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Disabled or Abled? Filming 'Ability' through Disadvantaged Groups: A Cross-Cultural Research

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to analyze the representations of "disability" in cinema. So as to portray this framework, two movies were used as the cases. The first one was selected from Hollywood named Forrest Gump (1994) whereas the second one came from Bollywood called Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). Actually, Laal Singh Chaddha is the modern equivalent of Forrest Gump; hence, messages given by Advait Chandan and Robert Zemeckis, the directors of both movies, towards marginalized and disadvantaged people are adjacent. Therefore, it can be alleged that these two movies are direct illustrations of how persons with disabilities can achieve through their lives. As research methods, content analysis and critical discourse analysis were used to describe textual, audial, and visual data from a qualitative point of view. As a result of these research methods, it is concluded that both Forrest and Laal are not represented as disabled; in the stark contrast, they are 'abled'[i] men and 'succeeded' a lot in spite of negative conditions as well as atmosphere, and despite the availability of biased people in their neighborhoods. From this perspective, it can be referenced that these films challenge stereotypes about disability. Therefore, selected movies strongly represent the abilities and the achievements of people with disabilities. Within the research, six 'abled' or 'capable' personality traits (themes) were verified. These characteristics range from their 'childhoods' to 'adulthood' and are analyzed qualitatively under the themes of abled kids (a), smart students (b), successful athletes (runners) (c), heroic warriors (d), business owners (e), lovers and fathers (f).

Keywords: Cinema, Disadvantaged Groups, Disability Representation, Disability and Cinema, Social Policy

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[i] In this research, the word "abled" is just used to refer to the fantastic achievements of persons with disabilities throughout their lives. Actually, this approach forms the rationale behind how movies represent abilities as well as successful initiatives of persons with disability. In a way, this is something like challenging stereotypes about disability itself.

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Introduction

In order to raise social awareness, movies can be referenced as strong genres for the depiction of humane realities (Ray, 2010). Thus, Ezzedeen (2015) regards movies as the "social construction of the reality" (pp. 239-264). Entman (1993), in accordance with the thoughts of these scholars, proposes the idea that movies consist of social messages, and they can be utilized for various purposes such as "promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (pp. 51-58). The communal problems in real life like urbanization, poverty, unequal distribution of income, unionism, discrimination, industry 4.0, future of work, unemployment, racism, and negative working conditions are contemporary economic and social topics of modern cinema, which is also the case for the representation of disabilities and or disadvantaged groups. Thus, it can be demonstrated that cinematography is an outstanding lab for disability studies as well.

The purpose of this article is to explore the depiction of disadvantaged groups and disabilities in cinema within the framework of two contemporary movies like Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) in a cross-cultural way. It can be referenced that disability or disadvantaged groups in cinema is a very popular theme and genre as understood from the former studies like Chivers and Markotić (2010), Ayisi and Brylla (2013, pp. 125-141), Riley (2005), Boyd (2016, pp. 1321-1332), and Church (2011, pp. 3-17). Instead of disadvantaged groups, the term disability is used in these papers as disadvantaged groups mean more than disability. This paper critically endeavors to analyze these predetermined movies in respect to their illustrations of disabilities so that the common stereotypes, socio-cultural norms, and discourses are to be identified. Unlike the studies of Botha and Harvey (2022, pp.1-23), the moving point of this current paper is strikingly different since this research suggests the idea that cinema illustrates disabilities in a 'supportive' and 'favorable' way and the absolute message in these selected movies is the fact that disabilities can be converted into perfect abilities; that's' why, cinematography is a fantastic tool for the representations of these abilities within disability. This positive image of disability can be conveyed to masses through cinematographic elements and these mainstream movies. Therefore, the research is built upon these open-minded questions: Are disadvantaged groups or persons with disabilities represented in a negative manner or vice versa? Do disabilities or the abilities of persons with disabilities come to fore in cinema? By means of movies, what kinds of messages are addressed to audiences concerning persons with disabilities?

As a matter of fact, current study consists of two sections. In the first section, related literature about disadvantaged groups and the synopsis of former studies orienting upon disabilities in connection with cinematography were summarized. Their similarities and variations were discussed within the framework of this research paper. In the second chapter of the article, qualitative analysis of the movies selected in terms of their disability context was uncovered. While following such a procedure, two fundamental research methods like content and discourse analysis were utilized. Just as analyzing visual and audial context, content analysis was benefited. On the other hand, discourse analysis became more dominant while focusing upon textual infrastructure of the movies selected as the cases.

The paper contributes to the existing literature in various perspectives. First and foremost, it is a cross-cultural study in terms of its concentration upon two movies selected from both Hollywood and Bollywood. Second, it is unique in view of the fact that it deals with social issues like disadvantaged groups and disabilities from a cinematographic point of view. Laying an emphasis upon the fact that disability means more than that; it also includes ability and capacity as well as big success. The reason is that two movies selected as the cases are the portrayals of two "abled" men called Laal and Forrest in spite of all the negativities that they encounter in their lives. In a way, selected movies represent the abilities as well as the achievements of people with disability

via Forrest and Laal as movie characters. Hence, the message is quite clear; that is disability is not actually so; contrarily, it is the presentation of ability and beyond that men with disability are quite exceptional concerning their achievements throughout their lives. As a result of the research, six abled features of these persons with disability were pointed out, and all these can be popularized via these movies.

Related literature on disability studies and cinema

Here, the underpinning concern of the research has been available that concentrates disadvantaged groups, their definitions, content, and various dimensions at first and later on, disability studies and their scopes in association with cinematography owing to the fact that disadvantaged groups mean more than disability and the former one encapsulates the latter.

The concept of 'disadvantaged' groups

The term 'disadvantaged' or 'vulnerable' groups are commonly used interchangeably so as to refer to those who have human rights deficiencies. Most often, their economic, cultural, political, and social rights are violated by either civilians and or government authorities as well as institutions (Castellino, 2009, pp. 10-28). Thus, members of these groups undergo a perpetual discrimination, alienation, social exclusion, and labeling (stigmatization) process (Chapman & Carbonetti, 2011, pp. 683, 684). To the generic list by Icelandic Human Rights Centre, thirteen groups were identified as 'disadvantageous' and or 'vulnerable', and so all these groups are in need of 'social protection'. These are "women and girls (1), children (2), refugees (3), internally displaced persons (4), stateless persons (5), national minorities (6), indigenous peoples (7), migrant workers (8), disabled persons (9), elderly persons (10), HIV positive persons and AIDS victims (11), Roma/Gypsies/Sinti (12), and lesbian, gay, and transgender people (13)" (Icelandic Human Rights Centre, The Human Rights Protection of Vulnerable Croups (2009). As indicated within the list, the scope of disadvantaged people is so elaborate. Due to the social barriers built by society and/or culture and also because of the 'participation problem', these individuals isolate themselves from the society, and they cut their connections with labor markets too. Therefore, their participation in the labor force and economic activity decreases in a ceaseless way. According to the research conducted by Gül and Eren (2017), gypsy children can be included within the framework of this category, which is in line with the categorical study of Icelandic Human Rights Centre (p. 125). Additionally, the paper written by Willis (2008), confirms the idea that older people are regarded as one of the disadvantaged groups within the English society in terms of their needs from public social services (Willis, 2008, p. 18). Instead of quoting all the members of these groups one by one, it is to be notified that their characteristics are to be highlighted; otherwise, it is beyond the scope of the study. Therefore, in general, disadvantaged groups possess predicaments of engagement as well as participation into economic, political, and social processes (Hyle, Devkota & Mustalahti, 2019, p. 1062), they are exposed to discrimination and social exclusion in all spheres of life (Yung & Lee, 2014, p. 563), they have worse utilization of public services including the coverages of health insurance (Long, 2012, p. 245), at times, their disadvantageous situations result from their ethnic backgrounds (Tezcür & Gurses, 2017, pp. 213-230), colors (Mansbridge, 1999, pp. 628-657), and gender (Haberfeld & Izraeli, 2002, pp. 156-175; Madhu, 2007, pp. 213-216; Layton & Smith, 2017, pp. 52-73), and also they are in need of rehabilitation in order that their integrations into the society can be succeeded (Dixon et al., 2010, pp. 76-80), they have limited access to equal opportunities like career planning procedures (Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso & Post, 2005, pp. 115-137), they have to deal with "barriers" or "restrictions" concerning benefiting from health care systems as witnessed during Covid-19 pandemic, which creates inequalities as well as social injustices (LoriUscher et al., 2007, pp. 32, 33), they have financial drawbacks, live under poverty line, and assigned as the poor (Ray & Lancaster, 2005, pp. 46-56), job opportunities and or vacancies are not so accessible for them (Bautista-Hernández, 2020, p. 162) and so on and so forth. As seen, the term disadvantaged groups have several dimensions; however, their correlation with disability on the basis of cinematographic elements will be discussed in this research. To put it another way, disability as the most vulnerable case in association with the motion picture industry forms the main skeleton of this paper.

Disability theories or models

In this part of the research, theories or models of disability are analyzed in detail. While clarifying these theories and models, Reid-Cunningham and Fleming (2009) as well as Letšosa and Retief (2018) classifications are fundamentally benefited as the starting point. Also, human rights-based disability models constitute the primary dynamics of modern approaches of disability in association with the representation of disability in cinematographic context.

