

# JOURNEY OF CINEMA ENTERTAINMENT: FROM AUDIENCE TO USERS!

MR. MILIND MADHAV DAMLE

Assistant Professor, Film and Television Institute of India.  
Research Scholars at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth.

## ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the changes that may occur in 'Audience' for turning them from 'Viewer' to 'User' due to the incoming digital entertainment formats. The new age Virtual Reality films and Interactive films are going to be the future of entertainment for all age groups. The involvement pattern of audience into the content will change and the audience will also have to deal with the ethical issues in the content. This process will change from 'watching a film' to 'participating in the film' and hence the viewer will turn into a user. The audience will start performing the roll of a character, though the face and person will remain the same on screen. The decisions of the characters will be as per the wish of the majority of the audience in the theatre or individuals in his or her own private space. However this space could be a small part of a large space with multiple users. The digital devices for this experience might be separate from each other. The future of entertainment will have more complexities in the behavior of audience. The small behavior change that may occur by watching a TV show or a film which remains for a short period of time may change as the decisions taken during viewing the content may impact the user for a long period of time or even permanently.

## INTRODUCTION

The film work began with experiment. The experimentalists realised the strength of the medium and slowly nurtured themselves into entertainment. However film later adopted various forms of storytelling and explored various reasons for existence. Primarily film is a journey which begins from '0' (ZERO) Time and Space in a theatre. It could be a ray of light in a single frame or a single note of any musical instrument played as a music piece. The journey slowly begins from ZERO and then it gives the audience a world of its own into that particular time and space. Each and every person in the audience becomes a part of that world though it is sitting idle in a dark room. Everybody knows that they are in a theatre even then they go on the journey of experience called CINEMA. (People have started watching film content now in a train compartment while travelling. It happens with a lots of sounds/ noise around and passing light of other trains or outdoor light seeping in and lighting inside the train compartment. This is the experience on a mobile phone or a tablet which is not expected in a dark room called theatre. The word MOBILE justifies the same. Watching film content is also a single person viewing as the person next to him or her is watching something else. The expressions on each ones faces becomes the entertainment for the ones who are not watching anything on their mobile phones. All these conditions do matter and affect viewing. It also takes away the plurality in the word AUDIENCE. The participatory opportunities that is given in a film theatre where on a joke the entire theatre laughs or cries on a sad moment. One has also seen the difference between watching a film content in a theatre and in a house on television set. One watches in theatre gives a different experience sharing while other just gives opposite reaction. The atmosphere matters as well as the AUDIENCE matters. In the history of CINEMA this word AUDIENCE has played a huge role. The nature of AUDIENCE has changed over the past century and one may see so many surrounding elements affecting the AUDIENCE.

The first encounter of CINEMA with its viewer was naive. The AUDIENCE was not ready to watch a film content. They were their as a part of an experiment. It was organised to show them the first ever single shot Cinemas. A few of the first films by Lumière's were shown to the Audiences for their reactions. In the same package a single shot of Train arriving a station was also screened and the viewers ran out of theatre thinking the train would run over them. This was the first impact film or CINEMA had on audience. The clueless audience was unaware of what was happening. When the CINEMA started taking baby steps the makers had very less options with them due to lack of technological advancement. The infrastructure was very basic. Film makers didn't have much choice so did the audience. They also didn't have choice to decide how to see anything. It was a standard screen on which film used to get projected and with a standard distance between the curtain and the audience this drama used to take place. This is

the case in theatres even today. The experiments were taking place such as screening of PANAVISION in DOME Theatre, 3D, 4D etc. Even the advancement was happening with the formats but the distance remained the same. The distance got reduced with the incoming technology inside the home with Television in the beginning on the mid of the earlier century and the mobile phones got the audio visual in the pocket of the customer. Now the viewer had become the customer.

Even when the technology was changing its course and bringing content in the homes of the viewers they didn't have choice to choose the content. In India the satellite brought enormous options for the viewers to choose from the content but it was also from a limited, shortened distance. The television also didn't give them opportunity to decide in between the show. What would happen next was never the option.

## HYPOTHESIS

Analytical study of Journey of CINEMA Entertainment: from Audience to users.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Viewer: The mere spectator.

In the CINEMA hall it is said that the viewer sees himself or herself in the actors that are performing the characters. Their sorrows and joy are reflected in the audiences. Similarly the stories brought on silver screen considered to be the reflection of the society. The HIT and FLOP words came from the business the audiences would give to a particular film. A repeat or a mouth publicity were key words in the success of the film. The audience in India would throw money on the screen to enjoy and celebrate the success of the hero or failure of the villain. Audience got engrossed with the dialogue spoken on screen and say along with the hero. "*Mere Pass Ma hai*" is one such example from the film *Deewar*.

Or in films like "*Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman*" the audience wants the hero to turn back and look at the heroine. They anticipate but unsure till he actually turns back. The same thing happens with "*Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*" where the hero turns back. The audience expects this to happen but remain uncertain if it would happen or not. There is no choice with them to choose what would happen next.

