

## **The Impact of Movies on Religion**

Siddhant Sinha. SY.B.Com  
Rochelle D'Souza S.Y.B.Com

### **Introduction**

Movies are the mainstream of entertainment and almost like a religion of the nation. In fact, the movie industry has influenced daily life, culture, religious views for decades. Such an influence can either improve modern society or it can deteriorate it. Religious views of people are highly influenced by movies. Religion is an important aspect of everyone's life.

### **Review of Literature**

Like media, religion also offers symbols, icons and stories to make sense of the world. Such an understanding has been well voiced by Dutch philosopher Hent de Vries, who claims that without these mediating practices and discourses, religion would not be able to manifest itself at all (De Vries, 2001).

Academics, journalists and fans alike have, for instance, identified football stadiums as 'holy grounds'. Gaffney (2008) has called stadium 'Temples of the Earthbound Gods', Trumpbour (2007) writes about stadiums as 'the new cathedrals' and more generally football has been interpreted as 'Ersatz religion' or 'substitute religion' (Sutter, 2006).

"Television is the most powerful tool of communication ever devised by man. Each of my prime time 'specials' is now carried by nearly 300 stations across the U.S. and Canada, so that in a single telecast I preach to millions more than Christ did in his lifetime." (Billy Graham, Postman, 118)

### **Aim of the Study**

The present study specifically focuses on the impact of movies on religious views of people of different age groups.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To measure the impact of movies on religion.
2. To analyze the essence of religion in today's world.

**Problem**

1. Do movies influence people's religiosity?
2. Is religion commercialized?

**Variables**

1. Dependent variable -Survey Responses
2. Independent variable - Movies

**Hypothesis**

1. Religiosity is easily influenced by movies.
2. Religiosity has become commercialized to a great extent.

**Sample**

Participants of the present study by random sampling include 60 people in Mumbai, 20 people each, from the age group 15-20 years, 21-40 years and 41 years onwards.