Traditional approaches to disability

Just as discussing disadvantaged groups on a macro scale, disability as a micro unit and its theoretical background needs to be uncovered as well. Actually, disability can be comprehended via a number of models and or theories developed in social sciences like sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, and psychology. These theories unveiled by these social sciences disciplines form the very basics or infrastructure of disability understandings on the basis of social welfare as an academic discipline. In general, these theories are categorized as individual (i), moral or religious (ii), societal (iii), oppression (iv), diversity (v), and social construct (vi) model. Moral and medical models are assessed as the examples of individual models while oppression, diversity, and social construct model are regarded as primary societal models (Reid-Cunningham & Fleming, 2009, pp. 11, 12). Other categorizations such as medical model (a), identity model (b), human rights model (c), cultural model (d), economic model (e), charity model (f), limits model (g) are also available in the literature (Letšosa & Retief, 2018, pp. 1-8). Therefore, in this section, these models are to be clarified in association with the outline of the research and the portrayal of disability from cinematographic angles.

At the very beginning, it can be argued that individual model is a sort of model that regards disability as the "problem of the person who carries the disability" and it can be related to the idea that people who possess disabilities have something wrong with them (Rothman, 2007, p. 3 as cited by Reid-Cunningham & Fleming, 2009, p. 11). Individual model can also be linked with the medical model which references the fact that disability occurs as a result of a defect in the human body and so it contains an abnormality and it is a type of pathological situation (Olkin, 1999, p. 26). In this model, disability is taken into account as a kind of disease (Letšosa & Retief, 2018, p. 2) to be cured or to be prevented (Marks, 1997, p. 86).

When it comes to the moral or religious model, it can be addressed that it includes a certain and a solid theological explanation of disability within which it is assessed as a punishment from God due to the sins or the wrongdoings that the people committed in their life journeys (Letšosa & Retief, 2018, p. 2; Reid-Cunningham & Fleming, 2009, p. 11). This philosophic approach is backed up by Henderson and Bryan (2011) who also highlight the fact that disabilities, at least some of them, are the consequences of a lack of moral behaviours in a particular religious and social context. In this model, disability can result from not only individuals' personal sins but also the sins of their parents or ancestors. That's why it may be something like a negative transfer from generation to generation, which ends with the disability itself (Henderson & Bryan, 2011, p. 7). Additionally, moral or religious model regards disability as the testing situation of an individuals' faith and it is an opportunity given by God for their redemptions (Niemann, 2005, p. 106). Hence, for some people in different societies or in cultures, passing the test is a sign of healing in a physical manner. On condition that physical healing does not come into reality, this can be interpreted in a way that the person has lack of faith in God (Black, 1996, p. 26).

As for societal or social model, disability is a socially constructed phenomenon (Letšosa & Retief, 2018, p. 3) and it is caused by social circumstances and conditions (UPIAS, 1976, p. 3). In this model, values, institutions, media, advertisements, social images, and the culture itself play a key role for the appearance of disability (Rothman, 2003, p. 3). This means that society has a leading role in disability problems, so the solution must take place on a community basis rather than its individual oriented equivalents including personal rehabilitation (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 2010, pp. 161-166).

As the samples of societal models, oppression model refers to the 'otherness' syndrome that brings forth to the psychological, economical, and social oppression of persons with disabilities (Rothman, 2003, p. 9). Therefore, these people are not visible in their society and they are socially eliminated, which is actually another form of discrimination (Reid-Cunningham & Fleming, 2009, p. 12). Again, diversity model, as another example of societal model, involves common cultural and societal parameters like socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, and disability. Common cultural and societal parameters mean shared feelings, understandings and the perceptions of a particular society (Rothman, 2003, p. 11).

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Returning Letšosa and Retief (2018) classification on disability models, it can be argued that medical model, first of all, is associated with the fact that disability is considered as a disease (Letšosa & Retief, 2018, p. 2), which is mentioned well in advance. On the other hand, identity model references that disability allows a sort of positive identity for persons with disabilities and gives membership to a specific minorized group (Brewer et al. 2012). At the same time, it forces them to create a group culture (Fraser, 2003, p. 26). Human rights model, which is extended and developed on social model, is closely concerned with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities on the basis of human difference and dignity (Lawson & Beckett, 2021, pp. 348, 368). Cultural model of disability emphasizes the functioning of disability in different cultural contexts (Letšosa & Retief, 2018, p. 6). When it comes to the economic model, it focuses on how disability leaves an impact upon the productivity of labor in labor markets, so it is closely concerned with the individual capabilities of persons with disabilities in a particular economic system (Armstrong, Noble & Rosenbaum, 2006, p. 151). This model raises the question of how persons with disabilities are economically included in labor-oriented procedures (Grue, 2024, pp. 3119, 3120) and in what way their working roles are defined (Smart, 2004, pp. 37, 38). Charity model contemplates persons with disabilities as those to be mercified and they are in need of comprehensive humanitarian services (Harisantoso et al. 2024, p. 34). Lastly, limit model of disability comes to the point that disability is a kind of limit or limitedness to be tackled with (Mawson, 2013, p. 411), and it is an unsurprising facet of being a human being (Creamer, 2009, p. 93).

Modern approach to disability: human rights-based disability model

Human rights-based disability model, which attributes to the fact that persons with disabilities are to be regarded as right holders rather than problems (Quinn et al, 2002), plays a certain ground for the formulation of this paper since this work proves the fact that the movies selected as the samples portray the "talented" vision and aspect of disability and underline the "abled" characteristics of these persons. Persons with disabilities possess the legal rights to be involved in society, participate in social, economic and cultural activities and have the rights to plan their lives depending upon socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political realities and within their communities. This is the main point and the argument of this model (Gomez, 2015, p. 34). More than that, human rights-based disability model demonstrates the idea that the problems that persons with disabilities encounter stem from outside factors and those people are to be assessed as "subjects not as objects" (Quinn et al, 2002). This approach clashes with categorical identification or stigmatization of the persons with disabilities and suggests a broader vision by including social and cultural codifications (Waddington & Priestley, 2021, p. 1). In a way, it can be claimed that this model necessitates evaluation of the rights of persons with disabilities within "human rights discourse" (Series, 2019, p. 74). Human rights perspective to disability unveils the actions in accordance with human dignity which is connected with the capability of people to make their own future plans and also encapsulates the freedom of choice (Peces–Barba Martinez, 1989 as cited by Gomez, 2015, p. 35). For that reason, the terminology of the paper, from the beginning to the end, is grounded in line with these scientific statements and so instead of disabled men, disabled personality, and disabled people, the term "persons with disabilities" are preferred, which is also in line with the basic standards of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) (United Nations, 2006). The talent or let's say the capability-oriented vision used in the research is also compatible with the arguments of this model as well.

Disability studies in association with cinematography

To define the term, it can be stated that disability, which is a form of discrimination, stigmatization, social exclusion, and or oppression, includes indiscernible elements since it is commonly addressed as the "mosaic of the cripples, the freaks, the blind, the deaf and the dumb" all together (Grue, 2011, p. 532). Via highlighting its dimension, CRPD shares a holistic definition of the term in this way (Article 1) (United Nations, 2006):

> Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

In literature, many academic papers focusing upon disability in line with cinematography are available too, which is actually the main axis of the paper. That's why extension as well as visible profile of disability studies as part of cinematographic elements is the main issue to be unveiled in this part of the

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research. To illustrate, O'Dell (2015) studies disability from Islamic spirituality perspective in Iranian cinema. The author references the idea that direct representations of disability in an academic discourse in Middle East are not so common and also scholars overlook this standpoint; however, this inclination varied a little bit with the contribution of theological components, so disability in cinema comes to fore in correspondence with a spiritual viewpoint. Therefore, it can be signalled that disability is not depicted in a direct manner in cinema in Iran, yet still it is something like a symbol of divinity. Additionally, O'Dell (2015) stresses the idea that cinema as cultural element plays a significant role in dealing with social, theological, economic, and aesthetic impediments particularly for disadvantaged people (p. 1123).

Whittington-Walsh (2002), who analyzes the images of persons with disabilities in cinema, suggests the fact that there is a positive transition concerning the portrayals of persons with disabilities in cinema from past to present. In the past, disability, including its physical and mental side connotated negativity, violence, psychiatric problems and so on and so forth. In a way, it can be put forward that cinematography was the illustration of disability just from a 'stereotypical' or 'adversarial' point of view. Frankly speaking, these men and women were referred as someone or something like "problems" in the society. Therefore, most often, persons with disabilities were referenced as "dependent", "isolated", "abnormal", "idiot", "invisible", "victims", "oppressed", and etc. That's why; they were stigmatized by actors and actresses in one way or another (Whittington-Walsh, 2002, pp. 695, 696). This claim is supported by other researchers like Zola (1985, pp. 5-17), Norden (1994), Nelson (1994, pp. 1-17), Safran (1998, pp. 227-238), and Mitchell and Snyder (2001, p. 196). On the other hand, to the viewpoints of some contemporary scholars like Goethals et al. (2022), nothing has changed about the icon of persons with disabilities in cinema or media for a few decades. As a result of their surveys, they came to the point that media still label those sorts of people as the "other" (p. 746). What's more, Charlton (1998) signified that cinema is a kind of industry in which disabilities are merchandized and "their disabling condition acquires an exchange value that a few people profit from." Because of this, the mainstream film industry just thinks about money and profitability; nothing else (Charlton, 1998, p. 47).

