

'Bollywood': Victim or Ally?

A WHO study on the portrayal of
tobacco in Indian Cinema

Executive Summary

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'Bollywood': Victim or Ally?

Introduction

On the occasion of the World No Tobacco Day on 31 May, 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) has decided to focus on the theme "Tobacco Free Films. Tobacco Free Fashion. Action!" It is a call for action to the film and fashion industries to stop promoting tobacco, which kills one in two regular users. The WHO is supported by the American Medical Association, the Los Angeles Department of Health and the SmokeFreeMovies project at the University of California in San Francisco in its call to the film industries to rid films of their tobacco-promoting role.

The use of brand placements in Hollywood movies has been a popular practice among tobacco companies. There is documentary evidence to show that Sylvester Stallone was paid US \$500,000 to use tobacco products in five films (1983) and Larks shelled out \$350,000 to feature in the James Bond extravaganza *License to Kill* (1988). The so-called "voluntary" ban imposed by Hollywood on celebrity endorsements of tobacco brands in movies in 1989 has not had made a dent in the portrayal of smoking in Hollywood movies. The SmokeFreeMovies project has noted that "actors now display or smoke featured brands ten times more than before the 1989 payola ban – celebrity endorsements the size of billboards. Videos and cable expose Big Tobacco's prime younger markets to these images over and over, in perpetuity." The fact that this strategy has worked for Big Tobacco is evident. The impact of this on youth has been devastating as studies have shown that "non-smoking teens whose favorite stars smoke frequently on screen are 16 times more likely to develop positive attitudes towards smoking."

Acknowledging this fact, the American Medical Association has reiterated the need for "reducing tobacco use in movies." It's not just Hollywood films that are tobacco-friendly. Increasingly, tobacco companies have reached out to film industries in other parts of the world. One of the most significant film markets and industries is based in Mumbai, in India, which has the distinction of producing the largest number of movies – over 900 per year. Mainstream Indian films target an estimated 250 million youngsters in India alone. Besides, Indian films reach out to a huge audience in South Asia, the Middle-East, parts of the UK, US, Africa and Europe. It is evident that the size and popularity of this industry has the power to influence the behavior and attitudes of millions of people in India and around the world. It is in this context that Strategic Mediaworks was requested by WHO to research the incidence of portrayal of tobacco products in mainstream Indian films.

This report is the result of several discussions between WHO and Strategic Mediaworks, which has consulted with media experts, sociologists, film and television professionals and academics and scanned media reports to gauge the impact of films on youth, particularly in the context of the portrayal of tobacco usage.

Movies are a national obsession with Indians. Not surprising for a nation that produces more than 900 films a year in different languages – Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. It reaches out to 188 million viewers in a year and ticket sales in a given year for the 12,900 cinema halls are approximately 5,000 million tickets. Satellite television has helped cinema reach out to a larger audience. There are more than 10 movie channels that telecast movies round the clock. Two of the prominent movie channels reach 35-40% of the 40 million Cable and Satellite (C&S) households in India each week. The four major general entertainment channels show 5-10 movies a week and reach 60-70% of the C&S audience every week. Films and film based programming account for 25% to 30% of programming content and are the key viewership drivers for all general entertainment channels. Films on TV have become big business so much so that

newly released films air on TV within six months of their debut in theatres. The reach of cinema goes much beyond the official statistics though, for cable and video piracy have ensured that pirated copies of films are distributed unofficially on the same day that a new film is released. It is estimated that 230,000 people each day watch a movie illegally.

For decades, Indian films have provided lifestyle cues to youth. And tobacco has featured prominently in the portrayal of icons like Ashok Kumar, Dev Anand, and Raj Kapoor in the 1950s and 1960s and by later day legends such as Amitabh Bachchan and Rajnikanth. Currently three of the most popular young actors – Shahrukh Khan, Ajay Devgan and Sanjay Dutt – are often seen smoking on- and off-screen. The tobacco industry has exploited this as part of their marketing activities by using film stars and associating with film events both in the Hindi and regional language films in India. Tobacco advertising on television and in cinema routinely featured film stars as models – including two very popular actors, Jackie Shroff and Akshay Kumar – and the ads leveraged the film stars' image as "men of action".

It is important to understand how the tobacco industry has leveraged cinema to reinforce the images around their brands and how cinema in turn has promoted the cause of tobacco. This research aims at understanding the degree of influence the tobacco industry has on Indian cinema in a detailed and a comprehensive manner.



Executive Summary

India, with its billion-strong population and nearly 250 million tobacco users, is one of the prime target markets for tobacco companies. Cigarette users comprise just 14% of the total tobacco using population. This presents a big opportunity for cigarette manufacturers who are increasingly looking at youth to grow their sales. The 15-24 year old population stands at 199.2 million and is projected to grow to 231 million by 2013¹. Nearly 5 million children under the age of fifteen are addicted to tobacco. According to the National Family Health Survey, 29% of the India's adult male population and 2.5% of India's adult female population smoke and 28% of India's male population and 12% of India's female population consume other forms of tobacco².

Increasingly cigarette companies are targeting the youth. Promotions involving the youth are part of tobacco brands' marketing agenda. The aggressive marketing of cigarette brands at places where youngsters hang out – discotheques, private parties, music events and contests at hotels and restaurants – has led to an increase in smoking among youngsters. This is increasingly evident in the major metropolitan cities. Film events, such as the Filmfare Awards, which have a television reach of nearly 40 million, are routinely sponsored by tobacco companies.

The Indian government has recognized the harm that is caused by tobacco and has prohibited tobacco manufacturers from advertising tobacco products on television and imposed a partial ban on advertising on print. This has greatly limited the potential of tobacco companies to market their product and the tobacco companies are trying to identify new avenues to market their product. The strategies generally adopted are surrogate brand extension, outdoor, events sponsorships and cinema.

India boasts of a thriving film industry that produces more than 900 films in almost all Indian languages every year. It accounts for nearly 27% of the global film production by volume.³ Bollywood films, or Hindi-language productions made in Mumbai, and Tamil and Telugu films, made in Chennai and Hyderabad, form the bulk of Indian film productions. The audience for mainstream Indian films, comprises not only of Indians in their home country but also viewers in other parts of the Indian subcontinent, large parts of the Middle-East and South-East Asia, the UK, US and Europe.

Portrayal of tobacco in Indian cinema – whether done consciously as brand placements or unwittingly by filmmakers for reasons of creating absorbing cinema – continues to be a major cause of concern as cinema over 61 million people⁴ across India.

The emergence of satellite television in India since the early 1990s has further extended the reach of Indian cinema. The constant demand for television software is met by films and film-based programming. Similarly, television offers the film industry not just additional viewership but also an additional revenue stream. Today there are more than 10 television channels that telecast movies 24 hours a day. Another five movie channels show American movies. Besides, films are telecast weekly on the main entertainment channels on prime time – including national broadcaster Doordarshan, and the private channels like STAR TV, Sony and Zee.

