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## UNIT 64 INDIAN CINEMA AND DIASPORA

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### Structure

- 64.0 Learning Objectives
- 64.1 Introduction
- 64.2 Brief History of Indian Cinema in Diaspora
- 64.3 Phenomenon of film tourism
- 64.4 Imagining India through Bollywood
- 64.5 Impact of Bollywood on Indian Diaspora
- 64.6 Diasporic Films
- 64.6 Let's Sum up
- 64.7 Key Words
- 64.8 References and Selected Readings
- 64.9 Check your progress – possible answers

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### 64.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you can:

1. Understand the brief history of Indian Diaspora cinema
2. Understand the impact of Bollywood on Indian Diaspora
3. Know about the contributions of Indian Cinema to Indian Diaspora culture.

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### 64.1 INTRODUCTION

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Presently, India has one of the most thriving film industries in the world. In 1896, the Lumiere brothers introduced the art of cinema to an eager audience in Bombay by screening Cinematography, a collection of six short films. Dada Saheb Phalke, who made the first feature-length silent film in India in 1913, and Ardeshir Irani, who made the first talking film in India in 1931, are considered the founders of Indian cinema. With the end of the silent era and the introduction of sound films, mythological texts became the primary source of inspiration for film. The Indian film industry is renowned for its glitz, vibrancy, and suspense, as it is one of the largest film industries in the world. The significance of Mumbai in this context is heightened by the fact that it is the birthplace and namesake of Bollywood in India. Regional languages such as Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Bhojpuri, and Bengali, to name a few, distinguish numerous other film hubs from the multibillion-rupee Hindi film industry in terms of net worth.

India's cinema is made up of films made all over the world. Cinema as a medium has grown in popularity in the region, with as many as 1,600 movies produced each year in various Indian languages. Indian films have also gained popularity in South Asia, the Greater Middle East, Southeast Asia, and other regions. The four-film cultures of South India are described as a single entity by the South Indian film industry. There are four of them: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada. The film industry became commercialised in the twentieth century. There are numerous Regional Film Industries

within the Indian Film Industry. The Hindi Film Industry, based in Mumbai, is the most influential and famous among them. Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, Bhojpuri, Telugu, Bengali, Oriya, Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil are among the other industries. In their respective countries, these sectors have monopolies. Regional expectations have a significant effect on the marketing campaign for advertising a movie or a product. The cultural diversity offered by the Indian Film Industry distinguishes it from any other film industry in the world.

In terms of the number of feature films produced and released in a year, India has been steadily upward, making it one of the world's largest film industries. Indian moviegoers flock to cinema halls, whether they be modernised multiplexes or old-school single-screen theatres. The growth of streaming services has made this consumption more available. Even though the number of single-screen theatres has been declining over the years, the country still has many of them. This also makes the Indian moviegoer a prime choice for advertisers. In the early twentieth century, cinema became widely popular throughout the world. Unlike theatrical performances, cinema has traditionally been and continues to be open to the general public. Cinema, like theatre, allowed films to narrate social problems and depict everyday life in the city for a wide range of audiences. Following its independence, India had numerous stories to share and a newfound voice to tell them. Many consider the 1940s to the 1960s to be India's own "Golden Age" of cinema, with countless commercially popular films made. For several, the cinema was the only source of inexpensive entertainment, and the industry replied by creating films that mirrored popular culture. During this period, an independent film revolution arose, demonstrating this political platform's cultural relevance to this young democratic country.

Bollywood's globalisation and popularity as a worldwide media outlet, as well as the western monetization of the Indian exotic, have coincided with the local political landscape's valorisation of 'diversity.' Bollywood caters to its diasporic audience with idealised portrayals of a "traditional and contemporary India." Bollywood portrayals of the thriving diasporic Indian community and engagement in the globalised Bollywood industry through concerts and international award ceremonies have allowed young diasporic Indians to re-examine their local Indian identities and feel invited to re-identify with India's global diasporas.