Depending upon David Lynch's *The Elephant Man,* Boyd (2016) analyzes the outlook of persons with disabilities by persons with non-disabilities and the research comes to the resolution that those kinds of people have potential to "dehumanize" and "objectify" disability by neglecting all ethical standards. Here, cinema plays a role of mirror for reflection of this "ableist stare" within the society (Boyd, 2016, p. 1321). Gauci and Callus (2015), who analyze disability within the framework of the film called *The Theory of Everything (2014)*, specify the fact that movies are unique tools for the presentation of disability from a multifaceted perspective and within a limited space or scale. In these snapshots, the audience experiences various characteristics of persons with disabilities at the same time, which is the case for Hawking in this movie (Gauci & Callus, 2015, pp. 1282, 1285). Therefore, the fact that spatial arrangements for characters with disabilities in movies are to be regulated including the places or the settings are of great significance in cinematography so that disability is to be manifested and illustrated in an objective manner (Imrie, 2014, p. 27).

Longmore (2003) emphasizes two striking facts concerning disability studies and again along with cinematography. The first one is directly correlated with former discussions. That is motion picture industry depicts disability as one of the "handicapped", "problematic" issues of the society, so persons with disabilities are referred as "bad guys" or criminals. This philosophy attributes negative meanings to disability and persons with disabilities as a whole. The idea of the author is supported by three films like *The Best Years of Our Lives (1946), The Big Parade (1925),* and *Coming Home (1978)*. On the other hand, the same researcher lays a great emphasis upon the fact that societies cannot be sustainable by overlooking the prevalence of this phenomenon as it is a social reality (Longmore, 2003, pp. 131-133). Here, Longmore (2003) cites Michael Wood's statement and argues that *"All movies mirror reality in some way or other"* (Wood, 1975, pp. 16-18). Therefore, he criticizes the negligent characteristics of society on the basis of disability despite the fact that it happens, and it is existent all around us (Longmore, 2003, pp. 131-133).

The scientific views of Markotic (2012) overlap the realistic aspect of Longmore (2003) since Markotic (2012) analyzes disability concept in documentary films and attributes the fact that illustration of disability in movies does not change its prevalence within a particular society, which is an

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absolute truth. Markotic (2012) reinforces this statement by underlying the fact that *"The act of fact making cannot be taken out of the fact." and "[…] certain bodies reveal a truth more than any statement […]"* (pp. 1, 2, 16).

All these things pave the way that disability, in one way or another, will continue to capture the attention of cinematography and social sciences in the years to come. However, in this research paper, the approach to disability in correlation with cinematographic elements is absolutely different from the current literature owing to the fact that this study claims that cinema is not just a platform where disability is represented in a negative manner; unlike that, it can be a gorgeous tool for the portrayal of disability from an "ability" perspective. Cinema has the potential or can be utilized to make the PR of persons with disabilities and their achievements, capabilities, and capacities in spite of the barriers that they encounter.

Aim and methodology

The primary goal of the study is to analyze 'disability' within the framework of disadvantaged groups in cinema. In addition, portraying disability from a positive imagery in cinematography is the second fundamental target of the current paper. To put it in another way and unlike from the current literature, demonstrating the fact that cinema as a 'visual' and 'audial' tool can be used to reflect disability from an ability perspective and it can be the mirror of the achievements of characters with disability. Rather than disability, psychological problems, and or mental as well as physical deficiencies, cinema has a perfect potential to signal the positive images of persons with disabilities, which is highlighted in this research paper depending upon the movies selected as cases. In coordination with the objective of the paper, four research questions were outlined:

RQ1. How is disability depicted in cinema?

RQ2. In movies, is it possible to portray disability from a positive point of view?

RQ3. To what extent is cinema effective in dealing with social problems?

RQ4. Does cinema lead to the analysis of "disability" on the basis of cross-cultural concept?

In comparison with current studies, this research paper is of great significance and unique since it proves that cinema is a benevolent apparatus to portray 'disability' as a 'positive' imagery. It is not just used as part of a crippled situation; in the stark contrast, cinema has the potential to be used as a reflection of ability or talent while clarifying the stories of these persons with disabilities. Therefore, it is quite possible to outline 'disability' from an 'ability' point of view by means of cinematography. Additionally, this paper enables a comparison between Hollywood and Bollywood cinema on the basis of their approaches to "ability" in 'disability' context, which also finds a certain ground for cross cultural study.

Research method

The paper is mainly built upon two research methods so that images, conversations, and textual infrastructure of the movies called Forrest Gump (1994), and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) can be analyzed in relation to disability context. First, the argument in this current study is embedded with critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is used to seek how "practices, events, and texts arise out of and ideologically shaped by relations of power" (Fairclough, 1995). The researcher in this paper investigates how these movies selected as cases are discursively constructed for the portrayal of disability from an "ability" perspective. Moreover, content analysis, which is commonly benefited for the inquiry of visual, textual, and audial data, was preferred as the other research method in this current paper. Content analysis enables the researcher to take the snapshot of analyzed document, text, visual and audial material or big data from 'categorical' and 'thematic' manner (Stemler, 2015, p. 1). This research technique is quite useful for determining the basics of analyzed material. That's why; content analysis was benefited to ascertain the "abled" sides of characters with disabilities in these movies. All these things pave the way that critical discourse and content analysis are determined as integrated research methods in particular for the analysis of qualitative data.

Research model

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The research adopted a qualitative research design to find out the talents of persons with disabilities and on the basis of two movies called Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). Therefore, the data consists of these two movies, their contextual, visual, and audial framework. While selecting and making the final list of the movies on the basis of disability and disadvantaged groups, additional inclusion criteria were highlighted by the researcher:

- A protagonist as well as a movie who/which depicts "disability" from an "ability" perspective.
- Particularly American and Indian movies which enables the researcher to analyze "content" and "discourse."
- Two movies were specified from both Hollywood and Bollywood that focus on cross-cultural aspect of disability.
- Mainstream films that capture the attention of the audience to social problems and disadvantaged groups.

Brief synopsis of the movies

Of course, it's not possible to unveil the entire synopsis of these two movies; nevertheless, relevant information can be provided in line with the main argument of the paper. More than that, Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) is the modern version of Forrest Gump (1994); thus, the story in these films is basically identical.

As the name suggests, Forrest Gump (1994) is a movie that clarifies the amazing life of Forrest, who was born and bred in the USA as a gifted child. He possesses gorgeous capabilities despite his physical and mental disabilities. He studies in prestigious schools including colleges in the US. Following his graduation, he becomes a national sportsman, who represents his country nationally. Due to his achievements in sports, he even meets John F. Kennedy, the president of the United States. After the outbreak of Vietnam War, Forrest is enrolled into the army without any hesitation and goes to Vietnam. He becomes a 'heroic' character during the war and saves many US soldiers' lives. Vietnam War ends and Forest returns to his hometown and initiates a new business. Later on, his mother becomes very ill, and he treats her very well and Forrest shows diligence and affection for her beloved mother. After a while, Forrest gets married to Jenny, his friend from childhood, and has a small kid named Michael. However, Jenny becomes so ill, and she dies. Following her death, Forrest becomes a perfect father for his son. The story of Forrest represents the "abled" character of a person with disability on the basis of a Hollywood movie.

Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) tells the story of Laal, living in rural India, so from this perspective, it can be alleged that it is the modern equivalent of Forrest. Like Forrest, Laal has great many disadvantaged peculiarities coming from birth both mentally and physically. Nonetheless, he does not give up dealing with handicaps and he goes to an international college and a prestigious university in India. He becomes a sportsman owing to his running ability, partakes in The Kargil War, rescues many people even his enemy, and he becomes a successful businessman, and a sensitive son of his mother. He gets married to Rupa and has son and takes good care of him following his wife's death. The film portrays the fact that mental and physical impairment or handicaps can be converted into abilities and achievements on condition that one desires to do so, which is the case for Laal in an Indian rural society.

Data collection

Concentrating on two popular movies, this study analyzes visual, textual as well as contextual data from a qualitative point of view. The movies were determined by means of detailed 'Google' searches. Just as conducting this procedure and making final list of the movies, several keywords like "disadvantaged groups and cinema", "fragility and cinema", "disability and cinema", "vulnerability", "impairment", "marginalized community and cinema" were commonly utilized. At first, positive image of persons with disabilities in these two movies and their cross-cultural content made the researcher choose these films. In fact, I have deliberately selected two examples of this representational approach, and my purpose is to examine how it operates, including its strengths and limitations. This philosophy leads to the appearance of six themes emerging as a result of scientific analysis. The data was generated through

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legal copyright versions of these selected movies. Also script.com, YouTube, IMDB, and platforms like Netflix and Disney Plus were utilized to obtain the full conversations, images, events, and music within the movies.