Footprints of satellite channels reach across the world. As a result, Indian films are increasingly finding a larger audience in Europe, America and Asia. Film producers are today releasing their films globally and satellite channels help them to promote

¹ Statistical Outlook of India 2001-02

² Family Health Survey (NFHS-2) 1998-99

³ Screen Digest

⁴ IRS 2001 round 2

their films among the Indian diaspora as well as local audiences. Bollywood films are not only earning more money but also spending lavishly on production values to score a hit with global audiences. The Mani Ratnam-directed *Dil Se* was the first Bollywood film to make it to the top 10 UK charts. Sooraj Barjatya's family drama *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*, celebrated 50 weeks on foreign shores. And Yash Chopra's candyfloss romance, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* earned total revenues of \$10 million, of which \$4 million came from the US and Europe.

The tobacco-cinema linkage.

Given its size, reach and popularity, the film industry have the power to influence the behavior and attitudes of millions of people – particularly the youth – in India and around the world. Tobacco companies have found an ally in Indian cinema. For transnational tobacco companies, India's film industry offers a huge opportunity to reach out to millions of film-crazy youngsters. This is particularly significant because increasingly tobacco brands are finding it difficult to advertise in the mainstream media.

Indian cinema has in many instances unwittingly glamorized tobacco usage. The trend began in the early 1950s when the superstars of the times, Ashok Kumar, Dev Anand and Raj Kapoor, were portrayed smoking cigarettes and cigars in their films. Smoking was associated with romance, style, tragedy and rebellion. In South Indian films, cigarettes have long been associated with style and sophistication. Smoking as a style accessory in South Indian films is believed to have been first used in a 1949 film titled *Velai Kari*. The association has only grown stronger over the years, reaching a pinnacle with superstar Rajnikanth's much imitated act of tossing a cigarette in his mouth and lighting up. Rajnikanth's "stylish" way of lighting up in movies of the late '80s enjoys instant recall and adulation among the youth even today.

In Bollywood, with the arrival of Amitabh Bachchan in the 1970s, the anti-hero came into his own. Traditionally, the anti-hero is characterized by the two acknowledged vices – smoking and drinking. This helps identify him as the anti-hero and lends him an aura of rebellion which has its own appeal with youngsters. While villains drink and smoke as part of well-established signifying codes, they are not always appealing or worthy of emulation – Amitabh Bachchan's characters are.

Bachchan's characters in countless movies represented the marginalized and the oppressed. He was a man on a mission of justice. He wore his angst on his sleeve and smoking was an act of rebellion. Through blockbuster films such as *Deewaar*, *Coolie* and *Sholay*, Bachchan turned into a "working class" hero and the *bidi* became a part of the Bachchan persona.

After Amitabh Bachchan a string of actors continued the angry young man's fight. The anti-hero of the 1970's continued into the 1980's but with a difference – his mission was personal vendetta. The films of Sunny Deol and Sanjay Dutt who bridged the gap between the late 1980's and the 1990's portrayed two facets of the hero. The hero was both the hardcore vigilante and the romantic with a soft inner core. Due to the duality of their characterization they inhabited a hazy space – often filled with smoke from their cigarettes.

By the 1990's the entry of Shahrukh Khan gave a new twist to the anti-hero tale. In films such as *Baazigar* and *Darr*, he was a wronged young man, a disturbed young lover rejected by society or the woman he loved which left him emotionally and psychologically scarred. Briefly, smoking formed a part of Khan's on-screen persona, until he emerged as the romantic boy next door in films like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* and *Devdas*, whose box-office collections smashed all

records. Though Khan rarely smokes on screen in his candyfloss romances, he is often photographed smoking in his press and TV interviews.

Film stars in India lead very public lives. Several aspects of the Indian film industry from film inaugural functions, information about shooting locales, love lives and heart breaks in the industry, favorite foods of the stars, where they shop, where they holiday etc receives substantial media coverage. Film stars have huge fan followings and this mass support enables many to build a successful political career. Some stars like Rajnikanth in the South, even have temples dedicated to their glory. The new generation of actors is selling images of healthiness. They are all brawn and biceps and they all smoke. Smoking has got a new lease of life and it often seems as if smoking is being promoted as a healthy habit. Film stars from Bollywood as well as the South, have been used in tobacco advertisements. The fact that superstars such as Shahrukh Khan, Ajay Devgan, Sanjay Dutt and Rajnikanth smoke off-screen, has helped establish a strong triangular relationship between their public image, their personal lives and tobacco. Recognizing this relationship, tobacco companies have gone to the extent of providing famous actors with a free life time supply of cigarettes

Approach to the Research.

Films and filmstars have a huge impact on the lives of youth. This study is aimed at understanding the extent to which movies impact youth's lifestyles and the impact of portrayal of tobacco in films.

It was therefore necessary to estimate the actual number of incidents of smoking in movies. A content analysis of the films was aimed at recording the number of tobacco incidents; the type of tobacco used; the situations, moods and locations in which these incidents were portrayed. Brand usage and demographic details of characters using tobacco on screen were the other important criteria. It was also important that the sample of films selected for viewing were homogenous so as to enable comparison. It was decided that 30-35 top films – comprising of the biggest revenue earners of the year – were to be viewed for the 12-year period 1991 to 2002. This particular timeframe was selected as it coincided with teenagers' exposure to movies during their growing up years.

It was felt that the content analysis should be conducted by youth themselves. Their opinion on the films would enable in assessing the likely impact the films would have on them. These would be achieved by recording the incidents as well as teenagers' opinion in a structured format. The predefined sample of the youth was representative of the upper and middle socio-economic classes in the leading cities of the country.

To relate the findings of tobacco portrayal in films with the changing mindset of the youth, we decided to conduct focus group discussions among teenagers. This exercise would enable us to establish a linkage between portrayal of tobacco in movies and the role that cinema plays in the day to day lives of teenagers. The qualitative research would be used to understand whether the youth of today is influenced by movies and movie idols and if so in what manner – lifestyle, behavior or some other fashion.

It was also important to probe the mindset of filmmakers and understand the key drivers for tobacco portrayal in films. Who, why, where and how tobacco is consumed on screen and who takes the decision to portray tobacco usage in films? This was best done through in-depth interviews with the leading filmmakers and creative personnel in the film industry. Gaining insights into the filmmaking process of Bollywood and South Indian filmmakers would enable in the development of advocacy programs in the future.

Thumbs Up Thumbs Down – The study

This study has been undertaken to assess tobacco incidence in movies released during the 1991-2002 period. The analysis is aimed at understanding tobacco portrayal in movies on the following counts: types of tobacco usage, situations and location of tobacco consumption and the profiles of characters shown using tobacco. The movies have been also evaluated for anti-smoking messages or special situations depicting usage of tobacco products.

Selection of the films has been done keeping in mind the widespread reach of Hindi films. Regional language films – especially Tamil and Telugu – dominate in the South and hence the sample included films in these two languages. The sampling frame consists of films that have been classified as "A" category films – that is with earnings of \$600,000-plus – for each year. After that "B" category films – those earning between \$500,000 and \$600,000 – have been viewed. Whenever the number of films has fallen short of the required number, "C" category films have been included – those with earnings of less than \$500,000. The number of "C" category films has increased after 1996 as these films have enjoyed high television viewership ratings. Based on these ratings, a sample of Bollywood films aired on television has also been selected.