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## 64.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN CINEMA IN DIASPORA

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The Indian film industry can be traced back to the nineteenth century. In 1896, the Lumiere Brothers filmed their first film, which was exhibited in Mumbai (then Bombay). Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar, also known as Save Dada, ordered a camera from England after being so inspired by the Lumiere Brothers' work. His first short film, titled *The Wrestlers*, was shot in the Hanging Gardens of Mumbai. It was a straightforward filming of a boxing match that was exhibited in 1899 and is considered the first film produced by the Indian Film Industry. In 1913, Dadasaheb Phalke, the Father of Indian Cinema, debuted the first feature-length film, "Raja Harishchandra." Financially, the silent film was a success. Dadasaheb was, among other things, a producer, director, journalist, cameraman, photographer, make-up artist, and art director. In 1914, *Raja Harishchandra* was the first Indian film shown in London. Though Indian Cinema's first mogul, Dadasaheb Phalke, oversaw and directed the production of twenty-three films between 1913 and 1918, the Indian Film Industry developed more slowly than

Hollywood. In the early 1920s, numerous new manufacturing companies emerged. The 1920s were dominated by films based on mythological and historical facts and episodes from the Mahabharata and Ramayana, but Indian audiences were also receptive to Hollywood films, particularly action films.

Gradually, the industry expanded tremendously, especially from 1917 to 1932, but film production decreased during World War II. In 1947, the western film industry began to emerge. During this era, the films that were released chiefly concentrated on the plight of the ordinary person. They focused on bringing to light issues such as slavery, adultery, and polygamy, among others. This time in cinema history was unprecedented, with an exceptional transformation in the films, stars, and scripts' consistency. The 1950s and 1960s are regarded as the golden era of Indian cinema. Exceptionally brilliant actors such as Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumari, and many others came to fame during this period. Along with the improvisation and refinement of the market's acting segment, the music industry started to achieve dominance by playing an essential role in the filmmaking process. Similarly, as Bollywood began to dominate the industry as a whole, many more regional initiatives sprouted up throughout the world. Essentially, the modern Indian film industry began around 1947. The film industry underwent a phenomenal and excellent transition during this time frame. Notable filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray and Bimal Roy made films about the lower class's survival and everyday miseries. Historical and mythological themes were pushed to the sidelines, and movies with social agendas started to dominate the market. These films dealt with issues such as prostitution, dowry, polygamy, and other social ills that were common in our culture.

Indian filmmakers have often produced films featuring Indian migrants. *Sir Wrangler Mr R. P. Paranjpye* (1902), about a Maharashtra man who studied mathematics at Cambridge, was the first documentary film made in India. *Bilet Pherat* (England Returned), a successful fiction film in 1921, also starred about an Indian man returning from Britain's extended stay. This returnee had odd habits and strange ideas about romantic love, and he became the subject of sarcasm and satire in the film. *Purab aur Pachhim* (East and West), a 1970 nationalist film, depicted Indians in London dancing and feasting under the influence of alcohol and cigarettes. The children in the film had been extensively westernised and had utterly ignored, if not hated, their history. Fortunately, an honest and noble young Indian man emerged and taught the female celebrity to love her country once more. When the entertainment industry became involved in the diaspora as a target demographic, the imagery shifted. The consequence was a modern 'transnational optic' in Indian newspapers (Moorti 2002). *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* was the first film to attempt to cater to the diaspora rather than mock it (1995). The film predicted the supposed urge of the Indian diaspora to rediscover their homeland and took their feelings of nostalgia and longing very seriously.

Songs are an essential aspect of Indian cinema. The use of songs has given Indian films a distinct look as compared to foreign films. Many young lyricists, music directors, and musicians have originated from the Indian film industry. The year 2008 was significant for the Indian film industry since A.R. Rahman won two Academy Awards for *Slumdog Millionaire's* best soundtrack. The 1990s saw the emergence of a new generation of actors such as Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan, Juhi Chawla, Chiranjivi, among many others. This new generation of actors used new methods to develop their performances, further elevating and upgrading the Indian Film Industry. Indian cinema is no longer exclusive to India, and it is now well received by foreign viewers. The overseas market makes a significant contribution to Bollywood box office

receipts. In 2013, approximately 30 film production companies were listed on the National Stock Exchange of India. Theatres have also grown in popularity in India as a result of tax breaks. Whether it is a regional or a Bollywood film, Indian cinema has become an integral part of our everyday lives. It plays an essential role in our culture. Though entertainment is the primary focus of Indian cinema, it bears much more responsibility because it influences its viewers' minds.

