

A STUDY ON BANS AND CENSORSHIP ISSUES IN INDIAN CINEMA

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Abstract

If we make a list of things that are banned in India we would come across usual stuff like porn, homosexuality, and the recent ban on beef meat but what would be an unbelievably strange addition to the list is the ban on over hundreds of films. Yes, India has become quite famous recently for becoming too strict on cinematic liberties. Be it the North or the South, India has had its fair share of films like recent controversial hot topic 'Padmavati'. Also, apart from facing bans certain films have to deal with (*mostly*) 'unjust' censorship policy taken up by Central Board of Film Certification (*referred to as CBFC*). With various questions being raised on the basis of these bans and censors the real challenge lies when it is matched up with the facets of law. Freedom of speech & expression is an important piece of legislation in the Indian constitution which serves as the ultimatum in this regard. A few recent happenings have forced the people to question its latent existence and the "freedom" it practically guarantees. Down the line this aspect of law needs immediate attention for the necessary progress of our country in terms of unrestricted quality filmmaking. It is all the more important when Global Cinema markets like America, China and France have opened up for Indian Cinema mindful of its worthy content. This paper is an attempt to bring out key information regarding the issues in censorship and their history along with the essential legal aspects involved in it.

Keywords: censorship, explicit content, censor certificate, ban, unfair treatment

Limitations

This research is based on a study that is restricted to materials collected within a short span of time and hence further deeper research could not be made possible. This paper is limited due to time constraints.

Research Methodology

The Paper has adopted Doctrinal Research Methodology primarily based on Articles, Bare Acts, Books etc. and the secondary sources include websites and commentaries on landmark judgments.

Introduction

Cinema is a medium that has enjoyed immense popularity and has become an integral part of common man s' leisure since its advent in 1913. A lot has changed from times when people waited hours together to see movie clips in Doordarshan (*the only TV channel until 1991*) to *Dangal* s' proud Olympics National Anthem moment being played in nearly 9,000 screens across China. According to a statistics India possess one of the largest film industries in the world in terms of number of films with about 1,500 to 2,000 films produced every year in more than 20 different languages. With such vast diversity of products comes along a fair share of altercations too. Films are allowed to freely discuss sensitive opinions and ideas which when normally expressed through other forms will face serious opposition. Such is the special privilege films occupy in bringing to life the unseen, the unheard and the unaware in the 3 hours people spend watching them. Indian Filmmakers have never shied away from exploring the so called "sensitive" subjects and are encouraged to take up issue based cinema that has come out well both critically and commercially. But these kind of films are often left with only two possibilities-- getting rave appreciation from the major chunk of audiences for its vivid content or result in the movie struggling to get censor clearance or even worse - getting banned. But in the midst of these flimsy arguments, no one has referred to the blueprint of the nation: the Constitution of India as Hon'ble Justice Raghvendra S. Chauhan (*a sitting judge of the Karnataka High Court*) rightly points out. To aptly put it in his words - It is the Constitution which guarantees the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression, and defines the contours of the said freedom & perhaps we should consider the interrelationship between the Constitution and cinema.³

³ R.S. Chauhan, "Clamping down on creativity" *The Hindu* <<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/clamping-down-on-creativity/article17739798.ece>> accessed 31 January 2018

Objectives

The primary objective of this paper is to:

- Examine the role and powers of CBFC & Government(s) in censoring and banning films.

The secondary objectives are to:

- Establish the bridge between law and cinema.
- List out the reasons that caused bans in the past and its standing.
- Suggest few practical solutions to tackle the problem of bans and unfair censorship.

Discussion:

Good Old Days

Much before screen cinema could assert its authority in India a traditional theatre system existed from 1920s and is said to have played a major role in kindling emotions of freedom struggle through its plays in the pre-independence era. In 1913 India produced its first full-length feature film *Raja Harishchandra*. Cinema gradually became a powerful medium and went on to impact people's lives, thoughts and even their political views.

Ever since the drafting of constitution in 1947, freedom of speech and expression was considered controversial and received periodical dissent. Article 19 (*primarily borrowed from America's First Amendment*) proposed for free speech to all citizens of the state under set limitations specified under Article 19 (2). Two years later in 1952 The Cinematograph Act was brought in place to further strengthen the position of Cinema in the same aspect. This period was touted to be the 'Golden Age of Indian Cinema' celebrated for India's success at International Film Festivals; Hindi Film '*Mother India*' nominated for Academy Awards as a Best Foreign Language Film and also marked a beginning for offbeat cinema and the problems that came along.