In addition to the positive image of the persons with disabilities in these selected movies, the assessment of "disability" in a comparative and a cross-cultural manner enabled the researcher to use them as a qualitative research input. In other words, Forrest Gump (1994) represents the West, USA whilst Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) symbolizes the values of the East, India. Therefore, their approaches to disadvantaged groups and disability are expected to be different. What's more, these two movies give an opportunity to analyze the portrayal of disability, or the changes if any, in cinematography in thirty years of time. It can be signalled that these movies allow researchers a chronological and time-based scientific analysis for a better understanding of the issue over the years and so, determining these timeline centered fluctuations in a comparative manner is another concern of the research.

In this context, selected movies were watched over and over to categorize achievements of the protagonists at first, which are also the themes listed within the research. Additionally, full scripts of the movies were provided from scripts.com which enabled the researcher to possess qualitative data used for critical discourse analysis. This approach also facilitated the analysis of cinematographic elements from various angles.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed on a qualitative basis and through CDA and content analysis research methods. In performing the analysis, the categories and themes as well as some sorts of discursive patterns appeared repeatedly, all of which were ascertained and coded. Therefore, it can be cited that the analysis was constructed by means of scripted dialogues on a linguistic and discursive level and through a symbolic point of view by using cinematographic elements. This strategy opens a new path to specify how disability was constructed in these movies: from a negative or pessimist point of view and/or vice versa, which is also a kind of challenge for researchers, who concentrates on 'disability' in terms of 'negative' and 'disadvantageous' philosophy in cinematography (e.g. Zola, 1985; Norden, 1994; Nelson, 1994; Safran, 1998; Mitchell and Snyder, 2001; Goethals et al., 2022; Charlton, 1998). As a result of content analysis, six themes (e.g. Laal and Forest as Abled Kids (a), Smart Students (b), Successful Athletes (c), Heroic Warriors (d), Business Owners (e), Lovers and Fathers (f) were identified to prove the fact that movies are the portrayals of 'positive' image of persons with disabilities, which were sustained via the discursive connections of the dialogues, images, visual and audial components in these movies called Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). This scientific approach also balances the power relations between 'abled' or 'disabled' protagonists in cinematography (Botha & Harvey, 2022, p. 5).

Research Findings

Theme 1. Forrest and Laal as abled kids

Both movies suggest the idea that Laal and Forrest are abled kids due to their ambitions for tackling with social and cultural prejudices against persons with disabilities in their communities. These socially and culturally driven handicaps confirm the claims of Waddington & Priestley (2021) on the basis of disability concerns. In their journeys that entail struggle against social and cultural oriented barriers, their biggest supporters are their mothers, who always believe in their sons' capacities, and they never regard these two guys as men with disability. Here, the capability approach reminds the scientific denominations of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) as cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35) as well.

The utterances like *"You're no different than anybody (Forrest Gump, 1994)."* and *"You're as good as the rest. You're like all the other children (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022)."* are direct evidences of Mrs. Gump's and Mrs. Chaddha's believes in the capacities of both Forrest and Laal, which also includes a strong reaction to social and cultural dichotomies of their communities. Both Mrs. Gump's and Mrs. Chaddha's approaches to their sons' health problems are so emotional, compassionate, and caring. These imageries at the very beginning of these two movies are coupled with serene music in the background, which signals the fact that family is the most significant element for growing up a kid. The following narratives occur while Forrest and Laal are returning from hospital with their mothers following their treatments by doctors. These statements put forward that their mothers are contemplating in a way that their sons are quite "normal" and the "same" as the others, whereas that is not the case for other members of the society (see also Table 1):

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Mrs. Gump: Remember what I told you, Forrest. **You're no different than anybody else is**. Did you hear what I said, Forrest? **You're the same as everybody else. You're no different** (Forrest Gump, 1994).

Mrs. Chaddha: Hey, please mind your own business. **He's capable of it**. Listen to me Laal. **There's no task in this world that you can't do. You don't need anyone's help whatsoever**. If God wanted to make all of us just the same, and tell me why would He make so many people different in this world? […] Okay Laal, remember what I am about to tell you. **You're as good as the rest. You're like all the other children. You're not different from anyone else** (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022).



Figure 1. Forrest's (on the left) and Laal's (on the right) endeavour to be an abled kid: everything starts with 'walking'

Source: Forrest Gump, 1994; Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022.

** As a matter of fact, life is something like learning how to walk. Everything starts with this ability, which shows that those who are capable of walking can stand on their own legs throughout life. Here, walking also refers to the decisiveness of these characters on the basis of their struggles against the barriers of life itself (Figure 1).*

Table 1. Mothers' efforts to register their sons to school

Dialogue 1 (Hollywood)	**Dialogue 2 (Bollywood)**
School Principal: Your boy's …….. different, Mrs. Gump. Now, his IQ is 75. Mrs. Gump: Well, we're all different, Mr. Hancock. School Principal: I want to show you something, Mrs. Gump. Now, this is normal. Forrest is right here. The state requires a minimum IQ of 80 to attend public school, Mrs. Gump. He's gonna gave to go to a special school. Now, he'll be just fine. Mrs. Gump: What does normal mean in any way? He might be a bit on the slow side, but my boy Forrest is gonna get the same opportunities as everyone else. He's not going to some special school to learn how to retread tires. We're talking about five little points here. There must be something that can be done. Mr. Hancock: We're a progressive school system. We don't want to see anybody left behind. Is there a Mr. Gump, Mrs. Gump? Mrs. Gump: He is on vacation. (Forrest Gump, 1994).	School Owner: Your child is different. Listen ma'am. Some children are extremely intelligent. Some have a normal IQ. And someone below that normal just like your Laal. It is impossible for us to enroll such kids in our school. I suggest you enroll him in a school for dimwits. Mrs. Chaddha: My son Laal is not a dimwit. My Laal understands everything. It just takes a bit longer. That's it. He desires the same kind of opportunities as the other kids. […] I will come here every day and cook food for you. I will keep the home […] and do the dishes too. School Owner: What's the kid's father do by the way? Mrs. Chaddha: His father lives abroad. School Owner: You seem to be affluent. Will you really do the dishes and cook and clean every day? Mrs. Chaddha: Yes. For as long as my Laal is in your school. (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022)

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Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

In their childhoods, Forrest and Laal were exposed to social and cultural exclusion by their peers and actually no one wanted to play with them. They were treated as someone who had a low level of IQ. They are always addressed as 'different' from others. However, they never stopped walking and so they succeeded a lot, including walking without any assistance and finding friends like Jenny and Rupa. Their patience as well as ambitious character to overcome all these obstacles made them successful and able, especially in their life journeys.

Theme 2. Forrest and Laal as 'smart' students

Another thing that illustrates "ability" of persons with disabilities in Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) is their achievements in educational settings. The talent found out here is in line with Quinn et al (2002) and Series (2019, p. 74) perspectives since they approach persons with disabilities as right holders and disability from human rights discourse. That's why; both Forrest and Laal have the right of education. Mrs. Gump's and Mrs. Chaddha's sayings like *"Forrest is gonna get the same opportunities as everyone else (Forrest Gump, (1994)."* and *"He desires the same kind of opportunities as the other kids (Laal Singh Chaddha (2022)."* lay an emphasis upon this fact. These guys and their families invest in education a lot, which enhances productivity, and which enables them to find proper jobs throughout their careers. Thus, both Forrest and Laal attend very prestigious colleges in their home countries and actually they become college graduates. Their disabilities and the tragedy of social exclusions from their peers, and even school principals, who commonly use the words like "cripple" or "dimwits" to refer to them cannot prevent them to study academically and to get a college degree (see Table 1). Here, the mothers called Mrs. Gump and Mrs. Chaddha come to the scene, and they always indoctrinate to the whole society and to their sons that they are the same as the others and they are capable of doing everything like other men and women. These ladies voice their concerns just as they are struggling to register their kids to school. The dialogues stated in a separate manner are the fundamental indicators of this devotion (Table 1).



Figure 2. Forrest (on the left) and Laal (on the right) in graduation ceremony

Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

*** As mentioned well in advance, there is nothing to do for Forrest and Laal and so they got college degrees, which can be assessed as another proof for their talented and dedicated personality (Figure 2).*

Notably, the narratives above are accurate proof that these movies regard disability from an 'ability' perspective on the basis of educational standards. This is because Mrs. Gump and Mrs. Chaddha contemplate in a way that there is not any abnormality with their sons, which allows both Forrest and Laal to be educated as the others. This belief is something like a manifest towards these guys' capability, which signals the fact that nothing is impossible for humanity as long as one desires to do that. This is also the case for disadvantaged figures like Forrest and Laal in their attempts to reach the opportunities of formal education (Table 1). Their wishes to be educated like other guys continue up till they attend and graduate from a college with their BA degrees in a university in Alabama, USA for Forrest and in New Delhi, India for Laal. Their mothers are so proud of them and join their graduation ceremony. In the aftermath of their professional education, they get the opportunity to participate in labor markets with their qualifications. But before that, their first priority is the army itself.