The films have been viewed by teenagers who have given them a Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down or Neutral rating based on their assessment of the extent of tobacco portrayal and its influence on viewers. A total sample of 300 respondents has been achieved.

Methodology

A review of 275 Hindi films and 60 each of Tamil and Telugu films is considered appropriate for the purpose of review. Twenty Hindi movies from the year 1991-1995 and 25 Hindi movies from the year 1996-2002 have been viewed. Five movies each of Tamil and Telugu –released between 1991-2002 – have also been viewed. Forty five Hindi movies telecast on TV channels in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 but released prior to 1991, have been considered as a separate sample for analysis due to their high television ratings.

The total number of movies viewed is 440. An additional sample of 90 South Indian films comprising 10 Telugu and 20 Tamil films for each year has also been considered for comparison purposes. This has been done to facilitate understanding of trends in South Indian films over the past three years.

Thumbs Up Thumbs Down study – Key findings

The portrayal of tobacco consumption in Indian cinema can be considered extremely high. Tobacco portrayal is prevalent in 76% of the films that have been reviewed for the 1991-2002 period. A cyclical trend has been observed with slight dips but the 80% level is reached every alternate year till 1997. Cigarettes account for nearly 72% of all smoking incidents during the 1991-2002 period. Cigarette incidents account for 85% of all tobacco incidents in 2002, which is very high compared to 1991. A cyclical trend with a peak after four years has been observed in the case of cigarette depiction. These trends found in Bollywood films follow a similar to the trends found in Hollywood films.

• **Table 0-1 Trends of smoking incidents in films**

Amount of Tobacco by Movie & Hours	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
Total Number of Movies	30	30	30	30	30	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	395
Total Number with Tobacco	24	23	24	21	24	25	28	25	30	28	25	25	302
Percentages with Tobacco	80.00	76.67	80.00	70.00	80.00	71.43	80.00	71.43	85.71	80.00	71.43	71.43	76.46
Total Number of Hour	75	75	75	75	75	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	987.5
Total Number of Incidents	166	171	164	142	174	201	234	295	214	162	267	273	2463
Average Number of Incidents per Hour	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2
Total Duration of Tobacco incidents (in seconds)	1235	979	923	611	1072	1021	1268	1290	972	1033	938	1992	13334
Average duration of a tobacco incident (in seconds)	7	6	6	4	6	5	5	4	5	6	4	7	5

Mood association with tobacco portrayal

As demonstrated in table 0-2, there has been an increase in depiction of smoking in stressful situations - going up from 9% in 1991 to nearly 29% in 2002. Additionally, there has been a sharp rise in tobacco portrayal as a rebellious activity in the years 2001-02.

Table 0-2 Total incidents by mood when used

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
Total Wealth/Power Incidents	16	2	1	4	9	9	5	8	1	9	26	6	96
Percent of Incidents	9.64	1.17	0.61	2.82	5.17	4.48	2.14	2.71	0.47	5.56	9.74	2.20	3.90
Average Incidents per Hour	0.21	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.12	0.10	0.06	0.09	0.01	0.10	0.30	0.07	0.10
Total Tension/Stress Incidents	16	16	15	8	7	38	34	46	39	23	32	78	352
Percent of Incidents	9.64	9.36	9.15	5.63	4.02	18.91	14.53	15.59	18.22	14.20	11.99	28.57	14.29
Average Incidents per Hour	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.11	0.09	0.43	0.39	0.53	0.45	0.26	0.37	0.89	0.36
Total Relaxation Incidents	7	3	10	6	8	16	12	20	11	9	13	4	119
Percent of Incidents	4.22	1.75	6.10	4.23	4.60	7.96	5.13	6.78	5.14	5.56	4.87	1.47	4.83
Average Incidents per Hour	0.09	0.04	0.13	0.08	0.11	0.18	0.14	0.23	0.13	0.10	0.15	0.05	0.12
Total Rebellious Incidents	6	0	3	8	2	4	5	1	7	1	10	29	76
Percent of Incidents	3.61	0.00	1.83	5.63	1.15	1.99	2.14	0.34	3.27	0.62	3.75	10.62	3.09
Average Incidents per Hour	0.08	0.00	0.04	0.11	0.03	0.05	0.06	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.11	0.33	0.08

Portrayal of tobacco and character profile

The depiction of smoking as a rebel activity has remained constant. But increasingly smoking is being associated with attitudes of "independence" and "self-assertion". The incidence of smoking among positive characters (good guys) is 50% of all instances. It has remained the same almost throughout the review period (Refer: table 0-3). Interestingly, the incidence of smoking among bad guys has declined considerably in the last 12 years. This belies filmmakers' claims that in contemporary Hindi film the hero is less likely to smoke.

The incidence of smoking among the good guys has risen sharply from 22% in 1991 to 53% in 2002 (Refer table: 0-3). This finding is of significance as films are unwittingly depicting cigarette smoking as a normal activity.

▪ **Table 0-3: Total incidents by demographic profile**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
Total Good Guy Character Incidents	79	75	79	62	107	110	95	152	138	76	148	116	1237
Percent of Incidents	47.59	43.86	48.17	43.66	61.49	54.73	40.60	51.53	64.49	46.91	55.43	42.49	50.22
Percent of all movies	40.00	43.33	30.00	26.67	43.33	34.29	31.43	37.14	40.00	34.29	28.57	25.71	34.43
Percent of movies with tobacco	57.14	59.09	42.86	42.11	59.09	50.00	45.83	59.09	50.00	46.15	50.00	40.91	50.18
Average Incidents per Hour	1.05	1.00	1.05	0.83	1.43	1.26	1.09	1.74	1.58	0.87	1.69	1.33	1.25
Total Lead Actor Character Incidents	37	61	66	37	79	70	89	67	115	47	120	147	935
Percent of Incidents	22.29	35.67	40.24	26.06	45.40	34.83	38.03	22.71	53.74	29.01	44.94	53.85	37.96
Percent of all movies	20.00	20.00	40.00	30.00	33.33	31.43	40.00	28.57	57.14	28.57	37.14	40.00	34.18
Percent of movies with tobacco	25.00	26.09	50.00	42.86	41.67	44.00	50.00	40.00	66.67	35.71	52.00	56.00	44.70
Average Incidents per Hour	0.49	0.81	0.88	0.49	1.05	0.80	1.02	0.77	1.31	0.54	1.37	1.68	0.95

There has been an increase in the portrayal of smoking by "neutral" characters. These are characters who are depicted as bad guys who have reformed. Such characters have shades of white and black. In many instances such characters are perceived to be more "realistic" or "normal" and hence when such characters smoke, smoking is perceived to be a normal activity.

Teenage tobacco incidents have been much lower than Hollywood films.

20% of films feature "without character" smoking incidents. Pack shots comprise 23% of incidents, 11% are made up of posters or billboards, 18% feature ash trays (containing stubs at times) and in 48% cases, there is a reference to smoking in the dialogue.