Contemporary Times

Fast forwarding to 2018 the heated debate today seems to be the plight of 'Padamvati' or 'Padmaavat' as the CBFC prefers to call it. The film centrally based on yet-to-be-accurately proven life of Rani Padmavati, a Rajput Queen and a war her kingdom faced. The Karni Sena (*a Rajput caste group*) was responsible for the ban of film on account of historical inaccuracies and causing disgrace to Rajput community. They had gone a mile ahead and put a price on the heads of lead actress Deepika Padukone who portrays the Queen and the Director Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The rumours are that the CBFC had asked makers to make a horrendous 300 cuts to their 193 minutes

film to grant a U/A certificate. It is still unclear if this was enough for the Karni Sena to uphold the dignity of the royal Rajput Community. Later on January 18th the Supreme Court refused to impose any kind of ban on the film. The film finally released on 25th January opening to rave reviews from the public and a gross of nearly Rs.100 crore in 3 days.

Another compelling incident happened after the release of Tamil Film '*Mersal*' (2017) when the Tamil Nadu BJP party members demanded certain dialogues pertaining to criticism of GST policy to be removed as it was factually incorrect. They also questioned the makers regarding the necessity of transforming a temple land into a village hospital whereas a Church or a Mosque is not used. Like the Karni Sena the state members of the BJP went ahead and called the lead actor JOSEPH Vijay highlighting his religious origins for doing such an 'anti BJP film'. Later the film achieved huge success both critically and commercially and was credited for numerous reasons which included the demanded cuts.

Films not just for entertainment

As pointed out earlier films have evolved from being an entertainment to something more significant. It has emerged as a powerful showcase of culture and lifestyle. When your Superstar says no to smoking and drinking scenes he stands as an example to his fans; when Aamir Khan whispers 'All izz well' when you are down in academics but urge you to chase your dreams it serves as a motivation to the millions like you who watched *3 Idiots*; or in *Dangal* where he yearns for a male child and dreams of making him a wrestler but ends up nurturing two brave lionesses to achieve his dream of Olympic Gold; or when each and every fan stormed theatres first day in traditional dhotis just because their star in the south sports a similar look in a Tamil film, cinema does tempt the odd changes in the society through its socially relevant films. Though the opposite does also tend to happen sometimes, it takes a backseat especially when the film is specially made as a commercial entertainer.

Biopics and real life adaptations have become a recent trend and has also grown as an opportunity to present India's pride in the global arena. A perfect product again being *Dangal* – a story based on a real life retired Indian wrestler father and two gold medallist daughters saw release in 10 different countries so far bringing accolades to the real life stars and pride to our nation from viewers abroad, Hollywood's *The Man who knew Infinity* based on the life of Indian Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan was showcased in the grand stages of Toronto, Zurich, Singapore and Dubai Film Festivals. All this is possible because of the reach of a global medium called cinema. It is a global phenomenon, needs no language and at the same time needs no universal acceptance!

CBFC: A History

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is a statue constituted under the Cinematographic Act, 1952. The amendment of 1959 bestowed the board with the powers of certifying a film before allowing for public exhibition. Till 1983 it was known as Central Board of Film Censorship and from then on it was known as the Central Board of Film Certification. Under Section 3 (3) (iv) of the Act, the board has been given the powers to refuse to sanction the exhibition of the film apart from certifying its content. The board off-late has come under severe criticism for refusing to permit the screening of recent films like Bollywood s' "*Padmavati*" (2018) "*Lipstick Under My Burkha*" (2017) & "*Uda Punjab*" (2016) & Hollywood s' "*Fifty Shades of Grey*" (2015) and list grows.

The subject of restraint first came to light in 1959 when a Bengali film titled *Neel Akasher Neechey* was banned for two months citing fear of political disharmony⁴ since then CBFC has proved to be the vital cog for the increase in the number of films getting banned since it is the concerned authority when it comes to cinema.