### Audience: the new USER

Considering a few examples given above of the audiences using the dialogues in the cinema hall. It was also very important to see what audiences take home. The fashion and dream to become one on screen was always the priority but with films having great dialogues the audiences started to catch up one. A few other examples of Audience becoming users:

*Kitne admi the?* (Sholay Ramesh Sippy ) Or *Rishte me to hum tumhare baap lagte hai* (Shahensha by Tinu Anand) are used by people over the years to suggest a characters or mentality. The roles played by both Gabbar Singh and Shahensha is respective films like Sholey and Shahensha are repeated again and again to underline superiority of the person speaking the line.

Other few examples from famous films are like "*Chinay Seth, Jinke ghar shishe ke ho wo dusro pe paththar nahi feka karte*" (Waqt, Yash Chopra) or "*YE police station hai tumhare baap ka ghar nahi, jab tak baithne ko kaha na jay chupchap kade raho*" ( Zanjeer, Prakash Mehra).

### The audience becomes user here.

In earlier days in played like Dandar in Adivasis of Yavatmal district the audience used to be a part of the narrative. They also play characters in the play by direct involvement in the performances. They themselves were the role player. In the midst of a play is any of the audience feels the way the play should go ahead he or she could walk up the performance and allow the actor to sit and become the actor himself or herself. Thus the audience becomes the party in the action.

In 1967 the first interactive movie came in with the name KINOAUTOMAT, here the anchor would come after every reel to ask which way the audience would want to go and then the reel would get changed accordingly.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Audience's choice

Even though there have been a few examples wherein the audience has a choice to choose which channel or program they do not have control over what would happen next. There are experiments taking shape to get the audience's participation in this process of decision making on the front of what happens next?

Now the new age cinema like LATE SHIFT Directed by Tobias Webber (an ex student of Zurich Film School)



has come where audience enters the theatre with the application downloaded on their mobile phone. The mobile phones in the theatres are connected to a local server and while the film is running a question appears on screen which has to be answered in 5 seconds or 3 seconds and then the story will branch out to that side seamlessly. The film has a total of 180 decision points, total duration of the film edited with options is of 4 hours length. The best part is that the film has 7 different endings. Depending on the audience choice, which is 51% of the total strength of the audience for a particular show, the film will have its ending. The technology plays a key role here because the branching out to the next section is the key. The seamlessness is the key feature of this new form of film making.

The audience becomes part of the film and starts playing a character automatically. Soon the audience loses the sense of time and becomes a part of the narrative. Earlier cinema didn't allow the audience to decide what to see next but now the audience could decide what to be seen. It used to be a third party. Everything happening on screen was a third party viewing. They were not involved in the decisions made by the characters and so they were not responsible for the screen progressions.

### Ethical issue

The ethical issues were never a part of film viewing earlier days.

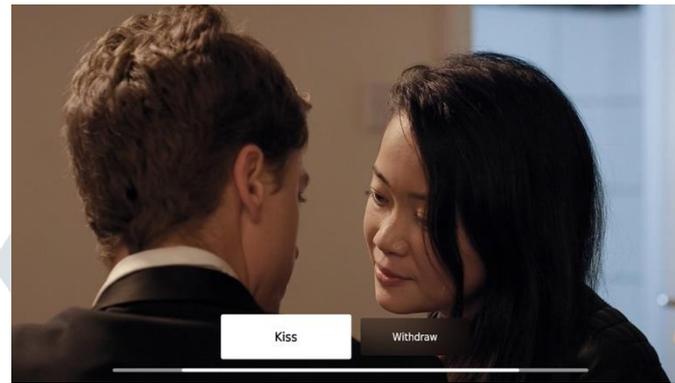
The audience may like or may not like a certain scene or act in a film but they couldn't help it. The film makers exploited this to go towards vulgarity or violence and overplayed it a lot of times. In China Gate directed by Rajkumar Santoshi the villain has a regular line for his character "Mere man ko Bhaya mai Kutta ktake Khaya". In Satya the gang war is played while the kids are playing in the ground.

But the audience never had to decide anything for the character. They were never involved in the ethical questions raised by the characters...

In the film Late Shift the leading girl requests keys of a car to the gatekeeper. She offers him a bribe and the question appears on screen from the boy's perspective whether he should ACCEPT or DECLINE. The boy is in dilemma, the bar is raised further by the girl from \$100 to \$200 and again the question appears on screen ACCEPT or DECLINE.



In another example the girl kisses the boy due to unavoidable situation and the question appears whether he should kiss back or not?



The audience has 5 seconds to decide what to answer. Their ethics in these situations are played. Instead of the boy the audience becomes corrupt by accepting the bribe.

By kissing back the boy starts taking disadvantage of the girl, so on and so forth.

Here in late shift the audience is a player but for somebody else.

In Mahabharata such situations keep coming, A situation where Duryodhana and Arjuna are waiting for Lord Krishna to wake up so that they can ask him for his participation in the War of Mahabharata.

It's their ethics by which the scene is played. In spite Duryodhana is offered to choose first he chooses the Army of Krishna and thus his ethics are underlined once again before the war begins.

