

FILMS ON INDIA:

HISTORY

"[Bajirao Mastani](#)" (2015): This historical epic focuses on the love story between the Maratha Peshwa Bajirao and the Muslim princess Mastani. It offers a glimpse into Maratha history and the cultural diversity of India.

"[Gandhi](#)" (1982): A biographical film that chronicles the life of Mahatma Gandhi, highlighting his role in India's struggle for independence. The film explores Gandhi's journey from his early experiences in South Africa as a lawyer to becoming a key figure in India's struggle for independence against British rule.

"[Jodhaa Akbar](#)" (2008): This historical romance film portrays the relationship between the Mughal Emperor Akbar and the Rajput princess Jodha Bai. It offers a glimpse into the cultural and political dynamics of the Mughal era.

"[Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey](#)" (2010): Based on the Chittagong Uprising of 1930, this film tells the story of a group of Indian independence activists who plan and execute a daring revolt against British rule.

"[Lagaan](#)" (2001): A historical drama that explores India's colonial past and the struggle for independence through the lens of a cricket match as a symbol of resistance. The film revolves around a group of villagers who challenge the oppressive tax imposed by British authorities through a cricket match. It provides insights into colonial India, the struggle for independence, and the spirit of resistance.

"[The Legend of Bhagat Singh](#)" (2002): This biographical film explores the life of Bhagat Singh, a prominent figure in the Indian independence movement. It provides insights into the struggle against British colonial rule.

"[Midnight's Children](#)" (2012): Directed by Deepa Mehta and based on Salman Rushdie's novel, "Midnight's Children" is a historical drama that spans several decades, following the life of Saleem Sinai, a boy born at the exact moment of India's independence in 1947. The film intertwines Saleem's personal journey with the political and social changes in post-colonial India.

"[Mother India](#)" (1957): A legendary film depicting the struggles of a rural Indian woman and the changing social landscape.

["Rang De Basanti"](#) (2006): While primarily set in contemporary times, this film uses a parallel narrative to revisit India's freedom struggle. It reflects on the ideals of sacrifice and activism through a group of young people inspired by historical events. A group of friends becomes politically active after acting in a documentary about India's freedom fighters. The film blends contemporary and historical narratives.

["Water"](#) (2006): A critically acclaimed film directed by Deepa Mehta and the third part of her Elements Trilogy. The film is set in 1938 during the pre-independence era in India and explores the gender inequalities prevalent in Indian society during the pre-independence era. One of the central themes of the film is child marriage and the subsequent plight of child widows. The story revolves around a group of widows living in an ashram, highlighting the social and cultural norms that contribute to their marginalized status.

ECONOMICS & INEQUALITY:

["The Lunchbox"](#) (2013): A charming film that delves into the lives of individuals in Mumbai and their interconnected stories through a unique lunch delivery system. The film explores various themes, primarily centered around human connection, loneliness, and the impact of unexpected relationships. The film subtly explores the clash between traditional and modern values in urban Indian society.

["Peepi \[Live\]"](#) (2010): "Peepi Live" is a satirical comedy-drama film on the state of rural India that explores the media frenzy surrounding farmer suicides in rural India, shedding light on socio-economic challenges.

["Slumdog Millionaire"](#) (2008): While a work of fiction, this film provides a glimpse into the realities of urban poverty and the pursuit of success in modern India.

["White Tiger"](#) 2010. Based on a novel written by Aravind Adiga, White Tiger explores several themes related to social class, economic disparity, and individual agency in modern India. The story is narrated by a driver from a rural background who rises to become a successful entrepreneur.

SOCIAL ISSUES:

["Article 15"](#) (2019): A crime drama that tackles caste-based discrimination and social inequalities in rural India. The film draws its name from Article 15 of the Indian Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Focusing on the issue of caste-based discrimination and untouchability that continue to persist in certain parts of India, Article 15 sheds light on the deep-rooted biases and atrocities faced by marginalized communities in India.

["Court"](#) (2014): A critically acclaimed courtroom drama that reflects on the Indian legal system, caste system and social issues. The narrative of "Court" revolves around a folk singer accused of abetting the suicide of a sewage worker. The film delves into issues of social inequality, oppression, and the exploitation of marginalized communities.

["Fire"](#) (1996): "Fire" is a film directed by Deepa Mehta that explores the theme of repression within the context of traditional societal expectations. "Fire" boldly addresses issues of sexuality and personal identity, focusing on the evolving relationship between two women, Radha and Sita. The film challenges traditional norms and conventions regarding gender roles and sexual orientation. It explores the tension between individual desires and adherence to traditional values as the characters grapple with their roles as wives and their personal desires for fulfillment and self-discovery.

["Masaan"](#) (2015): A drama that explores societal taboos, Masaan is known for its poignant storytelling and its portrayal of the characters' struggles against societal norms. The film addresses the deeply entrenched issue of caste discrimination in Indian society as the characters face societal prejudices and challenges based on their caste backgrounds and persisting social hierarchies.

["Queen"](#) (2014): "Queen" is a Bollywood film that explores several themes, particularly focusing on self-discovery and female empowerment. After her wedding is canceled, a young woman embarks on a solo honeymoon trip, discovering her independence and self-worth through her journey of self-discovery.

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INDIAN & OTHER SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS

["The Problem with Apu"](#) (2017): In this humorous documentary, comedian Hari Kondabolu confronts his long-standing "nemesis" Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, the Indian convenience store owner in the TV series "The Simpsons." Through this comedic cultural expose, Kondabolu questions why this controversial caricature was created and burrowed its way into the hearts and minds of (White) Americans, with negative implications and suffering for Indian and other South Asian Americans.