

VERTICAL CINEMA IN INDIA

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Abstract—Vertical Cinema is becoming very popular in India because of smartphones, social media, and cheap internet services. Nowadays, people mostly consume content on mobile phones, because of this vertical videos are growing rapidly on platforms like Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Moj, ShareChat, and Snapchat. This research paper studies the growth and development of vertical cinema in India. It explains how vertical videos have changed from simple social media content to a new form of digital entertainment and filmmaking. Today, many creators, influencers, and independent filmmakers are using this format for making content.

The paper also discusses technologies like smartphone cameras, editing apps, AI tools, and digital platforms that made this format easier and more accessible for everyone. Along with this, the study explains audience behavior and why viewers prefer short-form vertical content. It also focuses on the creator economy and how creators earn through advertisements, brand promotions, and monetization.

The paper further compares vertical cinema with traditional horizontal cinema to understand the differences in storytelling, production style, and viewing experience. astly, this research discusses the future scope of vertical cinema in OTT platforms, advertisements, education, and digital media. The study concludes that vertical cinema is not just a trend, but an important part of modern entertainment and visual storytelling in India.

I. Introduction

Cinema has always changed with technology and society. From silent films to digital cinema, every generation has seen new styles of storytelling. In recent years, one of the biggest changes in visual storytelling is Vertical Cinema. Unlike traditional cinema, which uses a horizontal screen, vertical cinema is made in a 9:16 format specially for mobile phones.

Vertical videos became popular because of smartphones and social media platforms. In countries like India, where mobile internet users are increasing rapidly, vertical cinema has become a common source of entertainment and communication. Platforms like Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Moj, ShareChat, and Snapchat made this format more popular among young audiences.

II. VERTICAL CINEMA VS HORIZONTAL CINEMA

Vertical Cinema	Horizontal Cinema
9:16 screen format	16:9 screen format
Made for smartphones	Made for theatre and TV screens
Short-form storytelling	Long-form storytelling
Close-up framing	Wide landscape framing
Fast pacing	Detailed narrative pacing
Mostly used on social media	Mostly used in films and OTT platforms

Source: Comparative analysis by the researcher

As The table shows the main differences between vertical cinema and traditional horizontal cinema. It explains how both formats are different in screen ratio, storytelling style, framing, and viewing experience.

In India, vertical cinema is also connected with the democratization of filmmaking. Today, anyone with a smartphone can shoot, edit, and upload videos for millions of viewers. Many regional creators, influencers, and independent filmmakers are getting recognition through this format. Even Bollywood and regional film industries have started using vertical trailers, promotional videos, and short-form content. Vertical cinema has also changed cinematic storytelling. Filmmakers now focus more on close-up shots, fast pacing, emotional storytelling, and mobile-friendly framing techniques. This format is creating new possibilities for digital storytelling.

Therefore, the rise of vertical cinema in India represents an important cultural and technological change. It is changing the way stories are created, shared, and consumed in the digital age.

III. REVIEW OF LITRETURE

Vertical cinema is still a new topic in media and film studies, but in recent years many researchers talked about how smartphones and social media are changing storytelling and viewing habits.

1. Development of Digital Media and Vertical Video

Earlier, films and television mostly used horizontal screen formats. But after smartphones became common, people started watching more content on mobile phones.

Researchers Hjorth and Pink (2014), who studied smartphone culture and digital media, explained that smartphones changed the way people consume media in daily life. Since most people naturally hold their phones vertically, vertical videos slowly became popular.

Similarly, media scholar Lev Manovich (2016) explained that social media platforms changed visual storytelling through mobile-based content and new screen formats. According to his study, vertical videos are now becoming a normal part of digital media.

In India, cheap internet and smartphone accessibility after the Jio revolution also increased the popularity of vertical videos. Platforms like Instagram Reels, Moj, ShareChat, and YouTube Shorts became very popular among young audiences.

2. Aesthetics and Storytelling in Vertical Cinema

Researchers also studied how vertical framing affects storytelling. Galloway (2017) explained that vertical videos create stronger emotional connection because they focus more on close-up shots and characters.

Similarly, Nathanson (2020) explained that vertical storytelling is more suitable for short-form mobile content. Instead of wide landscape visuals, vertical videos mostly focus on human-centered visuals and emotional moments.

These studies show that vertical cinema is slowly developing its own storytelling and visual style.

3. Audience Behavior and Mobile Media Consumption

Many studies show that people now consume more content on smartphones. Reports by GSMA (2020) and Statista (2021) mention that mobile video consumption is increasing rapidly, especially in countries like India.

Affordable internet and easy smartphone access created a mobile-first culture in India. Researcher Athique (2018) explained that digital viewing habits are changing storytelling styles, screen orientation, and video duration.

Research also shows that young audiences prefer short and fast-moving content because of scrolling behavior and social media algorithms.

