

GIST OF YOJANA

Indian Cinema

November, 2025



DELHI CENTRE:
Vivekananda House
6-B, Pusa Road, Metro Pillar No. 111,
Near Karol Bagh Metro
New Delhi-110060
Phone: 8081300200

DELHI CENTRE:
Tagore House
27-B, Pusa Road, Metro Pillar No. 118,
Near Karol Bagh Metro
New Delhi-110060
Phone: 8081300200

DELHI CENTRE:
Mukherjee Nagar
637, Banda Bahadur Marg,
Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009
Phone: 9311667076

PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:
31/31 Sardar Patel Marg,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj
Uttar Pradesh-211001
Phone: 9958857757

JAIPUR CENTRE:
Plot No. 6 & 7, 3rd Floor,
Sree Gopal Nagar,
Gopalpura Bypass, Jaipur-302015
Phone: 9358200511

CHAPTER 1: EVOLUTION OF INDIAN CINEMA

Cinema—often called the **seventh art**—combines elements of painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, theatre, and music to create a powerful medium for expression.

- Emerging at the end of the 19th century, cinema grew into an accessible and inexpensive mass medium. India today produces the **highest number of films in the world**, across languages and regions.

EARLY BEGINNINGS (1896 – 1940S)

Birth of Indian Cinema

- 1896:** Lumière Brothers' films were first screened in *Mumbai*.
- Late 1910s:** India witnessed its first motion picture.
- Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (Dadasaheb Phalke)** introduced the film *Raja Harishchandra*, the **first silent film**.
→ He is known as the **Father of Indian Cinema**.
- Alam Ara** (1931), directed by *Ardeshir Irani*, became India's **first sound film**.
- 1918:** *Indian Cinematography Law* passed for licensing cinema halls and censoring films. → Boards of censors were formed in provinces from 1920.
- 1937:** *Kisan Kanya* by Moti B. Gidwani became India's **first colour film**.

Important Early Milestones

- First Cinemascope film: **Kagaz Ke Phool** (1959) – Guru Dutt
- First 70 mm film: **Around the World** (1967) – Raj Kapoor
- First Sanskrit film: **Adi Shankara** – G. V. Iyer
- First Indian 3-D film: **My Dear Kuttichathan** (Malayalam)

The "Golden Era" & Parallel Cinema (1940s–1960s)

The post-Independence era marked the **Golden Age** of Indian cinema.

PARALLEL CINEMA / NEW INDIAN CINEMA

- Originated in **West Bengal** in the 1950s.
- Inspired by **Italian Neo-Realism**; precursor to the Indian New Wave.
- Key figures: **Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen**.
- Characteristics:
 - Serious themes, realism, naturalism
 - Sociopolitical issues
 - Rejection of formulaic song-dance
- Notable works: *Savkari Pash*, *Duniya Na Mane*.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

- Satyajit Ray becomes one of the most internationally acclaimed filmmakers.
- Indians who won Oscar:** Bhanu Athaiya, Satyajit Ray, Resul Pookutty, A.R. Rahman, Gulzar.

SOCIAL REALISM TO CULTURAL TRANSITION (1950S–1990S)

1950s–60s: Nationalism & Realism

- Haqeeqat** depicted experiences of soldiers during the Sino-Indian War.
- Do Bigha Zamin** highlighted rural distress.



- Ray's **Pather Panchali** showed rural Bengal's hardships.
- **Dahej, Devi** portrayed women's limited agency.

1970s: Angry Young Man & Emergency Era

- Themes of social injustice, unemployment, corruption.
- Mrinal Sen's **Calcutta 71** reflected Naxal-era turmoil.
- Parallel cinema expanded through films like **Manthan, Sparsh**.

1990s: Globalization & Cultural Shifts

- Themes of materialism, identity, and gender roles.
- **Mirch Masala** challenged gender norms.
- **Astitva** examined patriarchy, extramarital relations.
- Literary adaptations:
 - *The Play of God* (Malayalam)
 - *Antareen* (Mrinal Sen)

CONTEMPORARY CINEMA & REGIONAL RENAISSANCE (2000S–2025)

Early 2000s: Realism & Social Critique

- Films like **Chandni Bar, Black Friday** explored underworld violence, exploitation.
- **The Namesake** addressed migration and identity.
- Women-centric films: **Pink, Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey**.
- LGBTQ+ representation: **Kaathal, Samo – The Equals**.

Post-2020: OTT Revolution

Note:

- India hosts the **world's largest film industry** by volume, producing **over 2,000 films each year** across **20+ languages**, making it one of the most **diverse and globalized** cinematic ecosystems.
- The **Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil** industries constitute its three biggest production centers.