**Check my progress 1**

**Note :** a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. Explain how Cinema played an Important role in the Indian Diaspora.

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2. Why the year 1950s was the golden age of Indian cinema?

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**64.3 PHENOMENON OF FILM TOURISM**

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The travel and tourism sector went through a period of transformation around the turn of the century. This change was motivated by the vast processes of globalisation that were taking place at the time. The traditional types of tourism have been complemented and expanded upon by the development of new postmodern forms of tourism, which have also been introduced. These novel types of tourism have also resulted in the introduction of novel and diverse tourist goods and services onto the market. One of these new types of tourism is referred to as “film tourism,” and it is a key new trend that is rapidly increasing in the tourism business. The selection of a tourist destination in this subset of tourism is directly influenced and driven by cinematic productions. Film tourism establishes a connection between the characters, settings, and stories of a movie and the film-tourists who are encouraged to immerse themselves in the experience and relive the feelings that were generated and driven by the movie when they are at the location where the movie was filmed. Film tourism creates a connection between the movie characters, places, and stories and the film-tourists.

The need to escape the monotony of day-to-day life, to shake up patterns that have become second nature, to halt the passage of time, and to find something new and different that will help to legitimise our own existence is directly related to the desire to travel. Being in a new setting, with a new climate and environment, and surrounded by other people is what it means to be a part of a different story and to have a new experience. This is because being in a new setting forces one to interact with new people. Filmmaking and tourism are two industries that, at their foundation, provide customers with the opportunity to relive or experience, observe, and learn about new things via the lens of entertainment and enjoyment. This ability lies at the heart of both

industries.”Film tourist” and “tourist film places” need to be defined because they are elements that are included in “film tourism. The concept of film tourism is not limited to the act of tourism itself. Still, it is profoundly rooted in the preceding cycles of viewing of media representations, fantasising about the places involved, and finally reflecting on the completed journey (Larsen and Urry, 2011; Reijnders, 2016). This creative process is activated when faced with visual or auditory cues; Bollywood, as a mixture of powerful images and music, readily fuels the creative process.

In addition to an increase in tourism activities, film tourism makes it possible for new investments, as well as the extension of distinctive locations and their rehabilitation. The film tourism industry will receive an additional boost to the market as well as an enticing profile for local business owners. Film maps are an excellent tool for promoting other locations, such as motels, whether by means of illustration, discount coupons, and so on. It is possible to sway independent travellers to visit locations without resorting to overbearing or intrusive advertising, and these travellers can turn a possible interest in visiting such locations into a firm commitment. These days, people flock to the locations in the hopes of seeing any of the sets, and they are left feeling dissatisfied when the only thing that can be discovered there is a mountain and nothing that is relevant to the movie itself. This exemplifies a typical problem in the cinema tourism sector, which is that studios either are unaware of the touristic significance of their works or are unable to offer access to their brand or resources for use in tourism-related endeavours. (SPI Olsberg 2007, 40.) Other unfavourable consequences like excessive publicity and, in some instances, a spike in housing values because of filming productions and their contribution to an area’s rising appeal have also been uncovered as a result of the research that has been conducted (Beeton 2005, 13). Some movies may also present an inaccurate or unfavourable image of a location. This occurred in the East End of London when visitors observed that the television show *Eastenders* had given them a highly unfavourable opinion of the residents of the area and the city itself (Olsberg SPI 2007). The rapid increase in the number of tourists has the additional unintended consequence of disrupting the normal way of life in the area where the films were shot.

