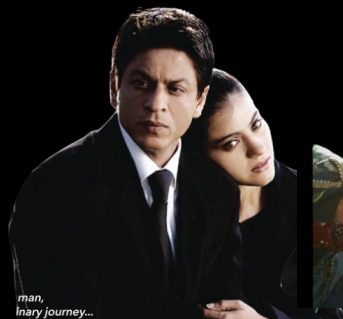


EVOLVING REPRESENTATION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN HINDI CINEMA

*Exploring the evolution of mental health depictions
across decades (1980s-2020s)*

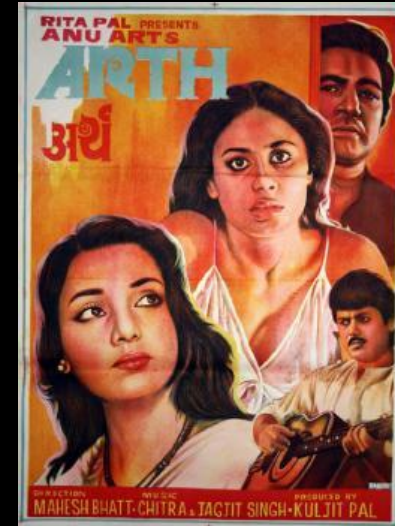
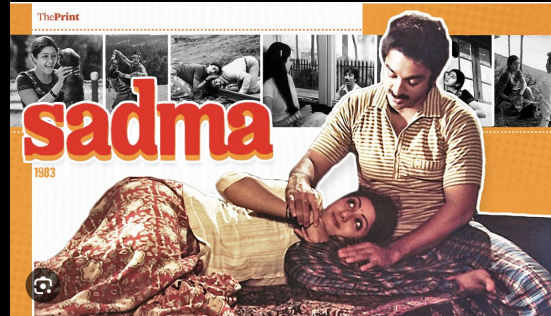


In India, where **10.6% of the Indian population* suffers from mental health disorders but 80% go untreated**, the stigma surrounding mental illness remains a major barrier to care.

1980s: SENSATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL PORTRAYALS

- Focused more on the emotional and tragic aspects of mental health conditions, often sensationalizing them.
- Extreme behavior or trauma
- Characters depicted either as innocent victims or burdens.
- Conditions were typically not treated with clinical precision but rather as plot devices to generate sympathy or tragedy.
- The medical treatment of psychological conditions was either absent or depicted as a miraculous event, and formal psychiatric care was rarely shown as part of the healing process.

1980s



1980s: SENSATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL PORTRAYALS



1980s: SENSATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL PORTRAYALS

Sadma (1983) Full Hindi Movie | Kamal Haasan, Sridevi, Gulshan Grover, Silk Smitha, Paintal

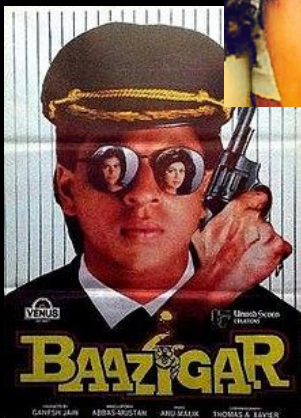
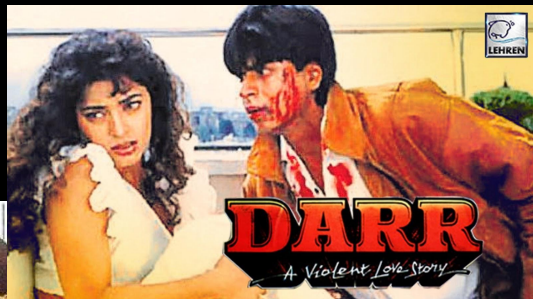
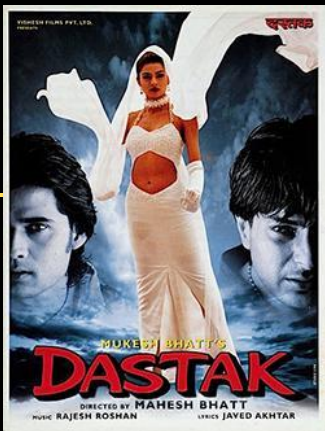


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Scroll for details

1990s: THE RISE OF THE ANTI-HERO AND OBSESSION



1990s

- The 1990s saw a shift in Hindi cinema from sympathetic portrayals of mental illness to a focus on obsession and toxic behavior, often associated with anti-heroes.
- Films like Darr (1993), Anjaam (1994), and Gupt (1997) sensationalized psychological disorders, presenting mentally unstable characters as obsessive, violent, or dangerous.
- Portraying mental health conditions as inseparable from violence and personal downfall, hindering any constructive understanding of psychological conditions.

