**Renaissance of Indigenous Culture in Modern Indian Cinema.**

Indigenous culture refers to the unique customs, traditions, beliefs, languages, and practices of the native peoples or ethnic groups that have inhabited a particular region for generations. These cultures are often closely tied to specific lands, and they have developed and evolved over time through a deep connection with nature, spirituality, and their ancestors. What if such a culture got representation through a powerful audio-visual medium? It can create wonders.

Cinema, a simple word, is capable of containing all kinds of talent, feelings, drama, music, and technological aspects, creating the best possible visual form of narrative. The world of film today has developed a strong connection with people's emotional, mental, and physical selves.

Everything that is displayed on a screen is much more valuable than other forms. We may see examples of several instances that have led to periods of celebrity worship where someone begins to imitate the star's every move. We can see that fans have built shrines for their favorite celebrities in several areas of India. On the other hand, they set up camps for blood donation, free tuition, camps for eye donation, or perform some charitable acts on significant occasions like their birthday or wedding anniversary. We can infer that films are having an effect on people's lives somewhere through these deeds and other cultural norms. According to Jean-Luc Godard's adage, "*Photography is truth*." Cinema is truth twenty-four times a second, which implies that it is more than just a format for narrating stories; it is also an effective medium that, in many instances, establishes a shared forum for both encoders and decoders, reflecting the idea that seeing is an act of believing. This Chapter deals with the importance of the renaissance of Indigenous culture in Modern Indian Cinema.

***Keywords: Renaissance, Indian Cinema, Indigenous, Culture***

**Role of nativity in Freedom Struggle**

Indian cinema has undergone a sizable change over the years. It all started with silent films in 1913, followed by the first talkies in 1931 and to today's colored films. Indian cinema reflects the nation's socio-economic, political, and cultural developments, as well as all of its peculiarities.

The historical drama Raja Harishchandra, which Dadasaheb Phalke presented on May 3, 1913, brought him fame as the "*father of Indian cinema*." This motion picture made its debut on April 21, 1913.

Nationalistic themes were also present in Phalke's 1917 films *Shrikrishna Janma* and *Kaliya Mardan*. His films introduced the mythological genre to Indian cinema and integrated his concept of Swadeshi into it. We can see that at this point in Indian cinema, Dadasaheb Phalke chose neither any another western format nor a simple genre of movie. Instead, he went back to the beginnings of the Bharatiya Culture to revive Indian society, which had grown stronger as a result of the Puranas, Bhagavad Geeta, Vedanta, and other early writings. He might’ve felt that there was no better option to convince people than these stories. According to historical accounts, Phalke was a photographer and printer by profession who had a keen interest in motion pictures. After watching *The Life of Christ*, he was struck by the possibility of making a film that would showcase Indian stories and traditions on the big screen.

Phalke was particularly inspired by the film's use of special effects and its ability to tell a story without dialogue, as he believed that these elements would make cinema accessible to a wider Indian audience. Inspired by these films, the youth at that time started making patriotic films. For instance, Baburao Painter and his Maharashtra Film Company made *Kalyan Khajina* (1924), *Shahala Shah* (1925), and others. These films stirred the masses into revolt.

Even talkie-era films made a similar contribution. *Alam Ara*, Ardeshir Irani's first talkie, was released in 1931. Irani was the father of the talkie and Phalke was the father of Indian cinema. The talkies altered Indian cinema's aesthetic. Along with good looks, actors needed a strong voice and singing skills because music started to define Indian cinema. The talkie era in South Indian cinema also debuted that year. In the same year, the first talkies in Tamil (*Kalidas*), Telugu (*Bhakta Prahlad*), and Bengali (*Jumai Shasthi*) were also released. In the history of Indian cinema, the 1930s are known as the decade of social protest. Three major studios—Prabhat, Bombay Talkies, and New Theatres—took the lead in producing serious but captivating and enjoyable films for a diverse audience. During this time, several films, including Aadmi and Padosi by V. Santharam and Duniya na Mane by V. Santharam, made strong appeals against social injustice.

Later, even in the post-Independence era, one can see several film-makers, both at the regional and national level, who tried to depict the core of Indigenous culture through their films. Recently, we can see that a Kannada film titled *‘Kantara’* not only made a huge sucatsthe box the booffice but also created awareness amongst the masses regarding ‘*Bhoota Kola*’ and ‘*Daivaradhana*’ in coastal Karnataka. Malayalam’s ‘*Pulimurugan*’, Marathi’s Chinmay Mandlekar’s, series on Shivaji Maharaj and many others fall on this path.

**Stages of Indigenous Renaissance**

Storytelling and Representation: Filmmakers ought to begin telling tales about Indigenous communities, highlighting their distinct cultures, societal contributions, and hardships. By eschewing the stereotypical or exaggerated portrayals that were common in earlier films, these tales can aim to more accurately represent Indigenous people.

Cultural Preservation: Indian cinema can contribute more to the preservation of Indigenous cultures by depicting their traditions, customs, and languages on screen. The film's documentation of Indigenous cultures' diversity and richness served to increase public awareness of them. Like '*Elephant Whisperers*'.

Inclusion of Indigenous Actors and Artists: Filmmakers can begin casting Indigenous actors and artists in roles that accurately portray their communities. This inclusion may allow for more authentic performances and help provide opportunities for Indigenous talent in the film industry.

Collaborations with Indigenous Communities: Upcoming filmmakers can collaborate directly with Indigenous communities during the filmmaking process. This collaboration will help ensure cultural accuracy and respect for their traditions while creating the film's narrative.

Social Impact and Awareness: Like how some films about Indigenous cultures had a positive social impact by increasing public awareness of the problems that these communities face, including land rights, eviction, and cultural preservation. Sometimes, this raised awareness sparks conversations and responses to these issues. Such impact-oriented movies can be brought to various dimensions.

The ability of a civilization's people to relate to their environment and one another rather than the height of its buildings is what defines civilization. And one of the key factors in making it happen is film. It's important to keep in mind that the portrayal and handling of Indigenous cultures in Indian film can be a difficult and ongoing process. While there was a trend in the right direction towards more respectful and accurate portrayals, there were still issues like cultural appropriation and a lack of opportunities for Indigenous artists and filmmakers. But this moment is ideal. The original renaissance of indigenous culture can be aided by the right efforts made at the right time by the right people.

**References** –

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