There has been a decline in the portrayal of in-home tobacco consumption. Simultaneously, there has been a rise in the depiction of smoking in public places such as hostels, restaurants and on the street (Refer **Error! Reference source not found.**). This suggests an association of smoking as a fun activity, to be done in the company of friends.

Tobacco portrayal and Superstars

The highest number of smoking incidents in the past 12 years has been recorded in movies featuring superstar Shahrukh Khan. Khan is an idol both among teenagers who have reported prevalence of smoking among friends and those who have not.

- Table 0-4: Usage by leading actors

Name of Actor by Number and Percent of Incidents	TOTAL number of incidents	Percentage of total incidents
Shahrukh Khan	109	4.43
Rajnikanth	103	4.18
Gulshan Grover	68	2.76
Ajay Devgan	55	2.23
Chiranjeev	55	2.23

The second highest number of smoking incidents has been recorded by South Indian film star, Rajnikanth, who has a huge fan following in the southern parts of India. Rajnikanth is among the top five actors idolized by teenagers who are now watching re-runs of his movies on television channels.

Tobacco Brand exposure in Indian Cinema

The use of branded tobacco is not high in Indian mainstream films. However 62 brand exposures have been recorded in the past 12 years. The trend of brand exposure has been more pronounced since 2000. The highest exposure has been for the ITC brand Wills. While it is heartening to note that Indian films have largely desisted from displaying cigarette brand names, this may not remain so in the future. As tobacco companies scout around for opportunities for promoting their brands, films could well turn out to be primary promotion tools for cigarette marketers.

How the films were rated

Notably 31% of films in 2002 have received a Thumbs Down rating as against 13% in 1991. An equal percentage of films – 31% - have been given a Thumbs Up rating. Films which do not impact at all have declined from 77% in 1991 to 37% in 2002.

Films on television

Teenagers' exposure to films is also through TV channels which not only telecast the latest films but hits from earlier years as well. A sample of 35 Hindi films have been selected on the basis of the high television rating points by achieved during the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 on the leading channels. 74.5% of these films portrayed tobacco consumption which is almost equal to the average percentage obtained for the films released during 2000 to 2002 (74.28%). This implies an additional and equal exposure to tobacco consumption from both sources - older hits on TV and new releases on channels and movie halls.

- The incidence of usage of tobacco in the workplace is very high (20%) in films shown on television as compared to the new releases (8%).
- Older films portray higher usage of *bidi* (11%) as compared to the new films (3%). The viewer is also exposed to *bidi* consumption apart from cigarette and cigar consumption which have a higher rate of portrayal in contemporary films.

- Celebration, fun, relaxation and addiction are some of the moods/situations associated with smoking in films shown on television.
- Tobacco consumption in contemporary films is associated with situations of stress relief and assertion of independence.
- The films shown on TV are not a major influence as far as brand exposure is concerned. 92% of the incidents feature unbranded tobacco as compared to 85% in new releases.
- In older films shown on television, the bad guys smoke (50%) while in the current crop of films, it's the good guys who smoke (50%). However, the earlier films are successful in reinforcing the belief that tobacco usage is acceptable among the bad guys.
- The portrayal of tobacco consumption by females is higher (8%) in earlier films as compared to just about 2.5% in contemporary films.
- Consumption by lead actors which accounts for 45% of incidents in the films released during the past three years is further compounded by the consumption of tobacco by the lead actor (38%) in films shown on television.
- 62% of films shown on are judged "neutral" as they are perceived to have no impact by teenage reviewers. This is significant as many of these films do have smoking incidents but these are perceived to be normal behavior. About 29% of the films have received a Thumbs Down rating, which is more than the number of films that have been similarly judged in the past three years (22%).
- 51% of the films shown on television carried a no smoking message. However the impact of that has not been much as can be seen from the number of films which have received a Thumbs Down rating..

Impact of smoking of Bollywood films shown on television

The youth is exposed to a larger variety of tobacco products through films broadcast on television. The situations shown also widen the scope for usage of tobacco products in home, bars, and other locations. Nearly 38% of the tobacco incidents in these movies are filmed with leading actors. These actors are powerful role models for the youth which is likely to motivate many to follow in their footsteps. In these films, smoking is associated with celebration and fun. Since a larger number of films broadcast on television have been awarded a Thumbs Down rating, the impact of such films is likely to be significant.

Focus groups - Indian cinema influence on youth behavior

Having quantified the extent of tobacco portrayal in films, a qualitative component has been introduced to the study. This is aimed at facilitating an understanding of the relevance of movies and movie idols in the context of teenage lifestyles and behavior.

Eight focus groups have been conducted to get a feel of the role that movies play in the lives of youth today. The research objectives include the following:

- To ascertain the space which teenagers allocate to movies in their daily lives.
- To evaluate the influence that cinema has on the teenage mind
- To ascertain teenagers' opinion about depiction of tobacco in cinema and its impact.

Research Methodology:

A total of eight groups, each comprising of teenagers in the 16-18 years age group were conducted in Mumbai and Delhi. The groups consisted of smoker and non-smoker participants and also male and female participants.

Key Findings:

Role of Hindi films in their lives:

Overall and across SEC and gender, films – Hindi films in particular – seem to play a large role in the lives of teenagers today. Discussions on films form a large part of daily 'gossip', and extend to a large degree into the real lives of film stars. Some quotes:

"When we are with friends we talk about lectures, about girls, about movies ... for example .. we are all waiting to see Kaante ... songs are a great hit"

"People are so crazy about movies ... they shave the back of their heads to display movie names"

Areas of influence on everyday life:

When it comes to fashion, romance and language, Bollywood movies are a constant reference point for youngsters. Gangster films are particularly popular with college students. Dialogues from these films are routinely used in their conversations with friends. When combined with the right clothes and symbols – motorbikes, cigarettes, girls/guys, mobile phones – the language becomes the idiom for the group. It gives youngsters a sense of belonging.

Imitation and Experimentation:

Films fuel the youngsters' desire to live out their fantasies. While the influence of films is openly admitted in some cases, in other instances it is observed through teenage behavior during the discussions.

Films are a medium through which teenagers are presented with new ideas - be it in terms of dress codes, behavior or attitude. These are often imitated and used by youth in their daily interactions with friends and acquaintances

"we get guts after seeing movies"

"films do influence us .. we try to act like them ... try to win a girl using methods we have seen heroes use. Try to be good like the hero. Try to copy his dress style"

Influence on romance:

Films have created a yearning for romance, to be tagged "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" implies popularity, cool-ness and modernity. Sexual innuendo/ 'tease' is a powerful weapon and these are associated with winking, whistling, ragging and propositioning.

"in college it is necessary to have a girlfriend. It's a fashion"

"if a guy does not have a girlfriend, he is jealous of others who do ... and he gets teased"

"we go to movies ... who sees them .. we are with our girlfriend"

Emulating the Hero - Herogiri:

This is a concept which has come from the movies. To be or act like a hero – this implies style, fashion and is associated with 'cool' behavior.

