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Management

VISIONING CLEAN INDIA MISSION THROUGH FILM'S: A CASE STUDY ON THE TAMIL MOVIE JOKER

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ABSTRACT

Films can make a society or break a society. It is great, as it can capture our imagination and educate us on issues we might not know much about. This paper is an attempt to use this media (films) as a catalyst to carry on the message of CIM to people at different echelons of society. A special effort has been made on the Tamil movie joker as a case study to tell a story and bring about social change.

Introduction:

Films as a medium to educate the common man on social issues have long been used around the world to awaken the thoughts of revolution and change in man. Films are great. They can capture our imagination and educate us on issues we might not know much about. But the best thing about films is that they tell a story.

Case Movie 1: A case worth mentioning here is the screening of the movie "Matt Sheppard is a friend of mine" by the US Consulate General office at Chennai this year in the month of June celebrating the Pride month. The movie is based on a real life incident of **Matthew Wayne Sheppard** (December 1, 1976 – October 12, 1998) an American student at the University of Wyoming who was beaten, tortured, and left to die near Laramie, Wyoming on the night of October 6, 1998. He died six days later at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado, on October 12, from severe head injuries.

Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson were arrested shortly after the attack and charged with murder following Sheppard's death. Significant media coverage was given to what role Sheppard's sexual orientation played in the killing.

Sheppard's murder brought national and international attention to hate crime legislation at the state and federal levels. In October 2009, the United States Congress passed the Matthew Sheppard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (commonly the "Matthew Sheppard Act" or "Sheppard/Byrd Act" for short), and on October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the legislation into law. Following her son's murder, Matthew's mother Judy Sheppard became a prominent LGBT rights activist and established the Matthew Sheppard Foundation. Sheppard's death inspired notable films, novels, plays, songs, and other works.

Awakening: This movie was screened to a selective group of visitors from various NGO's, industries and academic institutions along with the Trans genders from the city of Chennai. This was really a defining moment for the non LGBT community, which brought to fore the fact that they are also another gender in our society of male and female gender. It also brought about an awakening that they are in no way responsible for this birth and hence justifying the need for reservations in our social system to uplift this community neglected by many for long. It did bring about a resolve among a few that we should learn to co-exist with them and not just sympathize with them.

Sometimes it can be hard to really understand what discrimination, poverty or suffering are like when it does not affect us personally. The journey a film takes us on can immerse us in others live's for a few hours and help us sympathize with people we have never met. They can motivate us, inspire us to live a bit differently and even transform beliefs.

Movies Inspiring Change: Over the years, many films like these have initiated and inspired social change. Some worth to mention are Mandela: Long walk to freedom (It tells the inspirational story of one of the greatest leaders of our time, Nelson Mandela. From

his humble beginnings in Transkei, South Africa, to his 27-year incarceration for treason and eventual release to become the first president of a fully participatory and democratic South Africa); Brave heart (It helps us to uncover the leadership principles in the movie through the passion that William Wallace had for his people as a leader); Range De Basanti (The film left a social impact as many people came forward to talk about corruption and bureaucracy and their inefficiency in providing basic amenities.); Chak De (Chak De India is one movie that played an important role in reviving popularity of hockey, especially women hockey in India); Tare Zameen Par (The movie beautifully captures life of Ishaan, a dyslexic kid who struggles everyday to do simple things of life. As simple as, tying a shoe lace. It spread a message to all those families who want their kid to excel in everything – every kid is different and has different needs); Swades (The movie gives a message that a little help from the fortunate and educated ones can help the underprivileged to a great extent); 3 idiots (A need to look into our educational system beyond grades and focus on what a kid wants to do) etc....

Films can also be classified on the basis of addressing specific issues of social change like films on disability (Pithamagan, Porkalam, Taare Zameen Par); films on the educational system in India (3 idiots, Dhoni); films on women in India (Aval Appadithan/Bandit Queen/36 Vaiyathinilae) etc..The list is only long.