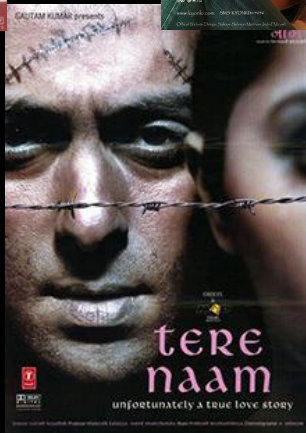
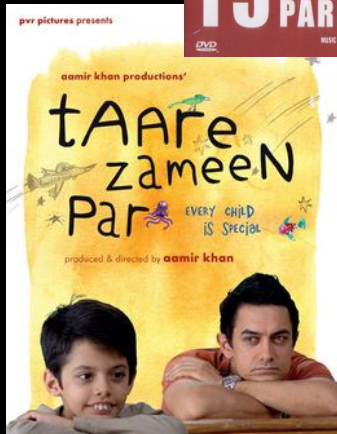
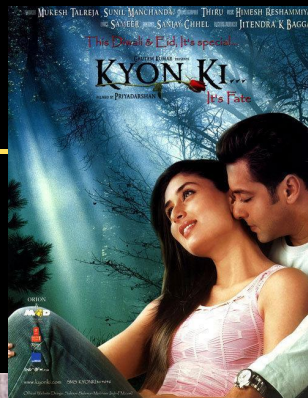
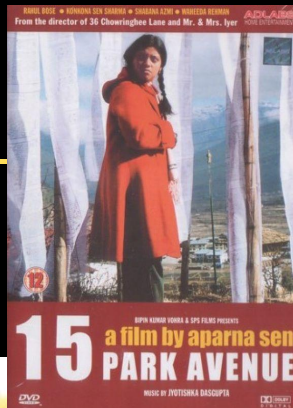
1990s: THE RISE OF THE ANTI-HERO AND OBSESSION



2000s: A DECADE OF DUALITY

2000s

- The 2000s saw a gradual shift toward more realistic depictions of mental health, though some films still fell into old tropes.
- While films like *Kyon Ki* (2005) and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* (2007) sensationalized mental illness through exaggerated portrayals, *Taare Zameen Par* (2007) and *15 Park Avenue* (2005) offered more authentic depictions of conditions such as dyslexia and schizophrenia.



2000s: A DECADE OF DUALITY

PUBLIC
CLIX



“I'm tired of you! Do you know how much shame you've brought to our family? What will it take to fix you?”

2000s: A DECADE OF DUALITY

EROS



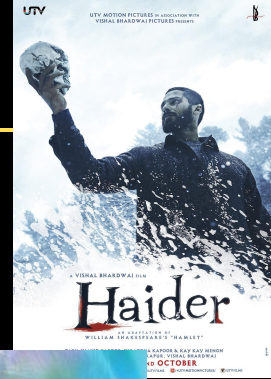
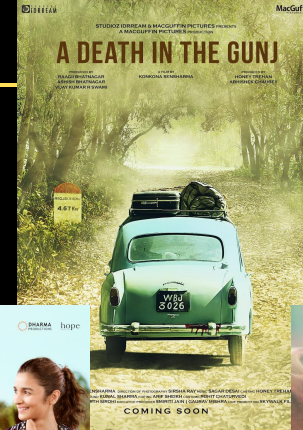
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2010s: EVOLVING REPRESENTATION, CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

2010s

- In the 2010s, Hindi cinema witnessed a significant shift in how mental health was portrayed, moving toward more realistic and empathetic representations.
- Films like Dear Zindagi (2016) addressed depression through the lens of therapy, and emphasized on emotional well-being
- A notable trend was the shift away from portraying mental illness as sensational or tragic.
- Female protagonists took center stage in these narratives, challenging earlier stereotypes, where they were shown as triggers for mental health conditions or caregivers.



2010s: EVOLVING REPRESENTATION, CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

Introducing Dr. Jehangir | Dear Zindagi | Movie Scene | Ali Bhatt, Shah Rukh Khan



0:03 / 1:55

Scroll for details



2020s: EMPATHY, INCLUSIVITY, BUT WITH LIMITATIONS



2020s

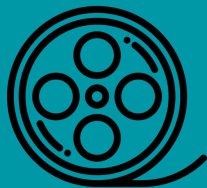
- Hindi cinema continued to evolve in its portrayal of mental health, reflecting increased awareness and a shift toward more authentic depictions.
- Films like Atrangi Re (2021), have been criticized for their representation of mental health and therapy
- OTT platforms have portrayed characters to be open and non-judgemental towards therapy.
- Films and streaming series from this period focus on individual struggles with trauma, emotional well-being, and systemic challenges faced by those dealing with mental health issues



REEL vs REAL

2020s

- In recent years, several Indian celebrities have taken steps to discuss their mental health experiences and establish initiatives aimed at raising awareness and reducing stigma.
- Deepika Padukone is a leading figure in this movement; she publicly shared her experience with depression in 2015 and founded the Live Love Laugh Foundation, which offers mental health resources and connects people to professional help.
- Anushka Sharma and Karan Johar have also spoken candidly about their experiences with anxiety and therapy, contributing to breaking the silence around these topics.
- Fahadh Faasil, recently opened up about being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at the age of 41.
- Tanmay Bhat, a well-known comedian and content creator, has openly discussed his struggles with clinical depression



REEL vs REAL

The Changing Representation of Mental Health in Indian Cinema

Panelists: MK Raghavendra, Apoorva Arora, Andre Borges
Moderator: Kashmira Patil

| 27th October 2024 |