Table 2. Forrest's and Laal's starting point as runners

Dialogue 1 (Hollywood)	**Dialogue 2 (Bollywood)**
Boy 1: Hey… dummy! Boy 2: Are you retarded or just plain stupid? Boy 3: Look, I'm Forrest Gump. Jenny: Just run away, Forrest. Run, Forrest! Run away! Hurry! Boy 2: Get the bikes! Boy 3: Hurry up! Let's get him! Come on! Boy 2: Look out, dummy, here we come! We're gonna get you! Jenny: Run, Forrest! Run! Run, Forrest! Boy 1: Come back, here, you! Jenny: Run, Forrest! Run! Forrest as a Storyteller: Now, you wouldn't believe it if I told you. But I can run like the wind blows. (Forrest Gump, 1994)	Boys: Hey dumbo! Got him. You silly stupid fellow. Ruppa: Laal, hey Laal […] Oh no, Laal! Did you get hurt? […] Hey, what are doing? Why are you hurting him? Boys: Because it's fun. Ruppa: Laal, just run! Just run! […] Run, Laal, run! Run, Laal, run! Laal as Storyteller: Now I know you won't believe me, if I tell you all that I can run faster than the wind. From that day, if I want to go anywhere, I would run. I would just keep already. (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022)

Source: Forrest Gump, (1994); Laal Singh Chaddha, (2022).

Theme 3. Forrest and Laal as successful athletes (runners)

As in the other spheres of life, Forrest and Laal are such talented guys that they become medal winners in sports. Their phenomenal achievements in sports prove the fact that persons with disabilities are "subjects" rather than "objects" in all segments of the society, which is coherent with the ideas of Quinn et al (2002). Forrest is pioneer in his soccer team owing to his running ability, which is also the case for Laal as athletes. The running skills of these men are forced to develop by their "peers" while they are humiliating and bullying Forrest and Laal. That's why; it can be assured that bullying behavior of Forrest's and Laal's friends unveil their 'running' abilities, which is the starting point of this adventure in their lives. These scenes are elucidated in a detailed manner in Hollywood in comparison with Bollywood. However, the messages conveyed to the audience in these cinemas are similar indeed (Table 2).

Since their childhoods, they have never stopped running, specifically when they encounter a problematic case in their lives. In a way, it can be addressed that their running habits are a type of protest or reaction against the burdens of life itself. Moreover, it is a manifest towards the biases of abled men. Later on, they are so progressive in their running abilities that they become professional sportsmen, and they join the college team. Their supporters' motivating slogans are "Run, Laal, Run!" (Laal Sing Chaddha, 2022), and "Run, Forrest, Run!" (Forest Gump, 1994). The slogans like "run" mentioned here means more than just a physical activity; it is a sort of stimulus, tools of motivation or action against the barriers in social life in particular for those who are stigmatized as persons with disabilities. By running, they are showing the fact that they have the unique skills to grapple with social and cultural prejudices, which are verified in those movies as well. All in all, it can be referenced that both Forrest and Laal converted their disability into ability again and they become top sportsmen in their countries and so they are even welcomed by the presidents of their countries. Hence, there's no hesitation to say that they know how to turn disability into a fantastic ability.

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Figure 3. Forrest (on the left) and Laal (on the right) as sportsmen

Source: Forrest Gump (1994); Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

****Forrest and Laal are so prestigious in sports that Forrest's football team gets championship via his running skill and Laal always comes first in running races. These scenes illustrate the fact that disabilities are in our minds, and they are not valid for the figures like Forrest and Laal (Figure 3).*

Theme 4. Forrest and Laal as heroic warriors

This theme discovered as a consequence of the qualitative analysis links with the capacity approach of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) and the attitude of Quinn et al (2002) that prioritizes the subject rather than object position of persons with disabilities in their cultural and communal contexts. From a career and freedom of choice perspective, this theme is also correlated with the points of views of Gomez (2015). The reason is that Forrest and Laal are so smart on the basis of their abilities in the army as well. They are patriotic since they joined the army to serve their nations. Laal clarifies his initiative to join the army as his grandpas and great great grandpas with these statements like *"Mom used to say that everyman in our family was an army man, so even I decided to join the army" (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022).* More than that, they become the leading figures in military operations and wars, which are quite critical for their own states. To illustrate, Forrest participates in Vietnam War (1955-1975), an overseas operation to fight against socialist sides of Vietnam and he saves many US soldiers' lives in a severe attack. He narrates the rationale behind the US coming to Vietnam with the following statements (Forrest Gump, 1994):

> Forrest: Now they told us that Vietnam was going to be very different from the United States of America except for all the beer cans and the barbecues it was. The good thing about Vietnam is there was always some place to go.

Table 3. Forrest and Laal as gifted personality in the army

Dialogue 1 (Hollywood)	**Dialogue 2 (Bollywood)**
Forrest: Bubba was my best good friend. I had to make sure he was okay. Forrest: Bubba! Forrest Narration: And on my way back to find Bubba, well there was this boy laying on the ground. Forrest: Tex. Forrest Narration: I couldn't let him lay there all alone, scared the way he was, so I grabbed him up and run him out of there. And everytime I went back looking for Bubba, somebody else was saying "Help me, Forrest, help me." […] I started to get scared that U might never find Bubba. […] If I had known this was gonna be the last time me and Bubba was gonna talk, I'd of thought of something better to say. Forrest: Hey, Bubba.	Laal Narration: I ran so fast, but after some time I realized I was running alone. Laal: Bala? Laal Narration: I didn't know how far behind Bala was. I went by running to find him. Laal: Bala! Laal Narration: Each time I went back to look for Bala, there will be someone else in need of help. I could see my three grandpas in every soldier even they had no return home from war. Soldier: Laal, listen where are you going? Laal: Bala, Bala.

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Dialogue 1 (Hollywood)	Dialogue 2 (Bollywood)
Bubba: Hey, Forrest. Forrest why did this happen? Forrest: You got shot. Forrest Narration: Then Bubba said something I won't ever forget. Bubba: I want to go home. Forrest: Bubba was my best good friend. And even I know that ain't something you can find just around the corner. Bubba was gonna be a shrimping boat captain, but instead he died right there by that river in Vietnam (Forrest Gump, 1994).	Soldier: Have you lost your mind? Bofors firing is going to start any second. The mountain area is dangerous. Laal: Bala, brother! Bala. Bala: Laal. Laal: What happened to you? Brother, you're hurt very badly. Hey, it's okay. It's okay. You have me. […] Laal Narration: Bala's injuries are really bad. […]But then all of a sudden, I got stung by a bee. Laal: Don't worry. […] You'll be already okay. Brother! Bala: Why did this happen, Laal? Laal I want to go home. My mother is waiting for me. Laal: Bala, Bala, brother, brother […] Laal Narration: Bala wanted to go back home and start his business. But he died on a mountain in Kargill (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022).

Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

That's also similar to Laal, who attends Kargil War as a soldier and contributes a lot to his army. He describes Kargil operation with these utterances as such *"The next morning we're sent on an important mission. We're posted in Kargil at that time. Our commanders told us there were few enemies in the area and we had to get rid of them." (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022).* Thus, Laal as a soldier does his best to serve for Indian army and gets wounded while trying to save the lives of army soldiers, in particular, Bala referred as his brother by himself. That is also the same for Forrest to put his effort into saving US soldiers and his best friend Bubba.



Figure 4. Forrest (on the left) and Laal (on the right) as strong army men

Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

*****People from US and India never forget the services of Forrest and Laal to their own nations, which is an absolute indicator of their distinguished features; not their disabilities (Figure 4).*

These examples above depending upon these pioneering figures reference the fact that both Forrest and Laal are fairly capable and talented considering their militaristic peculiarities. Also, their sincerity as well as diligence as a rescuer during bombing certify their capacity and ambition too. These are all

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validated in the dialogues above (Table 3). Therefore, their abilities and heroic initiatives outweigh their disabilities, which are all predefined by their communities and cultures where they live.

Theme 5. Forrest and Laal as business owners

Another skill underlined in the movies selected as the cases is the business making capacity of Forrest and Laal. From Bubba, his closest friend in the army, Forrest learns a lot about the shrimp industry. As a matter of fact, Bubba is a man of shrimp coming from the family and when they are alone, he always says something about that business (Forrest Gump, 1994):

> Shrimp is the fruit of the sea. You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it. There's, uh, shrimp kabobs, shrimp creole, shrimp gumbo, pan fried, deep fried, stir fried. There's pineapple shrimp and lemon shrimp, coconut shrimp, pepper shrimp, shrimp soup, shrimp stew, shrimp salad, shrimp and potatoes, shrimp burger, shrimp sandwich.

In a way, Bubba indoctrinates and teaches key points of that business to Forrest. After Forrest was left in the army, he decided to enter into that commerce due to the fact that he made a promise to Bubba. Later on, Lieutenant Dan participated in the team and following stormy weather, Forrest's boat becomes the unique one left sound and safe. For this reason, they catch tons of shrimp as only boat making that business, and they make a great deal of money and even they establish a corporation. It is so amazing to say that they also appear on the front page of Fortune Magazine as the most successful businessmen of the year.