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## 64.4 IMAGINING INDIA THROUGH BOLLYWOOD

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The global popularity of Indian movies can be said to transcend national appeal. Bollywood’s compelling aesthetics and narratives often vary significantly from Hollywood’s supposed “universal” strategies and reports. In recent years, films such as ‘*Dil Se*,’ ‘*Kal Ho Naa Ho*,’ and ‘*Guru*’ have exported an impression of Indianness that negotiates tensions between homeland and diaspora and emphasises India’s cultural authority for its imagined audience of audiences. Bollywood illustrates Appadurai’s argument that there is something “important and fresh in global cultural systems” by questioning Hollywood norms, fostering a sense of unity among diverse ethnic Indians, and portraying Indians as exemplary and superior to nationals from other developed countries. By imagining a global India, Bollywood speaks to its transnational viewers’ imaginations and invites us to reconsider our attitudes to cinema and the culture that international media is continuously reinventing.

The Anglo-American film industry was taken aback by the success of the low-budget film *Slumdog Millionaire*, which was released in 2008 and told the story of a teenager from Mumbai who appears on the Indian version of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” The film went on to win every award at the Academy Awards in the United States. The

novel written by Vikas Swarup served as the inspiration for the British movie, which was principally directed by Danny Boyle and was the result of a partnership between Indian and British authors and filmmakers. The film seems to draw inspiration from both Indian and Western commercial cinema in its use of action and melodrama, its use of on-location scenes taken in Mumbai, and its fast-paced storyline that hops back and forth across time to attain its happy conclusion. Although it was acclaimed as a “crossover” picture, the portrayal of children’s life in the slums of Mumbai as impoverished and precarious infuriated a number of Indian viewers. Film researcher Brian Larkin drew parallels between the Indian response to *Slumdog Millionaire* and the aftermath of the success of Satyajit Ray’s *Pather Panchali* on the international film festival circuit (1955). He sees that the incorporation of Western aesthetics in Ray’s film made it acceptable to academics in India as well as in Europe; nonetheless, this alarmed nationalists who wanted India to be viewed as a contemporary nation.

Though Bollywood has been a area of research for film scholars in recent years, it has been viewed more frequently than not as a national cinema of the subcontinent and its diasporic communities worldwide. Given the millions, if not billions, of people who may be engaged and influenced by Bollywood films, particularly now that satellite TV and other means of accessing Bollywood productions are possible, it seems essential to rethink Bollywood as a global platform. Its modes of address exert at least as much ideological and cultural impact as Hollywood’s. It appears especially crucial that film scholars not confine their discussion of Bollywood to that of a national cinema, either in the local context of where its films are made or in the sense of an ethnic or Third World cinema that functions as an oppositional cinema to transnational media conglomerates. Instead, as a hybrid of national and international cinema, Bollywood sheds light on a now-international imaginary by reflecting and theoretically shaping its audience’s perceptions, ideas, and opinions. What distinguishes Indian cinema, in general, is its rejection of certain psychoanalytical paradigms in favour of mixing the social form with the personality to seek a broader horizon of possibilities for linking the plot of the characters to the colonial narrative. Bollywood films, through cultural empathy, became a tool for connecting with or consuming India’s cultural authority. This indicates that the symbolic and aesthetic facets of Bollywood productions provide several elements in the *mise-en-scene* that elicit meaningful visual and emotional associations between local references and the need for national unity. If Bollywood romanticizes India for diaspora viewers, it also glorifies NRIs for domestic audiences. According to Chabra, commercial Indian cinema depicts NRIs as affluent and prosperous Indians in the United Kingdom and the United States, whom Indians in India hope will spend their foreign-earned riches in India. ‘In fact, we are part of the Indian Diaspora, building our own Indian identity outside of India,’ he writes. We are taxi drivers, restaurant staff, students, Silicon Valley billionaires, authors, actors, physicians, attorneys, environmental leaders, gays and lesbians, and battered women living their own lives in adopted countries.