**Tools Used**

Following was the questionnaire used

**Name:**

**Age:**

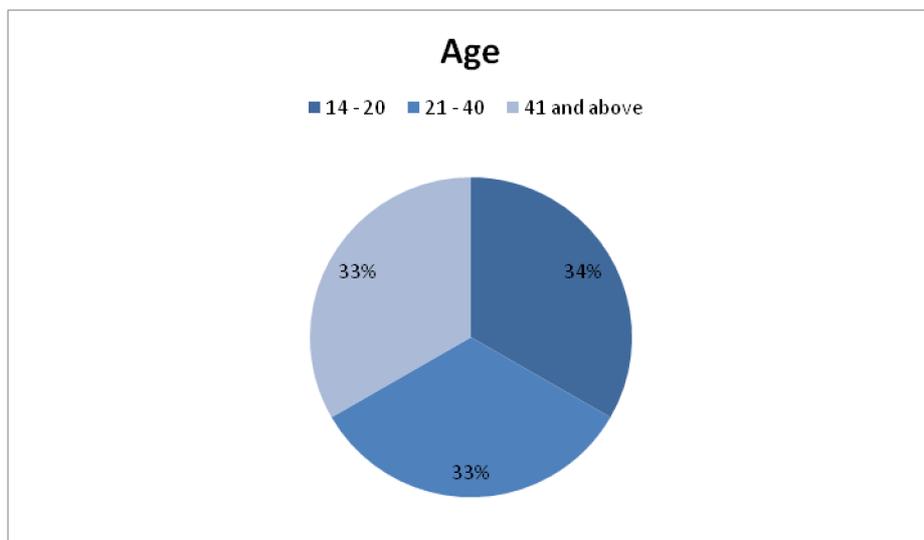
**Sex:**

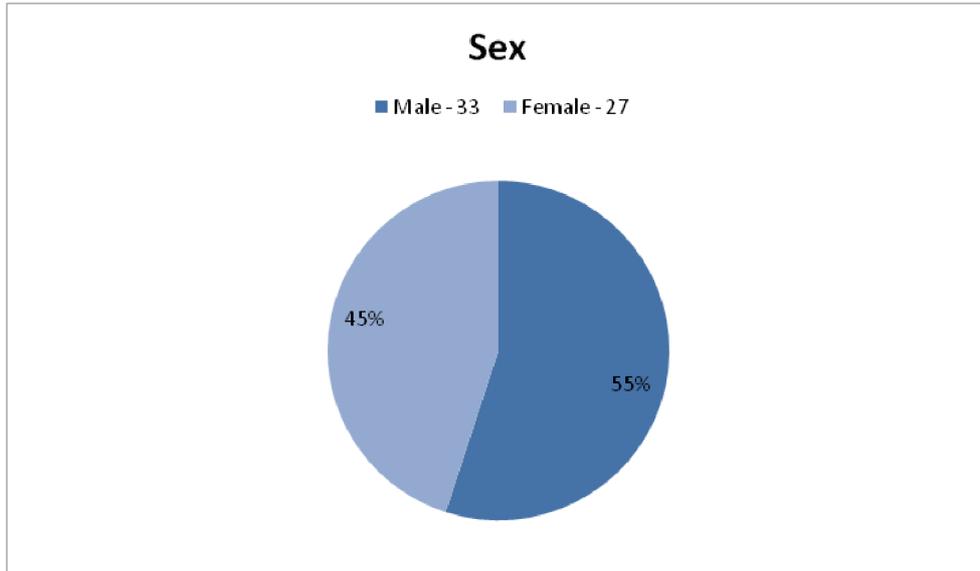
1. Have you watched any movies which depict religious views?  
A.YES                      B.NO
2. After watching these movies, do you think religion is commercialized?  
A.YES                      B.NO

3. Based on these movies, do you think rituals hold any importance in today's world?  
A.YES                      B.NO
4. Do you believe one's belief/ faith in their religion exceeds practicality after watching these movies?  
A.YES                      B.NO
5. After watching these movies, you worship God, because you  
A. Love God   B. Fear God   C. None
6. After watching these movies are you judgmental or rather show disparities on the basis of religion, caste and status?  
A.YES                      B.NO
7. Have your thoughts changed on religion after watching these movies?  
A.YES                      B.NO