CIM – The need of the hour :

Our Government of India is also promoting drives like Make in India, Skill India, Standup India, and Start up India over the last few years. These initiatives are being taken in order to put India on the forefront of developed countries in the world. **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan / Clean India Mission** is one of our national campaign by the Government of India, covering 4,041 statutory cities and towns, to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country. It envisages construction of 1.04 crore individual household toilets in 4,041 cities and towns besides 5.08 lakh community and public toilets and 100% door to door collection and scientific disposal of solid waste at a cost of Rs.62,009 crore. The campaign was officially launched on 2 October 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is being regarded as India's biggest ever cleanliness drive. Further with effect from 1 April 1999, the Government of India restructured the Comprehensive Rural Sanitation Programme and launched the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) which was later (on 1 April 2012) renamed Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA).

However, on 2 October 2014, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission, which aims to eradicate open defecation by 2019, thus restructuring the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan. The government is aiming to achieve an Open-Defecation Free (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 12 crore toilets in rural India, at a projected cost of 1.96 lakh crore (US\$29 billion). Also the government has spent 94 crore only on print, radio and television ads to promote the cleanliness mission.

Visioning CIM through Films :

Case Movie 2: Joker

It is thus understood that films can tell a story and serve as a catalyst in changing the society. It is here that we need to analyze a movie like Joker a Tamil movie that was released in August 2016 by director Raju Murugan very recently. It is a political satire based on the ills of globalization. The major focus in the movie is built around the concept of CIM.

This paper does a SWOT analysis of this movie to the extent of visioning CIM goal of our Government of India.

Strength of Joker as an advocate for CIM

The protagonist of the movie (Mannar Mannan) falls in love with a girl and hopefully pines for her even after she adamantly rejects the hero because his house has no toilet but later slowly succumbs to his charm.

The movie shows how some basic utility like toilet is still a dream for the unreached segments of our society.

It highlights the documentation needed to avail for government sponsored funds for building toilets under CIM.

Weakness of Joker in advocating CIM

Once again the government is portrayed as the antagonist with its corrupt practices like frauds done at the level of execution of the scheme while distributing the funds from the CIM scheme (the common man receives only the toilet basin and everything else is swindled by the intermediaries).

The movie shows that CIM is just another jargon used by the political parties to win votes and to establish their supremacy over past government.

Opportunity for films to advocate CIM

Today as everyone has a smart phone, their poverty is undermined. But does everyone have access to a toilet!!!!. This movie has indeed got everyone of us thinking in this direction.

The movie had reinforced the need for provision of toilets under CIM among the upper and middle class audience.

The reality of the rural India is brought forth and thus justifies the government vision for CIM.

Corporate's and other wealthy individuals may open up to donations for building toilets for the rural poor.

Movies are a good media to take to the heartland of our country the public policies which call for people-public and private participation.

Threat for films as a media in advocating CIM

Public revolts to government schemes from time to time saying that they are costing the government ex-chequer become true.

The protagonist loses his life in the struggle for justice.

Like most films end with the antagonist escaping the clutches of law, this film is no exception.

Learning from the movie:

Director Raju Murugan needs to be appreciated for showcasing how the common man who stays blissfully in the darkness, is used and abused by those in the power circles. A very relevant film. It revolutionizes the thinking among the various echelons of our society - who really do not understand the grave importance of the CIM of our Government.

The theatre halls which received the movie with thunderous applause is surely a good directive that movies can revolutionize change.

This movie further goes to justify/criticize government spending on

ads to campaign Swachh Bharat Mission on radio, Tv etc.. using a number of celebrities like Amitabh Bachan, Vidya Balan, Kangana Ranaut etc.. A point from joker is that there is no need to always use highly paid celebrities only to tell a story. It can be a slice of life commercial too.

The success of CIM can be reiterated by using other media like comic books to tell a story and change the society. This also justifies our government's new plan of signing a pact with Amar Chitra Katha to publish special edition of 32 pages which will carry messages on sanitation and solid waste components of CIM.

Our PM's call for 2-3 minute films on clean India and enter competition to show their creativity is no doubt a great initiative to trigger change in the society more inclusively than before.

Conclusion:

Youth and students are one of the biggest change agents for any social transformation and hence movies and also comic books can be seen as few of the best media to engage with them in an innovative manner and spread the message of CIM. Further everyone of us must rise to the occasion by believing that every policy initiative of our government needs sharing of a common vision if we are to move ahead into a developed world rather than stalling operations by criticism and becoming a slave to our own idiosyncrasy.

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