



# The Bollywood Is Fighting For Disability Inclusion: A Systematic Review.

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## Abstract

Disability inclusion has emerged as a crucial social issue in recent years because persons with disability are considered to be one of the most unsafe sections of the community who are grossly overlooked and neglected by family and others. Hence Inclusion of persons with disabilities in society is important to improve their visibility and consecration because of lack of visibility, everyone ignore their needs that's why prompting various industries, including the entertainment sector, to advocate for positive change.

Bollywood, as the largest industry in India, plays a significant role in influencing societal perspectives who think that persons with disability are not able to do their work properly or cannot do anything in society. In the previous studies have shown that Bollywood films have often portrayed disabled characters in a negative, stereotypical, or comic way. This type of representations have reinforced the social stigma and discrimination faced by disabled people in the real world. However, some recent the Bollywood movies have consistently is a positive impacting on society and attempted to challenge the dominant view of disabled and present disabled characters in a more positive, realistic, and empowering way, based on the social model of disabled that views it as a result of the barriers created by the society and advocates for inclusion and accessibility. Such representations have contributed to the paradigm shift in Bollywood cinema from being neglected to being in the limelight.

It is correct to say that if a message with true spirit is passed in the form among the audience it definitely bring the drastic changes in the society towards persons with disability. The present paper is to explore the fitting of Bollywood to share the achievement and inspiration of persons with disability among the society.

**Key Words-** Person with Disability, Inclusion, Bollywood.

## Introduction

As per the 2011 Census, the total population of India is 1.23 billion, of which about 2.1 percent (over 21 million people) suffer from one or other kind of disability. The total disable population, males and females is respectively 12.6 and 9.3 million. Today, disability is an important issue that is widely misapprehended and people with disability are seen as one of the most vulnerable groups in society and are often ignored and neglected by everyone. 'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others' (UNCRPD, 2006, p. 4). Due to these issues, the disable cannot take equal opportunities in society, such as equity in education, health, employment, freedom, security, etc., like a normal individual, and society also does not cooperate with them in achieving their rights. Disability inclusion essentially means understanding the relationships between the way people function and how they participate in society and making sure everyone has equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of life in society; hence, disability inclusion is necessary for their development based on their abilities and desires.

Inclusion means that all people with disabilities should be accommodated freely and openly in family and society, like normal people, without any constraint or restriction. Although inclusion places a strong emphasis on physical accessibility and universal design to promote global mobility, its primary objective is cultural reform. Disability studies are generally supported as an intellectual movement by inclusion, which also emphasizes the importance of including handicapped people. The inclusion of people with disabilities will decrease both the mental and physical obstacles that have been created and will have a positive effect on them. Inclusion is a complex process, but it is necessary for the development of persons with disabilities and their rights; therefore, the government and society should provide support, advice, and aid for their well-being.

Bollywood's cinema, renowned globally for its vibrant storytelling and dazzling cinematic creations and is beginning to address the issue of disability inclusion, has recently engaged in a significant fight for disability inclusion to change the negative perception and attitude of society towards disabled. In disability inclusion, the role of Bollywood movies is important because Bollywood and society are interrelated; Bollywood is known as the mirror of society. Persons with disability has been a longstanding concern globally, which should have been addressed and discussed but unfortunately was ignored because challenges such as stereo types, lack of accessibility, and limited representation persist, and historically, the portrayal of characters with disabilities in Bollywood films has been limited and has also promoted perpetuating misconceptions and reinforcing societal stigmas. Now, however, a positive shift is occurring. Some Bollywood movies have started to feature characters with disabilities, which increases awareness in society about how a person with disability struggles in daily life.

The Bollywood cinema, renowned globally for its vibrant storytelling and dazzling cinematic creations and for beginning to address the issue of disability inclusion, has recently engaged in a significant fight for disability inclusion to change the negative perception and attitude of society towards disabled. In the disability inclusion, the Bollywood is very crucial because Bollywood and society are interrelated, and Bollywood is known as the mirror of society. The Disability has been a longstanding concern globally, which should have been addressed and discussed but unfortunately was ignored because challenges such as stereotypes, lack of accessibility, and limited representation persist, and historically, the portrayal of characters with disabilities in Bollywood has been limited and has also promoted perpetuating misconceptions and reinforcing societal stigmas. Now, however, a positive shift is occurring; some Bollywood have started to feature characters with disabilities, which is raising awareness in society of how people with disability struggles in daily life.