Censor Process

The process is carried out by the CBFC (commonly called the 'Censor Board') consisting of maximum of 25 members and 60 members acting as an advisory panel to aid and advise the members, all of whom are appointed by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. The CEO will be at the helm of administrative affairs. Once an application has been received the Regional Officer shall appoint an Examining Committee consisting of 4 members and an examining officer among which 2 members must be women. The committee shall view the film and come up with a report of possible deletions and modifications. The regional officer shall certify it U, U/A, A or S based on the report of committee members. A list of "suggested changes" shall be communicated to the applicant in case of any dissatisfaction on the applicant's side. The censor board shall take a maximum of 68 days from date of application to issue a certificate for the submitted content.⁵ This shall include the time taken for all cuts and mutes required to be made. The process has recently been made accessible online to ensure better transparency. If the applicant is still not satisfied with the certification they can approach the Revising Committee and further appeals reach Appellate Tribunal and then finally to the court.

Few pass, few don't!

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ Cinematograph Act, 1952, Rule 41.

Though the stand taken by the board while the movie has excessive obscene content seems justifiable but with easy access to pornography through internet these days, this defence does not go too well with filmmakers either. Furthermore a lot of films that have recently passed the censors with a U certificate seems to have restricted content which the board had supposedly cleared with its eyes tied. CBFC passed “*Mohenjodaro*” with no cuts despite numerous intimate scenes and in sharp contrast took a stubborn stand towards “*Unindian*” demanding cuts of its intimate scenes. Bollywood s’ modern adaptation of Romeo & Juliet -- “*Ram Leela*”(2013), a movie shot in a setting of violent times which also had good number of kissing scenes was surprisingly given “U/A” by the board whereas “*Shahid*” (2013) a biopic of lawyer and human rights activist Shahid Azmi received a “A” despite changes. Coincidentally, the real life Shahid had defended the film “*Black Friday*” while it had problems with the censors during its release and the director of the film went on to produce Azmi s’ biopic. So what does it eventually come down to when raw romance doesn’t qualify as a censor cut and harsh reality is asked to be cut?

A recent list of recommended beeps by CBFC is a shocker. In a documentary on the life of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen the CBFC asked the makers to beep the words “cow”, “Hindu India” and “Gujarat”-- since it is a reference to the Prime Minister s’ Home state! ⁶

Nobody to blame? Blame Cinema!

One of the most bizarre accusations that contributes to the stern action on adult films and scenes is that “Rapes have increased because of such films that arouse sexual thoughts”. It is just seen as an attempt in vain to point fingers at a soft target to the existing vulnerable nature of women safety in the country. Kissing scenes featured way back from 1929 (A Throw of Dice aka Prapancha Pasha); Item Songs had become prominent part of Bollywood since 1975! Was the number of rapes high since then? Had films influenced so much as they say, agriculture would have thrived after “*Upkaar*”(1967) got released, Indian Army’s recruitment would have doubled up after the release of “*Border*” (1997) or “*Lakshya*”(2004), youngsters would have shot down corrupt politicians after watching the climax of Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra’s “*Rang De Basanti*”(2006).⁷ Though thousands stormed screens to catch these epics why didn’t influences work? Because people tend to see themselves as the protagonist and applaud when he does which they could never do.

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⁶ [Michael Safi. “Censors order bleeping of 'cow' in film on Indian economist Amartya Sen” *The Guardian*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/12/indian-film-censors-demand-removal-hindu-cow-film-nobel-amartya-sen) <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/12/indian-film-censors-demand-removal-hindu-cow-film-nobel-amartya-sen>> accessed January 16 2018.

⁷ Prakash Gowda, “Can films really be held responsible for increasing Rape in Indian society?” *Indian Exponent*, 11 March 2013 <<http://www.indianexponent.com/2013/03/can-films-really-be-held-responsible-for-increasing-rape-in-indian-society.html>> accessed January 31 2018

Films are said to be known for showcasing the society as such, which is not just sex, drugs and filth but also with factual, real & necessary content that needs attention and discussion.

Restricting Creativity:

Just like any other art cinema is also works with sole purpose as an expression of an artist's creativity and ideologies. Cinema even during the recent past was expected only to just engage-to-entertain but now people also expect films to engage their minds for the money they pay for. In an attempt to deliver such goods directors need to think more about what different ideas can be portrayed on screen, rather they are stranded on what would make the censor board happy. If numerous films face bans on such regular basis it puts a bar on the expanse of creativity that can be exposed through cinema and strikes a fear in anticipation of the response of handful of CBFC members watching the film during censor. When a maker is asked to chop off many scenes (*in the name of "censorship"*) which contribute a major portion of the film's subject or strategically placed to narrate something, his whole work gets torn into nameless pieces. The same was the sad condition of the film "*Hava Aney Dey*" (2004) where the director was asked to make a ridiculous 21 cuts to his just 93 minutes feature film.