OTT gave space to regional films traditionally overlooked in theatres.

- Breakout regional films:
 - **The Great Indian Kitchen** (Malayalam)
 - **Court, Sairat** (Marathi)
- Technical advancement comparable to Hollywood (e.g., **Baahubali**).

CONTRIBUTION OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA

The Indian diaspora has helped promote Indian cinema globally, boosting film visibility and cultural reach.

CHAPTER 2: CINEMA AND INDIAN SOCIETY

Cinema in India acts as a major **socio-cultural institution**, shaping **public attitudes**, influencing **social norms**, and reflecting **diversity** across regions and classes.

- Its vast reach allows it to promote **awareness, social reform, and national integration**, but it can also reinforce **stereotypes, commercialization of culture, and social biases**.

A. POSITIVE IMPACTS

1. Global Recognition of Indian Culture

- International successes such as **RRR** and **The Elephant Whisperers** have enhanced India's global cultural footprint and fostered national pride.

2. Reflection of India's Cultural Diversity

- Indian cinema showcases regional traditions, aesthetics, and customs:
 - Dedh Ishqiya** → Nawabi culture of Lucknow
 - Piku** → Bengali domestic and cultural ethos
 - Khoobsurat** → Rajasthani palaces and heritage

3. Changing Family Values

- 1960s:** Films like *Khandaan* depicted families shaped by societal expectations and patriarchal norms.
- Later cinema explored:
 - Illegitimacy:** *Masoom*, *Kal Ho Na Ho*
 - Extramarital relationships & divorce:** *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna*
 - Emotional bonds in nuclear families:** *Goodbye*, which highlighted intergenerational gaps and evolving emotional expression.

4. Women Empowerment and Education

- Durga Sohay (Bengali):** The protagonist emerges as a symbol of resilience and strength, reflecting the spirit of Goddess Durga.
- Nil Battey Sannata:** Demonstrates education as a transformative tool, with a mother returning to school to motivate her daughter.

5. Cinema as a Tool for Social Change

(a) Raising Awareness on Health and Social Issues

- Paa*: Introduced audiences to **progeria**.
- Taare Zameen Par*: Sensitised society towards **dyslexia**.

(a) Advancing LGBTQ+ Rights

- Fire* and *Aligarh* sparked critical conversations on gender identity, dignity, and human rights.

(c) Influencing Nationalistic and Civic Views

- Tamil cinema such as *Muthu* and Bollywood films like *Swadesh* reinforced civic responsibility, nationalism, and social consciousness.

B. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CINEMA ON SOCIETY

A. Gender Stereotypes and Toxic Masculinity

- Objectification of women** through item songs remains prevalent.
- Films like **Kabir Singh** and **Animal** glorify aggression and unhealthy male behaviour.
- Domestic violence** is trivialised in movies such as *Hum Tumhare Hain Sanam* and *Pushpa*.

B. Promotion of Unrealistic Body Standards

- Cinema often reinforces:



- **Fair-skin bias** in casting.
- **Body shaming**, where both thin and overweight individuals are mocked.

C. Questioning Traditional Family Institutions

- Films like **OK Jaanu** normalise live-in relationships and modern liberal values, challenging conservative family norms.

D. Cultural Dilution and Shifts in Preferences

- Growing prominence of:
 - **Western dance forms** (hip-hop, jazz)
 - **Western-inspired music** (rap)
- This sometimes overshadows classical Indian traditions such as **Kathak** and **Bharatnatyam**.

E. Poor Representation of Vulnerable Communities

- **LGBTQ+ identities** mocked in *Dostana*.
- **Disabilities** ridiculed in films like *Golmaal* (speech impairment, blindness, etc.).

F. Glorification of Substance Abuse

- Films such as **Dev D** portray smoking, drinking, and drug use as fashionable or as coping mechanisms, influencing youth behaviour.

G. Political Propaganda and Social Division

- Certain films weaponise emotions and historical grievances to promote partisan ideologies, often deepening social and political divides.

Indian cinema remains a powerful tool of **mass communication**, capable of driving **social change**, celebrating **cultural plurality**, and shaping **public consciousness**. Yet issues of **stereotyping**, **sensationalism**, and **politicization** call for greater **ethical responsibility**. Balancing **creative freedom** with **social accountability** is vital to ensure cinema strengthens India's **social fabric** rather than distorts it.

CHAPTER 3: INSTITUTIONS, REGULATIONS, AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

India's cinema operates under a structured **institutional and regulatory framework** involving bodies like **CBFC**, **NFDC**, **NFAI**, **DFF**, and key laws such as the **Cinematograph Act**, **BNS 2023**, and **Cable TV Act**.