As for Laal, another success story is available in the business of underwear. He with Mohammed Paaji initiated a business in Laal's farm as an enterprise and they turned into a big company. Actually, Laal implemented the strategies and business plans of Bala concerning the underwear sector since Bala was a pioneering figure in that trade. And in the end, Laal with the assistance of Mohammed Paaji, achieved. As in Forrest Gump, Laal and Mohammed Paaji appeared on the cover page of India Today as the entrepreneur of the year. At last, Laal also made a big fame. As seen in Table 4, both Forrest and Laal narrate their stories to the people listening to them; however, some of them do not believe in them, which is an indicator that outside factors in particular cultural biases are a sort of predicaments for the fact that persons with disabilities can never be a millionaire or a capital owner. In literature, this view is backed up by scholars like Quinn et al (2002), Letšosa & Retief (2018), and Rothman (2003). Nevertheless, the reality is that they are such private guys that they did it, which is again a superb sign for their 'abled' status (Table 4).

Table 4. Forrest and Laal as 'entrepreneur' of the year

Dialogue 1 (Hollywood)	**Dialogue 2 (Bollywood)**
Forrest Narration: And since people still needed them shrimps for shrimp cocktails and barbecues and all. And we were the only boat left standing "Bubba-Gump" shrimp's what they got. We got a whole bunch of boats. Twelve Jenny's, a big ol' warehouse, we even have hats that says "Bubba-Gump" on 'em. "Bubba- Gump Shrimp." It's a household name. Man: Hold on there, boy. Are you telling me you're the owner of the Bubba- Gump Shrimp Corporation? Forrest: Yes, sir. We've got more money than Davy Crocket. Man: Boy, I've heard some whoppers in my time, but that tops them all. We were sitting next to a millionaire!	Laal Narration: I bought three sewing machines, I bought cloth and hired two tailors for the work. I'll stitch 20 sets in a day and those two ten sets each. […]1000 sets were already in a month just like Bala had estimated. Bala was very smart. Things were going exactly the way he had planned. […] But we weren't able to sell 800 sets in a month. [..] And guess what? A miracle happened. Our product started selling a lot. Rupa underwear and banyan. So enough we went from three sewing machines to nine sewing machines. And then we moved to a very big place and then even bigger place. Today we have a number of factories. Our head office is in Delhi. Our products are very popular. Even you might be wearing of it. A Man in the Train: One second. Are you trying to tell me that you're the owner of Rupa Cooperation?

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Dialogue 1 (Hollywood)	Dialogue 2 (Bollywood)
Elderly Woman: Well, I thought it was a very lovely story. And you tell it so well. With such enthusiasm (Forrest Gump, 1994).	Laal: Yes, I am. A Man in the Train: Very good. Madam, will you know, we're in the company of a millionaire. In a second-class non-AC compartment. Rupa Cooperation […] Elderly Woman: What an engaging story you shared with us son. And you narrate it so beautifully (Laal Singh Chaddha, 2022).

Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).



Figure 5. Forrest with Lieutenant Dan (on the left) and Laal with Mohammed Paaji (on the right) on their ways to business

Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

***** *Forrest and Laal are making future plans about their businesses, and they are always open to learning something from the others. Bubba is primary teacher for Forrest about shrimping industry and that is the case for Bala in the underwear sector and in Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). Through their friends' experiences and support, they establish big firms and become millionaires (Figure 5).*

Theme 6. Forrest and Laal as lovers and fathers

Last but not least, Laal and Forrest as dedicated fathers and perfect lovers are to be mentioned as their emotional skills. This shows their abilities to plan their lives in line with human dignity in one way or another, and their freedom of choices, which can be connected with the arguments of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) as cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35). Initially, Forrest loves Jenny since his childhood and sacrifices a lot for her. In every single moment, Forrest says he would like to marry her. However, the case is a little bit tricky on the side of Jenny. She is fond of her freedom, and she encounters many barriers in her life especially due to her family. Actually, Jenny has different plans for herself, but nothing goes as she desires. I have got the feeling that the director of Forrest Gump gives the message that an abled woman does not make her dream real, yet a person with disability succeeds everything in his life. By the way, Jenny believes in the sensitivity of Forrest, his kindness as well as his love. In the final part of the movie, Forrest and Jenny get married and they have a cute son, a junior Forrest. After a while, Forrest learns that Jenny is so ill that she is on the verge of death. Then a moment later, she rests in peace owing to the fact that she trusts Forrest about taking care of their little kids. And Forrest becomes alone with his son. From that time on, Forrest does his best to be a wonderful father for Forrest Jr. The identical story with some variations concerning the characters like Ruppa and Aman, Laal's son, can be implemented to Laal in Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). Laal also dedicates his life to their sons following Rupa's tragic death. All these things pave the way that a man referred as a person with disability can be a devoted lover and can be a marvelous family for them, which is beyond the scope of those abled.

Variations in Disability Perspective: Further Refinement on the Cross-Cultural Representation of "Disability" in Selected Movies

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Apart from the other chapters of the article, this title of the research is particularly added in the findings section so as to address the portrayal of disability in a cross-cultural manner since the movies selected as the cases display the values of West and East. Therefore, the divergences, similarities or differentiations just as unveiling disability is to be investigated, and this is actually another objective of the paper. However, it is to be highlighted that these distinctions as well as the adaptations are the main characteristics of sample movies rather than general truths about Indian and American societies.

Initially, cross-cultural analysis comes from the fact that Forrest Gump (1994) is the direct illustration of Western and American values whilst Laal Singh Chaddha is the absolute indicators of the Eastern way of life. In close connection with the thematic categorizations of the study, it can be alleged that under the theme 1, which signifies "abled kids" status of the movie characters, disability is originated in urban areas or let's say the cities in Forrest Gump (1994), yet still disability concerns are mostly established upon the perspectives of the rural environments in Laal Sigh Chaddha (2022). Maybe, this is because of the industrialized characteristics of the West, which is actually the origin of industrialization following the invention of steam machine; on the other hand, the East is the symbol of rural lifestyle. More than that, disability is associated with classical American home and its environment in the former movie; however, in the second one, it is concerned with a rural and typical Indian resident. That's why, under theme 1, the description of disability issue goes backward and forward between Western and Eastern values.

Table 5. Cross-cultural tabulation of disability in the movies analyzed

	Theme 1 **Abled Kids**	**Theme 2** **Smart Students**	**Theme 3** **Successful Athletes (Runners)**	**Theme 4** **Heroic Warriors**	**Theme 5** **Business Owners**	**Theme 6** **Lovers and Fathers**
A) Hollywood Western Values Forrest Gump (1994)	City, Urbanization, Classical American Home, Western Values	Public School, Liberal School Environment	American Football, Tennis	Vietnam War, The narratives of war with American values like grills, cola, music style	Investment in Sea or Ocean, Shrimp Industry	Jenny running after American popular culture and hip hop to be a star Forrest as an American ideal father figure.
B) Bollywood Eastern Values Laal Singh Chaddha (2022)	Village Rural Area, A Typical Indian Resident, Eastern Values	An International School, Conservative School Environment	Athlete Running	Kargil War, War narratives in line with Indian conservative values	Investment in Industrialized Sector, Textile Industry	Rupa running after Indian popular culture, and cinema to be a star Laal as an Indian ideal father figure and strongly emotional.

Source: Author's own inferences.

Moreover, addressing disability, cultural variations are available in theme 2, that focuses upon Forrest and Laal as smart students. The difference here results from the educational context in which Forrest and Laal study. In Hollywood, the school is presumably a state school and liberal standards of education dominate the system, which may be because of the capitalistic ideology of the country. In Bollywood, this is not the case since Laal goes to a conservative school where religion is a key concept that shapes the school environment as well as its organizational culture. In a way, this reality can be interpreted in a

way that Hollywood cinema is linked with liberal thought concerning its disability portrayal, but when it comes to Bollywood, conservative values come to the fore. Hence, the tone of explaining disability is a little bit soft in Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) that is not directly evident in Forrest Gump (1994).

Depending upon Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022), cross-cultural analysis can be made via theme 3, which signifies the fact that both Forrest and Laal are successful athletes and sportsmen. However, Forrest and Laal differ from one another in regard to the type of sportive activities that they have expertise. Forrest becomes a pioneer in American football and so, he gets a full scholarship in the university while Laal, as an athlete, is a leader in running, which is not peculiar to a specific region or a country but much closer to the countries in the East like India. All these things pave the way that Forrest and Laal as the persons with disabilities variate on the basis of the sports that belong to their cultural environments, where they are born and bred. As witnessed in the qualitatively analyzed movies, baseball is a symbol of USA and Hollywood, but running can be associated with India and Bollywood.

Besides, the depiction of Vietnam and Kargil Wars and their narratives in both movies are not so similar, which provides a certain ground for a comparative analysis in a cultural way. This comparison is related to theme 4 that uncovers Forrest and Laal as heroic and patriotic figures in their countries. In Forrest Gump (1994), Vietnam War is included and the war is narrated with cultural motifs of American society like grilling, cola, and an American music style and so on and so forth. The war is something like an adventure and entertainment for American soldiers who are in Vietnam for ideological purposes. As a matter of fact, American army is fighting against another country as a whole to indoctrinate their political and economic system, named after capitalism. When it comes to the portrayal of Kargil War in Laal Singh Chaddha (2002), it can be referenced that its scope is smaller than the former one and it is something like defending the borders of India against marginalized groups. The war narrative in Vietnam fits to the liberal philosophy of America but in Kargil, it is in line with conservative values of an Indian society. Here, Forrest as a person with disability, represents an ideological American soldier whereas Laal is in battlefield to defend its own country.

