

Sports Movies - An Inspiration to Youth

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Abstract

A Sport Film revolves around a sport setting, event, or an athlete. Often, these films will center on a single sporting event that carries significant importance. There are two types of people, one who live a normal average life and one who inspires the mass. In India, a number of films have utilized the theme of sports for successfully highlighting various issues and problems of the society – with a deep influence on the target audience. These sports films have ample scope for the younger generations to be influenced and build leadership qualities in them. Further, films with sports genre which are still far less in number than general films are rarely discussed in academic forums or research panels. This paper looks at how sports films as a separate genre can impact peoples' life and thereby effect far-reaching changes in masses' attitude over a period of time.

Keywords: *Sports , Youth in India , hollywood , bollywood*

Introduction

Sports films have been made since the era of silent films, such as the 1915 film *The Champion* starring Charlie Chaplin. A classic theme for sports films is the triumph of an individual or team who prevail despite the difficulties. In the world of sports, the stories that are usually the hardest to believe are the ones that actually happened.. Hollywood has produced hundreds of films about sports for the same reason that synergistic ties have been established between American movies and other cultural forms, including theater, literature, fashion, television, advertising, and toys. From the documentary style “news films” of major prizefights and the World Series that were an important part of the early film industry to blockbusters such as *The Blind Side* (2009) and *Moneyball* (2011), collaboration with sports has helped sell the movies. Sports are rule-governed contests of physical skill in which humans compete against one another. In the sports film such athletic contests play a central role in defining the main characters. When it comes to Bollywood, there are many movies which are based on life of these inspiring sports personalities. The story of an upcoming star or a forgotten hero fighting against all odds to defeat the bad guy and lift the cup sounds tailor-made for Bollywood. During the course of the last few decades, Indian cinema has delivered quite a few passionate sports movies, with several leading heroes essaying athletic roles and finding appreciation come their way for their performances.

Sports and Benefits of Exercise

A sound mind in a sound body” is a well-known saying. The health of the body is essential for success in life. An unhealthy man is always sad, gloomy and therefore loses confidence in himself. To keep healthy, one must take an active interest in sports. Thus sports serve an essential purpose in life because they ensure good health and build a fine physique. If one is bodily fit, one feels capable of hard endeavor and life without endeavor is useless. The great advantage of sports is that they combine exercise with thrill, excitement and sensations. In order that we should readily take exercise it should be made interesting and, as everybody knows, practically all kinds of games devised by man possess a certain degree of interest.

The value of sports such as Hockey, football, cricket, tennis, badminton, rowing and swimming - all these and others not only give exercise to the limbs but also provide a good deal of excitement and entertainment. Besides, the competitive element in sports is source of thrills for the mind. Not only the players, but the spectators also feel engrossed in a game because of its suspense and unexpected turns. It is for these reasons that sports form a very important part in education. A bookworm who takes no interest in sport is physically weak and all his mental excellence can't make up for his physical deficiency. The Value of Sports benefits not only the body but also the mind. Almost every game requires a certain degree of skill to play. Skill is a mental quality. Physical vigor alone is not enough in games like golf, cricket and tennis. Sports develop and encourage the spirit of healthy competition. The competitive instinct is natural in man and demands outlets. Sports have wide scope for the competitive instinct. Matches and tournaments and contests are held to put to test the skill, toughness, stamina and endurance of values of participants.

Physical coordination and strength

There is a reason why sports and strength are believed to be two sides of the same coin. A person who is good at sports or at least participates in any kind of sports activity not only remains fit and healthy at all times, rather they also develop great body strength with time. It is, however, not necessary for everyone to indulge in hardcore sports; rather there are several different physical activities that one can take part in. Perspiration is one of the most underrated benefits of participating in sports as it helps the body in getting rid of toxins and also helps in strengthening the immune system.

People who are good at sports are also seen getting less tired as compared to people who have minimum physical activities as a part of their everyday life.

Sports helps in building character

If an individual is a part of any sports activity starting from a very young age, it is most commonly seen that they have a very clear as well as strong character. One of the common traits

seen in all sportsmen is their punctuality as well as discipline, thus gifting to the society strong as well as well- built individuals. Above all, it takes monotony out of everyone's life.