"the way they speak we copy .. Arnold S .. I know so many dialogues of his"

"even girls like us can start doing 'dadagiri' (behave like roadside hoodlums). We get influenced by movies, get ideas from there

Establishing linkages with glamour symbols:

Bikes, cars, discos, smoking, dance, boozing, fashion – clothes/accessories/hairstyles – and body building are the symbols that are considered most glamorous.

"My friends say I resemble Sanjay Dutt. So I joined a gym to get his type of body (physique). Copy his hairstyle and mannerisms too. Who knows, one day I may get a good break"

"wearing tight t-shirts like Salman Khan, riding bikes, doing 360 degrees in cars and bikes"

"we copy everything .. their dress, hairstyle – streaks in hair, sandals, accessories, jewellery"

Language - a powerful identity badge:

Being labeled '*bhais, mavalis, tapori*' by their group is cool. The language is picked up from films. *Bhai* in Hindi film lexicon refers to mafia dons, *mavalis* and *tapori* are street guys. Many teenagers play back dialogues from popular films, especially 'gangster' movies and use slang that is picked up from the movies. It gives them a sense of power, especially when in a group. Moreover, when combined with the right dress and symbols (bikes, cigarettes, girls/guys, cell phones), it becomes the idiom of the group, and gives them a sense of belonging:

"nowadays in colleges there are so many who want to copy characters from *Vaastav* and *Company*. They come by bikes or cars, carry hockey sticks, really pick fights, and carry mobile phones. Films are drama ... but people get influenced by them and carry it into the real world"

"we try to talk like *bhailog* (gangsters). Get all charged up"

"rough language ... *nikal le ... thok dalega ...*"

"*aati kya khandala ...* we discuss and copy these dialogues"

Projecting the right Image:

Projecting the right 'image' is an important aspect. For instance, girls aspire to project the "Uptown Girl" image - it's one who is provocative, presents a challenge - not just to other girls but boys as well. These girls are perceived to be the ones most likely to smoke.

"some girls think they are so smart. They move around in groups ... can answer back to any question. Rough and tough they can be. They tease us ... whistle at us, pass comments"

Impact of smoking depictions in films on the groups:

Most smokers openly admitted that films influenced their habit as it was fashionable; however a few smokers felt they weren't influenced by films in this habit. Smokers also admitted that they copy styles of smoking of different characters/actors in the movies. The primary trigger for picking up this habit seemed to be the need to fit in, to be part of a group that's 'cool'.

Triggers to smoke:

Peer pressure is the most commonly cited reason for smoking. Being fashionable and the need to fit in are the other reasons.

"you have to smoke in a group. They will force you to smoke"

"its more of a fashion – everyone will have it. If you don't you're left out"

"don't want to be left out"

"can't get into rock music without smokes and dope"

Smoking styles:

The Thumbs Up Thumbs Down finding that there has been a rise in the portrayal of tobacco usage among lead characters is corroborated through the focus group discussions. Style is what counts and the way lead actors smoke in films has a significant impact on youngsters.

"Sanjay Dutt in Vaastav holds the cigarette like a *bidi* ... we do it unconsciously ... try to copy him .. but no one really discusses it" (an interesting observation .. this characteristic smoking style was brought up and discussed in all the boys' groups spontaneously)

"Rajnikanth flips the cigarette and tosses it into his mouth. That's so neat. I tried to do it but couldn't"

"people do copy the way they light cigarettes"

Brand Exposures in Films:

Youngsters feel that cigarette brands are not displayed in movies. They point out that rather than the characters, it's the brand that the actor smokes off-screen that is likely to have a greater impact.

"it does impress people ... I am smoking SRK's (Shahrukh Khan's) cigarette brand"

Smoker Stereotypes:

Smoking is associated with certain types of characters on screen. Machismo, arrogance, rebellion, power and control are the underlying and aspirational values that are associated with such characters.

Rich Businessmen smoke - to relieve stress, to make a impact on others. Also, smoking cigars, many feel, translates into high status, sophistication.

The *Tapori* Smoker - Cigarette very much a part of the street 'cool', particularly among lower SEC group boys. As one boy pointed out: "The character of Shahrukh Khan in *Shakti* is that of a *mavali* - so cigarette is necessary." And another boy pointed out: "Cigarette completes the style of a *tapori*."

Bhai's are smokers - The gangster has to be a smoker. Sanjay Dutt in *Vaastav*, Ajay Devgan and Vivek Oberoi in *Company* are the most recalled characters. "It shows power," said one youngster. "It looks attractive - some people would try it at least once."

Only bad women smoke - Manisha Koirala in *Company*, Preity Zinta in *Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* - cigarette is seen as a character requirement when the actress is shown to be a part of a gangster clique or a negative character.

Attitudes towards smoking:

The values that seem to be associated with smoking are: modern, fashionable, cool, arrogant, rebellious, powerful.

"a smoker is a more fashionable guy, more modern, more popular"

"he is famous in college ... he will belong to a popular group"

a cigarette in my hand makes me feel like a man"

Non-smokers' perception of smokers is not very different from that of the smokers'. However non-smokers seem to be a much more reserved and traditional group - they hail from the SEC B, C groups and their "higher morality" seems to be driven by fear of parental and societal disapproval. A couple of these respondents were observed to be in awe of the smoker profile:

"they wear costly clothes, branded clothes"

"they show off .. come on bikes, their style of talking, wear jackets, jewelry, will have a cigarette in their hand for style"

"it's a status symbol ... especially for girls .. their parents may be smoking too, so they have no restrictions ... feel proud, modern"

"they have low willpower"

Hazards of Smoking:

Smokers are aware about the hazards of smoking. Many do feel that "decent, middle class girls" are not impressed by boys who smoke. But the attitude seems to be: "a girl may refuse to marry you if you smoke but marriage is a long way off ... today we want to enjoy."

"Can cause lung cancer, affect teeth .. they get yellow, eyes get red, fingers and nails are stained."

"we know smoking is bad. It's just style ... time pass"

"everyone has to die one day .. you could as well be killed in an accident"

Revealing In-depth Interviews with industry professional's

To identify the key drivers of tobacco portrayal in Indian cinema, depth interviews have been conducted with 31 professionals from the Indian film industry. Of these 28 are among Bollywood professionals and 3 among the South Indian (Tamil and Telugu) filmmakers. The sample includes producers, directors, scriptwriters and actors associated with different styles of filmmaking and genres of films. There are those who specialize in candyfloss romances; others who have made thrillers and action films. Some have directed the biggest blockbusters of Indian cinema. The objective of selecting a diverse group of filmmakers is to assess whether there has been a shift in attitudes towards filmmaking in general and portrayal of tobacco in cinema in particular. Another objective is to understand when, why and how filmmakers decide to include tobacco in scenes and how prevalent tobacco brand placements are in Indian films.

Methodology:

In these interviews the following issues have been explored:

- Is smoking glamorized in films?
- Who decides when to include tobacco in a scene?
- What messages are intended and is there a scope for misinterpretation of the message?
- Do actors' personal smoking habits have a bearing on portrayal of tobacco in a film?
- What is the role of tobacco companies in films?
- What advocacy methods might influence decisions about tobacco portrayal in films?

