

**SOCIAL ISSUES IN HINDI CINEMA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECT PRODUCTION HOUSES**

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By

Rakesh Bawa

(Registration No. 41400744)

Supervised By

Dr. Manu Sharma

Professor in History

**LOVELY FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ARTS
LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY
PUNJAB
2020**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Social issues in Hindi Cinema: A comparative study of select production houses” submitted for the award of Ph. D degree to the Lovely Professional University , Punjab is my original work and all ideas and references have been acknowledged. This thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma.

Dated:

Rakesh Bawa

Countersigned by

(Regd. No. 41400744)

Dr. Manu Sharma (Supervisor)

Professor in History

Lovely Professional University

Punjab

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mr. Rakesh Bawa Regd. No. 41400744 of Lovely Professional University has completed the Ph.D thesis entitled “Social issues in Hindi Cinema: A comparative study of select production houses” under my guidance and supervision. To the best of my knowledge, the present work is the result of his original investigation and research work. No part of the research has ever been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma.

The thesis is fit for the submission for the award of Ph.D degree in the subject of History.

Place: JALANDHAR

Supervised by: Dr. Manu Sharma

Professor in History

Lovely Professional University,

Phagwara, Punjab

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ABSTRACT

Cinema has been an integral part of life of people world over since its inception. In India also, this visual medium has enthralled one and all since the making of the first silent feature film Raja Harishchandra by Govindraj Dundiraj Phalke popularly known as Dada Saheb Phalke in 1913. Since then, Indian film industry has experimented with various genres restricting itself to a typical formula of making films which could appeal to the cine-goers emotionally. The early days of Indian film industry were the days of big production houses. These production houses had actors and technicians on their pay roll. The decade of 1930's and 1940's witnessed the making of films mainly in mythological genre. The decade of 1950's and to some extent the decade of 1960's saw various social issues being depicted in Cinema so as to produce a socially relevant Cinema. V.Shantaram pioneered this kind of Cinema, firstly in Marathi language and then in Hindi language. The likes of Mehboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy and Guru Dutt carried forward this tradition and various social issues like Unemployment, Poverty, issues concerning women, migration, issues concerning farming community, class division and struggle etc. got depicted on celluloid. This decade was the golden age of Indian Cinema in the genre of socially relevant Cinema. Later on era of Amitabh Bachchan dominated Hindi film industry and the latest trend is to make independent Cinema. The main purpose of the study is to show and explore various social issues being projected in the films of the Select production houses. An attempt has been made to show Cinema as an important source of social history.

Various objectives achieved during the study are as following

1. To analyze the depiction of social issues (women centric issues, issue of education, tradition and modernity issue, the crisis of conscience, class division and the issue of poverty and peasantry) in the Cinema made under Mehboob Productions.
2. To study the representation of social issues (Poverty, Class conflict, Problem of Marginalized elements of society, decay in the values of society, child

labor, hypocrisy in society, problem of migration crisis of conscience, and women-centric issues) in the Cinema made under the banner, R.K. Films.

3. To analyze the depiction of social issues (class conflict, crisis of conscience, hypocrisy in society, women-centric issues and feudal decay) in the Cinema made under the banner, Guru Dutt Films Pvt. Ltd.
4. To highlight the social issues (Peasant related, poverty, and rural-urban migration, issue of caste system, corruption, and decay in values of society and women-centric issues) in the Cinema made under the banner, Bimal Roy Productions.

The research methodology deployed to achieve the objectives is as following:

Many films have been made in Hindi Film industry based upon representation of social issues in Hindi Cinema. Proposed work of research is basically an exploratory one exploring the social issues in the selected films of the Select Production Houses. For this work, the researcher has relied upon first hand viewing of selected films of Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan and Raj Kapoor. Apart from it, the researcher has got recorded interviews of some persons (critics, journalists, Film scholars and persons associated in any capacity with the films of Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan and Raj Kapoor). The format of the interviews is unstructured one. The films and interviews form the primary source.

The majority of Sources are the secondary sources in form of Books and online articles. Data (Newspaper reports, unpublished matter, reviews published, and magazines of that era like Cinemaya, Rangbhumi, FilmIndia, Filmfare, Complete Cinema, Rajatpat Masik, etc. and Reports of various committees on Cinema) available in National Film Archives of India and Archives of various Studios have been consulted for the relevant information regarding our study.

This thesis comprises seven chapters in which we have taken the study of four select production houses (Mehboob Productions, R.K.Films, Guru Dutt Films Pvt. Ltd. And Bimal Roy Productions) to analyze the social issues which were represented in the films made under these banners and a comparative study has been done to show the different styles of these film-makers.

The first chapter is the one which gives an introduction to the Hindi Film industry. A brief history of notable production houses is given including the production houses which are part of our study.

Chapter two of our study is titled as Cinema, History and Indian Society in which an effort has been made to establish a relationship between various facets of Cinema and Indian History. How Indian society has been influenced by Cinema has also been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three focuses on Cinema of Mehboob Khan specifically the films made under his banner in which social issues have been depicted. . Six films of Mehboob Khan have been taken for the purpose of our study. These films are *Najma (1943)*, *Anmol Ghadi (1946)*, *Elaan (1947)*, *Andaz (1949)*, *Amar (1954)* and *Mother India (1957)*.

Chapter four deals with the study of selected films made under the banner, R.K. Films. In total, eight films *Awara (1951)*, *Boot Polish (1953)*, *Shri 420 (1955)*, *Jaagte Raho (1956)* , *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai (1960)*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978)*, *Prem Rog (1982)* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili (1985)* have been chosen to study various social issues.

Fifth chapter of our study is focussed on the Cinema of Guru Dutt where four films have been taken to analyze the style and presentation of various social issues in these films.

Chapter six deals with the films of Bimal Roy to understand the social message and issues as taken in the films of Bimal Roy. The films chosen for this purpose are *Do Bigha Zameen (1953)*, *Madhumati (1957)*, *Sujata (1959)*, *Parakh (1960)* and *Bandini (1963)*.

Chapter seven is the concluding chapter in which an effort has been made to compare the style and presentation of the film-makers which comprises our study. Some suggestions have been made so as to take the study of Cinema further. Our study is just a comparative study of four select production houses which could be extended further to include other production houses also.

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN CINEMA

1.1 Indian Cinema at a glance

One of the most important inventions of the 19th century has been the Cinema. The visual images have enthralled one and all since the making of first feature film in the world, *The story of the Kelly Gang* (1906)¹. Firstly, the silent era of Cinema dominated the world and later on the talkies took over. India was not to be lagged behind and soon in 1913, first silent feature film, *Raja Harishchandra* made by Govindraj Dunderaj Phalke, popularly known as Dada Saheb Phalke hit the screens. The film made an instant connection with the masses as the story of Raja Harishchandra along with other mythological heroes had been embedded right there in the minds of Indians. The advent of silent era in Indian Cinema is dominated by Hindu mythological². Various mythological produced in India left a great impact on the minds of Cine-goers. In the absence of sound, mythological gave a chance to the film-makers to play with the visual effects though the technology in that era was not so advanced. Revered gods and goddesses who had become part and parcel of Indian psyche were now being beamed live on celluloid due to efforts of some enterprising film-makers of that era. The mythological laid the base for a thriving film industry in India and even in the modern era, in the digitalised age, the mythological have not lost its sheen as shown by the success of two serialized epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* telecast on Doordarshan in decade of nineties. Some of the important silent mythological produced during the silent era are as following: *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), *Mohini Bhasmasur* (1913), *Satyavan Savitri* (1914), *Lanka Dahan* (1917), *Nala Damayanti* (1921) and *Maya Bazaar* (1923). Silent films were

¹ The story of the Kelly Gang is a 1906 silent film made in Australia which traces the conflict between Bush rangers and outlaw Ned Kelly and his gang. The film was shot in and around Melbourne.

² Hindu mythology consists of various stories related to Gods, Goddesses and demons and the basic premise of almost every story is to show the victory of good over evil. The epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* contain many such episodes and stories within the main story. Earliest decade of Hindi Cinema was much inspired by these stories.

silent only in the name as these films were often accompanied by the musicians playing various musical instruments like Harmonium, Tabla, Sarangi and Violin. Soon the Silent era gave way to talkies being made in India.

1.1.1 Hindi Cinema in 30's and 40's

1931 saw the first talkie film hitting the screens in form of *Alam Ara* made by Ardeshir Irani. The film also marked the advent of songs in the films. The film was released on March 14, 1931. Those were the days of big production houses. One of the prominent production houses, The Imperial Movietone produced *Alamara*. The film starred Master Vitthal and Zubeida as main male and female leads respectively. The film also starred Prithviraj Kapoor³, who in the times to come was to become a major star of Hindi Cinema. The decade of 1930's and 1940's was important in the aspect that the decades saw the starting of socially relevant Cinema being produced in India along with the usual Hindi films based upon mythology and fantasy tales. 1930's and 1940's were the decades in India when the national movement in India was at its peak and some of the events within the national movement were talking of social issues especially after coming of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene of freedom movement. This was the time when various social issues like Caste related problem, Class struggle, issue of poverty, communalism, marginalised society and untouchability were being tackled by the film-makers. The name of V. Shantaram can be rightly taken as the pioneer of socially oriented films. Starting his journey in the field of Cinema in Marathi language, Shantaram excelled himself in the social genre in Hindi language also. *Duniya Na Maane*, *Padosi* and *Do Aankhen Barah Hath* are the films which took V. Shantaram to a higher pedestal. After Shantaram, came Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy and B.R. Chopra who were keen to put across the social message through this medium. It is pertinent to mention here that Nehruvian ideology was the motivating factor inspiring these film-makers all the time.