Good health

Being an active participant in sports activities mean that you have very less time to waste around. While people who do not take part in sports are often seen fighting with ailments in their adulthood, such as cholesterol, diabetes, etc; active people are seen leading comparatively healthier lives.

For an individual to be a part of any sports, it is very necessary that they get motivated starting from a very young age. Parents should set a good example for their children by being active in sports. It is one activity that benefits the body as well as mind in the long run.

Research Methodology

A comparative study between different Hollywood and Bollywood sports movies has been done .Writings on sports genre of films have been studied along with different attributes of sports world shown in such movies. Around 80 youth from Pune have been interviewed. Few Research papers on Impact of Movies on Youth have been referred.

Findings and Observations:

Impact of Sport movies

Sport movies have always enjoyed a special position in the global film industry in terms of box office success and popularity amongst viewers. This genre has been quite popular and there are plenty of movies that have become all-time greatest hits setting a benchmark for years. Sports movies have a wide variety as well. The movies made in this genre has covered quite a significant number of sports as well as athletics. When comparing the two largest movie making industries i.e. Hollywood and Bollywood, there is an interesting difference in the category of sports that are covered in the movies. Hollywood has boasted a significant variety of sports in the movies. On the other hand Bollywood has represented sports like Cricket, wrestling, hockey, athletics, and boxing. It would quite fair to say the existing support of the sport in itself within the region plays a big role in the selection of sport in the movie.

For the analysis, I have considered top Hollywood & Bollywood sport movies from which have been hugely successful.

Hollywood Top 15			Bollywood Top 12	
1	Auto/Car Racing	<i>Cars (2006)</i>	Hockey	<i>Chak De (2007)</i>
2	Football	<i>The Blind Side (2009)</i>	Athletics	<i>Bhaag Milkha Bhaag (2005)</i>
3	Boxing	<i>Rocky IV (1985)</i>	Wrestling	<i>Sultan (2016)</i>
4	Baseball	<i>A League of Their Own (1992)</i>	Cricket	<i>Lagaan (2001)</i>
5	Basketball	<i>Space Jam (1996)</i>	Cricket	<i>Iqbal (2005)</i>
6	Ice Hockey	<i>Miracle (2004)</i>	Athletics	<i>Pan Singh Tomar (2010)</i>
7	Olympics	<i>Blades of Glory (2007)</i>	Boxing	<i>Mary Kom (2014)</i>
8	Horse Racing	<i>Seabiscuit (2003)</i>	Cricket	<i>Kai Poche (2013)</i>
9	Surfing	<i>Surf's Up (2007)</i>	Ice Hockey	<i>Patiala House (2011)</i>
10	Golf	<i>Tin Cup (1996)</i>	Cricket	<i>MS Dhoni (2016)</i>
11	Soccer (aka Football)	<i>Kicking & Screaming (2005)</i>	Cycling/Athletics	<i>Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander (1992)</i>
12	Figure Skating	<i>Blades of Glory (2007)</i>	Cricket	<i>Ferrari Ki Sawari (2012)</i>
13	Track and Field	<i>Chariots of Fire (1981, UK)</i>		
14	Cheer-leading	<i>Bring It On (2000)</i>		
15	Dodgeball	<i>Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story (2004)</i>		

What is an interesting observation here is the different types of sports Hollywood movies are based on. Although we know that Basketball, Baseball, Soccer, Ice Hockey are some of the most commonly played and viewed sports, the Hollywood stories have a not relied on any popularity of the sport. Their script carry an extremely well-crafted representation of the underlying message, the journey, the hardships, struggles and creating an inspiring take away at the end. Attention to detail in each of the sport they're based on is quite intricate. This brings the movie on a whole new level of reality, thus making it more effective and impactful. The problems faced by sports are certainly shown in detail but the nature of these problems is based on the type of society and their economic health. Financial issues, support from family or society most often are not such a big factor as the western world is significantly based on an individualistic society.

Bollywood has every now and then relied on taking advantage of an existing viewer base of a sport which has mainly been cricket. It has always been the reason for the success of a movie. What these movies actually portray is the harsh realities in a cricketer's life in India, most often using emotions as a backdrop. Although it contains the bitter truth like politics, money and inferior motives of businessmen behind the sport, it fairly does indicate that success can after all be achieved with talent and immense hard work. They do provide a realistic picture of the sport for any aspiring cricketer. If we consider the other sports Bollywood movies normally work on, we can observe some other dimension of battles that one would face in the Indian context. This is normally the family and society factor together with poverty, lack of financial support and hindrances in pursuing a sporting career.