Key Findings

Do films glamorize smoking?

Eight out of ten professionals vehemently argue that Hindi films do not glamorize smoking – at least not in contemporary films. In fact, most claim that filmmakers today go to great lengths to avoid portraying leading heroes smoking on screen. The 50's and 60's were a different time when awareness about the health hazards of smoking was low. In the '70s too, Bollywood actors relied on smoking to create drama; to look cool; or to just fill up awkward moments in scenes. Most quoted Ashok Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand and Raj Kumar among the leading stars who smoked on-screen. Among the villains, Pran was identified as the actor whose appearance in films was often preceded by the smoke rings that he blew. Even those who admitted that cinema may have glamorized smoking in the past, felt that it was not done consciously. One argument that was presented: the larger-than-life format of the medium tends to glamorize anything that is portrayed. There were a few who did say that smoking has been glamorized because it "looks cool" to be smoking on screen; that a certain "romanticism" has been associated with smoking in Hindi films.

"Anything in films is glamorized. Film is glamour. So there is no glamorizing being done consciously. Films glamorize violence, films glamorize the mafia, drinking, everything. If you get influenced by films, you need to get your head checked." - Jackie Shroff, actor.

"Smoking is not a glamorous thing at all. I don't remember glamorizing smoking in my films. In films people do drink, smoke, but to glamorize that...underlining something to bring it up, I don't think that happens...(In *Deewaar*) do you think we glamorized smoking? Larger than life, you say? He (Amitabh Bachchan) was a common laborer in the film who gets into the smuggling racket. He smokes a *bidi*. When he gets bigger he smokes a cigarette, when he becomes a big don, he smokes a cigar." - Yash Chopra, producer-director.

Emulation of film stars by youth:

When questioned specifically about the significance of actors as role models in influencing youth behavior, some filmmakers agreed that the "aspirational" quality of films has an impact. If smoking is depicted in a manner that is perceived to be aspirational by viewers, it could lead to emulation, they said. But just how much of an impact role models have on youth behavior is difficult to quantify. Some felt that "style" for the youth is an important factor – when it's associated with their favorite film stars, the chances of emulation rise. However, one director felt that the days of hero-worship are over. And a couple of interviewees pointed out that certain "segments" of youngsters are more likely to be influenced by cinema than others – particularly those who haven't got the "right values, upbringing" or those belonging to "the lower strata of society". One director totally rejected the idea that youth behavior can be influenced by films, particularly when it comes to smoking.

"Cinema has an influence, people start emulating fashion and the lifestyle elements because they are presented so well. You can't dissociate the aesthetics of cinema from the emulation that happens among certain people." - Govind Nihalani, director

"I remember in my young age, I was very influenced by Dev Anand's smoking. Because he would play the part of a cop who is investigating (a crime), he would light up, take a drag and then he would get an idea and then he would bash up the criminals. So those fantasies were related to smoking by the leading stars. And so, smoking became a catalyst to the brain exercise – it makes you smart. There was a perception that a person who smokes, thinks better, is a better actor, better artiste. And that an artiste is not creative unless he smokes. - Subhash Ghai, producer/director.

"I don't think there is a lot of impact. I think they see it and forget it. There may be a small percentage of people who may get influenced." - Mahesh Manjrekar, director (Note: Manjrekar directed *Vaastav*, the reference to which came up in all the focus group discussions).

"To give the South example, if they can build temples for film stars, I mean fans can go crazy that way. But I don't think Shah Rukh – or the national stars – have that kind of fan following. Regional stars do. Hrithik may be loved everywhere but if you want to find out whether there is some section of the country that is wanting to build a Hrithik temple, I would think that's a laughable idea." - - Sanjay Daayma, screenwriter

Extent of tobacco portrayal in films:

The general perception is that smoking in Hindi films has declined considerably. Most interviewees quoted the '50s and '60s when Ashok Kumar, Dev Anand and Raj Kapoor were the flag-bearers for smoking. The reasons given for this declining trend include: greater awareness about the hazards of smoking and a rise in health-consciousness among both actors and viewers. The fear of inviting unwanted trouble from the Censors and a trend towards conservatism among filmmakers were also cited as reasons for the perceived decline in tobacco portrayal. Besides, there is also a

correlation between smoking and the genre of film – given that most Hindi films today are romances which, they claim, do not lend themselves to tobacco portrayal. The fact remains that while filmmakers labor under these misconceptions, tobacco portrayal has not declined in Indian films in recent times.

"The hero is much younger than what he used to be. In the 1960s, 1970s, the hero was a 'man'. Now, the hero is a 'boy'. That's the difference. And he is physically fit. He is a very good dancer. In the old days, it was not mandatory – there was one Shammi Kapoor here or a Raj Kapoor there. Most of the male stars were not dancers. Today, all of them dance. All of them are physically fit and he is not as dignified or as "heavyweight" as what they used to be...He is cool, youthful; dignity is not his basic virtue.... Now, because of the Censors, because of changed morality, somehow, cigarette is no longer cool. There are people who smoke but it is not the thing to do. On the other hand, I see a lot many girls smoke nowadays. At least in cities like Delhi and Bombay." - Javed Akhtar, screenwriter and lyricist.

"For the last ten years there has been a round of feel-good films, family films, so there wasn't any reason to show smoking. But if one wasn't aware about this thing (hazards of smoking), I think it would have been quite easy to put it into films. Playing with a cigarette, as they used to...blowing smoke into somebody's face...all that has stopped. It used to happen at one time." - Ramesh Sippy, director

Who takes the decision?

Filmmakers insist that they do make a conscious effort not to portray tobacco in their films. However, the reality is that rarely is it a well-thought out decision. Most film writers and filmmakers agreed that the decision – to smoke or not to smoke – is taken on the sets, when a scene/character is being discussed. Sometimes, a few of them maintained, it is written into the script, but mostly it is a "spur-of-the-moment", arbitrary decision. In fact, portrayal of smoking in films is hardly given any thought at all, as one director pointed out.

"If I feel a character should smoke, he smokes. Smoking is not so important...it's not important enough for me to think why a character should smoke. In Pitaah, Sanjay Dutt does not smoke...No character traits-vaits...nobody goes so indepth. I don't plan it. I don't want to cut the scene just because it might influence somebody to smoke. If I feel the scene deserves it, it gets it." – Mahesh Manjrekar, Director

"There is no set rule for this. Sometimes an actor feels comfortable holding a cigarette, cigar or a pipe in his hand. Sometime a Director feels that a cigar or a pipe can add to his personality. Or perhaps the way an actor holds it or smokes could add to the characterization. Basically the decision is made between the two of them (director and actor) and the writer. Also most of these decisions are taken while the scene is being discussed on the set or while filming is on." - Boney Kapoor, producer

Why and when smoking is portrayed?

