

## Editorial

# Medicine Meets the Movies: Transforming Learning Through Cinemeducation

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### **BACKGROUND**

Cinemeducation is using cinema in the education of medical and health science students. Countries in South Asia have a long cinematic tradition and produce the largest number of movies globally. The public, including medical students love to watch movies in different local languages and even in English. Cinema has long influenced different facets of life in Nepal and other countries of the region.

***The power of cinemeducation:*** Health humanities and the psychosocial aspects of

medicine are now receiving increasing attention in many countries and movies/movie clips have been used to explore various subjects such as medical ethics, doctor-patient relationship, clinical research, mental illness, and professionalism among undergraduate medical students and even among postgraduates [1]. In 1979, the first report on the use of cinema in medical education was published and viewing of movies followed by discussion was used in psychiatry postgraduate psychiatry education [2]. Alexander and coworkers coined the term 'cinemeducation' to refer to the use of clips from movies and videos to educate medical students and residents about the psychosocial aspects of medicine [3]. Cinema combines visuals, audio, action and dialogues with emotions to captivate the viewer. The use of multisensory approaches and the emotional power of movies can be used to learn empathetic behaviours, self-reflection, compassion, altruism, and professionalism which may be less emphasized in the curriculum [1].

*Use of cinema in medical education:* Medical schools in several countries have used movies and movie clips to teach medical students. Some of the initiatives from India were described in a recent article [4]. Movies are an effective to explore the affective domain, promote reflective attitudes, and link learning to experiences. Life stories and narratives enhance emotions. Movies use emotions and images to explore concepts and experiences and is also grounded in the students' familiar, everyday life [4]. In a medical college in Chennai, India, Cinemeducation was an effective tool to foster humanistic values in medical students by promoting empathy, ethical reasoning, and professionalism, and offered a transformative approach to medical education [5]. In Telangana, India an educational intervention among interns showed no statistically significant improvement in self-reported empathy levels, but observer-rated empathy levels and the knowledge about empathy improved significantly [6]. Movies can contribute to public health in several ways. These range from raising awareness, promoting healthy behaviours, reducing stigma and discrimination and promoting policy change.

A Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (SWOT) analysis of cinemeducation was recently conducted [7]. The strengths mentioned where the method is engaging and effective, has a strong emotional impact and uses real-life scenarios. The weaknesses were inaccuracy, time consuming and cost. With the availability of movies and movie clips in digital formats and the use of digital projectors the cost associated with screening has decreased. The opportunities mentioned where the method provides opportunities for innovative teaching, multidisciplinary approach, and integration of technology. Among the threats are resistance to change,

copyright issues and negative impact if not used appropriately. In Rajasthan, India a study using a self-confidence and learning scale showed that 86% of students agreed that cinemeducation was better than didactic lectures. The mean satisfaction index of cinemeducation as a teaching-learning method as rated by the students was high at 97.6% [8].

***Movies and life stories:*** Movies help students learn medicine in the context of patients' life stories acknowledging emotions. This strengthens empathy and helps teach complex concepts [9]. Clinical presentations of different illnesses, historical background for diagnostic or treatment approaches or developments, patient-doctor relationships, family, and society's perspectives can be depicted. Movies also provide examples of behaviours and attitudes that can be modelled or avoided. Twelve tips for the use of cinema in medical education have been described. These range from identifying a need in the curriculum that can be met through the use of movies, planning and mapping how to incorporate movies in the curriculum, determining the learning objectives, choosing the movies/clips based on the learning objectives, designing and planning how learning will be assessed, grounding the teaching and learning activity in educational theory, providing learners with an overview before the session/course, setting up a safe learning environment, using active learning technics, having fun, making learning explicit and obtaining feedback and modifying as required [10].

***Cinemeducation in Nepalese medical schools:*** In Nepal, the undergraduate medical (MBBS) curriculum has two years of integrated basic sciences, two and half years of clinical sciences and one year of internship.