Especially when the same film/scene passes censors without cuts in countries like US & UK and faces ban or censor in India, the obvious question of "why is there a problem here?" frequently creeps into our minds. Has some one ever seen James Bond drinking Martini on Indian screens? No! Because it is claimed to be not suited to Indian audience is what the CBFC tells. Is it because it would encourage more people to drink like Bond? A loud no, because regional films have been enjoying such liberties with 'statutory warnings' as an easy give away. What else? It is quite acceptable that tradition differs but when laws of the country give you the freedom you are free to use it. Similarly, the choice of viewing is always left with the audience and I feel neither the board, government nor the court should step into their shoes and decide on what they should or should not watch.

With such rapidly changing world and people coming across tons of information every day in the era of Social Networking you cannot make something stay hidden for long. Even though few films are banned they are easily available on piracy sites which people download and watch defeating the sole purpose of banning the film. A perfect example of the said scenario happened in the case of Hollywood s' product "*Fifty Shades Of Grey*"(2015) when it was banned for explicit content people

crowded torrent sites & watched the movie by downloading it.⁸ In fact it serves as a great promotion for the movie to do well elsewhere. CBFC cuts Sunny Leone s' moves so that our young generation aren't spoiled by her antics. Result? It would be a laugh to say people stopped watching Sunny because of this. She is Yahoo s' most searched celebrity for five straight years in a row from 2013 to 2017 and her YouTube views, downloads are out of the roof to say the least.

Ban: A potent weapon of law

The very existence of law is to protect the interests of people. But in such unjustifiable situations the freedom of speech and expression is suppressed. The freedom is granted to ensure that citizens do have the right to speak out their views freely unless it does have a grave impact on other fellow citizens or damages the country as such. But when such unfair bans being used to contain them it would only mean the end of the freedom of speech and expression. So when the "law" itself which is given the fundamental responsibility of protecting the rights restricts fair usage of such right people begin lose their faith in the law.

Besides having the Cinematographic Act, 1952 the Union Government has jurisdiction in accordance with Entry 60 of Union list in matters of sanctioning films for exhibition. Certain states governments enjoy further extended jurisdiction using Entry 33 of the State List and have framed their own state laws to accommodate any other "half-baked" reasons to impose a ban which maybe beyond the scope of the 1952 Act.

A separate piece of legislation known as "State Cinema Regulation Act" already in place in Southern States like Tamil Nadu (Section 7 of the 1955 Act), Andhra Pradesh (Section 8 of the 1955 Act), Kerala (Section 9 of the 1958 Act) & Karnataka (Section 15 of the 1964 Act) which gives the power to the Government or District Collector to suspend exhibition of films which are likely to cause breach of peace. This is mostly used only as a tool for revenge against Actors & Producers who are opposed to their party ideologies and to garner the support of a particular class of people but not as a useful provision of law.

An authoritative use of the regional powers was to ban the exhibition of the film "*Vishwaroopam*" (2013) in Tamil Nadu citing that certain scenes in the film would hurt Muslim sentiments. After 15 days of struggle the film saw the light of the day and people found nothing offensive. The rumours were that the ruling government wanted to please the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnatra Kazagham (TNMMK) party with which it had alliance in the 2011 elections to aid further collaborations.

⁸ David Johnson, "Fifty Shades of Grey': Indian Audience Download Erotic Drama from Torrent Sites Following Ban" *International Business Times*, 6 March 2015 <<http://www.ibtimes.co.in/fifty-shades-grey-indian-audience-download-erotic-drama-torrent-sites-following-ban-625395>> accessed January 31 2018

Further it was widely spoken that the people involved in the movie were not in good terms with the head of the ruling party and hence they wanted to induce some fear through ban. Same was the case with another Tamil film "*Thalaivaa*" (2013) which was banned for 11 days due to bomb threats by "unknown group". The film was later released after the producer agreed to drop the tagline "Time to lead" and a few other politically critical dialogues from the film. Though all these have the possibility of just being rumours the probability of such a thing happening is not beyond one's imagination given the kind of the politicians of our country.