Reasons for on-screen smoking elicited diverse replies. Smoking is a prop that actors need; smoking is used as an acting device; smoking helps bring out certain weaknesses/flaws in characters; smoking is associated with villains/vamps

"Sanju plays a gangster in my film (Hathyar). These are habits – smoking, drinking – which go with a restless person. If I want to show restlessness in a person, a person who is not steady, I may show him smoking."- Mahesh Manjrekar, director

"If cigarette as a prop has any dramatic significance...like in a crime film, a butt is discovered at the scene of the crime, then it is built into the script at the time of writing it. Otherwise it is improvised. Sometimes even artistes influence it...can I have a cigarette in this scene, can I do this, can I do that? When the director feels that moments need to be filled up, there is a gap, there is a silence that needs to be filled up, you allow him to light up a cigarette, as a business to cover up some awkward pauses. Or to add style to the character. The style of smoking adds to the persona of the character." - Govind Nihalani, director

Well in this particular (Tamil) film (Gemini), the hero was from the lower classes. He was a rowdy, but there was hardly any smoking; there was a lot of paan-chewing - AVM Shanmugam, director.

What messages are communicated?

Most filmmakers insist that they rarely show the good guys smoking. That's because smoking is a habit that is "looked down upon" by the middle class who are today the target audience of Bollywood movies. Moreover, the Censor Board frowns upon any film that depicts the hero of the film smoking. There are no such constraints on the villains/bad guys/negative characters. In fact, the stereotype of "bad guys smoke" is alive and kicking in Hindi cinema. The general presumption is that nobody would want to emulate a bad character. However, many of these so-called bad characters in some recent films – for example, Manoj Bajpai who plays the role of a cold-blooded assassin in *Satya* – have very charismatic personas. Again, some superstars like Shahrukh Khan and Ajay Devgan have done "negative" roles. A charismatic star assaying the role of a charismatic negative character on screen does have an influence on audiences, said one director. But most brush aside this dilemma by offering the justification that "in the end, the bad character meets a gory end."

Filmmakers' perception about good guys being non-smokers on screen is totally at variance with reality. As the Thumbs Up Thumbs Down findings reveal, the incidence of smoking among positive characters (good guys) is 50% of all instances. It has remained the same almost throughout the 1991-2002 period. On the other hand, contrary to filmmakers' perception, there has been a decline in smoking among the bad guys.

"When you see *Pardes*, *Taal* or *Yaadein*, you'll never find my hero smoking. Except in *Khalnayak* where Sanjay Dutt smokes a *bidi*. But he is a *khalnayak* (villain). We feel that smoking is indulged by someone who is looking for destruction for others and for himself... In films where there are negative characters – like terrorists, where the villains dominate, smoking comes as a property. Smoking, bars, guns, bullets, *kothas* (dancing girls)...these are again *rakshasas'* (demons') properties." - Subhash Ghai, producer/director.

If the audience identified with that (a negative) character, then of course, he would subconsciously absorb his mannerisms and activity. But remember in all these films (like *Satya* – which dwelled on the underworld), the major characters are played by actors who may be stars or may not be stars but have the star charisma built into their personality, otherwise they wouldn't get a major role. So when they smoke, like in *Company*, Ajay (Devgan) smokes. Not only is he a star but also a very fine actor. Though he is portraying a bad character, the audience while seeing him in the film is not just watching Ajay Devgan, they are also watching the character. The consciousness is simultaneous, that's why you enjoy it more. When he does it, it's not just a gangster who is doing it, but also Ajay Devgan who is doing it. There's this seductive quality which is part of the aesthetics of the cinema. Where the star persona and the character is merged in a manner that looks very attractive." - Govind Nihalani, director.

You must understand the social context of the Rajnikanth phenomenon. His being an icon is not to do with smoking but to do with his defiant, cock-up act to the establishment. In the eighties all you had was chocolate box heroes. You have to see Rajnikanth's rise and cinema in the social context. There was this Dalit movement. What do these heroes empathise? They don't empathise cigarettes. Cigarette smoking in front of others is considered offensive—you don't smoke in front of your father! So when Rajnikanth smoked on screen it was aggressively positioning that concept of defiance. It was kind of raising a voice which was not there before. And since he was dark and not did not look the typical TamBrahm (Tamil Brahmin) boy, he was really representing the backward classes and projecting their voice aggressively on screen - Rajiv Menon, director/cinematographer

Role of Tobacco Brands:

In-film advertising is not new in Hindi films, says Subhash Ghai. In fact, he was among the first to have featured in-film ads in his film *Karz*, way back in 1978. Later he also promoted Hero Honda (a motor cycle brand) in his film *Hero*. But most, including Ghai, insist they have never promoted "tobacco brands". Some however feel that tobacco companies could start playing a big role in the future as cash-strapped producers look around for new sources of funding. One director said that the Censors do not allow cigarette and liquor brands to be shown even if they do allow cigarette smoking – a rule that is clearly not strictly followed. Recent films like *Satya*, *Shakti*, *Company*, *Road* feature cigarette brands whose brand names are clearly visible in certain scenes. One director felt that it was a good source of revenue and he didn't see why filmmakers should be "morally" bound not to show smoking when the products are being openly advertised on hoardings, at sporting events, etc.

"Yes (we have been approached by tobacco companies) but we have always said no to them. The liquor companies have also approached us. Wills had approached us. We are usually approached by the agencies. But we have rejected tobacco and liquor companies. There was some argument over Pass-Pass (which was used in Ghai's recent release *Yaadein*). We screened it to figure out whether it was a tobacco/gutka based product or not. We found that it is not *gutka* and that it has been passed by the health ministry. We saw to it that we do not have tobacco products. As a responsible company and filmmaker, Mukta Arts, and Subhash Ghai, made sure that there is nothing in our films which gives a wrong signal to the young generation. But what happens is that because we are in a good situation, we are in a comfortable position and we can be responsible. However there are many needy producers who will do anything for money. Corruption is part of our culture and money overrules everything." - Subhash Ghai, producer/director

I don't know of brand placements by tobacco companies but I believe they are desperately trying to. They haven't succeeded yet. The tobacco industry hasn't tried in a more organized manner unlike the liquor companies or soft drinks that are now a regular part of our film product endorsements. - Rajiv Menon, director/cinematographer

Actors and brand endorsements:

Brand endorsements by filmstars are a common phenomenon. But apart from the two instances when Red & White was endorsed by Jackie Shroff and Akshay Kumar, cigarette brands have not been associated with any other actors.

I endorsed cigarettes which people smoke, it's moled by people who are sensible. If they want to smoke they smoke. If they don't wanna smoke, they don't. They are adults and you can't stop an adult for god's sake. - Jackie Shroff, actor.

Attitudes towards censorship:

There is a consensus among filmmakers, actors and others involved in the industry that portrayal of smoking "without justification" is not on and that the Censors are right in asking such scenes to be deleted. However many object to an "arbitrary" and "blanket ban" approach to portrayal of tobacco consumption. One view is that "smoking is a reality" and insofar as cinema is a reflection of society, it is only natural that smoking will be portrayed in cinema. Another view is that "throwing the rule book" at filmmakers does not help in sensitising either filmmakers or the audience to the hazards of smoking. Many felt that the industry is already extremely "cautious" about tobacco portrayal and there is enough self-censorship. Some argue that films, by associating smoking with the bad guys, are actually making a moral statement against smoking. Others say that the "constant media glare", responsible behaviour by celebrities and a greater health awareness among film personalities have also curbed smoking both on- and off-screen. One interesting issue was raised: if Censors started to ban smoking on-screen, would there also be a ban on popular film magazines that often print photographs of actors with a cigarette in their hands/lips? And what about sponsorship of media events like Filmfare Awards by Manikchand, a group that sells a gutka brand with the same name?