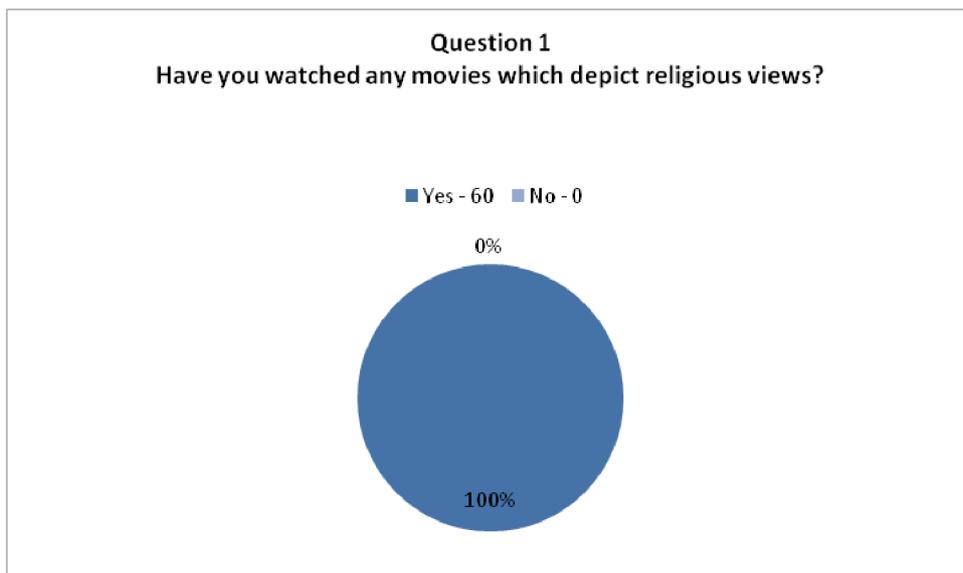
## Results

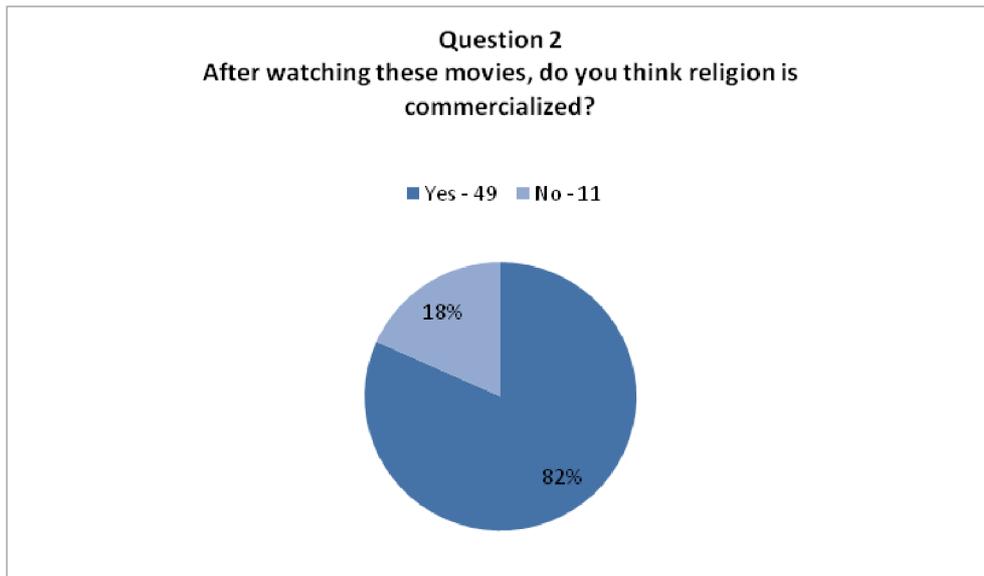
Pie Charts showing the age and gender ratio of the sample.





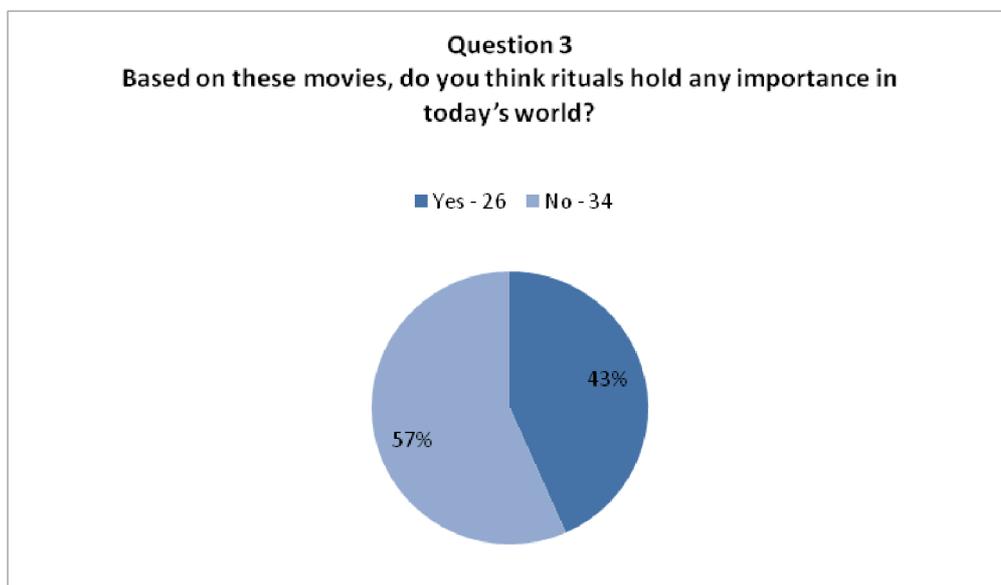
### Question-wise depiction of the Pie Chart