It is seen that in general the above sports movies essentially invoke strong emotions and are a brilliant tool for motivation. The most common factor we find here is the story of an underdog, making it right to the top through a series of hardships and struggles. Almost all stories trigger an inspiring factor in the viewer, which makes them believe that one can indeed achieve any goal – in sports for aspiring athletes or life in general. They seem to provide a great deal of encouragement to strive for achieving our targets and can be of great assistance to us even it is on different levels.

It would be fair to say an average movie viewer normally is not related to any sport at a competitive level and thus it is quite interesting to observe the effect these movies have. Their stories also emphasize on character one needs to succeed. They also bring up our own dreams and imaginations. These movies describe the journey of how someone achieved success and how they made it to that level. They were made with a purpose to inspire you and give you more courage in what you're doing. It might be a sport or it might be something else like work or business, but what we learn and apply in our lives will always remain the same. Also they depict how sports are not just games but real events where sportsmen/athletes have to give in their best in order to reach the goal. They have portrayed the sportsman/athlete and what it took him/her to get there and the sacrifices that they made.

What these sport movies have done is brought about a big change in mindset of the people. Every sport has sacrifices, but most people do not understand the hardships behind it. For many it would have been just a sport / game, when the truth is quite the opposite. Sports movies have played a pivotal role in presenting what it takes from hard work to sweat blood and tears to succeed and make it to the top.

Sport movies like these have gained massive admiration. The awareness created about a not so known sport, inspiring people towards the sport or even a sporting career to the simplest thing of being motivated in life, sport movies are here to stay. Their role cannot be undermined and have certainly been an essential and influential factor in the viewers mind. Youth look at a sportsman as a role model and try to emulate what their sporting icon has become.