4.Creator Economy and Digital Platforms

The growth of vertical cinema is also connected with the creator economy. Researchers Cunningham and Craig (2019) explained that social media platforms created new opportunities for independent creators who are working outside traditional film industries.

In India, platforms like YouTube Shorts, Moj, Instagram Reels, and ShareChat helped many creators from small towns and regional backgrounds become popular online. Vertical videos are also widely used in influencer marketing, brand promotions, and digital advertisements.

Because of this, vertical cinema is not only becoming a new style of entertainment but also a source of income and career opportunities for many creators.

5.Vertical Cinema in the Indian Context

Research focused completely on vertical cinema in India is still limited. However, studies on TikTok India and short-form video platforms provide useful information.

short-form vertical videos gave opportunities to creators from different social and linguistic backgrounds to express themselves online. Researchers also highlighted the importance of regional storytelling and local creativity in Indian digital culture.

This shows that vertical cinema is making content creation more accessible and democratic.

6.Gaps in Existing Literature

Although research on digital media and mobile videos is increasing, there are still some important gaps:

- Limited academic research on vertical cinema as a cinematic art form.
- Lack of studies focused on Indian vertical filmmaking.
- Very little research on vertical storytelling techniques and film festivals.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This research paper uses a qualitative research methodology to study the growth, audience behavior, aesthetics, economic impact, and future possibilities of vertical cinema in India.

V. Research Design

The study follows descriptive and exploratory research designs.

Descriptive research helps in understanding the present condition and characteristics of vertical cinema.

Exploratory research helps in identifying future possibilities, trends, and research gaps related to vertical filmmaking.

1 Research Approach

This study mainly follows a qualitative approach because it focuses on:

- Audience behavior
- Digital media practices
- Storytelling methods
- Creator experiences
- Cultural impact

Qualitative research helps in understanding social and artistic aspects that cannot be explained only through numbers.

- **Data Collection Methods**

A. Secondary Data Collection

Most information in this study is collected from secondary sources such as:

- Research papers and journal articles
- Books related to cinema and digital media
- Reports by TRAI, GSMA, and Statista
- Media industry reports
- Articles related to influencer culture and creator economy
- Case studies of digital platforms and creators

B. Observation of Digital Platforms

Observational analysis was done on platforms like:

- Instagram Reels
- YouTube Shorts
- Moj
- ShareChat
- Snapchat

The observation mainly focused on:

- Storytelling techniques
- Framing styles
- Audience engagement
- Content categories

C. Comparative Analysis

The study also compares:

- Vertical and horizontal cinema
- Mobile filmmaking and traditional filmmaking
- Short-form and long-form storytelling

This comparison helps in understanding the major differences between these formats.

4. Sampling Method

The study uses purposive sampling because selected creators, platforms, and content are directly related to vertical filmmaking.

The samples were selected on the basis of:

- Relevance to vertical cinema
- Popularity and influence
- Language diversity
- Representation of different platforms

5. Data Analysis

A. Thematic Analysis

The collected data was divided into different themes such as:

- Historical development
- Technology

- Audience behavior
- Creator economy
- Aesthetics
- Future possibilities

B. Interpretative Analysis

Interpretative analysis was used to connect:

- Technology with cinematic methods
- Digital trends with audience behavior
- Economic opportunities with creator culture

6. Scope of the Study

The research mainly focuses on:

- Vertical cinema in India
- Mobile-first storytelling
- Audience and creator behavior
- Digital trends from 2016 to 2024

The study does not focus on:

- Traditional theatrical cinema
- Detailed monetization systems
- Large-scale film production

7. Limitations

- Limited academic research is available on vertical cinema in India.
- The study mainly depends on secondary data.
- Digital platforms change rapidly, which may affect future relevance.
- Audience behavior may vary across different platforms.

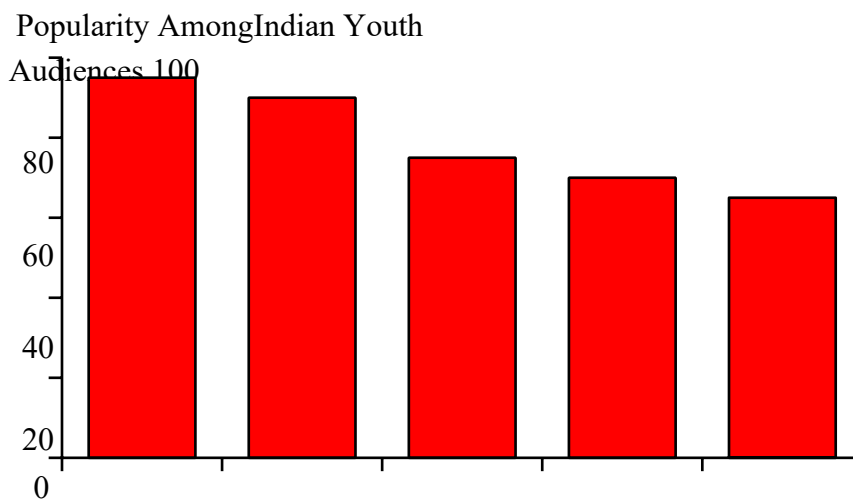
VI. RESULTS

The study identified several important findings related to vertical cinema in India.

