Portrayal of identities through Bollywood: Shift from brain drain to brain circulation

Shrinkhala Upadhyaya

The desire to have more and an opportunity to achieve it, is the primary motive for migration. Before globalization (or prior to 1990s), the flow of highly educated professionals such as doctors, engineers, and scientists from a less to more developed nation was considered to be a negative drain for the less developed country. It was thought that the brain, skilled workforce, money invested, culture and every positive aspect of that person is moving out. In short, the famous term “brain drain” was happening and making the nation of the migrators weak and incompetent. However, a recent trend has emerged called the “brain circulation”, meaning the growth of reverse flows of knowledge, money and skills (Parathasarathi, 2006). The negative to positive shift of these connotations are described appropriately through Bollywood.

Unarguably, Bollywood (Hindi cinema) has spread its wings and continued its legacy to be the second most popular film center of the world after Hollywood, and successfully made its impact globally (Punathambekar, 2013). The identities that are portrayed through Bollywood are more or less the desired images. The romantic boyfriend, an ideal son, a caring husband, a wealthy businessman, a respectful family, all are examples of the desired images of the identities we have in mind. Bollywood helps create and shape those identities. Two legendary classics of Bollywood, Purab aur Paschim (1970) and Namstey London (2007, also claimed by some to be the remake of Purab aur Paschim) are perfect examples of portrayal of the shift from brain drain to brain circulation. The images of cast and characters in these two movies represent how people as well as media identify with migrators in the era of pre and post globalization. This paper will
look over the issue of portrayal of Indian migrants and diasporas in Bollywood in the pre and post globalization era with respect to the concepts of brain drain versus brain circulation.

References