³ Born on November 3, 1906, in Samundri, Punjab, India, and Prithviraj Kapoor started his film career with the Imperial film company and worked as a lead actor in the silent films made by the company. He also honed his skill as an actor in New Theatres, Calcutta. Meanwhile he established a touring theatre group, Prithvi theatres in 1944 and which staged many memorable plays like *Gaddar*, *Pathan*, *Deewar*, *Dahej* and *Kisan*. These plays were based upon socialistic ideology.

1.1.2 The Golden age of Hindi Cinema

The golden age of Hindi Cinema started in real sense after India got freedom in 1947. Before India's independence, Lahore⁴ was creative hub of film industry in North India whereas Kolhapur and Nasik were the cities where the film-makers from Maharashtra were satisfying their creative urges. Bombay was just emerging and developing as the site of film-making during that time and it became a melting pot for all the creative people representing various cultures and sensibilities and thus came forward some of the classic masterpieces being created in that era in the decade of 1950's representing both entertainment as well as social consciousness. The era also saw the flavour of various regions being incorporated in Hindi Cinema. The era saw the bringing of Bengali sensibility in Hindi Cinema in form of Cinema of Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy. Raj Kapoor brought boisterousness and loudness of Punjabi culture with music becoming an integral part of his Cinema. V.Shantaram was busy churning out Hindi Cinema of a subdued nature. Satyajit Ray marked his presence in 1955 with *Pather Panchali* (film in Bengali language). In the days to come, Ray was to be counted among the greats of world Cinema. Ray has been the only film-maker from India to get a lifetime Oscar. His Cinema has remained basically universal in nature made in Bangla language and he never tried to make his presence felt in the realm of Hindi Cinema apart from *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* and *Sadgati*.

1.1.3 Cinema in the decade of 60's

The beginning of the decade of sixties saw the release of magnum opus *Mughal-E-Azam*, the film by K. Asif.⁵ This decade also saw the blooming of Cinema based upon theory of escapism. Liling music played an important role in the success of these films. These films were basically dreams which were sold by the commercial film-makers to the cine-goers though the meaningful Cinema as initiated by film-makers

⁴ Along with the establishment of Film industry in Bombay and Calcutta, Lahore, Punjab was also a major seat of film-making in India. This was the pre-partition phase where prominent film-makers like Roop Lal Shorey and Dalsukh Pancholi had established their studios. After partition, many talented film-makers and artists migrated to Bombay, Maharashtra, India.

⁵ Born as Asif Karim in Etawah, Uttar Pradesh, India on June 14, 1924, he became famous in film industry as K. Asif. *Mughal-E-Azam* is his magnum, opus Based upon the love story of Prince Salim of Mughal Empire and Anarkali, a courtesan. Apart from this film, he was also associated with films *Phool* and *Hulchul*. He started a project called *Love and God* which was later completed by K.C. Bokadia.

like V. Shantaram, Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan and Bimal Roy was still being made. But the star system had made its presence felt in this decade. It was the emergence of a star system now where star was all powerful entity whose name was instrumental in selling the film. For the first time, it was felt that music could be used to sell a film in an effective way. *Sunil Dutt's Mujhe Jeene Do*, *Dilip Kumar's Ganga Jumna*, *Raj Kapoor's Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai and Sangam*, *Bimal Roy's Madhumati and Bandini*, *B.R. Chopra's Naya Daur*, *Manoj Kumar's Upkar*, *Ramanand Sagar's Aarzo* and *Shakti Samanta's Amar Prem* were some of the significant films of this decade.

1.1.4 Parallel Cinema movement

Formally named as Film Finance Corporation, , a central agency was set up to promote quality Cinema in India which was later renamed as National Film Development Corporation. It was felt that Hindi Cinema had been successful in making commercially viable Cinema and had struck a chord with the film-goers, but somewhere, this Cinema did not represent the true culture and issues ailing India. The Cinema was not portraying real issues in an effective manner as it should be. Thus, this agency was born and a new parallel cinema movement started in India under its umbrella. Film-makers like Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalani, Jabbar Patel, Kumar Shahani, Mani Kaul, Sai Paranjpe and Utpendu Chakraborty were able to make films with financial help from NFDC though later on some private enterprises also helped these film-makers in their effort. But this parallel Cinema movement also called as new wave cinema failed to capture the audience's eye and soon fizzled out of the scene. Some of the important films made under this movement are *Shyam Benegal's Ankur*, *Nishant and Manthan*, *Govind Nihalani's Aakrosh and Ardhsatya*, *Sai Paranjpe's Katha and Sparsh*, *Mrinal Sen's Bhuvan Some*, *Mani Kaul's Uski Roti* and *Kumar Shahani's Tarang*.

1970's was the decade of emergence of a new phenomenon of angry young man in the form of Amitabh Bachchan and anti-establishment formula became new **mantra** of film-makers to make their films successful. Political emergency was declared by the former Prime minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and it produced a mass reaction on the

streets of India and this reflected in the Cinema also. This decade was a sort of death knell for the romantic, musical and escapist cinema.

1.1.5 Indian Cinema in 70's and afterwards

1970's was the decade of emergence of a new phenomenon of angry young man in the form of Amitabh Bachchan and anti-establishment formula became new **mantra** of film-makers to make their films successful. Political emergency was declared by the former Prime minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and it produced a mass reaction on the streets of India and this reflected in the Cinema also. This decade was a sort of death knell for the romantic, musical and escapist cinema.

After the decade of seventies, crass commercialization had dominated Hindi Cinema more or less and Hindi Cinema worth its name was very rare to mention. The story of commercialization continued in the decade of nineties and thereafter also. The coming of multiplexes have initiated a new trend of independent cinema backed by corporate houses and to some extent cinema produced by production houses assembled by young enthusiastic film-makers. These films are known as Indie films.⁶ These film-makers are keen on experimentation in Hindi Cinema though within the basic parameters and pattern of film-making which had been going since the inception of Hindi Cinema in India. Very few film-makers have been able to break the conventional mould of film-making. Styles have changed, film-makers have come and gone, slight difference in the pattern of film-making has been there and despite a lot of entertainment options now available to the people, Indian Cinema is still going strong and has lately able to mark its presence felt at a global level also.

1.1.6 Socially relevant Cinema

Indian film industry, in general, has never remained aloof from the social issues and the issue of nationalism. Whatever is the pattern or design of a film made in India, except the escapist Cinema, rest of Indian Cinema cater to nationalistic feelings and social issues, time to time. According to Sanjukta Tutul Ghosh, the Indian film

⁶ Indie films or Independent films are the films which are made without any major studio backing. The films are independent ventures of some individuals who fund their cinema with the backing of corporate houses. With the advent of multiplexes, the trend of Indie films has got a boost. This trend has helped many film-makers in India like Anurag Kashyap, Vikas Behl, Vikramaditya Motwane etc.

industry has been a powerful ideological tool for the Indian state. In the films made in the decade of 1950's which is taken to be as golden period of Indian Cinema, national unity and national integration have been recurrent subtexts in the Hindi Cinema. Bombay Cinema consists of simple moral fables of good forces triumphing over evil forces and representation of state as collective good.

Indian Cinema is always on forefront in visualising the social change. Depiction of social issues has been an important factor in the making of Indian Cinema. Cinema has been an important medium to educate the masses. There are examples of many films doing this work successfully. In the words of Dr. Kalidas Nag, "Cinema is a powerful medium to educate the masses"⁷.

1.1.7 Social movies can further be categorized into two categories

1. The movies which are concerned with society, in general which raise the issue of casteism, class difference and class consciousness, issue of education, marital problem and related issues, problem of alcoholism, poverty issues in rural belt, rural-urban migration etc. Indian film industry boasts of many such movies where these types of issues have been raised. Example, *Achhut Kanya*, *Sujata*, *Mother India*, *Elan*, *Aavishkar*, *Daddy*, *Manthan*, *De Bigha Zamin* etc.

2. There are certain social movies which are concerned with personal emancipation. These films are concerned with the problem of ego, guilt, fame and talent. The storyline in these kinds of films revolve around a particular character and through the characterization of that particular character, the film hits out at the unjust society. Example: *Amar*, *Kala Patthar*, *Abhiman*, *Bandini* etc.

1.2 Notable production houses in India: A Glance

India boasts of numerous production houses which are instrumental in making films. The early phase of film-making in India had started this trend of large production houses with every facility of film-making available in these production houses, in house and actors and other technicians were on the pay roll of these production houses. Prithviraj Kapoor was the first actor to become a freelance actor. These

⁷ Singh, Dr. Devendra Nath & Singh, Dr. Virendra. 2012. *Bhartiya Hindi Cinema ki vikas yatra, ek Mulyankan*, India, p. 112.

production houses had become a brand name themselves and a certain genre of films came to be identified as the product of a specific production house. These production houses had got a specific set of people to work with. That specific set of people brought about a similar pattern of film-making under the banner of that production house. These production houses in the earlier phase of film-making in India had been strengthening pillars of film-industry and a spate of talent got bloomed and groomed in these production houses in the form of actors, lyricists, music directors, cinematographers, editors and directors. Some of the important production houses in India in the earlier times and in the present times are as following:

Imperial Film Company

The production house was started by Ardeshir Irani in 1926. This was one of the earliest production houses to create Cinema in India. Historically, costume generated drama was the main genre and forte of this film company. In 1928, the company produced *Anarkali* which was shot and released overnight. The company was instrumental in making remakes of its silent films. *Anarkali*, made in 1928, was retold on celluloid as a talkie in 1935. Similarly, *Wildcat of Bombay*, a production of this company became *Bambai ki Billi* in 1936. The company made films in at least nine languages, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Burmese, Pashto, Malay and Urdu. The company is credited with producing first talkie of India, *Alam Ara (1931)*. The company is also credited with making first film shot at night, *Khwab-E-Hasti (1929)*. It is also credited with making first Iranian talkie, *Dukhtar-E-Lur (1932)*. The company is also credited with making first colour film of India, *Kisan Kanya (1937)*. Out of one hundred fifty-eight films that Ardeshir Irani made in his career, sixty-two films were made under the banner of Imperial Film Company. Though now forgotten, this banner was instrumental in bringing various themes on celluloid.