1. Vertical Cinema Has Become a Popular Digital Format

Vertical videos are no longer limited to casual social media use. Platforms like Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Moj, and Snapchat made this format highly popular among Indian users.

POPULARITY CHART OF VERTICAL VIDEO PLATFORMS IN INDIA



- Instagram
- Reels
- YouTube Shorts
- Moj
- ShareChat
- Snapchat

Source: TRAI Reports, Statista (2021), GSMA Mobile Economy Reports

The graph shows the popularity of major vertical video platforms among Indian youth audiences. It explains that Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are the most widely used platforms for vertical content consumption in India.

2. Mobile-First Culture Supports Vertical Storytelling

Most Indian audiences consume content on smartphones, which naturally supports vertical viewing. This makes vertical cinema more convenient for daily entertainment.

3. Vertical Cinema Has Its Own Style

The study found that vertical cinema mainly uses:

- Close-up and mid-shot framing
- Fast pacing
- Character-focused storytelling
- Emotional connection
- Vertical camera movement

These elements create a different visual style from traditional cinema.

4. Short-Form Storytelling Is More Popular

Most successful vertical videos are short in duration and focus on relatable situations, trends, and emotional storytelling.

5. Youth and Regional Audiences Are More Active

The largest audience for vertical content is between 15 to 35 years of age. Regional languages like Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Bengali, and Bhojpuri are also widely used in vertical storytelling.

6. Vertical Cinema Supports the Creator Economy

Vertical content created economic opportunities through:

- Brand collaborations
- Advertisements
- Influencer marketing
- Monetization
- Affiliate marketing

7. Low Production Cost Makes It Accessible

Vertical filmmaking requires fewer resources than traditional filmmaking. Smartphones and editing apps made content creation easier and cheaper.

8. Vertical and Horizontal Cinema Have Different Uses

Vertical cinema works better for personal and short-form storytelling, while horizontal cinema is more suitable for large-scale cinematic experiences.

9. Brands Prefer Vertical Advertisements

Many companies now prefer vertical advertisements because they provide better engagement on mobile platforms.

10. Technology Will Shape the Future of Vertical Cinema

AI tools, mobile filmmaking equipment, and OTT integration may further increase the popularity of vertical cinema in the future.

VII. DISCUSSION

The rise of vertical cinema in India reflects major changes in audience behavior, storytelling methods, and digital media culture.

1. Changing Media Consumption

Indian audiences now mostly consume content on smartphones. Because of this, vertical viewing has become more natural and comfortable for users.

2. Evolution of Storytelling

Vertical cinema focuses more on emotional connection, close-up visuals, and fast storytelling. This format is creating a new cinematic language instead of replacing traditional cinema.

3. Impact on the Creator Economy

Vertical cinema allowed independent creators to produce and distribute content with limited resources. Many regional creators are now getting national recognition through digital platforms.

4. Challenges of Vertical Cinema

The study also identified some challenges:

- Short duration limits deep storytelling
- Heavy content competition
- Monetization problems
- Lack of academic recognition
- Copyright issues in music-based content

5. Connection with Mainstream Cinema

Vertical content is also being used in movie promotions, celebrity marketing, and short-form storytelling connected with mainstream cinema.

6. Cultural Importance

Vertical cinema allows creators from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to share local stories with wider audiences. This increased cultural diversity in digital media.

7. India's Position in Vertical Content

India is becoming one of the largest producers and consumers of vertical content because of:

- Cheap internet
- Large youth population
- Smartphone accessibility
- Strong storytelling traditions

8. Future Possibilities

The future of vertical cinema may include:

- Vertical web series
- Hybrid storytelling formats
- AI-assisted filmmaking
- OTT integration
- Advanced mobile filmmaking technologies

VIII. CONCLUSION

Vertical cinema in India represents an important change in digital storytelling and visual culture. What started as a social media trend has now become a major form of entertainment and communication.

The study shows that vertical cinema is closely connected with India's mobile-first culture, affordable internet, and growing smartphone usage. Its unique visual style and accessibility made it highly popular among modern audiences.

Vertical cinema also democratized filmmaking by giving ordinary people opportunities to create and share stories online. Platforms like Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Moj, and ShareChat created new opportunities for creators, influencers, and regional storytellers.

At the same time, vertical cinema contributed to India's creator economy through advertisements, brand collaborations, and monetization.

The research also shows that vertical cinema is not replacing traditional horizontal cinema. Both formats have different purposes and can exist together in the future of storytelling.

In conclusion, vertical cinema is not just a temporary trend. It is becoming an important and evolving part of modern storytelling and digital media culture in India.