Many films appeal to second-generation audiences, who are depicted as “model minority people,” some who adopt and capitalise on their country of residence while retaining specific ties to their homeland nation-state. In relatively straightforward ways, as in the scene, the dynamic is not merely that of longing for the homeland and a wish for citizenship and modernity. To demonstrate its cosmopolitanism and India’s cultural authority globally, the Indian Diaspora distinguishes itself from other immigrant

communities. By comparing the Indian nationalist reception of *Slumdog Millionaire* with the global appeal of Bollywood films, the issue of cinematic representation and national identity in the age of globalisation was created. Both *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Guru* rely on the cross-cultural popularity of the rags to riches myth. Within the framework of transnational companies and international media markets, both films aptly represent the facts of today's material society, modernity, and technology, as well as the disappearance or redefinition of conventional familial or cultural ties. The discrepancies between the films, on the other hand, point to the ways in which multinational media construct contrasting collections of imaginary environments for different viewers. The traditional Euro-American film relies entirely on the individual subject, and so until his or her wants or wishes are met, the film is essentially finished. Thus, the Bollywood-style song and dance at the end, which may have been used in a Bollywood film to signify the reconciliation of the past and present and reinforce a sense of cultural identity, is disconnected from the plot. Instead, it is used in conjunction with the credit sequence to create a feel-good tune for moviegoers as they leave the theatre.

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## 64.5 IMPACT OF BOLLYWOOD ON INDIAN DIASPORA

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Bollywood films play an essential role in Indian culture as the largest film industry in India and the world. Bollywood has portrayed Indian society through its films for generations, particularly for South Asians in the diaspora who wish to reconnect with their "Indianness." However, Bollywood's portrayal of this diaspora frequently imposes socially regressive views on women (both in the diaspora and in India) by establishing a stark contrast between the "traditional" values of India and the "liberal" values of the West.

The rapidly growing popularity of Bollywood films among Indian women in the diaspora places these films in a crucial position to shape the identities of this demographic. We are able to develop a "sense of Indianness" through these films, allowing us to relate to and identify with them. These films are used by diasporic Indians, including second-generation India-American women, to establish a sense of commonality that unites them as strangers in a foreign land. This is achieved in part by providing the diaspora with a glimpse of their homeland, which aids them in coping with the sense of loss caused by separation from their culture and traditions. Rahul, Anjali, Rohan, and Pooja celebrate Karva Chauth away from home during the song "Bole Chudiyen" in "Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham" (K3G), allowing us to indulge in our nostalgia for our timeless Indian traditions.

Bollywood has increased its representations of the West and diasporic Indians, creating another way to navigate hyphenated identities through film. Many Indian films are now set in the West, outside India. The idea of India as a land of pure tradition versus America as a land of progressive (and, in some views, morally inferior) values isn't new and has been perpetuated in the postcolonial era in various forms. When Bollywood films portray India as traditional, it creates a false image in the diaspora – a nostalgic fantasy of purity and tradition in a sexualized and decadent land, while the real India continues to grow as a culture beyond imagined traditional and colonial paradigms. Bollywood's glimpse of the diaspora's lost Indian homeland is largely imagined.

## 64.6 DIASPORIC FILMS

The cinema has become an important platform for diasporic cultures to express and convey their identities, as well as to reach a wider audience. It may convey a feeling of the displacement, intolerance, and stigmatisation that migrants encounter, as well as the tensions that emerge among geographically dispersed families or those striving to establish themselves in new nations. The subject matter of displacement, diasporas, and cultures is used by filmmakers of a variety of cinema genres, including Hollywood, Bollywood, independent, and art film. Diverse scholars have examined diasporic and exilic films as a foreign genre or contemporary phenomena. Currently, the Indian film business is likewise a “nostalgia factory.” Looking at the distinct views presented in popular films from the 1990s, one of the major topics is nostalgia. The increasing accessibility of Indian film in the diaspora is indicative of a larger trend in international popular culture. Trend watchers saw the breakthrough of Asian architects, Asian artists, and Asian musicians in the 1990s. By 2001, India had already been ‘cool’ on MTV. Superstars such as Madonna and Janet Jackson used oriental styles in their videos, famous DJs created club remixes of Bollywood soundtracks, and scenes from vibrant urban India have appeared in television advertisements (Hulsman 2001, Moorman 2001).