The fight for disability inclusion is multifaceted. Today, filmmakers are increasingly seeking to tell stories that reflect the richness and complexity of life for individuals with diverse abilities. This not only provides a more accurate reflection of society but also serves to break down stereo types and challenge societal attitudes towards persons with disability. Today, with the help of Bollywood we can better comprehend of disabled problems like personal, societal and educational, while there is still work to be done that is not sufficiently addressed, but represents the Bollywood commitment to disability inclusion represents a positive and progressive shift. The Bollywood disability inclusion is not just a quest for representation; it is a call to action for societal change.

### **Selected articles and research papers for review study-**

Researcher has followed the review paper and articles to collect the systematic information about disability inclusion and how Bollywood's efforts towards disability inclusion successful. The researcher used the electronic databases such as Shodganga, Scopus, and Google Scholar, Research Gate, ERIC and used the keywords like "disability inclusion," "Bollywood," "representation," and related terms for collect the information. The researcher has reviewed the bollywood movies to "between" 2000 to 2023, focusing on disability inclusion by bollywood to understand the patterns, trends, and gaps in disability inclusion.

1. **Dhandhukia, Aahuti. (2023).** Conducted a study on "**Changing Social Perspectives on Disability in Hindi Films Dosti and Barfi**" this research paper highlighting their impact on societal perceptions of disabled individuals. While "Dosti" perpetuates stereotypes of disability as a personal tragedy, "Barfi" offers a more nuanced and progressive representation, addressing complex issues like agency, inter dependence and social victimization. By contrasting these films, the study emphasizes the importance of realistic portrayals in shaping public consciousness and fostering understanding. Such representations in popular media can enhance disability awareness, promote empathy, and encourage a more inclusive society, ultimately challenging discrimination and marginalization of disabled people in India.

2. **Deo, Tejaswini. (2022).** Conducted a research on “**Representation of Disability and Sexual Agency in Margarita with a Straw**” researcher presents a groundbreaking analysis of "Margarita with a Straw"(2015), highlighting its progressive representation of disability and sexual agency. Unlike many Bollywood films that portray disabled individuals as pitiable or villainous, this movie empowers its characters by exploring their sexual identities and emotional well-being. It argues for normalizing disability and creating enabling environments that allow individuals to thrive. By addressing the intersection of disability and sexuality, the film challenges stereotypes and fosters a more nuanced understanding of disabled people's experiences. This refreshing portrayal promotes awareness and acceptance, encouraging audiences to recognize the complexity of disabled identities.

3. **Mukherjee, Trisha. (2022).** Conducted a study on “**Representation of Disability in Indian Movies: A survey of perception of parents of Kolkata who live with it**” This research highlights the critical issue of disability misapprehension in India, where individuals with impairments face significant social exclusion. It emphasizes the potential of media, particularly cinema, to educate and raise awareness among the public about disability. By collaborating with NGOs, media can challenge stereotypes and foster understanding among neurotypical audiences. The study focuses on the perspectives of parents of differently-abled children, offering insights into their experiences and the protective love they provide. Their voices can illuminate the positive impact of authentic media representation, ultimately encouraging acceptance and compassion in society towards individuals with disabilities.

4. **Pandey, Neha& Singh, Dev Vrat. (2021).** Conduct study on “**Framing Disability in Contemporary Bollywood Cinema**” in this article bollywood highlights a notable shift from the traditional medical model—characterized by pity and dependency—to a more nuanced social model that emphasizes acceptance and empowerment. Films post-2000, such as "Barfi!" and "Chhichhore," portray disabled characters as complex individuals, challenging stereotypes and fostering empathy. It evolution not only normalizes disability in mainstream narratives but also contributes to societal change by promoting inclusivity and understanding. As representations improve, they encourage positive dialogues around disability rights in India, ultimately inspiring greater acceptance and challenging existing prejudices within society.

## **Let us look at a list of some Bollywood movies that have fought for disability inclusion and given messages in a sensitive way –**

1. **Srikanth (2024).** Directed by Manoj V. and represented the visual impairment disability in this movie.

**Role of the character:** Rajkumar Rao plays role of a visually Impaired ‘Bhola’ in who struggles in his life to becoming independent.

**Message of Movie for society:** The film conveys a message aimed at empowering students and advocating for the respectful educational, occupational and living opportunities of individuals with disabilities.

2. **“Hichki”(2018)**. Directed by Siddharth P. Malhotra and represented the Tourette syndrome disability in this movie.

**Role of the character:** A school teacher (Rani Mukerji) which is affected by a neurological disability.

**Message of Movie for society:** This movie has given a message to society and family that any problem cannot stop us from achieving our goal and Divyang are not a burden on anyone if given proper guidance, so they can do their best in life.

