinema influences public opinion by shaping moral and ethical perspectives. Rivera also notes that films contribute to cultural dialogue and collective reflection. The study underlines cinema's role in initiating conversations on social justice. It concludes that cinematography is both reflective and transformative in nature. The work establishes cinema as an agent of social change.

As stated by Junmoni Gogoi in *The Impact of Films on Society* (2022) as Gogoi examines how films influence attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral patterns of viewers. The author argues that cinema functions as a powerful communication tool capable of shaping societal norms. He highlights that repeated exposure to cinematic themes can influence individual value systems. According to the study, films affect youth more significantly due to emotional identification with characters. Gogoi also discusses the role of digital platforms in amplifying cinematic influence. The research points out both positive and negative impacts of films on society. It stresses the need for responsible filmmaking. The study contributes to understanding cinema's social responsibility.

As stated by Nirmala M and Noushad C in *A Study on the Role of Tamil Films in the Teaching of Social Issues* (2023) as the authors analyze Tamil cinema as a medium of Social education. They argue that Tamil films frequently

address issues such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, and social justice. According to their study, cinema simplifies complex social issues for mass understanding. The authors highlight that strong narratives and dialogues enhance social awareness. They also observe that films influence public discussions and attitudes. The research emphasizes the pedagogical value of cinema. It recognizes Tamil cinema's deep societal reach. The study concludes that films act as informal educators.

➤ *Research Gap:*

Although existing literature extensively discusses the general influence of cinematography on society, limited research focuses on its region-specific impact within Tamil Nadu's unique sociocultural and political context. Most studies emphasize either historical perspectives or broad social effects, leaving a gap in analyzing contemporary changes driven by digital platforms and streaming services. There is insufficient empirical examination of how modern Tamil cinema balances commercial interests with social responsibility. The psychological impact of star culture and hero worship on youth remains underexplored. Existing research also lacks comparative analysis between traditional theatrical cinema and new-age digital storytelling. Furthermore, negative influences such as stereotyping and ideological polarization are often acknowledged but not critically assessed. Hence, a comprehensive and context-specific study is required to address these overlooked dimensions.

➤ *Statement of Problem:*

Cinematography has emerged as a powerful medium that significantly influences social attitudes, cultural values, and public consciousness in Tamil Nadu. While existing studies acknowledge the broad impact of cinema on society, they fail to provide a focused and systematic analysis of its region-specific influence within the contemporary Tamil socio-cultural context. The rapid commercialization of the film

industry and the rise of star-centric narratives raise concerns about their effects on youth behavior and value formation. Moreover, the growing dominance of digital platforms has altered storytelling patterns and audience reception, which remain insufficiently examined. There is a lack of critical evaluation of how Tamil cinema negotiates social responsibility alongside commercial success. The psychological and ideological impact of repeated cinematic representations is also under-researched. Additionally, negative consequences such as stereotyping, glorification of violence, and excessive hero worship are often overlooked. Therefore, this study seeks to critically examine the multifaceted influence of cinematography on society in Tamil Nadu.

➤ *Objective of the Study:*

- To study the socio-cultural impact of cinematography on society in Tamil Nadu.
- To analyze the influence of commercialization, star culture, and digital platforms on Tamil cinema.
- To evaluate the social responsibility and negative implications of cinematography.

III. RESEACRH METHODOLOGY

Non doctrinal research has been adopted for the present study. The information is obtained from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data is in the questionnaire form and it is collected from people of all categories who had the experience of the cinema in the theatre and in the homes as well. the sources for secondary data include journals and websites. This method is used for deriving table column about the response collected from people about the topic. The response collected from people is used to tell about the mindset of the people about the specific topic used in the research area.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Personal Details

S. No	Particular	Options	Number	Percentage
1.	Age group	Under 18	30	12.5
		18 To 30	75	31.3
		30 To 45	79	32.9
		45+	56	23.3
		Total	240	100
2.	Gender	Male	126	52.5
		Female	114	47.5
		Total	240	100
3.	Qualifications	School	47	19.6
		Undergraduate	107	44.6
		Postgraduate	86	35.8
		Total	240	100
4.	Occupation	Student	64	26.7

	Employee	45	18.8
	Employer	27	11.2
	Business	44	18.3
	Professional work	60	25
	Total	240	100

Source : Primary source

➤ *Interpretation*

The above table presents the demographic profile of 240 respondents who participated in the study. It is observed that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 30–45 years (32.9%), followed closely by the 18–30 age group (31.3%), indicating active participation from the working-age population. Male respondents constitute 52.5%, while females account for 47.5%, showing a fairly balanced gender representation. In terms of educational qualification, most respondents are undergraduates (44.6%), followed by postgraduates (35.8%), reflecting a well-educated sample. With regard to occupation, students (26.7%) and professionals (25%) form a significant portion of the respondents. This distribution suggests diverse social and educational backgrounds, making the data suitable for analyzing the influence of cinematography on society.