All pictures are taken from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

Source: <https://blogs.fu-berlin.de/>

The research of diasporic media identities has been beneficial in assessing the culture-place nexus. Previously, the majority of diaspora and media research have concentrated on either literary interpretation (e.g., on Indian cinema, see Uberoi, 1998) or the cultural politics of television and the internet. Several studies have also shown that films can play an important role in a diaspora’s interaction with its homeland and in providing a sense of mutual cultural memory (again much is published on Indian cinema, e.g. Cunningham & Sinclair, 2001; Dudrah, 2006; Punathambekar, 2005; Ram, 2003). Diasporic film culture has been developed and continues to be shaped by initiatives from within communities. In the 1990s, Indian diamond merchants began private screenings for their own group and established small companies to carry homeland



films to Antwerp, capitalising on the opportunities created by homeland film industries. The feature film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is just one example of a private screening. Profits were often donated to humanitarian programmes in India, which resonated with the diaspora, which often wants to support the economies of their homeland. For example, the Antwerp World Diamond Center hosted a screening of *Gandhi My Father* (Feroz Abbas Khan, 2007) for the benefit of children in 2007. As these measures proved to be cost-effective, Belgian exhibitors (whose theatres were often used for private screenings) started to exploit the niche market. When a couple of international distributors approached Kinopolis, both of which were managed similarly by representatives of the Indian diaspora in London and the Netherlands, deals were struck, and Indian films were finally included in the daily schedule of the Antwerp multiplex (in 2006). This resulted in the commercialization of the diasporic film industry, as well as a power transfer as a community practise was appropriated by larger corporations. The local multiplex has evolved from a simple site to an involved participant selling films to the diaspora, while the culture itself has evolved from initiator to target audience in a niche market.

To contextualise how people interact with “homeland” films, it is important to analyse current theatrical flows’ structural properties when discussing these blind spots. This type of contextual research is influenced by both critical audience studies (which emphasise systemic audience confinement) and vital political economy (arguing for incorporating micro-processes and attention to audiences). On the one side, scholars like Ien Ang (1991) have suggested a contextualised audience analysis. Myria Georgiou (2006), a diasporic media theorist, sees reception as being structured by power frames around media access, use, and perception. Audience researchers have become profoundly conscious that audience practises, such as film industries, are limited by the global political economy (Bird, 2003). At the other end of the continuum, insightful re-thinkers in the political-economic tradition have pushed toward an interpretation of media flows that includes more than just an economic study of power structures and moves beyond the general large-scale processes analysed in political economy. While macro-level dynamics play an essential role in determining the broad context in which communication occurs, Murdock and Golding show that they do not fully describe the structure of communication processes (2005).

Mira Nair’s films tell a number of stories about identity shifts while also exposing “the complexities of South Asian Diasporic cultural development.” Despite the fact that her films portray various settings, there is a recurring thread in her work that revolves around issues of “authenticity, heritage, nostalgia, and home” (Chakraborty 2014, 610). These problems, as seen through the eyes of various characters and the ramifications of each element, will be discussed in the following sections through the respective journeys of various characters. The theme of Nair’s films is on diasporic displaced people who end up in a marginal situation after being forced to flee, either for greater opportunities to improve their lives or for political reasons. In Nair’s films, where Indian and Western cultures are combined, the result is “multiculturalism,” which is more than just a “rhetorical initiative” since it “both creates and naturalises a market for both internal and external facets” (Athique 2013, 111). Nair’s efforts to break down racial boundaries are carried out by shifting the vantage point of her films to highlight the significant effect on how racism is increasingly being burst into the forefront.