Furthermore, Forrest's and Laal's manners of making business, that is linked with theme 5 in the research, include a strong variation from each other due to the fact that the sector that they invest in is strikingly different. To illustrate, Forrest as an American guy prefers to invest in agriculture, that is to say sea; on the other hand, Laal goes on an industrialized sector. The prosperity of Forrest is centered on shrimp industry in America, but Laal's richness depends on textile industry in India. Perhaps, cultural parameters play a certain ground for the formation of their choices since America as the biggest economy in the world does not strongly need industry for economic growth. In the stark contrast, USA prioritizes services such as finance, technology, innovation, education, tourism, and banking as the leading sectors for an economic upheaval. Nonetheless, India is still in need of industry for capital accumulation in order to meet the needs of its largest population. Thus, Forrest and Laal as the persons with disabilities have become rich at the end of the day but using different methods peculiar to their cultural backgrounds, requirements, and identities.

Concerning theme 6 called as lovers and fathers, it is possible to make a comparative analysis on the basis of cultural issues. Here, this comparison can be made both on Jenny and Rupa and also the level of emotion that Forrest and Laal reflect within the movies. Jenny, who will be the wife of Forrest at the end of the movie is the symbol of popular American culture and the way of life. The reason is that she always keens on her freedom and she behaves in coherence with popular cultural trends in USA at that time. For example, she would like to be a star, wears like a hip hop girl, travels a lot, participates in political demonstration organized in Washington D.C. Jenny's freedom-oriented perspective is also in line with the American political system and American dream as well. As for Rupa, the wife of Laal, it can be mentioned that she is actually the symbol of Indian popular culture and Bollywood because she would like to be a star through cinema. When it comes to Forrest's and Laal's tone of emotion just as looking after their mothers and wives, it is quite clear that both of them are ideal sons and husbands. Both show a strong devotion and affection towards their mothers when they become ill.

Rather than treating sample movies as two independent examples of Hollywood and Bollywood cinema, it is of great significance to have a look at how Indian adaptation retains, changes or reinterprets particular aspects of American film. Some sorts of adaptations are available in the school life of Laal.

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To illustrate, Forrest goes to a public school, but when it comes to Laal, it is clear that he studies in an international school. As for the info about Jenny's and Rupa's family, some changes exist due to the fact that Rupa is unwilling to go to her home and Rupa's father kills her wife by beating her; however, Jenny's father exposes Jenny to physical and sexual abuses. That's why Jenny, like Rupa, does not want to go to her home. The changes in Indian version are evident for those who contribute Forrest and Laal to be entrepreneurs. In Forrest Gump (1994), the contribution comes from Lieutenant Dan, who was the commander of Forrest in Vietnam War, yet still the inspiring character of Laal on the way to be a capital owner is Mohammed Paaji that was saved by Laal during Kargil War. Mohammed Paaji returns to his hometown at the end of the movie to participate in educational activities whilst Lieutenant Dan visits Forrest while he is getting married to Jenny. By the way both Dan and Paaji are the persons with disabilities since they lose their legs at the time of wars. Mohammed Paaji is frequently on the scene with wheelchair, but Lieutenant Dan is on the forefront with wheelchair at first, but he uses prosthetic leg at the end of the movie. Also, the way that the business is made in both movies reveals that there are some kinds of reinterpretations. For example, in Laal Singh Chaddha (2022), business scenes, employees, factories, office workers, and institutional departments are much more concrete than Forrest Gump (1994). Thus, it can be confirmed that the business episode is detailed elaborately in Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

The Contribution of Music and Sound for the Formation of Meaning in Sample Movies

In addition to conversations and the narration in both films, the music and the sound itself play a critical role in the formation of meaning in Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). The reason is that both music and the sound are something like the complementary segments of cinematic representation especially grounding disability from an ability perspective. This can be witnessed in running scenes and military episodes of Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). The music in these scenes immerses the audience into the story, makes them understand the movie characters, their emotions and their achievements, creates empathy and runs into the feelings that persons with disability can free themselves from the barriers that they encounter in their lives, and so they can achieve in spite of all handicaps. More than that, the sound signals a transition from negative to positive situation, which triggers hopes for everyone. In these episodes, the music connotates failure, a pessimism at first, but later on, it turns into a big success and a perfect accomplishment. This is also the case for Forrest and Laal even in battlefields. From here, it can be comprehended that the sound or music serves for the understanding that persons with disability are quite capable of managing life challenges.

During their college graduation ceremonies, the music used and the manner the sound is suggested in Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) also serves for the success story of two men with disability. Again here, music as well as the sound directly signal the tone and the mood of the movie in detail. The celebrating and successful tone of the sound performed in this episode of both movies makes cinema represent disability from an ability point of view. The positive content of the sound gives the message that Forrest and Laal are doers. Their disabilities cannot prevent them from being successful. Here, the tone signifies a great achievement in spite of two disabled characters called Forrest and Laal. Their mothers celebrate their sons' success, and they are very proud of them.

Concluding Remarks

Analyzing literature, it is quite visible that there are many papers claiming cinema illustrates disability from a negative perspective. To describe the pessimism here, Grue (2016) uses the words like "freakery, blindness, deafness, crippling" and so on and so forth (p. 532). This idea is supported by many scholars like Zola (1985, pp. 5-17), Norden (1994), Nelson (1994, pp. 1-17), Safran (1998, pp. 227-238), and Mitchell and Snyder (2001, p. 196). Whittington-Walsh (2002) shares the same idea with these researchers in spite of some nuances. The suggestion here is that there is a positive transition from past to present concerning the portrayals of persons with disabilities in cinema. This means that cinematography was a stigmatizing element of disability in such a way that persons with disabilities were represented as 'isolated', 'oppressed', 'invisible', 'abnormal', 'problematic', 'lonely', and etc. However, this changed a lot in modern cinema (Whittington-Walsh, 2002, pp. 695, 696) which is the main argument of this paper and also which is validated according to the results of this study on the basis of qualitative analysis implemented on the films like Forrest Gump (1994) and its Bollywood equivalent Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). In this current research, six areas (themes) of ability or talent rather than disability were certified depending upon the forefront characters

namely Forrest and Laal in these two movies. Actually, these are Laal and Forest as abled kids (a), smart students (b), successful athletes (c), heroic warriors (d), business owners (e), lovers and fathers (f) all of which prove the fact that movies can be used as platforms to portray the 'positive' image of persons with disabilities (Figure 6).

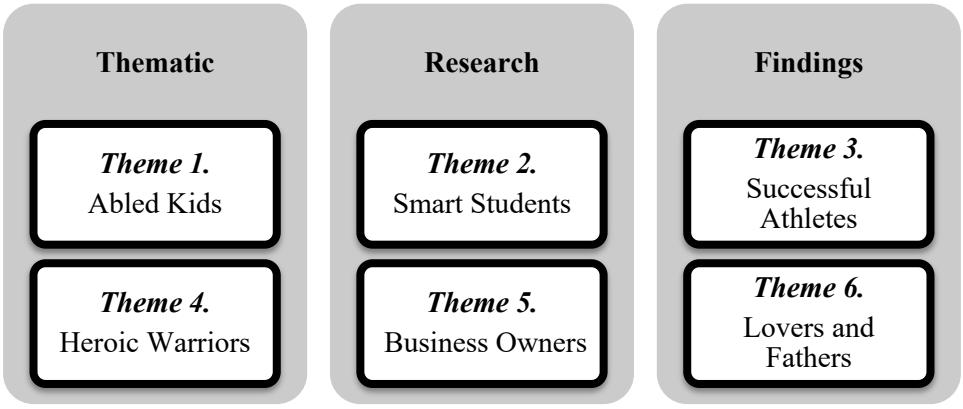


Figure 6. Thematic categorizations determined within the paper to explain disability from an ability perspective

Source: Forrest Gump (1994), Laal Singh Chaddha (2022).

There are also some scholars such as Charlton (1998), who lays an emphasis upon the fact that cinema is a big industry that makes money, so it just thinks about the profit and merchandises the protagonists while dealing with a particular theme (p. 47). The results of the research partly overlap with the ideas of Charlton (1998), but not entirely. The reason is that Bollywood cinema at first and in particular is so concerned with social and economic problems of Indian society; that's why; social realities such as segregation, class conflict, gender problems, disadvantaged groups, disability, income inequality, poverty and many others come to the scene as cinema is coded as the mirror of the society. And this socially reality-oriented approach is just beyond the scope of any economic or monetary concerns. Also, disability is a certain factuality in all cultures. From this perspective, this study's scientific outcomes are in line with Boyd (2016, p. 1321), Wood (1975, pp. 16-18), Markotic (2012, pp. 1, 2, 16), and Longmore (2003, pp. 131-133).