Table 2 Audience Engagement and Emotional Influence of Cinema

S. No	Statement	Options	Number	Percentage
1.	Frequency of watching movie	Yes	111	46.3
		Maybe	58	24.2
		No	71	29.6
		Total	240	100
2.	You have follow or admire any film celebrity	Yes	102	42.5
		Maybe	45	18.8
		No	71	29.6
		Total	240	100
3.	You have been emotionally affected by a movie	Yes	112	46.7
		Maybe	56	23.3
		No	72	30
		Total	240	100
4.	Films helped you become more aware of the social issues	Yes	124	51.7
		Maybe	54	22.5
		No	62	25.8
		Total	240	100

Source : Primary source

➤ *Interpretation*

The above table presents the responses of 240 participants regarding their engagement with cinema and its influence on their emotions and social awareness. It is observed that 46.3% of the respondents watch movies regularly, while 29.6% do not, and 24.2% watch movies occasionally, indicating varied viewing habits among the public. With respect to admiration of film celebrities, 42.5% of the respondents follow or admire a film celebrity, whereas 38.8% do not, reflecting a moderate presence of star influence. Nearly half of the respondents (46.7%) reported being emotionally affected by movies, highlighting the strong emotional impact of cinematography. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents (51.7%) stated that films have helped them become more aware of social issues, suggesting the educational and awareness-creating role of cinema. Overall, the findings indicate that cinema plays a significant role in influencing emotions, perceptions, and social consciousness among the audience.

Table 3 Cinema Consumption Patterns and Viewing Preferences

S. No	Statement	Options	Number	Percentage
1.	Type of movie do you prefer	Rom - com	38	15.8
		Commercial	81	33.8
		Content driven	80	33.3
		Sci - frictional	41	17.1
		Total	240	100
2.	Thinks that determinants of the success of the movie	Character	69	28.7
		Direction	82	34.2

		Content	89	37.1
		Total	240	100
3.	Platform you watch movie	Theatre	77	32.1
		TV	88	36.7
		OTT	75	31.3
		Total	240	100
4.	Reasons you watch movie	Time pass	90	37.5
		Character	46	19.2
		Content	92	38.3
		Social media influence	12	5
		Total	240	100
5.	Language you wish to watch the movie	Mother tongue	136	56.7
		Original audio	92	38.3
		Dubbing	12	5
		Total	240	100

Source: Primary source

➤ *Interpretation*

The above table illustrates the preferences and viewing patterns of 240 respondents regarding cinema. It is observed that commercial (33.8%) and content-driven films (33.3%) are almost equally preferred, indicating a balanced interest between entertainment and meaningful storytelling. Sci-fictional films (17.1%) and romantic-comedy films (15.8%) attract comparatively fewer viewers. With regard to the determinants of a movie's success, content (37.1%) is considered the most important factor, followed by direction (34.2%) and character portrayal (28.7%). The data shows that television (36.7%) remains the most common medium for watching movies, closely followed by theatres (32.1%) and OTT platforms (31.3%). Content (38.3%) and time pass (37.5%) are the major reasons for watching movies, while social media influence is minimal (5%). A majority of respondents prefer watching movies in their mother tongue (56.7%), highlighting the importance of regional language cinema.

Table 4 Perceptions of Social, Cultural, and Ethical Impact of Cinema

S. No	Statement	Options	Number	Percentage
1.	Do you believe cinema is more than just an entertainment	Strongly agree	73	30.4
		Agree	74	30.8
		Neutral	67	27.9
		Disagree	18	7.5
		Strongly disagree	8	3.3
		Total	240	100
2.	Tamil cinema reflect real socio issues	Strongly agree	66	27.5
		Agree	82	34.2
		Neutral	59	24.6
		Disagree	22	9.2
		Strongly disagree	11	4.6
		Total	240	100
3.	Do you think present-day films focus more on profit than message	Strongly agree	81	33.8
		Agree	80	33.3
		Neutral	55	22.9
		Disagree	21	8.8
		Strongly disagree	3	1.2
		Total	240	100
4.	The rise of OTT platforms changed your movie-watching habits	Strongly agree	72	30
		Agree	85	35.4
		Neutral	62	25.8
		Disagree	12	5
		Strongly disagree	9	3.8
		Total	240	100
5.	Films influence fashion, language, or lifestyle choices	Strongly agree	62	25.8
		Agree	87	36.3