New Theatres

New Theatres established in February 1931 was a very important production house to be established in the state of Bengal. Bombay had not emerged yet as an important centre of film-making in India when this production house had become a very important one. Bombay Talkies in Bombay was a production house worth its name and in Calcutta New Theatres made its presence felt in the decade of 1930's and

1940's. Many of the stalwarts of Bombay film industry initiated their career at New Theatres, Calcutta. Established by B.N. Sircar, relevance of New Theatres lay in producing Cinema based upon literature as well as films based upon social messages. The production house made films in Bengali and Hindi language. Kanan Devi, Prithviraj Kapoor, Pahari Sanyal, K.L. Sehgal, Pankaj Mullick and Basanta Choudhary were the important artists for whom, New Theatres acted as a nursery of acting. Music Director R.C. Boral made his name in New Theatres, Calcutta. Devaki Bose, Nitin Bose and P.C. Barua were the important directors who cut their teeth at New Theatres, Calcutta and were instrumental in making this company, a brand name. The first film produced by New Theatres was *Dena Paona* in 1931 in Bengali language. The film was based upon a literary work of same name by Saratchandra Chatterjee. New Theatres was responsible in making Prithviraj Kapoor, a star, in his own mould. The notable films made at New Theatres, Calcutta are as following: *Chandidas, Subah Ka Sitara, Rajrani Meera, Meera Bai, Devdas, Manzil, Grihadah, Maya, Mukti, Vidyapati, Street Singer, Udayer Pathey and Anjangerh*. Bimal Roy, who later on ventured as an independent film-maker also got his initial education in film-making in New Theatres, Calcutta.

Bombay Talkies

Bombay Talkies, a very important film production house, established in 1934 was the brainchild of Himanshu Rai and Devika Rani. They established this studio after returning from London. Himanshu Rai had learnt the art of film-making in Germany. The unique special point of this studio was employing European technicians, a majority of being them, German nationals. Director Franz Osten⁸ and Cinematographer, Joseph Weirsching was instrumental in providing a world class technical expertise to this studio. It had set a very high technical standard of producing films. The production house was instrumental in launching the career of Dilip Kumar and Ashok Kumar who in the coming years were destined to become stars in their own mould. After the death of Himanshu Rai, Devika Rani lost interest in running the affairs of the studio and left the nitty-gritty of dealing with the studio

⁸ Franz Osten was a German national who came to India along with Himanshu Rai. He directed one of the earliest films imparting social message, *Achhut Kanya*.

matters with Shashdhar Mukerji, who in the coming years founded Filmistan studio⁹, a leading production house. Notable films to come out of Bombay Talkies are as following: *Achhut Kanya (1936)*, *Jeevan Naiyya (1936)*, *Jeevan Prabhat (1937)*, *Jhoola (1941)*, *Basant (1942)*, *Kismet (1944)*, *Jwar Bhata (1944)*, *Milan (1946)*, *Ziddi (1948)*, *Mahal (1949)* and *Sangram (1950)*. *Jwar Bhata* and *Ziddi* launched the career of Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand respectively. *Kismet* is hailed as the first anti-hero Hindi film of India and has remained the most successful film commercially to come out of this production house. Directors like Gyan Mukerji, Amiya Chakraborty and Nitin Bose were instrumental in making meaningful films for this production house.

Rajkamal Kalamandir

A film company named Maharashtra Film Company was formed in Kolhapur in 1918 by Babu Rao Painter, a name to reckon with silent films. History of silent films is incomplete without the contribution of Babu Rao Painter¹⁰. In this company worked, four friends namely, Babu Rao Pendharkar, V. Damle, V. Shantaram and Fateh Lal, the trusted lieutenants of Babu Rao Painter. Some differences arose in the company with Babu Rao Painter and the four friends formed a new company, Prabhat Films Company. The company made twenty-five films in total and after sometime V. Shantaram also left the studios to form his own company, Rajkamal Kalamandir in 1942. He was the face and name behind the success of Prabhat Film Company. His forte was in making meaningful films giving social message to the masses. After forming Rajkamal Kalamandir, this special point remained with him and this production house was responsible in making some of very important films in the history of Indian Cinema. The films were produced both in Marathi and Hindi language. In the earlier phase of this studio, films produced by this studio were hailed commercially as well as critically acclaimed but later on films produced by this film

⁹ Shashdhar Mukerji founded the production house, Filmistan after leaving Bombay Talkies in 1943. Filmistan eventually was responsible for many hits coming out under this banner like *Munim Ji*, *Anarkali*, *Nagin*, *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* and *Paying Guest*.

¹⁰ Babu Rao Painter was a name to reckon with in the earliest phase of Indian Cinema. He founded Maharashtra Film Company which made many silent films based upon mythology and history. He is famous for his films, *Savkari Pash* and *Sairandhri* which introduced the entry of female actors in the film industry. He later on founded Prabhat Film Company in Pune.

company lost some of its sheen. In total, twenty-three films were produced by this company, notable amongst them are as following:

Shakuntala (1943), Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani (1946), Dahej (1950), Teen Batti Char Rasta (1953), Subah Ka Tara (1954), JhanakJhanak Payal Baaaje (1955), Do Aankhen Barah Hath (1958), Navrang (1959), Sehra (1963), Geet Gaya Patthron Ne (1964) and Boond Jo Ban Gayi Moti (1967). *Do Aankhen Barah Hath*¹¹ is considered to be a classic film produced by this film studio which resonates the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi of compassion. This film bagged the Golden Bear award at prestigious Berlin film festival in 1957 for its strong human appeal.

Bimal Roy Productions

Bimal Roy is hailed as a film-maker par excellence and a core humanist. He is seen as the founder of New Wave Cinema in India in real sense. His Cinema has got a core subtlety which is very rare to be seen in the Cinema of his times. He started his career as an assistant cameraman in the prestigious production house, New Theatres, Calcutta. His work as a cinematographer in *Devdas* produced at New Theatres is hailed as a masterpiece work. His directorial debut, *Udayer Pathy (1944)* took a strong opposition to the caste and class system with a tinge of nationalism. Several Bengali producers and directors had shifted their base to Bombay after India got independence. Bimal Roy was one of them. He started his production house, Bimal Roy Productions in 1952 and *Do Bigha Zameen* was the first film produced by this banner. The movie is special in regard that it won the major international awards in United Kingdom, Karlovy Vary film festival, Cannes, U S S R and Moscow film festival. Bimal Roy was totally a socially committed film-maker for whom commercial success didn't matter though his banner was responsible in making *Madhumati*, the most commercially successful film of this production house which was unlike the sensibility of Bimal Roy as it was made keeping in mind the previous films of the banner not running very successfully. Notable films to come out of this

¹¹ *Do Aankhen Barah Hath*, released in 1957, produced and directed by V.Shantaram is based upon the premise of Mahatma Gandhi to hate the sin and not the sinner. It is the story of an idealist jailor, Adinath, played by Shantaram himself to reform the dreaded prisoners and bring them up in the mainstream of society.

production house are as following: *Do Bigha Zameen* (1953), *Naukari* (1954), *Biraj Bahu* (1954), *Devdas* (1955), *Madhumati* (1958), *Sujata* (1959), *Parakh* (1960) and *Bandini* (1963). His films are notable in the aspect of making the leading lady as the central figure of his films whether it is *Sujata*, *Bandini* or *Madhumati*. Bimal Roy's influence has been far reaching in Indian as well as world Cinema.

Guru Dutt Films private limited

Guru Dutt, along with Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan and Bimal Roy has been a prominent film-maker of 1950's and 1960's. The quartet of these film-makers were responsible in making meaningful as well as commercially successful Cinema. Films made by Guru Dutt had a personal stamp as well as hard hitting social message used to come across through his films. *Baaz* (1953) was the first film produced under this banner. Other notable films made under this banner are as following: *Mr. and Mrs. 55* (1955), *C I D* (1956), *Pyaasa* (1957), *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959), *Choudhvin Ka Chand* (1960), *Sahib Biwi Ur Ghulam* (1962) and *Baharen Phir Bhi Aayengi* (1966). Guru Dutt has been instrumental in bringing sensitivity to Hindi Cinema that is unparalleled. Guru Dutt was a very sensitive film-maker and his films reflected a sensibility of its own. Guru Dutt got a chance in the banner, Navketan started by Dev Anand to direct his first film, *Baazi*. This film was routine commercial stuff of Hindi Cinema. After establishing his production house, Guru Dutt's repertoire included a mixture of commercially successful commercial films as well as meaningful films putting across social message to the cine-goers. His films *Pyaasa* (1957), *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959) and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* are hailed as timeless classics. In 2005, *Pyaasa* was rated as one of the 100 best films of all times by Time magazine. Cinematographer, V.K. Murthy¹², writer Abrar Alvi and music director S.D. Burman had played a very important role in giving films of Guru Dutt, a peculiar outlook.