- These collectively guide **film certification**, **preservation**, **content standards**, and **industry development**, ensuring cinema aligns with **public order**, **morality**, and **cultural sensitivity**.

MAJOR FILM AWARDS IN INDIA

- **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** – India's highest honor in cinema, conferred for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian film industry.
- **National Film Awards** – Government of India confers the **Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus)** for the Best Feature Film annually.
- Other major recognitions include **IIFA Awards**, **Screen Awards**, and various **State Film Awards**.

KEY INSTITUTIONS IN INDIAN CINEMA

- **Films Division of India (1948)**- The *Films Division of India*, headquartered in **Mumbai**, produces **documentaries**, **short films**, and **animation**, with a core focus on **national programmes**, **heritage documentation**, and **public awareness**.
- **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)**- The **CBFC**, a **statutory body** under the *Cinematograph Act, 1952*, headquartered in **Mumbai** with **nine regional offices** (Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru,

Cuttack, Guwahati, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Thiruvananthapuram), is responsible for **film certification** prior to **public exhibition**.

- **National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), 1975-** The NFDC acts as the **nodal agency** for promoting the **integrated development** of Indian cinema, supporting **film production, marketing, and international co-productions/collaborations**.
- **National Film Archive of India (1964)-** The *National Film Archive of India* works for **preservation of national and world cinema, documentation** of film prints and archival material, and **promotion of film culture at national and international platforms**.
- **Directorate of Film Festivals (1973)-** The *Directorate of Film Festivals* (DFF) **organises the International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**, conducts the **National Film Awards** and the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award**, manages the **Indian Panorama**, facilitates **cultural exchange**, coordinates **international film showcases**, and maintains **festival documentation**.
- **Children's Film Society of India (1955)-** The *Children's Film Society of India* (CFSI), headquartered in **Mumbai**, produces and distributes **children's films** in multiple Indian languages, aiming to provide **value-based and culturally rooted** entertainment for children.

REGULATION OF CINEMA CONTENT

- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023-** The BNS, 2023 includes **penal provisions** against **obscenity, public indecency**, and content harmful to **public order, morality, and societal harmony**.
- **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986-** This Act prohibits **indecent, derogatory, or objectifying portrayal of women** across media—including **print, cinema, digital platforms, and advertising**.
- **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995-** The Act enforces adherence to the **Programme Code** and **Advertisement Code**, ensuring **decency, morality, accuracy, and fairness** in broadcast content on cable networks.
- **Cinematograph Act, 1952-** The **Cinematograph Act** governs **film certification** through the CBFC, ensuring compliance with standards related to **public order, morality, national security, sovereignty, and artistic integrity** before release.
- **Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)-** The ASCI is a **self-regulatory body** that monitors **advertising content** to curb **misleading, harmful, insensitive, or culturally inappropriate** advertisements across media.

India's film governance framework balances **creative freedom** with **social responsibility** through strong **institutions and regulations**. To stay relevant in the digital era, reforms must enhance **clarity, accountability, and adaptability**, ensuring a vibrant and globally competitive film industry.

CHAPTER 4: INDIAN CINEMA & IT'S ROLE IN SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY

Indian cinema, encompassing Bollywood and regional industries, has become a **major global cultural ambassador**. Reflecting India's values and diversity, it today serves as a key instrument of **India's soft power**.

INDIAN CINEMA AS A PILLAR OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER

- **Projection of Culture and Values-** Drawing from Joseph Nye's concept of soft power as influence through attraction, Indian cinema has acted as a cultural ambassador.
 - Through themes of **family bonds, social harmony, non-violence, spirituality, and resilience**, Indian films introduce global audiences to Indian civilisational values.
 - Films like *Lagaan*, *Swadesh*, and *RRR* highlight cultural pride and national ethos, reinforcing India's global image.

- **Global Reach and Popularity-** Indian cinema enjoys significant viewership across **South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Russia, and East Asia**.
 - Bollywood stars have become global icons, while regional cinema—Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam—has expanded India’s cultural footprint.
 - The success of *Dangal* in China, *Baahubali* across Asia, and *The Elephant Whisperers* on global platforms demonstrates cinema’s role in shaping positive perceptions.
- **Unique Storytelling and Cultural Expression-** Indian cinema blends **music, dance, emotional depth, and colorful aesthetics**, creating a distinct narrative style.
 - This uniqueness differentiates India in a globalised media space, reinforcing cultural identity while appealing to diverse audiences.
 - Genres spanning romance, social drama, mythology, and contemporary issues make Indian cinema both inclusive and globally relatable.
- **Cultural Diplomacy and People-to-People Ties-** Cinema aids diplomacy by fostering **cross-cultural understanding**.
 - Iconic songs, dialogues, and characters have permeated global pop culture, strengthening India’s soft influence.
 - **Film festivals, international co-productions, and global award** recognitions further enhance India’s diplomatic outreach.

RELEVANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA’S CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- **Showcasing India’s Pluralism-** Indian cinema reflects India’s **linguistic, regional, and cultural diversity**—from Punjabi folk narratives to Tamil historical epics, Bengali art films, and Marathi social dramas.
 - This diversity strengthens India’s soft power by showcasing **unity in diversity**, one of India’s strongest cultural assets.
- **Platform for Marginalized Voices-** Contemporary films increasingly highlight issues of gender justice, caste inequality, LGBTQ+ rights, disability, and social reform. This **strengthens India’s identity** as an inclusive, progressive democracy committed to human dignity.

RELEVANCE TO INDIA’S GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS

- **Enhancing India’s Global Brand-** As India aspires to become a leading global power, cinema supports this ambition by projecting an image of a **modern, democratic, culturally confident nation**. It aids nation branding in tourism, investment, and international cooperation.
- **Economic Contribution and Global Visibility-** The Indian film industry—one of the largest globally—contributes substantially to GDP, employment, and creative exports. International collaborations and streaming platforms amplify India’s global presence.
- **Soft Power in the Asian Century-** As India deepens engagements in the **Indo-Pacific**, Africa, and Europe, cinema serves as a strategic tool to **build goodwill**, counter stereotypes, and expand India’s influence through non-coercive means.

Indian cinema effectively projects India’s cultural diversity and values, making it a key instrument of **soft power**. As India pursues **greater global influence**, cinema will continue to strengthen its international image and diplomatic outreach.

CHAPTER 5: CINEMATOGRAPH (CERTIFICATION) RULES, 2024

The **Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024** modernise India’s film certification system, aligning it with **technological advancements, digital workflows, and global standards**. These rules complement the **Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023**, aiming to create a **transparent, efficient, and inclusive** regulatory ecosystem.

- It aims to establish a **technology-driven, audience-sensitive, and globally competitive** certification framework that enhances **ease of doing business**, ensures **content suitability**, and promotes **inclusive access**.

KEY PROVISIONS

- Complete Digital & Time-Bound Certification**- The rules fully shift certification to a **digitised platform**, reducing **processing delays**, improving **transparency**, and accelerating decision-making—boosting the film industry's **regulatory efficiency**.
- Mandatory Accessibility Features**- Films must incorporate **accessibility features** (subtitles, audio descriptions, etc.), promoting **inclusivity** and aligning with **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD)** principles.
- Age-Based Sub-Categorization**- The traditional **UA** category is refined into **UA 7+**, **UA 13+**, and **UA 16+**, supporting **age-appropriate viewing** and enhancing **parental guidance mechanisms**.
- Gender Representation in CBFC**- Mandates **one-third women** in the **CBFC Board** and encourages **50% women** in Advisory Panels, strengthening **gender-sensitive content evaluation**.
- Priority Screening Facility**- Introduces **priority screening** for filmmakers with urgent release commitments, fostering **industry responsiveness** and improving **ease of compliance**.
- Perpetual Certificate Validity**- Removes the earlier 10-year limit, granting **perpetual validity** to film certificates—beneficial for **long-term distribution, archiving, and OTT/TV releases**.
- Recertification for TV Broadcast**- Films edited for television require **fresh certification**, ensuring only **U-category** or appropriately modified versions reach **family-oriented audiences**.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Contemporary & Tech-Aligned Governance**- Reflects shifts in **film technology, OTT consumption, and audience diversity**, making the system **adaptive and modern**.
- Strengthened Regulatory Architecture**- Creates synergy with the **2023 Cinematograph amendments**, reinforcing **anti-piracy measures, accountability, and institutional clarity**.
- Better Ease of Doing Business**- Digital workflows, faster timelines, and priority screenings enhance the **creative sector's productivity** and reduce compliance burdens.
- Inclusive & Ethical Certification**- Accessibility mandates and increased women's representation contribute to a more **equitable, sensitive, and socially responsible** certification regime.

The **Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024** mark a move toward a **modern, inclusive, and industry-friendly** regulatory regime. By integrating digital systems, refining age classifications, ensuring accessibility, and promoting gender representation, the rules strengthen **India's cultural governance** and support the country's expanding **creative economy** while safeguarding **public interest**.

UPSC MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q.1 "Indian cinema mirrors societal realities while simultaneously shaping public attitudes." Discuss the positive and negative impacts of Indian cinema on Indian society, with suitable examples.
- Q.2 Critically analyse the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024. How do the new provisions address technological advancements and evolving audience demographics?