		Neutral	62	25.8
		Disagree	15	6.3
		Strongly disagree	14	5.8
		Total	240	100
6.	Filmmakers should be socially responsible while making films?	Strongly agree	101	42.1
		Agree	82	34.2
		Neutral	48	20
		Disagree	8	3.3
		Strongly disagree	1	0.4
		Total	240	100
7.	A character in the movie influences your interest in the movie	Strongly agree	70	29.2
		Agree	99	41.2
		Neutral	50	20.8
		Disagree	18	7.5
		Strongly disagree	3	1.2
		Total	240	100
8.	Cinema sometimes promotes violence or unrealistic expectations	Strongly agree	86	35.8
		Agree	82	34.2
		Neutral	42	20
		Disagree	20	8.3
		Strongly disagree	4	1.7
		Total	240	100

Source : Primary source

➤ Interpretation

The above table consolidates the responses of 240 respondents on various dimensions of cinema's influence on society. It is observed that a significant proportion of respondents perceive cinema as more than mere entertainment, with 73 respondents (30.4%) strongly agreeing and 74 respondents (30.8%) agreeing, while only 26 respondents (10.8%) expressing disagreement. With regard to Tamil cinema reflecting real socio-social issues, 66 respondents (27.5%) strongly agree and 82 respondents (34.2%) agree, whereas 33 respondents (13.8%) disagree, indicating overall positive perception. A majority of respondents believe that present-day films focus more on profit than message, with 81 respondents (33.8%) strongly agreeing and 80 respondents (33.3%) agreeing. The influence of OTT platforms is clearly evident, as 72 respondents (30%) strongly agree and 85 respondents (35.4%) agree that their movie-watching habits have changed. Furthermore, 62 respondents (25.8%) strongly agree and 87 respondents (36.3%) agree that films influence fashion, language, and lifestyle choices. A strong consensus is seen on social responsibility in filmmaking, with 101 respondents (42.1%) strongly agreeing and 82 respondents (34.2%) agreeing. Characters play a vital role in audience interest, as 70 respondents (29.2%) strongly agree and 99 respondents (41.2%) agree. Additionally, a considerable number of respondents feel that cinema promotes violence or unrealistic expectations, with 86 respondents (35.8%) strongly agreeing and 82 respondents (34.2%) agreeing. Overall, the data highlights cinema's powerful influence on societal attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions, encompassing both positive and negative dimensions.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is limited to a sample size of 240 respondents, which may not comprehensively represent the diverse population of Tamil Nadu. The data collected is based on self-reported opinions and perceptions, which may be influenced by personal bias and subjective judgment. The study focuses only on audience perspectives and does not incorporate views from filmmakers, critics, or industry professionals. Regional, rural-urban, and socio-economic differences among respondents have not been analyzed separately in detail. Due to time constraints, the study does not adopt a longitudinal approach to observe changes in perception over time.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The findings of the study indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents (73 respondents – 30.4% strongly agree and 74 respondents – 30.8% agree) perceive cinema as more than mere entertainment, reflecting its strong role in shaping social attitudes and public consciousness.
- A majority of respondents (124 respondents – 51.7%) acknowledged that films have increased their awareness of social issues, demonstrating cinema's function as an informal medium of social education.

- The data also reveals a prevailing perception that contemporary cinema prioritizes commercial success over meaningful social messaging, as 81 respondents (33.8%) strongly agree and 80 respondents (33.3%) agree that present-day films focus more on profit than message, highlighting concerns about excessive commercialization.
- The influence of digital platforms and OTT services is evident, as 72 respondents (30%) strongly agree and 85 respondents (35.4%) agree that the rise of OTT platforms has changed their movie-watching habits, indicating a significant shift from traditional theatres to digital consumption.
- Additionally, the findings show that cinema has a noticeable impact on fashion, language, lifestyle choices, and youth behavior, with 62 respondents (25.8%) strongly agreeing and 87 respondents (36.3%) agreeing that films influence fashion, language, or lifestyle. At the same time, 86 respondents (35.8%) strongly agree and 82 respondents (34.2%) agree that cinema sometimes promotes violence or unrealistic expectations, underscoring cinema's dual influence on society.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study conclusively demonstrates that cinematography exerts a profound and multifaceted influence on society in Tamil Nadu. The collected data confirms that cinema functions not only as a source of entertainment but also as a powerful medium of social communication that shapes emotions, values, and public awareness. A significant number of respondents recognize the role of films in addressing social issues and influencing cultural practices such as language, fashion, and lifestyle. At the same time, the study brings attention to growing public concern regarding commercialization, profit-driven narratives, and the psychological impact of repeated cinematic representations. The emergence of OTT platforms has further intensified cinema's reach, altering viewing habits and expanding its societal influence. The strong consensus on the need for social responsibility in filmmaking reflects public expectations for ethical and balanced storytelling. In conclusion, cinematography continues to play a decisive role in molding societal perceptions and behavior, making responsible and socially conscious filmmaking essential for sustaining its positive impact on society.

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