R.K. Films

Prithviraj Kapoor had started his career in Bombay Talkies, a prominent production house located in Bombay. New Theatres, Calcutta groomed him as a star. His Drama Company, Prithvi Theatres was instrumental in producing hard hitting socially

¹² V.K. Murthy is the only cinematographer belonging to Hindi film industry to be awarded Dada Saheb Phalke Award.

oriented dramas which were influenced by the idea of socialism and Nehruvian ideology. His eldest son, Raj Kapoor worked firstly as an apprentice and an actor in some of the dramas produced at Prithvi Theatres. Kedar Sharma gave him the first chance as the lead actor in film, *Neel Kamal* in 1947 opposite Madhubala. In 1948, Raj Kapoor established R.K. Films, the banner under which he produced the movies and R.K. Studios where most of these films were shot. In the coming years, this banner became a name to reckon with. Those were the days when the earliest known production houses, Bombay Talkies, New Theatres and Prabhat Films were losing the sheen. The era was witnessing, the coming up of many new production houses like Filmistan, R.K. Films, Navketan, Guru Dutt Films Private Limited and Bimal Roy Productions. Raj Kapoor being at the helm of affairs of the production house, R.K. Films produced some memorable films. The unique special point of films produced under this banner had been to put across social message in form of entertainment in its full bloom. Showmanship of Raj Kapoor was clearly visible in the films produced under this banner though he also experimented in producing low budget art house films like *Jagte Raho*, *Ab Dilli Door Nahin*, and *Boot Polish* which were influenced by neo-realistic Italian Cinema. R.K. Films had got a set of specific people working with the studio. Shankar JaiKishan as music directors, Radhu Karmakar as cinematographer, Hasrat Jaipuri and Shailendra as lyricists, V.P. Sathe as a publicist, K.A. Abbas as a writer and Nargis as the main leading lady were the mainstays of this production house. Notable films produced under this banner are as following: *Aag* (1948), *Barsaat* (1949), *Awara* (1951), *Boot Polish* (1954), *Shree 420* (1955), *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* (1960), *Sangam* (1964), *Mera Naam Joker* (1970), *Bobby* (1973), *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* (1978), *Prem Rog* (1982) and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* (1985).

Mehboob Productions

Earlier in his career, Mehboob Khan worked as an extra, assistant director and then director in the film company of Ardeshir Irani, Imperial Films. He also directed films for the banner, Sagar Movietone before establishing his own production house, Mehboob Productions. Mehboob Productions has been instrumental in making some of the memorable films in the history of Hindi Cinema. The symbol of sickle and

hammer of his production house reflected the political leaning of communism of Mehboob Khan. The production house was established in 1943. His films have remained critically acclaimed as well as commercially successful. *Mother India* has been regarded as the most acclaimed film to come out of this production house. Produced in 1957, directed by Mehboob Khan, this film is a social epic acclaimed world over. The film won the film fare awards for the best director and the best film in 1958 and was nominated as the best foreign language film at the 30th academy awards in 1958. Nargis became the first Indian female actor to receive the award as the best actress at Karlovy Vary film festival held in Czech Republic. Though there are other memorable films also produced under this banner, this film has become synonymous with Mehboob Khan and India. Notable films produced under Mehboob Productions are as following: *Najma (1943)*, *Anmol Ghadi (1946)*, *Elan (1947)*, *Andaz (1949)*, *Aan (1952)*, *Amar (1952)* and *Mother India (1957)*. Emblem of Mehboob Productions showing sickle and hammer seems fitting as his films mostly were concerned with the class struggle, oppression of poor and societal imbalance.

B.R. Films

The golden age of Hindi Cinema witnessed B.R. Chopra becoming a prominent producer-director. Born as Baldev Raj Chopra at Rahon, Punjab in 1914, he started his career as a film journalist writing articles for Cine Herald in Lahore. Partition of India saw B.R. Chopra losing everything and coming to Bombay where he directed his first film *Karwat* in 1948. The film was not successful commercially. His second film *Afsana (1951)* saw Ashok Kumar in iconic double role. He established his own banner, B.R. Films in 1955. His banner is famous for producing socially relevant cinema. The decade of 1950's had witnessed meaningful Cinema being made by many notable production houses. B.R. Films also joined the bandwagon and his banner was instrumental in giving new direction to Hindi Cinema. The Cinema produced under this banner was not loud and lacked an appeal of showmanship which was quite visible in the cinema of Raj Kapoor. Notable films produced under this production house are as following: *Ek Hi Raasta (1956)*, *Naya Daur (1957)*, *Sadhna (1958)*, *Dhool Ka Phool (1959)*, *Kanoon (1961)*, *Gumrah (1963)*, *Waqt (1965)*, *Humraz (1967)*, *Aadmi Aur Insaan (1970)*, *Insaaf Ka Tarazu (1980)* and *Nikaah*

(1982). The emblem of B.R. Films represents two statues, a man with a hammer and a cogwheel in his hand and a woman carrying a heap of wheat. The emblem is somewhat similar to that of emblem of Mehboob Productions Private Limited. The emblem also reflects the impact of Nehruvian ideology and socialistic ideology on the film-makers of golden era. This emblem also rightly reflects the kind of Cinema being produced under B.R. Films.

Navketan Films

Navketan Films was a name to reckon with in the decade of 1950's and 1960's. The production house is credited with giving us a number of Black and White films of that era. The banner never boasted of making films giving any direct social message. Dev Anand wanted to construct his image as a debonair, suave hero while making the films in his own style under this banner. Though in the earlier phase of this banner, most of the films under this production house were directed by Vijay Anand albeit, stamp of Dev Anand in creating a specific image is well seen in these films. The banner started losing some of its sheen after Dev Anand started directing films¹³ for this banner. The banner, Navketan films was founded in 1949 and Anand brothers were a combination of creative talent. Chetan Anand had directed a film *Neecha Nagar* before this banner was established but this film failed to hit bull's eye and did not create any storm commercially. Dev Anand gave the chance to his eldest brother Chetan Anand to direct the film, *Afsar* based upon Nikolai Gogol's literary work, **The Inspector General**. In total, thirty two films were produced under this banner. Notable films to come out of this production house are as following: *Afsar (1950)*, *Baazi (1951)*, *Taxi Driver (1954)*, *House No 44 (1955)*, *Funtoosh (1956)*, *Kala Pani (1958)*, *Kala Bazaar (1960)*, *Hum Dono (1961)*, *Tere Ghar Ke Samne (1963)*, *Guide (1965)*, *Jewel Thief (1967)*, *Prem Pujari (1970)*, *Tere Mere Sapne (1971)*, *Hare Rama Hare Krishna (1971)*, *Des Pardes (1978)*, *Lootmar (1980)* and *Swami Dada (1982)*. Film-maker Guru Dutt, Raj Khosla, Bhappie Soni, Music director Jaidev, film-maker Mohan Sehgal and lyricist Amit Khanna were the talents groomed by this banner.

¹³ *Prem Pujari* is the first film of Navketan banner directed by Dev Anand in released in 1970. He directed many films made under banner of Navketan after this movie but the banner could not create the magic of earlier times when the films of Navketan were directed by Vijay Anand.

Rajshri Productions

This production house was established in 1962 by Tarachand Barjatya. Kamal Kumar Barjatya and Rajkumar Barjatya took this production house to another level while making commercially successful films. At the present times, Sooraj Barjatya is at the helm of affairs at this production house. The production house is famous for making family entertainers. First film, produced by this production house was *Aarti*, which was critically acclaimed as well as commercially successful. *Dosti*, a cult film produced under this banner is basically a non-star film¹⁴ and in the era of stars, the film was successful commercially. The banner made several critical acclaimed and successful films between the decade of 1960's and 1980's. When the video culture was in full bloom in India, Sooraj Barjatya made *Maine Pyaar Kiya*, a much-acclaimed teenage love story which resurrected this banner. *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* followed this film and made history in Hindi film industry¹⁵. Notable films produced under this banner are as following: *Aarti (1962)*, *Dosti (1964)*, *Sooraj (1966)*, *Taqdeer (1967)*, *Jeevan Mrityu (1970)*, *Uphaar (1971)*, *Piya Ka Ghar (1972)*, *Geet Gata Chal (1975)*, *Tapasya (1976)*, *Chitchor (1976)*, *Dulhan Wahi Jo Piya Man Bhaye (1977)*, *Akhyion Ke Jharokhon Se (1978)*, *Nadiya Ke Paar (1982)*, *Saaransh (1984)*, *Maine Pyaar Kiya (1989)* and *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun (1994)*. The production house has got goddess Saraswati as its emblem.

Yashraj Films

Born on September 27, 1932 at Lahore, Punjab, India, Yash Chopra learnt the film-making under the patronage of his elder brother, Baldev Raj Chopra under the banner B.R. Films. He directed five films for B.R. Films namely *Dhool Ka Phool (1959)*, *Dharmaputra (1961)*, *Waqt (1965)*, *Aadmi Aur Insaan (1969)* and *Ittefaq (1969)* before forming his own banner, Yashraj Films. B.R. Films was responsible for making socially relevant films whereas Yashraj wanted to make films depicting larger than life images and selling the dreams on celluloid. Opulence, beauty and high aesthetic value was forte of this production house. *Daag (1973)* was the first film

¹⁴ Released in 1964, Hindi film *Dosti* was directed by Satyan Bose for Rajshri Productions. Sudhir Kumar and Sushil Kumar played the main roles of two friends in this film.

¹⁵ Hindi film *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* changed the way Hindi films were being seen in India and worldwide. It was the first Hindi film to gross over Rs. 1 Billion.

produced under this banner and was highly successful film. Most of the films of this banner were directed by Yash Chopra himself though the production house gave the chance to many new comers to direct movie for this banner in between. Many critically acclaimed and successful films have been churned out under this banner. Yash Chopra, in the film industry is hailed as king of romance. Yashraj films, now is the most visible production house in Hindi film industry. It can be taken as the most dominating film production house of India at the present times. He has always believed in star power and used the appeal of stars to make commercially viable films. Notable films produced under this banner are as following: *Daag* (1973), *Kabhie Kabhie* (1976), *Doosra Aadmi* (1977), *Noorie* (1979), *Kala Patthar* (1979), *Nakhuda* (1981), *Silsila* (1981), *Faasle* (1985), *Chandni* (1989), *Lamhe* (1991), *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (1995), *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997), *Mohabbatein* (2000), *Dhoom* (2004), *Veer Zara* (2004), *Bunty aur Bubli* (2005), *Fanaa* (2006), *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom* (2007), *Chak De India* (2007) and *Rab Ne Bana di Jodi* (2008).