Table 6. Summary of the findings of the research in relation to disability models

Themes in the Selected Movies	**Abilities of Protagonists**	**Correlation with the Disability Models in Literature**	**Messages Underlined in the Selected Movies**	**Portrayal of Disability Concerns**
Theme 1	Abled Kids	Waddington & Priestley (2021), Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35)	Persons with disabilities are as smart and capable as the other kids. They are no different than the others.	Positive / Abled
Theme 2	Smart Students	Quinn et al (2002) and Series (2019, p. 74)	Persons with disabilities are intelligent enough to be educated.	Positive /Abled

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Themes in the Selected Movies	Abilities of Protagonists	Correlation with the Disability Models in Literature	Messages Underlined in the Selected Movies	Portrayal of Disability Concerns
Theme 3	Successful Athletes (Runners)	Quinn et al (2002)	Persons with disabilities can be a medal winner sportsmen.	Positive /Abled
Theme 4	Heroic Warriors	Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) and Quinn et al (2002), Gomez (2015)	Persons with disabilities can join the army and become heroic warriors.	Positive /Abled
Theme 5	Business Owners	Quinn et al (2002), Letšosa & Retief (2018), and Rothman (2003).	Persons with disabilities can be a millionaire.	Positive /Abled
Theme 6	Lovers and Fathers	Peces–Barba Martinez, (1989) as cited by Gomez, (2015, p. 35).	Persons with disabilities can have a family and become mother and father.	Positive /Abled

Source: Author's own inferences.

Concerning disability models, it can be stated that research findings have coherence with the theories in literature. To illustrate, theme 1 that signifies the abled status of kids has in coordination with the arguments of Waddington & Priestley (2021), Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35). Here, Waddington & Priestley (2021) stress social and cultural dichotomies of disability problems, which is the case for both Forrest in USA and Laal in India. Again, on the basis of theme 1, both Mrs. Gump and Mrs. Chaddha support the fact that their sons are as capable as the other, which is validated by the models of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35). Theme 2 can be associated with the models of both Quinn et al (2002) and Series (2019, p. 74) due to the fact that they approach disability from human rights perspective and Forrest and Laal has the right of education as the others. As persons with disabilities are pioneers or the subjects of society rather than the objects, it can be highlighted that theme 3 involves the views of Quinn et al (2002). Frankly speaking, Forrest's and Laal's phenomenal achievements in sports make them subjects. The capabilities of Forrest and Laal in the army prove the capacity approach of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) and also the ideas of Quinn et al (2002) because perceptions of disability status come from their unused capabilities sustained by cultural and communal codifications. This is actually the validation of theme 4. Same cultural biases or the predicaments against Forrest and Laal are the case for theme 5 which can be coordinated with the viewpoints of Quinn et al (2002), Letšosa & Retief (2018), and Rothman (2003). Culturally, there is a paradoxical idea that it is impossible for a person with disability to be a millionaire, which is against the rules of life. As for theme 6, it can be linked with the arguments of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) as cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35) for Forrest and Laal has the ability to plan their own lives in line with human dignity and freedom of choice. Therefore, they planned their lives freely and they had a family with cute sons.

On the basis of the cross-cultural significance of the research that focuses on the portrayal of disability both in USA and India, it was found out that disability is peculiar to urbanization in USA whilst it is fairly associated with the rural standards and lifestyle in India. This selected outcome is also in line with the theme 1. Theme 2 has some cultural denominations in regard to the fact that education of the persons with disabilities derives from liberal thought in America whereas it is rooted in conservative ideals in India. In coordination with theme 3, the paper has come to the idea that the sportive activities that the persons with disabilities have expertise are culturally oriented as Forrest is super in American baseball, but Laal is a pioneer in running. Even the war narratives variate between Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) because of the fact that American cultural elements like music, grilling,

way of life and etc. is suggested just as clarifying war atmosphere maybe so as to illustrate a war is something like an entertainment or an adventure, which is not the case in its Indian equivalent. The reason is that Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) is more conservatively segmented by Aamir Khan on the basis of its description of Kargil War. And to my personal point of view, Khan has a perspective that war is a war where people die and so it is negatively structured. These statements fit to the role of theme 4 in the research. When it comes to the cultural comparisons on theme 5, it can be signalled that the way of doing business of the persons with disabilities differentiate in the movies. This means that Forrest as a man, who represents a nation that terminates its industrialization process has become rich via agriculture or shrimp sector; however, Laal, who belongs to a culture that needs industrialization for economic prosperity has become millionaire by means of textile industry. Cultural differentiations can be linked with emotional and rational identifications of Forrest and Jenny as well as Laal and Rupa in theme 6.

Besides, this paper is unusual in regard to the fact that the sample movies selected as the cases allows a cross-cultural analysis concerning the perception of disadvantaged groups or disability in the West and in the East and from cinematographic point of view. Unlike the differences stated in the former paragraph, this closer outlook is mostly related to the similarities of disability perceptions in both cultural settings. Both Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022) dignify humanistic values concerning disadvantaged groups or disability without considering their cultural belongings. This reality can be interpreted in a way that the West and the East go hand in hand on the basis of investigating the abled characteristics of disability on movie screen. In both cultural context and specifically for these selected movies again, the positivities and abilities rather than the negativities and disabilities are on the forefront, which capture the attention of the audiences as well. Compared to the years on which Forrest Gump (1994) was shot, time-oriented deviations are not available concerning the perceptions of disability, which is actually another dimension of this cross-cultural analysis. All these findings pave the way that cinema may lead to the analysis of disability from an ability perspective and from cross-cultural philosophy.

This study's novelty also lies in suggesting the fact that cinema has potential to highlight the 'abled' peculiarities of 'persons with disabilities' and it reflects disability from a 'potential' and "doers" point of view whereas the common literature claims the opposite. This is also proved through content and critical discourse analysis shared in each theme determined as a result of the research. This viewpoint is in line with the scientific explanations of Waddington & Priestley (2021), Peces–Barba Martinez (1989) cited by Gomez (2015, p. 35). In this paper, it was witnessed that both Forrest's and Laal's talented personality traits come to fore in their childhoods with the assistance and via the sacrifices of their mothers who struggle against social and cultural biases towards disability within their communities. Both Mrs. Gump and Mrs. Chaddha think in a way that their kids are like the others, and they are not different. For Forrest and Laal, everything starts with walking, which goes the way to running later on. This impassioned approach opened a new path in their lives, and they got formal education like the others.

In addition, this work references the fact that cinematography prioritizes smartness of persons with disabilities while they are striving to get formal education, which is sustained by the ideas of Quinn et al (2002) and Series (2019, p. 74). This is also the case with Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). Both of them are socially excluded and segregated from their peers and more than that, they are exposed to bullying behaviours of their classmates in and out of the class, in school bus, and everywhere. Nevertheless, Forrest and Laal never fed-up with walking and they complete their education and get a college degree. This is so proudful for their mothers, that is to say, Mrs. Gump living in Alabama, USA and Mrs. Chaddha residing in India.

This study demonstrates that cinema is a fantastic way to depict the achievements of a person with disability in sports. Actually, this philosophy is backed up by Quinn et al (2002), who approached persons with disabilities from a doers perspective. The same happened to both Forrest and Laal in the movies analyzed. Our protagonists are very talented figures in running and Forrest is accepted to the football team while Laal does spectacular jobs as runners in college. By means of their athletic abilities, they finish college in an easy way. Furthermore, Forrest becomes champions in table tennis and Laal is appointed to the deputy coach of Indian national team.

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Another finding of the paper is that cinema can be a perfect platform to unveil the heroic features of guys with disability, which reduces stigma and ableism for them. Academically, the basic understanding of disability in such a manner can be correlated with the ideas of Peces–Barba Martinez (1989), Quinn et al (2002), and Gomez (2015) in literature. In Forrest Gump (1994) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022), this approach is extraordinarily represented. Forrest as an army man is always praised by his commanders and referred as "Private Gump" (Forrest Gump, 1994) and turns into a heroic figure because he saves the lives of many in Vietnam War. Like Forrest, Laal does similar things in Kargil War.

Promisingly, the analysis also revealed that those predefined as persons with disability has capability to do business and to make lots of money, which is not possible for many abled, and which is in line with the statements of Quinn et al (2002), Letšosa & Retief (2018), and Rothman (2003) again. This inclination is grounded by cinematography as well. Forrest becomes a millionaire by means of shrimping industry while Laal establishes Rupa Corporation. These characters were selected as entrepreneurs of the year in their home countries.

Last but not least, CDA and content analysis in the research proved that cinema is an exceptional tool to frame the abilities of persons with disabilities on love affairs and parental relationships, which many abled cannot succeed. Peces–Barba Martinez, (1989) as cited by Gomez, (2015, p. 35) unveil this scientific angle. Forrest's love and marriage with Jenny and Laal's with Rupa are signals about how these characters are talented on love and family affairs.

Limitations and directions for future researchers

There are several limitations of the research due to the qualitative nature of the paper. At first, just two movies, a small sample, were analyzed, which can be a major restraint to generalize the outcomes of the study. Also, selected movies' direct adaptation relationship, their deliberate selection as positive representations, and from these particular example, drawing broader conclusions about Hollywood and Bollywood are other handicaps in the paper. For further research, it is recommended that more cases are to be focused to enlarge the data, and professional programs are to be utilized which empower an inclusive movement for constructing the 'abled' properties of these persons with disabilities in the movies.

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