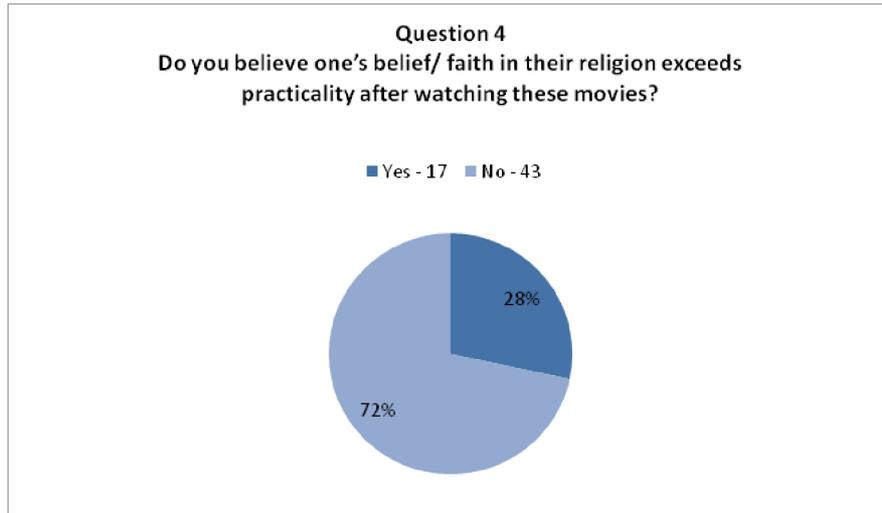


The data in question 2 shows that 82% people think religion is commercialized after watching movies. Whereas 18% of the people think religion is not commercialized. It can be thus concluded that religion has become commercialized to great extent.

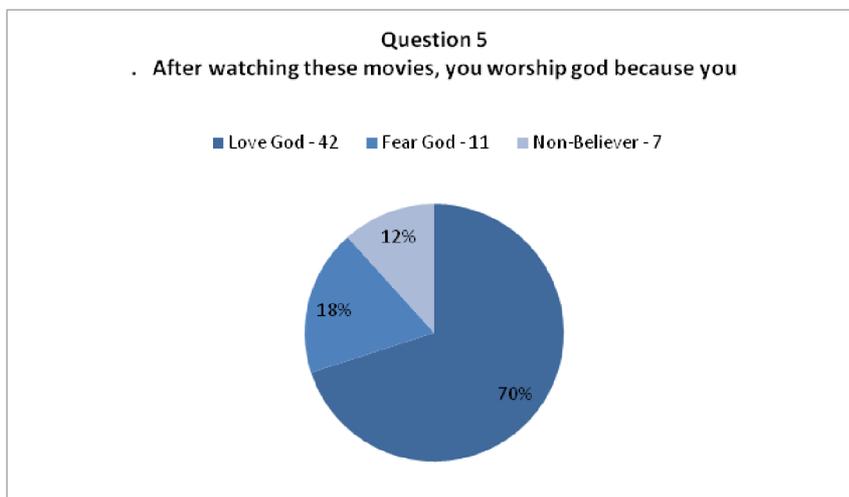
Therefore the hypothesis is supported.



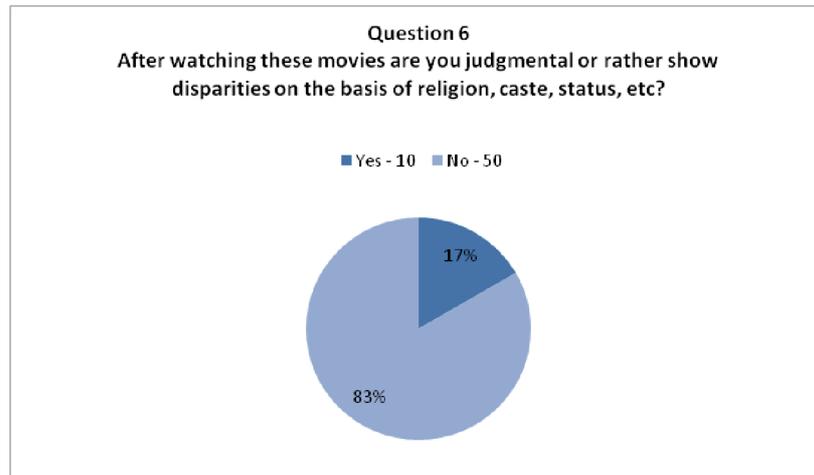
The data in question 3 shows that 43% people think rituals hold importance in today's world while 57% do not. It can be concluded that rituals do not hold importance in today's world. Thus we can conclude the essence of religiosity is fading.