Amongst the production houses which existed in the decade of 1950's, four film-makers and their production houses stood out for the sheer presence of these stalwarts in the film industry. These film-makers are Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Mehboob Khan and Guru Dutt. These four film-makers represent the golden period of Hindi Cinema in right earnest. These film-makers had established their own production houses which meant that they were not dependent on other producers to put their point forward in exact manner in which they wanted to. These film-makers were influenced by Nehruvian ideology of socialism and had dreamt of making films on various issues concerning Indian society at that time. The destination of these film-makers was of similar nature but the path taken was quite different one. The sensibility with which these four film-makers pursued their path was different in each case. This is the main reason to take this study so as to find the comparative styles of film-making in tackling various issues in Hindi Cinema. Further at some given time, these film-makers had made their mark in the world Cinema as well and their films are much talked about at the world level. Raj Kapoor's Cinema was bit loud and commercial angle has dominated his Cinema, Bimal Roy's Cinema had a lyrical and sublime quality attached to it, Mehboob Khan was the person who believed in making things

larger than life and lavish production values and Guru Dutt's Cinema was quite personal while taking various social issues in his films.

1.3 Filmography of the select Production houses

1.3.1 Filmography of Mehboob Khan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)

Mehboob Khan, a pioneer producer-director of Hindi films learnt the trade of film-making, earlier in the Imperial film company and later on with the production house, Sagar Movietone where he directed some of the films. In 1943, Mehboob Khan established his own production house, Mehboob Khan Films. *Najma* was the first film to be produced under this banner. *Mother India* remains not only the most renowned work of this production house albeit; this is the first Hindi film which took Indian film industry to new heights¹⁶. In total, thirteen feature films were produced under this banner and eleven of these films were directed by Mehboob Khan himself. These films are as following:

3	Film Name	Banner	Year	Director
1.	<i>Najma</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1943	Mehboob Khan
2.	<i>Taqdeer</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1943	Mehboob Khan
3.	<i>Humayaun</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1945	Mehboob Khan
4.	<i>Anmol Ghadi</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1946	Mehboob Khan
5.	<i>Elaan</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1947	Mehboob Khan
6.	<i>Anokhi Ada</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1948	Mehboob Khan
7.	<i>Andaz</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1949	Mehboob Khan
8	<i>Aan</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1952	Mehboob Khan

¹⁶ Released on 25 October 1957, *Mother India* won many laurels at international level. This became the much talked about Hindi film. Many film scholars of international repute have written about this film. Nargis became the first Indian actor to get an international award at Karlovy Vary festival. The film was the first Hindi film to be nominated for the category of best foreign language film in the academy awards but lost by a single vote.

9.	<i>Amar</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1954	Mehboob Khan
10.	<i>Aawaz</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1956	Zia Sarhadi
11.	<i>Paisa Hi Paisa</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1956	Zia Sarhadi
12.	<i>Mother India</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1957	Mehboob Khan
13.	<i>Son of India</i>	Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd	1962	Mehboob Khan

1. *Najma*: First Hindi film produced under the banner established by Mehboob Khan is *Najma*¹⁷. The film comes under Muslim Social genre. It emphasises on the importance of education in Muslim community, the theme which is quite relevant in the present times also. Ashok Kumar and Veena played the main characters of *Yousuf* and *Najma* in the film.

2. *Taqdeer*: Second film to be produced under Mehboob Khan Productions is debut film of Nargis as a leading lady who in the coming years became a major star in her own right. Moti Lal played the main male lead. The film was the ninth highest grossing film of 1943.

3. *Humayun*: A typical Hindi historical film having the Mughal emperor, *Humayun* is the third film to be produced under this banner. Ashok Kumar portrayed the role of *Humayun* and Nargis played the role of *Hamida Bano Begum*. This was the seventh highest grossing film of 1945. Cecil B. DeMille has described the film as “a masterpiece of lighting and composition”.

4. *Anmol Ghadi*: Basically, the film is a love triangle which is more remembered for its songs. Soulful music by Naushad and lyrics by Tanvir Naqvi is highlight of this film. The film, though having the usual plotline of romance was about class struggle, conflict between poverty and eternal values like humanism also. The film had humanist overtone embedded in it. It was the highest earning Hindi film of 1947.

¹⁷ Chatterji, Saibal. Gulzar & Nihalani, Govind (ed.) 2003. *1931-1946: The emergence of talkies* by Firoze Rangoonwala in *Encyclopaedia of Hindi Cinema*: New Delhi. Popular Prakashan.

5. *Elan*: Set against Muslim backdrop, this film also had a strong message to put forward. This was stated to be Mehboob's most stylized Muslim Social enhanced by an ornate décor and heavily shaded camerawork by Faredoon Irani. The film had the message of anti-feudalism.

6. *Anokhi Ada*: Released in 1948, this film is also a love triangle in typical Mehboob Khan's mould. Naseem Banu, Prem Adib and Surendra played the main characters of *Kamini*, *Laat Saheb* and *Professor Nath* respectively. The film was written by Zia Sarhadi and music was given by Naushad, a regular of many films of Mehboob.

7. *Andaz*: Released in 1949, this film had a very modern outlook towards the relationships. Made in 1949, the film was considered as ahead of its times and explored the question of infidelity, marriage and extra-marital affairs. The film used a melodramatic style to dramatize the contradictory proposition that newly found freedom of India must uphold moral values while going for the capitalistic modernisation. The film could be read as a cautionary note for a newly Independent India and the pitfalls of rampant westernization sans values. Signing Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Nargis in the pivotal roles was a Casting coup of sorts at that time. *Andaz* along with *Barsaat* remained the highest grossing films of the year 1949.

8. *Aan*: This was the transition of Mehboob Khan from black and white to colour. Loosely based upon *the taming of the Shrew*, the film also questioned the issue of feudalism and class struggle. Shot in the Hollywood style, this was the first Technicolor film to be made in India. It marked the debut of actor Nadira. The film became the highest grossing film of the year 1952.

9. *Amar*: Released in 1954, the film is basically a psychological melodrama. The film is based upon pertinent issues of moral turpitude, desire, conscience and justice. *Amar* didn't fare well on the box office and was a rare flop for Mehboob Khan. The film had soulful music and lyrics¹⁸. As with other films of Mehboob Khan, this film also had a strong female character that fights for justice. Dilip Kumar, Nimmi and Madhubala played the important roles in this film.

¹⁸ The Hindi film, *Amar* had lyrics by Shakeel Badayuni and music by Naushad.

10. *Aawaz* and *Paisa hi Paisa* were the films produced under the banner established by Mehboob Khan but were directed by Zia Sarhadi.

11. *Mother India*: A remake of *Aurat* which was made in the decade of 1940's by Mehboob Khan, *Mother India* is the best-known work of Mehboob Khan and got him and India, an international recognition. It refers to newly found Indian independence and metaphorically stands for the high moral values and self-sacrificing spirit of the nation. Nargis who played the role of main protagonist Radha immortalised the role by her acting prowess. In 1958, this film was India's first submission in the category of best foreign film for the academy awards.

12. *Son of India*: The film was the last one to be directed by Mehboob Khan. He wanted to excel his *Mother India* by making this film but the film failed to move the masses and flopped at the box office.

1.3.2 Contribution of Mehboob Khan as a Film-Maker

Mehboob Khan though unlettered was full of wisdom and was rooted to grassroots while making films. Though he had not joined the communist party, his political ideology was similar to that of leftist ideology and the logo of his banner, the hammer and the sickle also reflected this ideology. A deeply religious man, Mehboob Khan can be taken as a humanist film-maker. He is best known for his work *Mother India* but his work goes far beyond that. Like the earlier known works of Raj Kapoor and V. Shantaram, Mehboob Khan's films had been powerful enough to spread the social message. Mehboob Khan orchestrated the rustic opulence in his films. Deeply influenced by Nehruvian ideology of socialism and his concept of democracy, his films reflect those ideas. Golden period of Hindi Cinema witnessed a few film-makers interested in meaningful Cinema and the style of every film-maker was different. Mehboob Khan in Hindi film industry stands out as a grass-rooted man who was considerate about the common man and his problems. He got rave reviews for his films in Hollywood also. He lacked the romanticism of Raj Kapoor and tragedian angle of Guru Dutt still he was able to put his message through the audiences without going dull. Mehboob Khan's *Aan* is a lively example of democracy pitted against feudalism. The film has got an opening audio track, "This is the peasant who through

the ages has seared the earth for food, and during the war, turned his plough into a sword to protect the kingdom.” The film is dedicated to the serf, exploited uniformly over centuries, notwithstanding political upheaval and changing

1.3.3 Filmography of Raj Kapoor (R.K.Films)

The production house, R.K. Films was established in Chembur, Bombay in 1948 by Raj Kapoor when he was twenty-three years old. A total of twenty-one films were produced under this banner, out of which eleven films were directed by Raj Kapoor.