The Issues

There isn't a special modus operandi when it comes to films getting banned in consonance with procedure. The reasonable restrictions available in Article 19 (2) of the constitution also mentioned under Section 5(b) of the Cinematographic Act is said to serve the purpose but this has been wrongly used. Any film affecting the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or involves defamation or contempt of court or is likely to incite the commission of any offence is not allowed for public exhibition in India but did all these banned films met the above criteria is big question mark. An example for the apt use of limitations would be the banning of "*No Fire Zone: In the Killing Fields of Sri Lanka*" because the government couldn't further worsen their position with their Sri Lankan counterparts. Apart from the above legal permutations there are many other unofficial situations which has led to bans. The dispute has always been in relation to the content of the film more than anything else. A summary of the other permutations are as summarized below.

"*Bandit Queen*"(1994), a biographical film based on the life of Phoolan Devi a bandit and later a Member Of Parliament was banned by Delhi High Court after Devi challenged its authenticity.

"*Kuttrapathirikai*"(2007), a Tamil drama film completed in 1993 was not allowed release by CBFC until 2007 as it had Former Prime Minister.Rajiv Gandhi s' assassination as a backdrop.

"*India s' Daughter*" a documentary about the 2012 gang rape was prevented from broadcast by a court order. Eventually the film was uploaded into Youtube and later removed at the request of Indian Authorities. 2016 s'

"*Udta Punjab*" saw major opposition by CBFC as it dealt with the inability of the Punjab government to control drug mafia. The film was initially asked to make a mammoth 89 cuts for granting certification. Later the High Court took up the matter and recommended only one cut after which a leaked copy of the film spread online with a "censor" watermark raising further suspicions.

Tamil Nadu government banned “*Dam 999*” for allegedly spreading fear among people regarding the strength and stability of the Mullaiperiyar Dam.

“*Final Solution*” a 2004 documentary based on 2002 Gujarat violence was stopped from screening citing fear of communal violence. It was later allowed for release after public support poured in.

“*Madras Cafe*” & “*Inam*” were banned in Tamil Nadu because it was filmed in the backdrop of Sri Lankan Civil War.

“*Santa Banta Pvt Ltd*” a Hindi comedy drama was banned in Punjab as the film had portrayed Sikhs in a defamatory manner.

“*The Da Vinci Code*”, a popular Hollywood flick was banned in Punjab, Goa, Andhra and Tamil Nadu fearing that it might hurt Christian sentiments.

The ban on “*Lipstick Under my Burkha*” due to the depiction of Muslim women in bad light. Even before its official release in India it had won 11 International Awards, was shown at over 35 film festivals and was India’s entry at the Golden Globe Awards.

“*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*” & “*Fifty Shades of Grey*” along with its sequel “*Fifty Shades Darker*” didn’t see a release in India due to its explicit sexual content after directors refusing to make the cuts recommended by CBFC.

International Perspective

Censor Boards across the world approach films differently. The CBFC in a neighbouring country like Pakistan are pretty strict in terms of portrayal of its country and Muslims in films which made them ban most of the Indian Films like “*Baby*” (2015) and “*Haider*” (2014) and the list goes on. In contrast, United States & United Kingdom have a slightly direct and clear system of rating films.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) has a 6 type rating system that includes G – General Audience; PG – Parental Guidance suggested as content may not be suitable; PG-13 – Inappropriate for people of age 13 or below; R – Restricted to people over the age of 18 but allowed to accompany a adult if under 17; NC-17 – No children equal to or below the age of 17; NR (or) UR - Not Rated or Unrated for movies not submitted for rating that can also be played in select theatres. Similarly the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) has the same system of U, PG, 12A, 15, 18 and R 18 for films that can played only at licenced adult cinema halls.

They usually proceed based on the version received by them from the crew and would rarely demand cuts apart from only RECOMMENDING cuts and rate films accordingly thereby leaving the burden to the filmmakers to decide their fate. Not that they are lenient to let go anything that

comes their way, it is only fair to say that they decide on what they get and let the people decide what is good or bad for them thus reducing the issues that may arise regarding censors. So do films don't face ban on these countries? As indicated earlier, a freedom has no force unless it imposes some reasonable restrictions. All censor boards across the globe are quite uncompromising on strong sexual content and excessive violence which is quite understandable.

Findings

Finding 1 – CBFC has not been treating every film equally

In reference to the comparisons made between censoring of “*Mohenjodaro*” & “*Unindian*” and “*Ram Leela*” & “*Shahid*” apparently shows there is no proper standard when it comes to CBFC s’ handling of the process. While big films mostly escape the board s’ wavering standards it is the small films to which its wrath is unleashed. Ofcourse big films sometimes do come under the scanner as well but that happens when there is a larger controversy like the one in “*Padmaavat*”.