Apart from the government’s efforts, the Bollywood film industry started making films targeted at the Diaspora in the 1990s. Following the liberalisation of the Indian economy,

films such as Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (The Large-Hearted Will Take Away the Bride, 1995), Pardes (Foreign Nation, 1997), Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (Something Happens [in the Heart], 1998), Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham (2009) were made more focused on Indian Diaspora. These films feature a (group of) NRI/PIO. They discover(s) India for the first time and establish India as a place of longing centred on culture, heritage, and national identity. As a result, stereotypical depictions of poverty and pollution are avoided, and the new Bollywood film appears. The fusion of consumerism and so-called desi ideals is one reason for its popularity in the diaspora. Bollywood films directed at NRIs/PIOs often portray a western youth community with links to branded goods from the United States and Europe. The characters in the film are young, beautiful, rich, and deeply ingrained in consumerism. Nonetheless, notwithstanding this western touch, traditions called desi or traditionally Indian are highly valued, such as upholding women’s modesty and chastity, honouring parents, or compromising individual interests for the more significant benefit of the family. The popularity of Bollywood in the diaspora is mirrored in increased consumption of Indian items such as DVDs, apparel, travel agency bookings, and so on, which fuels and contributes to the industry’s success. Nonetheless, voices of disapproval are lifted, for example, by an Indian audience for whom the depicted lives in the West are not available or attractive. The depicted ‘Indianness’ mainly describes well-off middle-class or upper-class families who do not have to suffer financially to get by regularly. However, the ‘Indianness’ that unites various age groups of the diaspora will remain a figment of the imagination, as India is a diverse region.

**Check my progress 2**

**Note :** a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

3. What role does India’s diaspora play in making India a soft power? Examine.

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4. Describe how Bollywood films, through cultural empathy, became a tool for connecting Indian diaspora?

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**64.6 LETS SUM UP**

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The Indian film industry, especially Bollywood, has made considerable strides in the last two decades. The storey started nine decades ago when precarious film making was transformed into a multifaceted and massive economic empire. In terms of film production scale, it is also the most prominent worldwide film industry. So far, nearly 27.000 films (more than 1000 each year) and thousands of short movies have been

made. After establishing itself as a highly qualified industry, the popular Indian cinema has made significant progress in almost all areas, including infrastructure, banking, marketing, and distribution. Bollywood films are becoming more popular in the foreign market as a result of the Indian Diaspora and the expansion of “Brand India.” It is true that in recent years, exterior sales have outpaced interior sales. Bollywood films are included in the top ten charts in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The industry has advanced in every field of globalisation, including technologies, products, services, money, and individuals (Pillania, R. k., 2008).

Bollywood is not only one of India’s most remarkable growth trends, but it is also one of the two major film industries that has risen the fastest. Nowadays, almost 1,000 films are produced per year, while in 1912, only 150 films were produced. Globalisation, in conjunction with Indians of the Diaspora, was the primary driver of its growth. Via these influences, new technology and techniques entered India, making development more straightforward. Besides, a modern way of life became sensible, which was integrated into the film’s content. In the modern sense, Bollywood is the biggest and most popular cultural product of the twenty-first century. It is undeniable that globalisation has bolstered Bollywood. big-budget melodramas, Bollywood aimed at the middle class and diasporic Indian audiences. Various Bollywood films have portrayed NRIs, emigration, and diaspora from multiple viewpoints and events over the years. Bollywood attempts to show diasporic topics that deal with middle-class hegemony. Middle-class problems are somewhat different and essential, as are the daily cultural traditions, caste-system, patriarchal system, preferences and lifestyles, and expectations for better livelihoods. They have social and cultural connections that motivate their desire to be linked to their individuals, community, and social classes back home. The major constituents of cultural capital are routine rituals, religious faith, eating preferences, festivals and family functions, cultural association, songs-music-films. Any Diaspora community’s main priority is the maintenance of tradition, self-identity, and nationalism. The actual state of society, in which the dynamics of gender relations, the transformation of the economy into cultural marketisation, and the voices of the oppressed for rights are being portrayed.