Ref: <http://www.bhagavatam-katha.com/mahabharata-story-arjuna-and-duryodhana-seeking-help-from-krishna/>

It was in 1967 that the first ever interactive film was made, titled as KINOAUTOMAT. Conceived by Raduz Cincera for the Czechoslovak Pavilion in 1967, Quebec, Canada. It was a film where at 9 different points the film stops for the moderator to appear on screen and ask the question to the audience. Following the audience's vote the next reel used to get played. The good part of the film was whatever choices the audience is making the film will end in burning the building.



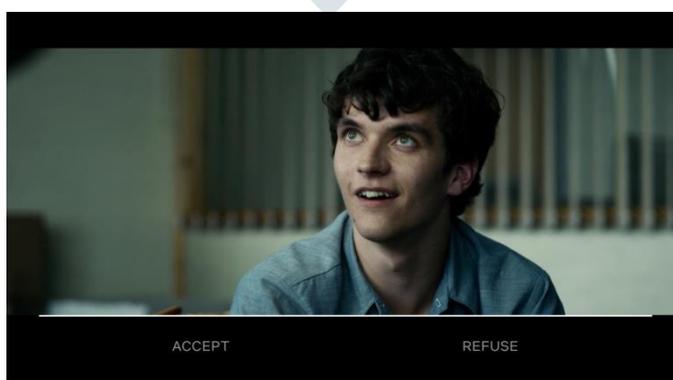
The idea was hilarious and glued the audiences. It was an instant hit but due to Government bans it didn't do well. The Hollywood tried to get its technical rights but later that fuzzed out. The lack of technological advancement was the key that post its release the interactive cinema didn't pick up quick. The film was based on film stock and theatres used to run films on prints hence the time was required to change the reel post audiences decision as to what they would like to see. A question for example was asked Whether Mr. Novak should let in a woman, locked out of her apartment and clad only in a towel, just before his wife arrives home.?

This played on the audiences mind and clearly asked their ethical standards. It was a game of ethics.

Even in future from here on the audiences ethics will come in play to decide what genres would be coming to the audiences.

#### Web starts playing the interactive:

The internet has been interactive since its inception. The entertainment available on the net is also wide spread and now the new player in the league NETFLIX has come up with its interactive series created by Charlie Brooker. The BLACK MIRROR is an instant hits in the youth and is based upon a video game based on a book. Such a new content will keep coming as the net entertainment will grow.grow.



#### New ways coming up: Short films for ADVT:

Now a days a new trend has began where the products are marketed through really short films. These are fictional advertisements created by the emotions and marketed as short films. Eventually they are advts in the last one minute but they appear like they are short films.

The recent known examples are google films, paperfry film etc.



The VR games and kids.

This interactivity may be a good way to try as a new element of entertainment but it may cause a big damage to the kids who may become users of this interactivity.

The VR films give us simpler options to choose but as adults we may use our minds and brains to choose right or wrong. If kids are provided with VR games then they play the game as a character and be a part of the brutality or violence or abuse which is a part of that content. A few recent examples of the video games or apps causing fatal injuries have crossed alarming limits.



## CONCLUSION

The audience involved in the ethical issues could cause a big damage and may affect the business of the film making. The producers mostly have films to lure the audiences only. It's the last stage which the cinema sees, a theatre. A house full is the ultimate goal each film maker has in his mind.

The films should be left as cinema only. The new age interactive cinema may lose the innocence of the audience just being a spectator and get involved as a dream come true. The technology should be used for the betterment of the content but it should not overpower the content. Content will always be the ruler. The riders of the new technologies such as server connectivity may lose the "walking in dreamland" feature of cinema.

On the other hand consumption of films should be in the sole entity of entertainment and education. It can't be seen as a para income scheme. The multiplexes are earning money due to the sale of samosas, pop corn and cold drinks. The maximum earning they are having is through the two-wheeler and four-wheeler parking. The film is not the content that the audience is turning themselves into users for in such occasions. The audience is becoming users for the surroundings offered for the films. In Jattras and Yattras audience sees the film sitting on the ground and inside a tent. The content becomes the king there in its true sense. In multiplexes the sliding sofa is the audience is paying for as a user.

## Implication of research

- 1:-VR AR is the future
- 2:-To create the appropriate approach to make interactive cinema
- 3:-It is going to impact traditional story telling
- 4:-It may change the display platform as well

REFERENCES

1. Nitzan S., Ben Sahul (2008). Hyper narrative Interactive Cinema, Netherland : Rodopi
2. JASON JERALD (2016). THE VR BOOK: HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN FOR VIRTUAL REALITY. NEW YORK: ASSOCIATION FOR COMPUTING MACHINERY AND MORGAN & CLAYPOOL PUBLISHERS
3. [https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/virtual\\_reality.htm](https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/virtual_reality.htm)
4. <http://sensesofcinema.com/2019/feature-articles/total-cinema-or-what-is-vr/>
5. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/startups/the-world-of-virtual-reality-in-cinema/articleshow/55362099.cms?from=mdr>