Finding 2 – When it comes to cinema it’s for the people that they are made and they are the best judges.

Films like “*Fifty Shades of Grey*” which have been brought down by the board but has received warm welcome from the audience ultimately proves that this is not what people want. Though it is deemed to be a cautious effort fears of revenue loss, thousands who worked for the film left uncredited or cuts hampering the narrative are matters of great concern. In case of such instances post release where action is necessary before things go haywire there is always an option of removing the film or the scenes from screens within no time as everything has been digitalized and is controlled from one central place.

Finding 3 – Censoring does not make a huge difference it just spoils the movie watching experience

Audiences of “A” Rated film watch these film knowing the violence or the explicit content it would offer, they would obviously expect such stuff and as adults understand that cinema and reality are far apart. Hollywood works in the same way and does not censor these scenes unless it proves to be too much.

Finding 4 – Bans are sometimes used as a political weapon by governments.

When bans are imposed by governments they are either used to display their political upper hand or just as an effort to please a section of objectors. In a rare case of real law and order problem arising where the state is unable to hold talks nor control the parties the government could then take the issue in its hands and impose a ban if necessary. Instead the governments see this as an opportunity

to let the people know that they are still in control and it is a cautious move for common good that the action was taken. “*Vishwaroopam*” is an apt case of government using the film for its political motives using it for their own good.

Finding 5 – The censor system that exists in India is outdated in comparison with other countries

Culture and lifestyle has drastically changed and hence people have a better understanding of cinema. When the people of UK, US and many other countries have the capacity to handle mature content why can't we? The existing system literally has no room for grown-up content and has been treating us like kids. India must make way for different content and make sure the right film reaches the right set of audience.

Recommendations

There isn't an easy and permanent solution for every problem especially when it concerns art which is ever developing. Few of the possible and practical suggestions are briefly mentioned below.

(i) Expanded Rating System: In India we do not have 'R' or 'R-18' unlike the other certifying bodies around the world. An 'R' rating would mean that the film passes without cuts and is allowed for restricted exhibition. The closest we have to these ratings is an 'A' (Adult) which is not appropriate for films based on certain subjects. An amendment in the system could be seen as long term solution to solve the whole issue of films getting banned or losing its artistic integrity due to unnecessary censor issues.

(ii) Public Participation: The time has come where common man must have a say in censorship apart from the officials appointed by the CBFC. This would ensure there would be no concerns about biased decisions and also a form of public representation in such processes. Signing of a simple Non-disclosure agreement would also protect the content and make sure his/her opinion has a part to play in the final decision of the board.

To further strengthen public inputs, an experimental system of 'voluntary rating' followed in US seems to be the right way forward. Under this highly successful system, an independent group of parents having children aged between 5-20 years rate submitted works based on 2/3rd majority. This group came to be known as Classification and Ratings Administration (CARA) and its members change every 7 years leaving no space for any abuse of powers.

(iii) Uncensored adult content only for adults: Re-censorship of films for playing on television sounds logical as no one would have any clue what kids are up to while watching TV but when a

legal adult purchases a movie ticket for a 'A' rated film he expects the film to treat him as an adult too and not as a kid or a teenager.

Indians do have the capacity handle mature content and hence it is high time that the CBFC, the Government puts down its scissors and treat adults as adults who can understand mature content. Moreover this is what people want! Proof?!- We live in a country where over 17,817 people have signed a petition seeking ban on censorship of adult films created initially by an irritated movie buff who had to shell out Rs.600 to watch a film with most of its dialogues muted in the name of censorship.⁹ So, Adult rated films shouldn't require cuts to enhance viewer interest because that's what he has paid for.

Conclusion

The blame cannot be fully placed on CBFC or the Government, but they must only be clipped of their powers to restrict exhibition of any film and let the people decide if anything offends them or not. The 1983 change from Central Board of film censor to Film Certification itself pretty much explains the limited responsibility vested with the CBFC and it would only be right for it to stick to what it is legally entitled to do. It would also be fruitful if censorship laws in India see substantial changes to adapt to the current society where every household has an internet connection and even a 10-year old kid is able to access all kind of stuff available online. On the other side, film makers must try to find out ways where films can deal with sensitive issues and be sensational yet not problematic. Avoidable inclusion of explicit content in films might prove to be less laborious to Cinema Authorities not only here but around the globe. At the same time it is necessary to strike a balance between preserving culture and encouraging art but not by imposing unnecessary ban on films.

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