3. **“Margarita with a Straw”(2014)**. Directed by Shonali Bose and character is an affected by Cerebral palsy disability.

**Role of the character:** Laila is a College student who is a victim of cerebral palsy and does not suppress her sexual desires.

**Message of Movie for society:** In this Laila loves, fights, and enjoys every moment of her life, and in this Bollywood movie, the message in society is that disability is not a barrier to enjoyment, and sexuality is also needed by disabled people like normal people. This movie depicts the lesson for disabled people as well as society that rejection is not the end of life; it prepares us to do better and work towards a bigger goal in life.

4. **Barfi(2012)**. Directed by Anurag Basu and it based on deaf-mute and Autism.

**Role of the character:** Barfi (Ranbir Kapoor) plays a deaf and mute character and Jhilmil (Priyanka) has autism.

**Message of Movie for society:** They both fall in love with each other, and finally they get married. This movie gives a big message to society that love cannot be defined or bound by rule and regulation of society's and also love has no language and it conquers all disabilities. It shows that happiness is not dependent on money or physical ability and they also have emotions like normal people.

5. **My Name Is Khan (2010)**. Directed by Karan Johar and this movie show the condition of Asperger's syndrome which is a type of Autism disability.

**Role of the character:** Rizwan Khan, who has Asperger's syndrome which belong from Muslim category and struggling for to proof i am khan not a terrorist.

**Message of Movie for society:** Throughout the movie, Rizwan faces various trials and tribulations, but his unwavering determination and genuine heart win over those he encounters, but the film gives the message themes of love and acceptance.

6. **Taare Zameen Par (2007)**. It based on Dyslexia, a neurological disorder form of Learning Disability.

**Role of the character:** In this film, Amir Khan) plays the role of a special educator and meets Shaan Awasthi, who is affected by dyslexia, a neurological disorder.

**Message of Movie for society:** This movie gives a big message to parents, siblings, teachers, peers and society about how to behave with children or students. It highlighted the importance of empathy, patience, and understanding in education and also gives the message that we must understand the strengths and weaknesses of children & should be encouraged based on their ability for move forward.

7. **Black (2005)**, Represented the deaf and blind disability.

**Role of the character:** A young girl Michelle McNally (Rani Mukherjee), who is deaf, blind and mute.

**Message of Movie for society:** The film shows how cases the power of perseverance and education, urging society to invest in the potential of people with disabilities. It emphasizes the importance of breaking societal barriers and the transformative power of compassion and determination.

8. **Koi Mil Gaya (2003)**. In movie character is depicted as having intellectual disability.

**Role of the character:** Rohit (Hrithik Roshan), a young man with is an intellectual disability and struggles with societal prejudice but grows through his the journey.

**Message of Movie for society:** The movie promotes inclusivity and challenges preconceived notions about people with disabilities. It stresses that if individuals with disabilities can best and contribute in society if given the opportunity because everyone has the chance and capability to shine.

9. **Paa(2009)**, represented the Progeria which is rare genetic disorder.

**Role of the character:** It movie intelligent and witty 12-year-old boy named Auro who is suffering from progeria.

**Message of Movie for society:** Paa follows a young boy's struggle with a serious illness, highlighting his fight for life and the emotional challenges of living with an irreversible condition, while showing how his family copes with its impact.

### **Motivational impact of Bollywood-**

- The Bollywood change the negative perception of parents towards person with disability.
- The Bollywood provide a plat form to persons with disability to achieve their aims.
- The Bollywood encourages acceptance and support for diverse talents of disability people.
- The Bollywood increase the endurance power to face incontinent situations.
- The Bollywood increase the love, affection, and respect in society for person with disability.
- The bollywood improve the quality life of people with disabilities and help to reduce social unrest and marginalization from their life.
- The Bollywood introduces the real life of person with disability to society.
- The Bollywood represent the faith and courage of person with disabilities

### **Conclusion**

Bollywood is a major entertainment and informational resource in India which blends emotion, storytelling, and cultural relevance enables it to motivate audiences on personal, social, and national levels. But today it is playing a significant role in society by creating social awareness and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. Such a Bollywood movie shows that disabled people are equal to normal,

and they can do everything like normal people but need positive support and guidance. It also shows that disability is only in people's minds and thoughts because there is no dearth of the courage and enthusiasm of the disabled; hence, reality-based inspirational and motivational movies slap the faces of such people who think negatively towards people with disabilities and consider them a burden on the family and society. So Bollywood movies related to disability should continue to be made because, through this, they develop confidence in people with disabilities and have positive effects on families and society regarding people with disabilities.

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