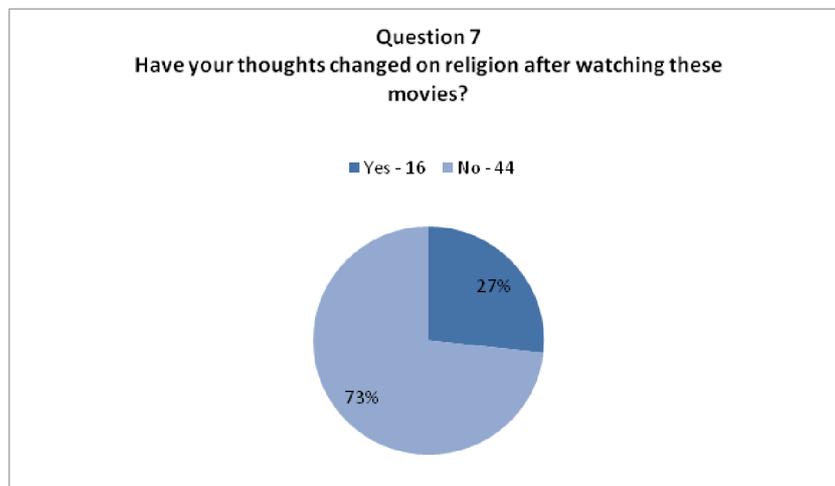
The data in question 4 shows that 28% people believe that one's belief/ faith in their religion exceeds practicality after watching these movies. Whereas 72% believe being practical is more essential. This shows that media is leading us towards practicality. It can be concluded that being practical is more essential than being religious.



The data in question 5 shows that 70% of people worship God because they love him, while 12% because they fear them. The remaining 12% are non-believers. This shows that the views of the very existence of God are now changing.



The data from question 6 shows that 83% people are not judgmental or don't show disparities on the basis of religion, caste, status after watching these movies whereas 17% people do judge people based on the same. This shows that movies have helped people gain perspective. The days of judgment based on religious stereotypes are fading.



The data in question 7 shows that 73% of the people have not changed their religious views after watching movies, while 27% of the people have changed their views. Thus it can be concluded that the religiosity of people is not easily influenced by movies.

Therefore the hypothesis is partially supported.

### **Discussion**

Results of the present study are consistent with other similar studies. Stockman(2005) examined the relationship between religion and commercialization. He observed that The Irish rock band U2 has often been framed in religious and spiritual terms, not only because the Irish catholic backgrounds of its members, but also because of the band's political and social agenda, its iconography and relation to its fan base. Moreover Starker (1989) examined the relationship between impact of particular media and religion. He states that a list of conflicts between religion and particular media is very long and suggests an inherent opposition between the two parties.

The research also shows that a percentage of people are still skeptical about about religious backgrounds and beliefs and shown by Abanes. In current times, orthodox Christians have called for the Harry Potter books to be banned from schools libraries because of their alleged occult and paranormal content (Abanes, 2001).

The results also bring it the the differences in media and religion and how how people view them as stated by Starker. The list of such conflicts between religion and particular media is very long and suggests an inherent opposition between the two parties (Starker, 1989).

### **Conclusion**

Results of the present study and the consistent studies show that Religiosity is not easily influenced by movies and that Religion is become commercialized to great extent. In other words religion does not influence people to a great extent and religion today is a business. Results also suggest that the essence of religion is fading in today's world.

## References

Abanes, R. (2001). *Harry Potter and the Bible*. Toronto: Horizon Books.

De Vries, H. (2001). *Religion and Media*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gaffney, C. (2008). *Temples of the Earthbound Gods*. Stadiums in the Cultural Landscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Starker, S. (1989). *Evil Influences: crusades against the mass media*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Stockman, S. (2005). *Walk on: the spiritual journey of U2*. Orlando, FL: Relevant Books.

Sutter, T. (2006). *Ein Vergleich von populärer Kultur und Religion am Beispiel des Fußballs*. Grin Verlag.