Movies can be used at different times in the curriculum. During the basic sciences, movies and movie clips can be used in individual subjects like Physiology and Pharmacology among others. Movies can also play an important role in exploring the History of Medicine. If a Health Humanities module is being offered at the college, movies could be among the different methods used. As described previously movies can be used to

explore 'human skills' like empathy, communication skills, perspective taking among others. It can also be used to introduce ethical issues and ethical challenges. Table 1 presents a short selection of Nepali movies that can be used to explore different issues in medical education. Movies and documentaries can also explore current pressing issues like climate change, planetary health and antimicrobial resistance.

**Table 1: A selection of Nepalese movies, themes addressed and how to use it in the curriculum**

<b>Movie title</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>How to use it in the medical curriculum</b>
<b>Purna Bahadur Ko Sarangi (2024 film)</b>	Social determinants of health, access to medicine and medical education. The struggle of a Dalit father to afford medical education for his son is captured.	The areas that can be explored are health equity, the immense financial burden of medical education, and caste/social discrimination in contemporary society impacting health access.
<b>White Sun (Seto Surya) (2016 film)</b>	Post-Conflict Trauma, Public Health in Remote areas of the country, and Traditional vs. Modern Practice. The movie is set in post-Civil war Nepal.	The movie can be used to explore the challenges of healthcare delivery in remote, conflict-affected regions, and trauma and mental health issues in a post-conflict society. The uneasy coexistence between traditional healing practices and modern medicine can also be studied.
<b>Mahapurush (2022 film)</b>	Mental Health, Societal Stigma, and Elder Care. The film is about a widowed father finding love and the disapproval of society he faces due to the relationship	Among the issues that can be explored are: Mental well-being and stigma in older populations, elder care ethics, and how social judgment affects personal choices and mental health. How students can and should navigate these issues can also be explored.
<b>Nasha (2020 short film)</b>	This short film explores a patient's journey through alcohol use disorder, detoxification, and counselling	Among the issues that can be taught using this short film are Psychiatry and addiction medicine, the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to manage addiction, and the role of the physician in de-stigmatizing substance use disorders
<b>What Grows in Thari Maila's Vegetable Garden? (2025 short film)</b>	Reproductive Health, Public Health, and Ethical Dilemmas are explored. The film was inspired by a death due to unsafe abortion in a rural area.	The film can be used to sensitize students to the public health crisis of unsafe abortions, and the ethical and legal landscape of abortion in Nepal. The issue of individual autonomy versus social norms can also be explored.
<b>Dukhi Aatma (2025 film)</b>	The themes addressed are Sexual Health, Men's Health, and Seeking Professional Help. A man's struggle with erectile dysfunction and his treatment journey are depicted.	The movie can be used to introduce the importance of men's health, the dangers of seeking non-professional advice and treatment, and the vital need for open communication between doctors and patients regarding sensitive sexual health issues.

**Logistic issues in using movie clips in medical colleges in Nepal:** Table 1 shows a selection of movies. Showing clips from these movies (rather than the complete movie) may be easier in terms of logistics and time management than showing complete movies. There are also other movies and movie clips that can be screened. The 12 tips mentioned previously while facilitating movie screening and activities should be kept in mind [10]. The preparation is usually divided as those before and while planning for the session, those while conducting the session and those after the session. The availability of digital copies of movies and movie clips on public sources like YouTube and on different online platforms makes movie screening and activities easier. Projectors have good picture quality, and most classrooms have public address systems and microphones. The sound quality can sometimes be an issue. Copyright issues may need to be considered if new movies are being screened. Guidelines for conducting cinemeducation sessions were mentioned in a previous article [1].

Movies are powerful and multisensory and involve emotions. The stickiest ideas explained as those that make the biggest impression, prove to be most memorable, and exerting the most influence are often simply the ones that are presented best.<sup>11</sup> Movies and movie clips are powerful educational resources due to their ability to present ideas and concepts linked to emotions and can be used to explore a wide range of topics and concepts in medical education.

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