The films made under this banner are:

S. No	Film Name	Banner	Year	Director
1	<i>Aag</i>	R K Films	1948	Raj Kapoor
2	<i>Barsaat</i>	R K Films	1949	Raj Kapoor
3	<i>Awara</i>	R K Films	1951	Raj Kapoor
4	<i>Aah</i>	R K Films	1953	Raja Nawathe
5	<i>Boot Polish</i>	R K Films	1954	Prakash Arora
6	<i>Shri 420</i>	R K Films	1955	Raj Kapoor
7	<i>Jaagte Raho</i>	R K Films	1956	Shombhu Mitra
8	<i>Ab Dilli Door Nahin</i>	R K Films	1957	Amar Kumar
9	<i>Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai</i>	R K Films	1960	Radhu Karmakar
10	<i>Sangam</i>	R K Films	1964	Raj Kapoor
11	<i>Mera Naam Joker</i>	R K Films	1970	Raj Kapoor
12	<i>Kal Aaj Aur Kal</i>	R K Films	1971	Randhir Kapoor
13	<i>Bobby</i>	R K Films	1973	Raj Kapoor
14	<i>Satyam Shivam Sundaram</i>	R K Films	1978	Raj Kapoor
15	<i>Dharam Karam</i>	R K Films	1975	Randhir Kapoor
16	<i>Biwi O Biwi</i>	R K Films	1981	Rahul Rawail
17	<i>Prem Rog</i>	R K Films	1982	Raj Kapoor
18	<i>Ram Teri Ganga Maili</i>	R K Films	1985	Raj Kapoor
19	<i>Henna</i>	R K Films	1991	Randhir Kapoor
20	<i>Prem Granth</i>	R K Films	1996	Rajiv Kapoor
21	<i>Aa Ab Laut Chalen</i>	R K Films	1999	Rishi Kapoor

1. *Aag*: Raj Kapoor's directorial venture *Aag* had a simple storyline about *Keval* (Raj Kapoor) who runs away from the authoritarian way of his father to join the theatre. His first venture was ahead of its times and it depicted a conflict between father and son. *Aag* refers to the fire which is embellishing in the belly of Young protagonist and is ready to challenge the authority of his father. This film, in the words of Raj Kapoor represented the story of youth consumed by a desire for a fighter life¹⁹
2. *Barsaat*: Though *Barsaat* was the second directorial venture of Raj Kapoor, this was the first film under the banner of R.K. Films which was typically in the showmanship style of Raj Kapoor. Starring Raj Kapoor, PremNath, Nimmi, and Nargis, the film became an instant hit and Raj Kapoor established a lifelong bonding with Shankar JaiKishan, the music directors of the film and lyricists, Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri.
3. *Awara*: *Awara* is the first Indian film which took Eastern Europe (erstwhile communist bloc countries) by storm especially erstwhile U.S.S.R. The song "*Awara Hun*" became a virtual anthem in that country. This is the first film coming out of R.K. Films to depict class struggle, poverty and plight of downtrodden classes. The script of the film was written by *K.A.Abbas*²⁰ though the main story idea had been taken from an episode of '**Ramayana**' of exile of Sita. The film was the top grossing film of 1951 earning Rs. 12 million²¹.
4. *Aah*: The film produced under R.K. Films was directed by Raja Nawathe. Somewhere, the directorial touch of Raj Kapoor was missing in the film and the film starring Raj Kapoor, Pran and Nargis failed commercially though the lilting music was an instant hit amongst the masses. *Aah* was a typical triangular love story and did not have any social message to put forward. Contrary to loud image of Pran, he was given a subdued role in this film. The film grossed Rs. 70, 00,000 after its release²².

¹⁹ Jain, Madhu. 2005. *The Kapoor's, the first family of Indian cinema*, New Delhi: Penguin Books.

²⁰ From the website, www.muvyz.com

²¹ Khwaja Ahmed Abbas born in Panipat is a renowned journalist, novelist, film-maker and columnist of India. He was deeply influenced by Marxist ideology and had a fruitful association with Raj Kapoor in his earlier films. K.A. Abbas, himself directed a few Hindi films such as *Sat Hindustani*, *Naxalite*, *Do Boond Pani*, *Dharti Ke Lal* but none of his films was commercially successful though he got critical acclaim for his films.,

²² Source: www.Muvyz.com.

5. *Boot Polish*: Directed by Prakash Arora, this was the first film by Raj Kapoor made in the mould of new wave cinema. The film had no star worth its name. Baby Naaz (the child artiste) got special mention at Cannes film festival in 1954. There is an anecdote that Raj Kapoor didn't like the first draft of the film as the film did not have any song in it. Raj Kapoor himself created the situation for the songs and these songs became instantly hit though the film was declared a flop at the box office.
6. *Shri 420*: Along with *Awara*, this is the film which stamped the image of the tramp and a common man raising his voice in a funny manner on Raj Kapoor. He was happy playing a simpleton with a golden heart. The film established Raj Kapoor in Chaplinesque image in an Indianized form. *Mera Joota Hai Japanese* from this film had a nationalistic fervour. The film tried to depict the hypocrisy of the newly rich and plight of downtrodden classes. The film grossed Rs. Twenty Million after its release and was declared, a blockbuster.
7. *Jagte Raho*: Bengali sensibility dominated the making of this film with Shombhu Mitra directing this film. *Jagte Raho* was the last film produced under R.K. Films in which Nargis and Raj Kapoor appeared for the last time together. The last scene in which Nargis quenches the thirst of Raj Kapoor echoed the fruitful relationship that both the actors shared. The film was declared as a flop.
8. *Ab Dilli Door Nahin*: *Ab Dilli Door Nahin*, directed by Amar Kumar was another film which was not in the style of Raj Kapoor. It is said that the film was produced by Raj Kapoor in a depressed state of mind after Nargis left the R.K. Films. The film was based upon the premise that the little protagonist of the film wanted to meet Pandit Nehru, the erstwhile Prime minister of India in order to secure the release of his father who has been wrongly framed. It is said that Pandit Nehru himself was to as himself in the film but on the advice of his ministerial colleagues, he backed out.
9. *Jis Desh mein Ganga behti Hai*: The film was a dacoit story associated with the rehabilitation of dacoits. It starred Padmini along with Raj Kapoor. After Nargis left the R.K. Films, Raj Kapoor was not able to create magic on the box office. *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* marked a turnaround in the style of film-making by Raj Kapoor in the sense that though the social message remained somewhere in the films made by him, crass commercial appeal started dominating the scene. This was the

film in which the sensuality gave way to sexuality. Padmini was captured by the camera angles in a voyeuristic way. The film was successful commercially.

10. *Sangam*: *Sangam* is the first film of Raj Kapoor picturised in Technicolor. Along with the advent of colour in R.K. Films, this is the exclusive Raj Kapoor film which was shot extensively in Europe. Raj Kapoor initiated the path for other film-makers to come who wanted glamour and technical gloss for their films. Though basically, a triangular love story, Raj Kapoor considers *Sangam* embedded in rich Indian culture and he takes the term *Sangam* as confluence of three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati in which Saraswati disappears²³. For him, this was the film representing confluence of souls, Vyjyanti Mala, another actress from South India entered R.K. camp through this film. *Sangam* was successful commercially and grossed Rs. 12 Crore at the box office in the year 1964.
11. *Mera Nam Joker*: Buoyed by the success of *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* and *Sangam*, Raj Kapoor again turned to experimental cinema with the making of *Mera Naam Joker*. The film was highly autobiographical in nature and too long even when compared with the length of Hindi films. The film failed to stir the masses at the box office in its release year. In the present times, the film is hailed as a classic. Cinema of Raj Kapoor had always been oscillating between highly personal and cinema of mass appeal. The failure of *Mera Naam Joker* was also a turning point in the style of film-making under this banner.
12. *Kal Aaj aur Kal*: This was the film produced under the banner R.K. Films which was directed by Randhir Kapoor. The basic premise of the story was to show the gap between the three generations in a family. Prithvi Raj Kapoor, Raj Kapoor and Randhir Kapoor played these roles respectively. In the words of Raj Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor was a master craftsman and Raj Kapoor had enjoyed working under his baton. In his eyes, the film might not have run successfully at the box office but the film had a youthful exuberance.
13. *Bobby*: The failure of *Mera Naam Joker* devastated Raj Kapoor and he was searching a right story to engage the masses in his own style. He had never shown apathy towards showing sexuality in his films but that was shown with an aesthetic way. *Bobby* can be taken as first teenage love story in the history of Hindi films and its

²³ Nanda, Ritu. 2002. Raj Kapoor speaks, New Delhi: Penguin Books.

idea, Raj Kapoor took from Archie comics. He himself has said that he was not a very well-read man and was not an intellectual in the ways of the world. *Bobby* paved the way for many teenage love stories to be produced in Hindi Cinema. It is also the first film which was instrumental in launching the merchandise to publicise the film. A new actress, Dimple Kapadia was introduced in this film.

14. *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*: This film directed by Raj Kapoor has been his most controversial one in the sense that the critics feel that he was totally converted to show voyeurism while making this film. Symbolism occurs again and again in this film and the theme of the film that beauty lies in the soul, not in the body is a perfect one but the treatment, especially of showing the female protagonist Zeenat Aman in a voyeuristic way was a question mark on Raj Kapoor, some critics feel. The film is said to be inspired by the legendary singer, Lata Mangeshkar.
15. *Dharam Karam* and *Biwi O Biwi*: These films were produced by R.K. Films but did not have the stamp of Raj Kapoor on these films. Critics have hailed these films as regular potboilers.
16. *Prem Rog*: Produced under the banner of R.K. Films, this film is again a message oriented film. The theme of widow marriage, class struggle, caste system is raised by Raj Kapoor in an effective way in this film. Padmini Kolhapure played the role of young widow *Manorama* and was central figure of this film. Melodious music and soulful lyrics helped the film to scale new heights commercially. The film was in the league of older message oriented films of the decade of 1950's.
17. *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*: Mandakini, a new actress made her debut in this film. The film had the theme of polluted Ganga River and exploitation of women. Raj Kapoor has tried to make a similarity between the sacred Ganges and vulnerable hill women in this film. Despite a message oriented film, he could not save himself from the allegation that the body show of Mandakini had somewhat killed the purpose for which the film was made. Raj Kapoor as usual defended the nudity in the film on the premise that this was shown in an aesthetic way. The movie was hailed as all-time blockbuster in the year 1985.