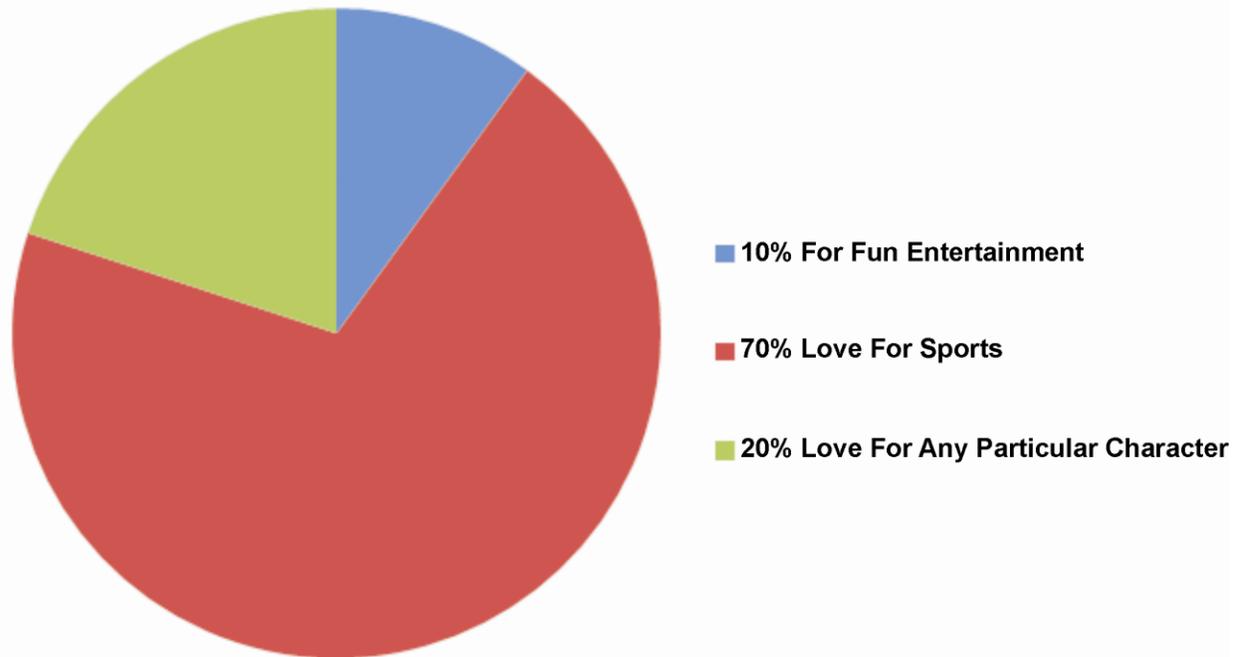
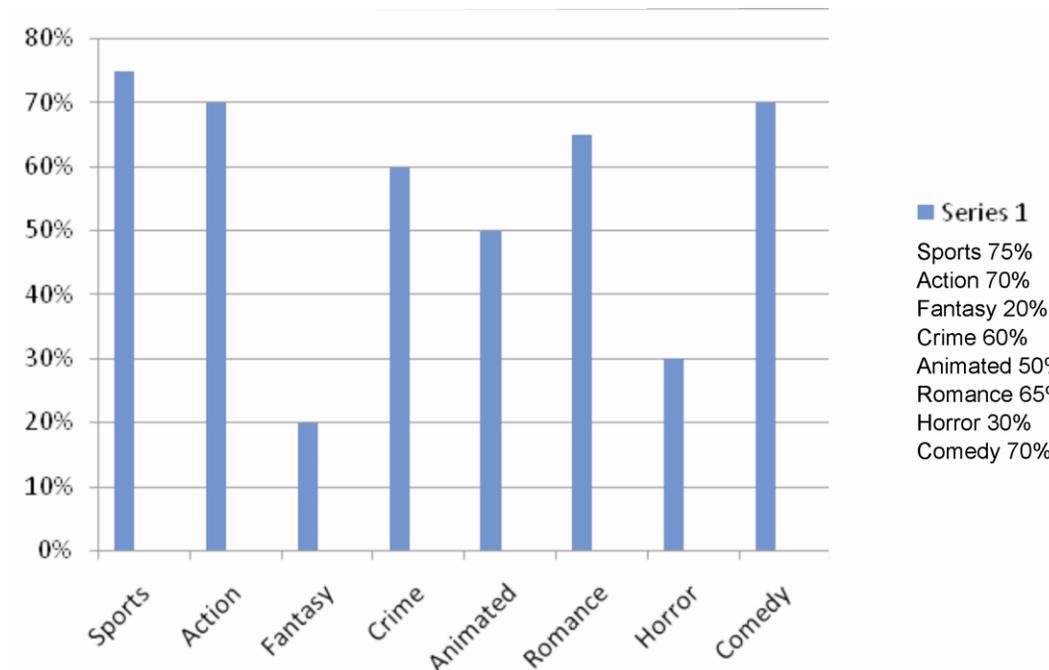


Figure 1 Why do you watch sports movies?

From the interview conducted, 70 % of the youth watch sports movies for the love of the sports (Figure 1) and only 10 % watch them for mere entertainment that shows the inclination of youth towards sports movies

FAVOURITE MOVIE GENRE



During the survey, 70 – 75 percent of respondents stated action, sports and adventure movies were their favorite type of movie to see in the theatre. Even Crime and Romantic movies are quite popular in youth.

