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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56727

Title: INDIAN CINEMA - SOCIO CULTRAL ASPECTS AS PER REPRESENTATION

Recommendation:

- Accept as it is
- Accept after minor revision.....
- Accept after major revision
- Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article titled "Indian Cinema - Socio Cultural Aspects as Per Representation" provides a panoramic and insightful examination of the evolution of Indian cinema as a reflective and formative cultural text. By analyzing the shift from traditional, often stereotypical portrayals in the early post-independence era to the more nuanced and inclusive narratives of the 21st century, the author effectively positions cinema as a profound sociological map of the nation. The research successfully navigates the complex tensions between tradition and modernity, exploring how filmic representations of gender, caste, religion, and regional identity have both reinforced societal norms and, more recently, challenged them. This study is highly relevant to the field of media and cultural studies, offering a valuable perspective on the power of the moving image to shape national identity in the world's largest film industry.

A primary strength of the manuscript is its cross-decade comparative approach, particularly its focus on the transformative nature of the early 2000s compared to the contemporary streaming era. The author's observation that early 21st-century films often perpetuated patriarchal attitudes and traditional stereotypes provides a necessary baseline for understanding the "inclusive turn" in more recent productions. The discussion on the rise of regional cinema and its role in fracturing the monolithic "Bollywood" identity is particularly compelling, as it highlights the increasing visibility of diverse linguistic and cultural narratives that were previously

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marginalized. This focus on the "plurality" of Indian cinema is a significant contribution, reflecting the actual demographic and social complexity of the Indian subcontinent.

The researcher's analysis of gender and women's empowerment within the filmic narrative is another commendable aspect of the work. By tracing the journey from the "idealized sacrificial woman" to the "agentic, independent protagonist," the paper captures a vital shift in the cultural imagination. The author effectively links these changes to broader socio-economic shifts in India, such as increasing female education and workforce participation. Furthermore, the exploration of caste and social inequality—topics that have historically been sidelined in mainstream commercial cinema—shows a keen awareness of the industry's evolving political consciousness. The mention of specific challenges, such as "caste-blindness" and the reliance on upper-caste perspectives, adds a layer of critical rigor to the study, preventing it from becoming a mere celebration of progress.

However, to meet the rigorous standards of a top-tier academic journal, several minor revisions are recommended to enhance the theoretical depth and structural cohesion of the article. From a theoretical perspective, the manuscript would benefit from a more explicit engagement with concepts such as "Stuart Hall's Representation Theory" or "Appadurai's Scapes," particularly "mediascapes." Explicitly framing the transition from traditional to inclusive narratives within these established academic discourses would provide a stronger conceptual anchor for the empirical observations. Additionally, while the paper mentions the "streaming age," a deeper analysis of how OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime have specifically altered the *economics* of representation—allowing for "niche" stories that would not survive the traditional box office—would be a valuable addition.

The discussion of the "Paradox of Choice" and the role of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is a high point of the paper but feels slightly condensed. The author should elaborate on how censorship has historically acted as a gatekeeper for socio-cultural representation, particularly regarding sensitive religious or political themes. Providing one or two specific, anonymized examples of films that faced significant hurdles due to their "challenging" socio-cultural content would ground the abstract discussion in concrete reality. Furthermore, the researcher could expand on the "Market Forces" section to discuss the tension between artistic

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integrity and commercial viability, exploring whether the "inclusive turn" is driven by genuine social change or merely by a desire to tap into new, diverse consumer segments.

The editorial quality of the manuscript is generally good, but the "Introduction" currently contains a verbatim repetition of its opening paragraph. This duplication should be removed to ensure a professional and concise opening. Additionally, while the "References" section lists foundational texts by Majumdar and Rajadhyaksha, the author should ensure that all internal citations in the body of the paper follow a consistent and standardized format (such as APA or MLA). Incorporating more recent scholarship from 2023 and 2024 on the impact of "Pan-Indian" cinema (e.g., the success of South Indian films in the North) would also demonstrate that the research is at the cutting edge of contemporary film studies.

The conclusion of the article successfully synthesizes the central theme of cinema as a "mirror and shaper" of society. However, it could be made more impactful by looking toward the future. The author might reflect on how the increasing use of AI in filmmaking or the globalization of Indian content via digital platforms might further evolve these socio-cultural representations. Will the pressure to appeal to a global audience lead to a new form of "cultural homogenization," or will it allow for even more specific, localized stories to find a world stage? A brief reflection on these emerging trends would provide a forward-looking resonance to the study's findings.

In summary, this article represents a high-quality, intellectually stimulating study of the socio-cultural landscape of Indian cinema. It successfully documents the industry's transition from reinforcing traditional hierarchies to becoming a site of social critique and inclusive storytelling. The author's prose is clear and the thematic focus is well-chosen. Once the repetitive sections are pruned, the theoretical framework is slightly expanded, and the editorial formatting is standardized, the manuscript will be an excellent contribution to the journal. The study offers a nuanced understanding of how cinema functions as a profound cultural text that both reflects and directs the nation's sociological journey. I recommend the article for publication subject to these minor revisions, as it captures the dynamic and often contradictory essence of representation in the world's most prolific film industry.