1.3.4 Contribution of Raj Kapoor as a Film-maker

R.K. Films is the production house established by Raj Kapoor in 1948 to make cinema of his own liking. In the words of Raj Kapoor, scripts for some of the films just came his way and some scripts were created at R.K. Films by his trusted team of writers. The Production house, R.K. Films has got a significant relevance in the history of Indian Cinema in the sense that the banner has successfully tried to mix-match the commercial angle of Cinema with the social message. *Awara* started this trend. Aesthetic appeal and showing glamour through the beautiful heroines has been another feature of this banner. In the words of Raj Kapoor, he was never hypocrite in his life and had not feared the stringent rules of censor board. He has tried to defend the accusations of some of the critics about the way heroines were shown in R.K. Films. In his own words, he had always respected women and could not understand the accusation of exploitation of women in his films. He defends the films produced under his banner in the decade of 1980's in comparison with the films made in the decade of 1950's in the terms that the time had changed, the issues had been changed, and the way the films were seen had been changed so he changed himself but idealism was not lost. The banner, R.K. Films has given us some of very memorable films and showmanship and magic of Raj Kapoor is clearly visible in every department of film-making. Raj Kapoor's contribution to Indian Cinema is his own way of presenting social messages wrapped in intense passion²⁴. At R.K. Films, a new rhythm and pattern was given to already exiting popular Hindi Cinema by the trusted team of Raj Kapoor, V.P. Sathe and K.A. Abbas. Abbas was mainly responsible for the earlier proletarian ethos present in *Awara* and *Shri 420*. The association was a strange combination of Marxian ideology as represented by Abbas and religiousness of Raj Kapoor. This association worked greatly because in the words of Abbas, "While Raj Kapoor was no great ideologue following any specific political ideology, he was not allergic to ideas. Indeed, with his basic sympathy for the common men he is more amenable to socially progressive ideas and humanistic ideals, so long as their

²⁴ Nanda, Ritu. 2002. Chapter *Colleagues and Friends in Raj Kapoor speaks*, New Delhi: Penguin Books.

presentation does not interfere with the popularity potential of the film”²⁵. Here lies the main relevance of the banner, R.K. Films.

1.3.5 Filmography of Guru Dutt (Guru Dutt Films Ltd and Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd)

Originally named Vasanth Kumar Shivshankar Padukone, the renowned film-maker got fame as an actor- producer and director in Hindi film industry as Guru Dutt. His career was cut short by untimely death in 1964. In total, he produced eight feature films under his banner out of which he directed four films for his production house. His films had a certain lyrical quality and personal touch. His films *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Pyasa* are considered as classics. His Filmography as a producer is as following:

S No	Film	Banner	Year	Director
1.	<i>Aar Par</i>	Guru Dutt Productions	1954	Guru Dutt
2.	<i>Mr. and Mrs. 55</i>	Guru Dutt Films Ltd.	1955	Guru Dutt
3.	<i>C.I. D</i>	Guru Dutt Films Ltd.	1956	Raj Khosla
4.	<i>Pyasa</i>	Guru Dutt Films Ltd.	1957	Guru Dutt
5.	<i>Kaagaz Ke Phool</i>	Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd.	1959	Guru Dutt
6.	<i>Choudhvin Ka Chand</i>	Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd.	1960	M.Sadiq
7.	<i>Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam</i>	Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd.	1962	Abrar Alvi
8.	<i>Baharein Phir Bhi Aayengi</i>	Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd.	1966	Shahid Lateef

1. *AarPar*: The film was released on May 7, 1954 in Novelty Cinema in Bombay. The film was made in the happier phase of film-making by Guru Dutt. The film was a crime thriller and was inspired by Hollywood thrillers. The film belongs to noir-comedy genre. The film features Guru Dutt, Shakila and Shyama in key roles. The film ranked fifth in gross earnings in the year 1954.

²⁵ Ibid.

2. *Mr. and Mrs. 55*: The film was basically in comedy genre but was socially relevant at that time. The film was ranked fifth overall in the earnings in the year 1955. The film featured Guru Dutt, Madhubala and Lalita Pawar in key roles.
3. *C.I.D.*: The film was made under the banner of Guru Dutt Films but was directed by Raj Khosla. The film was released in 1956 and was a huge success. The film marked the debut of Waheeda Rehman. It ranked as number one in total earning in 1956. The film comes under crime-thriller genre.
4. *Pyasa*: Released in 1957, it is the most celebrated Hindi feature film made by Guru Dutt. Securing his production house financially, after *Mr. and Mrs. 55*, Guru Dutt started making films which he really wanted to make. It has been hailed as a masterpiece and got international recognition. Key roles in this film were played by Guru Dutt, Mala Sinha, Waheeda Rehman and Rehman. The film was ranked at number three in the overall rankings in the top grossing films of 1957.
5. *Kaagaz Ke Phool*: This film is considered as a landmark film produced and directed by Guru Dutt. The film is said to be inspired by the association of Guru Dutt with Gyan Mukerji, the famous director in the decade of forties. Partly autobiographical, this film was released in 1959. The film was a disaster when it was released initially but later on was considered as a world cult classic.
6. *Choudhvin ka Chand*: The film was produced by Guru Dutt but directed by M. Sadiq. It is said that Guru Dutt was not confident of directing a film after the disaster of *Kaagaz Ke Phool* so he entrusted the job to M. Sadiq. He also felt that the film being a Muslim social, Sadiq was the right person to direct it. The film, released in 1960 was a big success commercially. The film was ranked fourth in the list of gross earners of that year.
7. *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam*: Based upon the literary work of Bimal Mitra, the film was released in 1962. The film is directed by Abrar Alvi. This is one film under the banner in which directorial style of Guru Dutt is quite visible so some people still believe that the film was directed by Guru Dutt only. The film tackles the issue of feudalism in

Bengal and the position of women in the decaying society. The film was not successful commercially.

8. *Baharein Phir Bhi Aayengi*: The film was planned with Guru Dutt in the lead but with his untimely death in 1964, the film was reshot again with Dharmendra as the main lead. The film is directed by Shahid Lateef and is the last film of the production house of Guru Dutt. The film was released in 1966 and dealt with the potent question of corruption. The film failed to connect with the cine-goers and was a flop.

1.3.6 Filmography of Bimal Roy (Bimal Roy Productions)

The production house was established in 1953 and iconic *Do Bigha Zamin* was the first film produced under this banner. In total, fifteen films have been produced under this banner out of which, seven films under this banner were directed by Bimal Roy himself. In total, twenty-five films have been directed by Bimal Roy leaving his stamp on the films produced by other banners also. The films produced under the banner Bimal Roy Productions are as following:

S No	Film	Banner	Year	Director
1	<i>Do Bigha Zamin</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1953	Bimal Roy
2.	<i>Naukari</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1954	Bimal Roy
3.	<i>Devdas</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1955	Bimal Roy
4.	<i>Amanat</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1955	Aravind Sen
5.	<i>Parivar</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1956	Asit Sen
6.	<i>Apradhi Kaun</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1957	Asit Sen
7.	<i>Madhumati</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1958	Bimal Roy
8.	<i>Sujata</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1960	Bimal Roy
9.	<i>Usne Kaha Tha</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1960	Moni Bhattacharjee
10.	<i>Parakh</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1960	Bimal Roy
11.	<i>Kabuli Walla</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1961	Hemen Gupta
12.	<i>Prem Patra</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1962	Bimal Roy
13.	<i>Bandini</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1963	Bimal Roy
14.	<i>Benazir</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1964	S.Khalil
15.	<i>Do Dooni Char</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	1968	Asit Sen

1. *Do Bigha Zamin*: This was the first feature film to be produced under the Production house, Bimal Roy Productions. An anecdote is that the production house was born in the mind of Bimal Roy travelling in the local bus after watching *Bicycle Thieves* by Vittorio De Sica²⁶. His partners in his new venture were Asit Sen, Hrishikesh Mukerji and Salil Choudhary. The film is based upon the story by Salil Choudhary. Balraj Sahni played the role of main protagonist, *Shambhu* whose character has been immortalized by the method acting of Balraj Sahni. The film got international recognition and won awards at Cannes film festival and social progress award at Karlovy Vary international festival. The film was successful commercially also and earned Rs. Seventy Lakh after its release.
2. *Naukari*: The film produced under the banner of Bimal Roy has got a very contemporary and relevant issue as its theme, unemployment. Kishore Kumar, the actor, singer and music composer got a memorable role to enact in this film contrary to his funny on-screen image. As social issues have been forte of films of Bimal Roy, *Naukari* is also based upon a relevant social issue but the film is not mentioned in the same league as *Sujata*, *Bandini*, *Madhumati* and *Do Bigha Zameen*. The film was not successful commercially.
3. *Devdas*: Film makers have been enamoured by this Saratchandra classic. This piece of literature has been filmed eight times in different languages. Critics feel that the version of Bimal Roy has been the best on the celluloid. Dilip Kumar, Suchitra Sen and Vyjyanti Mala played the main three roles of *Devdas*, *Paro* and *Chandramukhi*. Bimal Roy had earlier worked as the cameraman in the earliest version of *Devdas* made in 1935. The subtle and method acting by Dilip Kumar immortalized this classic. Lilted music by S.D. Burman and soulful lyrics by Sahir Ludhianavi played a great role in the success of the film. It is believed that Dilip Kumar was so involved in his role that he had to take psychotherapy lessons to come out of this role²⁷. The film grossed Rs. Fifty Lakh after its release and was declared as semi-hit.

²⁶ Vittorio De Sica is an Italian film-maker who is a leading name in neo-realist movement. His films *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and *Shoeshine* (1946) are considered as masterpieces which inspired many film-makers to indulge in meaningful Cinema.

²⁷ Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy. 2009. *Bimal Roy, the man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Viking Penguin Books.