Bollywood has been cashing in on the Diaspora audience for a long time. It also had its traditional markets in the Arab World and in the countries that formed the erstwhile Soviet Union. However, the spread of the Indian Diaspora and its changing constitution from Labour to entrepreneurial, professional, academic, and transnational also meant an exponential increase in Hindi Cinema’s audience. Bollywood has also garnered new audiences in France and Germany. These new audiences are drawn to these Bollywood films by the transnational nature of these cinematic texts. Commercial Hindi cinema plays a central role in the negotiation of national identity. For decades, the expatriate Indian served as a counter-example for acceptable behaviour, a living testimony of inappropriateness. In the mid-1990s, following the liberalization of the Indian economy, the rise of Hindu nationalism and the advent of a multiplex-going urban middle-class, the stereotype was turned around. The Non-Resident Indian (NRI) became the epitome of Indianness and embodied in capitalist and consumerist modernity and patriarchal, Northern and Hindu traditionalism. This change was meant to cater to a lucrative niche market and reflected an uneasy transition period. Besides, the on-screen NRI role models were seen as an instrument of Western modernity in India and of India’s recognition as a global power in the West.

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## 64.7 KEY WORDS

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- Globalism** : An ideology based on the belief that people, goods and information ought to be able to cross national borders unfettered.
- Nationalism** : Identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.
- NRI** : Overseas Indians, officially known as non-resident Indians (NRIs) or persons of Indian origin (PIOs), are people of Indian birth, descent or origin who live outside the Republic of India.

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## 64.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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1. The cinema has become an important platform for diasporic cultures to express and convey their identities, as well as to reach a wider audience. It may convey a

feeling of the displacement, intolerance, and stigmatisation that migrants encounter, as well as the tensions that emerge among geographically dispersed families or those striving to establish themselves in new nations. The subject matter of displacement, diasporas, and cultures is used by filmmakers of a variety of cinema genres, including Hollywood, Bollywood, independent, and art film. Diverse scholars have examined diasporic and exilic films as a foreign genre or contemporary phenomena. Currently, the Indian film business is likewise a “nostalgia factory.” Looking at the distinct views presented in popular films from the 1990s, one of the major topics is nostalgia. The increasing accessibility of Indian film in the diaspora is indicative of a larger trend in international popular culture.

2. The 1950s and 1960s are regarded as the golden era of Indian cinema. Exceptionally brilliant actors such as Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumari, and many others came to fame during this period. Along with the improvisation and refinement of the market’s acting segment, the music industry started to achieve dominance by playing an essential role in the filmmaking process. Similarly, as Bollywood began to dominate the industry as a whole, many more regional initiatives sprouted up throughout the world. Essentially, the modern Indian film industry began around 1947. The film industry underwent a phenomenal and excellent transition during this time frame. Notable filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray and Bimal Roy made films about the lower class’s survival and everyday miseries. Historical and mythological themes were pushed to the sidelines, and movies with social agendas started to dominate the market. These films dealt with issues such as prostitution, dowry, polygamy, and other social ills that were common in our culture.
3. Diaspora is a powerful actor who can effectively use soft power to influence foreign policy results. Certainly, India’s policy toward its diaspora has been extremely progressive, with the acknowledgement of diaspora as a partner in India’s prosperity, and diaspora may play a highly proactive role in influencing many matters pertaining to the home country’s interests. Joseph Nye invented the phrase soft power in the late 1980s to describe a country’s capacity to convince others to do its bidding without using force or coercion. As nations attempt to make sense of the quickly shifting global backdrop and alter their tactics appropriately, the soft power resources at their disposal will be a crucial component of the foreign policy instruments required in the future. India has always been one of the few countries with a strong hand in the area of soft power.
4. This indicates that the symbolic and aesthetic facets of Bollywood productions provide several elements in the mise-en-scene that elicit meaningful visual and emotional associations between local references and the need for national unity. If Bollywood romanticizes India for diaspora viewers, it also glorifies NRIs for domestic audiences. According to Chabra, commercial Indian cinema depicts NRIs as affluent and prosperous Indians in the United Kingdom and the United States, whom Indians in India hope will spend their foreign-earned riches in India. ‘In fact, we are part of the Indian Diaspora, building our own Indian identity outside of India,’ he writes. We are taxi drivers, restaurant staff, students, Silicon Valley billionaires, authors, actors, physicians, attorneys, environmental leaders, gays and lesbians, and battered women living their own lives in adopted countries.