"Censorship should be handled properly. You can't ban smoking and drinking. Then you have to ban a lot of things. Sugar. That's also bad for health. Salt. Ghee. There won't be an end to it. The Censor Board can't decide what society wants to see. But there can be guidelines. Ratings." - Sanjay Chhel, screenwriter-director

"Tobacco is bad but sometimes it is required for a scene. If you stop showing such things then you might as well have a police state telling people what to do and what not to do. And then they will definitely indulge in such (smoking) activities!" - Dev Anand, actor-director

"When we make films, we are guided by our producers, don't do this, don't create problems. I think the government is doing a lot of things. My only point to that is yes, if you glorify – or create some kind of romanticism around smoking – then it's going to affect adversely. Like smoking, drinking, violence. If you see the real face of it – the truth about smoking is that at the end of it you die a miserable death. If that gets communicated, it shouldn't be stopped. You certainly shouldn't make it a kindergarten rule that anybody holding a cigarette, the Censor Board goes 'cut.' We shouldn't glorify this." - Saurabh Shukla, screenwriter-actor

Advocacy:

What is the filmmaker's personal opinion about tobacco consumption? Most admitted that they have never really given it a thought. Even when it comes to portrayal of tobacco on screen, it's an instinctive, "on-the-spur-of-the-moment" kind of a decision rather than a thought-out action. On a personal level, many of them are non-smokers today; while few have never smoked; most have given up due to "health reasons" after years of smoking. The attitude is: "I don't smoke any more but I don't mind if anybody else does." However one celebrity admitted that tobacco had been responsible for the death of a couple of his close associates. Many filmmakers are open to the idea of incorporating anti-smoking messages in films.

As a filmmaker I do feel that many talented people have gone before their time because of tobacco addiction. I really feel there is a need to tell the youth that they shouldn't get addicted to tobacco because it is poison...by enjoying the first half of their life by using tobacco, they are just ruining the second half of their lives. Because this poison takes effect only after 40, and after that it's just too late. - Subhash Ghai, producer/director

"Smoking killed my mom....I would do it (anti-smoking messages) if someone is interested in working with me. Immediately. In fact, I'm working on pollution, population...I have a script here. I am doing on lots of things. If someone comes with a suggestion on anti-smoking, I will do it. My contract with Red & White was over years back and I'm not bound by the cigarette company. So I can definitely do anti-smoking messages. In fact, I'm getting emails from a cigarette company who wants me to do their ads, I have been refusing them."- Jackie Shroff, actor

They (Filmmakers) should become more conscious (about the tobacco problem). I know many young filmmakers – Karan Johar, Sooraj Barjatya, Aditya, Farhan – they are better filmmakers than us. They conceived their films in totality. They wrote the film, planned it, directed it, were involved in the editing, publicity, marketing, designs, music...they are total filmmakers. Sooraj Barjatya himself is from a very educated family. Farhan, Adi and Karan neither smoke nor drink. But if something is put in their mind "please try to see that you don't glamorise this". If you can't speak against it, at least don't glamorise it." - Yash Chopra, producer-director

Implications for Tobacco Control Policy and Advocacy

The findings from our study have helped break a few myths:

- That portrayal of tobacco consumption in Indian cinema is on the decline. On the contrary, tobacco consumption is today being viewed as "normal behavior" by youth.
- That tobacco consumption is portrayed mostly to underline the negative traits of a character. In fact, both in Hindi and South Indian films, more and more "good guy" characters are smoking.
- That youth behavior is not influenced by mainstream movies. The focus group findings clearly reveal that there is a strong linkage between films and youth behavior.
- That films do not glamorize cigarette smoking and that it is used just to project "realism". The truth is that smoking incidents in movies is much higher than actual cigarette consumption among the Indian population.

Eliminate influence of the tobacco industry on entertainment

- **Continue to monitor and research** possible tobacco industry efforts to influence the entertainment industry including the development of an anonymous tip line to report such efforts.
- **Support internal and external:** efforts to eliminate tobacco brand identification in movies including the adoption of studio based policies and inclusion of statement at the end of movies declaring that nobody on the production received anything of value from anyone in exchange for using or displaying tobacco.

Policy initiatives

In view of the findings, the following policies need to be adopted by the Indian film industry to reduce the influence of tobacco portrayal in movies:

1. **Modify Indian rating guidelines** to eliminate most tobacco use from youth oriented U (Universal) and U/A (Universal adult) movies through working with and encouraging the entertainment industry to adopt strict measures for tobacco portrayal.
 - Work with entertainment industry and IMPA leadership to build support for the proposal
 - Develop a broad base of national support for the proposal with the leadership of India's NGO's
2. **Certify No Pay-Offs:** Every film should post a certificate in the credits at the end of the movie declaring that nobody on the production accepted anything of value from any tobacco company, its agents or fronts.
3. **Ban Sponsorship of Film Events:** Media and film companies should stop supporting events that are sponsored by tobacco companies.
4. **Run Strong Anti-Smoking Ads:** Producers and exhibitors should run strong anti-smoking ads, that are not produced or sponsored by tobacco companies, before and during the interval of a film with any tobacco presence in it. Preferably, the actors who are shown smoking in the film should be used to persuade viewers against smoking.
5. **Stop Identifying Tobacco Brands:** Tobacco brands should not be shown in scenes – they are unnecessary.
6. **Rate any Smoking Movie "A":** The Censor Board should be encouraged to give an adult rating to movies that depict smoking. This would put pressure on producers to stop unnecessary depiction of smoking.
7. **Television warning:** Encourage broadcasters to run a health warning message if the movie contains tobacco consumption.

Recommendations for Advocacy

- Promote media literacy activities that inoculate young people against pro-tobacco messages that appear in U, U/A and A rated movies.
 - Support efforts to include in-theater and on-video anti – tobacco messages before all movies that include tobacco use.
 - Develop and maintain a current movie review site that evaluates movies based on tobacco content and maintains historical records that can be used by parents, young people, teachers, organizations etc.
- Encourage ongoing media efforts targeting the entertainment industry.
- Continue current and past movie analysis of entertainment production for tobacco content with feedback to the industry built into the process.

- Encourage public outreach efforts to the industry.
- Utilize the educational options outlined above to encourage denormalization.
- Work with and encourage the entertainment industry to reduce tobacco use in entertainment industry productions through education and the denormalization of tobacco use within the entertainment industry
- Promote media literacy activities that educate young people against pro-tobacco messages that appear in movies.
- Encourage major public and private funders to support the above efforts and also support the continuing research into the influence of tobacco use in entertainment productions and the development of effective means to counter such influence.