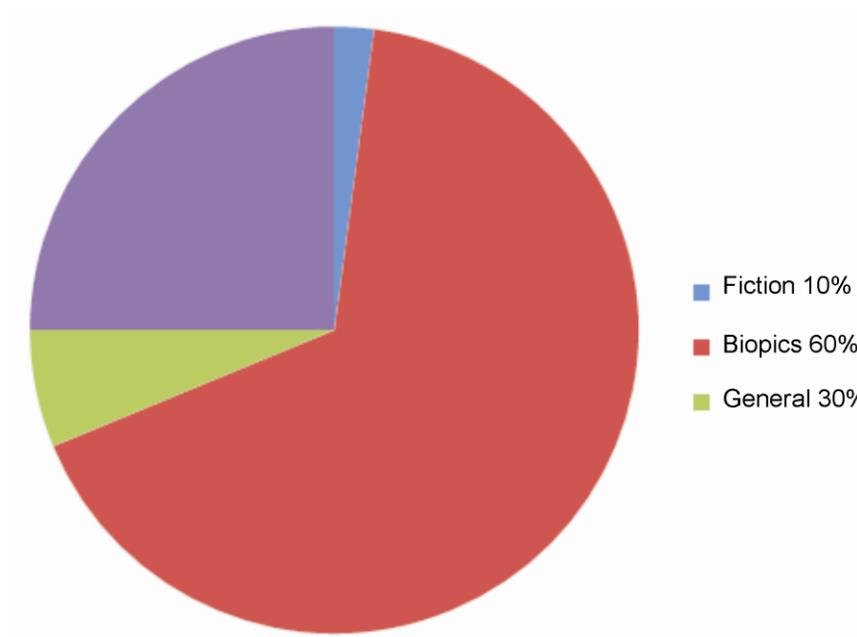


Figure 2 Preference of Sports Movies

Out of 80, 60% love the movies based on true life stories or biopic of sportsman. Besides, film is a medium which has a diverse language. It can communicate to the larger audiences in a very limited time and space. Sports is a popular phenomenon in the society and it gets more elevated through films which speak a universal language.

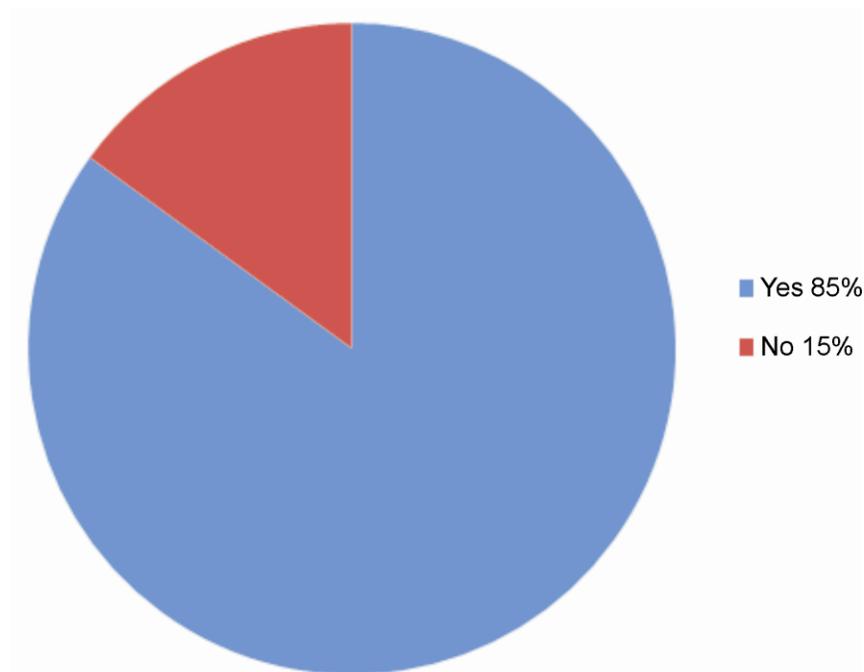


Figure 3 Does a sport movies inspire youth?

A sport program is able to reduce criminal activity and antisocial behavior by engaging at-risk youth in sport, rather than leaving them to their own devices. According to the research of Wicks et al. (2007), youth sport is about promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles as well as strengthening communities.

Conclusion

Sports movies, whether documentaries, true story movies or even just a regular fictional movie, can inspire young athletes to greatness. They inspire youth to dream, to want the cheers, to overcome the hardships, and they teach them the meaning of hard work. Whether you are an athlete or not, movies can give you a feeling where you just want to be great. These movies evoke inspiration and a sense of team spirit and patriotism in viewers. They generate immense energy and power and forms positives attitudes which are very necessary in real life. The game of sports filled with rules and penalties restrict human ideologies to think in the right and correct direction for the society's future improvement. Most of these themes in sports film are regeneration of the events happening around us in real life, being a popular media for the masses it uplifts the entire messages to give it a higher and immediate effect. A good sports film is not only about losing or winning on the field, it speaks about the deep meaning associated with the sports itself. Sports films appreciate the struggle of the participants by showcasing losers as the temporary pain to achieve greater rewards in the future. Sports films penetrate into human emotions which results in the positive attitude in the way we think and live in the society.

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