4. *Amanat, Parivar and Apradhi Kaun*: These films are some of the lesser known films of Bimal Roy Productions. Though produced under his banner, the films were directed by Asit Sen and Aravind Sen respectively and the stamp of direction of Bimal Roy was somewhat missing in these films.
5. *Madhumati*: This film released in 1958 is commercially the most successful venture of Bimal Roy Productions. The story of this film was written by Ritwik Ghatak, a stalwart of new wave cinema in Bengal. The story of the film is based upon the revenge theme of o ghost which inspired many such films in the future. It is said that though the film was made to appeal to the masses still the social issues of caste factor, poverty and debt-ridden marginalised society was raised in an undertone by Bimal Roy. The losses of Bimal Roy were duly covered by this film. It was highest grossing film of the year 1958. It also held the record of winning nine film fare awards till *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* broke this record in 1995.
6. *Sujata*: Released in 1959, this film raised the issue of untouchability in an effective manner. *Achhut Kanya* was the first film to raise the issue of untouchability. *Sujata* is based upon a story by the renowned Bengali writer, Subodh Ghosh and was filmed in a typical subtle directorial style of Bimal Roy. According to critic Khalid Mohamed, an attempt to remake *Sujata* has not been there though its theme of untouchability still persists.²⁸Nutan's oneness with the role in this film is memorable²⁹. Today is the trend of making women-centric films in that respect, *Sujata* stands out as one of the earliest women-centric films in the history of Hindi films. The film grossed Rs. Sixty-five lakh in the year of its release and was declared as a semi-hit.
7. *Usne Kaha Tha*: This feature film is based upon a renowned Hindi story by celebrated writer, Chandradhar Guleri. The film is directed by Moni Bhattacharjee who later on directed the popular Hindi film, *Mujhe Jeene do*, a dacoit drama. The film was not successful commercially.
8. *Parakh*: This film released in 1960 is a typical Bimal Roy film in which he raised the social issue of corruption and hypocrisy in society. A satirical look at Indian democracy was presented in this film. The film was based upon the story written by

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

famed music director, Salil Choudhary. It grossed Rs. Fifty Lakh in year of its release and was declared as semi-hit. *Parakh* is more remembered for the song *O Sajna Barkha Bahar Aayi* sung vividly by Lata Mangeshkar. The film had Basanta Choudhary and Sadhna in the main roles.

9. *Kabuliwallah*: Directed by Hemen Gupta, this film is more remembered for the nationalistic fervour and the character of *Kabuliwallah* which was portrayed by Balraj Sahni in a realistic manner. The film was produced under the banner of Bimal Roy but it is not taken as a Bimal Roy film. It was declared as a semi-hit earning Rs. Seventy Lakh in the year of its release.
10. *Prem Patra*: It is one of the lesser known films of Bimal Roy. Released in 1961, the film starred Shashi Kapoor and Sadhna in the main roles.
11. *Bandini*: Released in 1963, this was one of those rare women centric Hindi films to have come out of Indian film industry at that time. It was also the only film to depict the role of rural women in Indian freedom struggle³⁰. Nutan, in a memorable role portraying the role of *Kalyani* has remained understated throughout the film. Bimal Roy has employed symbolism and irony throughout the film to represent the understatement. Soulful lyrics by Shailendra and music by S.D. Burman played an important role in the success of this film. The film won the national award for the best Hindi film in 1963.
12. *Benazir and Do Dooni Char*: Released respectively in 1964 and 1968, these films were produced under the banner Bimal Roy Productions but directed by S.Khalil and Asit Sen respectively.

1.3.7 Relevance of Bimal Roy as a Film-maker

Bimal Roy is hailed as a humanist film-maker who represented the Nehruvian ideology in the true spirit not going overboard in the effort. His style has remained subdued and subtle. The films made under his banner represented a certain lyrical quality where the narrative is told in a linear way. As Bimal Roy belonged to Bengal, his unit at Bimal Roy Productions mainly consisted of Bengalis and brought an ambience of Bengal in the films of Bimal Roy. The Cinema of Bimal Roy under his production banner is in many ways a documentation of Nehruvian India from 1947 to

³⁰ Kaul, Gautam. 1998. *Cinema and the Indian struggle*, India: Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd.

1964. According to Assamese film-maker, Cinema of Bimal Roy co-incited with the Nehruvian ideology at its peak. The political and social atmosphere in India at that time had similar overtones as that of cinema of Bimal Roy. His best films *Do Bigha Zameen*, *Devdas*, *Sujata* and *Bandini* reflect the ideals of a young republic struggling with the harsh reality of poverty, despair, prejudice and injustice³¹. Bimal Roy could turn his ideas into reality on celluloid very effectively as he had got his own production house to bank upon. His banner, in the golden period of Hindi Cinema had become synonymous with the meaningful Cinema being created in an understated way. What is outstanding in his Cinema is his use of metaphors connected with nature³². Soulful lyrics and melodious music has been a hallmark of this production house.

1.4 Review of literature

Reuben (1988) in his work **Raj Kapoor, The Fabulous Showman** has written about the life and works of Raj Kapoor. This work is more or less based upon his noting as a publicist for R.K. Films for about forty years. Gossips and anecdotes dominate this work.

Raj Kapoor's Films (Harmony of Discourses) by Wimal Dissanayake and Malati Sahai .Dissanayake and Sahai work (1988) is useful in understanding the Cinema of Raj Kapoor. There are total nine chapters in this book in which authors have tried to analyze the Cinema of Raj Kapoor through various angles. The major angle that runs through these chapters is that of mass appeal of Raj Kapoor's films. In total, fourteen films of Raj Kapoor have been discussed in which his auteurship is clearly visible

Prasad (1990) work is the book, **Ideology of the Hindi film: A historical reconstruction** which is divided into 2 parts mainly: First part of the book is divided into three chapters whereas second part of the book is divided into five chapters. These chapters deal with different aspects of Hindi Cinema like the profitability factor, various modes of production, the censorship phenomenon in Indian context,

³¹ Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy. 2009. Bimal Roy, the man who spoke in pictures, India: Viking Penguin Books.

³² Ibid.

state intervention in making of Hindi Cinema. Different patterns of narratives to be found in Hindi Cinema are discussed in the second part. This part also discusses the phenomenon of Amitabh Bachchan that took birth as an anti-establishment protagonist in movies like *Deewar*. Realism in Hindi Cinema as such has not been discussed in detail.

National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema (1947-1987) by Sumita S.Chakravorty. Chakravorty (1993) work is mainly based upon the Cinema of 50's and 60's, the era known as golden period of Hindi Cinema. The study focuses on Indian Cinema's characteristic forms and layers. It examines the various ranges of meanings and textures of Hindi Cinema. It tries to present Indian Cinema as the study of ideological construction and national identity. Informed by theoretical developments in the study of Indian Cinema and cultural studies, the book helps in presenting Indian Cinema in the academic light. The book identifies the various genres and patterns of Hindi Cinema within the parameters of set "formula" of Hindi Cinema. The book covers the nationalistic and patriotic aspect also but in a different way. She mainly contends that how "impersonation" in Hindi Cinema has been masqueraded as nationalism. It is being contended that the concept of nationalism had been presented in Hindi Cinema so as to neutralize the concerns over class and caste issues. The question of nationalism has been tackled in Hindi Cinema in the way as it has been done is to suppress the regional aspirations, is contended by the author.

Mehboob... India's DeMille. The first biography by Bunny Reuben: **Reuben (1994)** work dwells upon the life of Mehboob Khan, the making of his films and his ideology. His important films like *Mother India*, *Andaz*, *Aan*, *Najma* and *Aurat* have been discussed and works of his contemporaries have also been discussed but there is ample scope of comparative study of Cinema that how Mehboob Khan's depiction of social issues was different from his contemporary film-makers

Dwyer (1996) in her work **Filming the Gods, Religion and the Indian Cinema** basically examines the role and depiction of religion in Indian Cinema. This book has six chapters. One of the chapters of this book, namely, **The Religious and Secular in Hindi Film** touches upon the issue of nationalism in the pattern of nation building

process. **This chapter deals with the Nehruvian idea of socialism in Hindi films.** In the decade of forties, mythological genre dominated the scenario but after gaining Independence, decade of fifties saw many movies stressing upon the nationalistic values and communal harmony. The book is a welcome addition to the other scholarly works on Indian Cinema. As Dwyer's book rightly points out that Hindi Film, when studied seriously can be helpful in understanding a nation's history. Mythological had been instrumental in creating the feeling of nationalism in pre-Independence period as other icons representing patriotism were absent at that time. After Independence Nehruvian socialism and other icons of nationalism came into the front and mythological lost ground somewhere till those were re-invented by the television industry.

Guru Dutt, A life in Cinema by Nasreen Munni Kabir: The book is an important one written on the life and films of Guru Dutt. The book describes in detail, the making of classics such as *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam*, the films which form our field of study. **Kabir (1996)** work traces the life of Guru Dutt, an unusual gifted man through studies of his films and interviews with his family, friends and colleagues. Representation of social concerns in the Cinema of Dutt has been touched upon in a deep sense.

Making Meaning in Indian Cinema edited by Ravi S. Vasudevan. **Vasudevan (2000) work** is the book comprising essays on various themes concerning Indian Cinema. The book examines the phenomenon of Hindi Cinema from the silent era till latest blockbusters. In the process, theory of nationalism and patriotism also gets discussed though in a limited way. How the melodramatic content dominated the scenario in 1950's, how does a popular film invite the spectator to become part of this wonderful experience of viewing cinema, how do censorship affect cinema and how cinema helps in nation building or the process of nation buildings is shown in the movies are some of the issues which gets discussed in this work. Various essays in this book discuss many theories of film-making which includes fashion, gender and ideology of family and domestic arrangements in 1950's era cinema. Regarding the presence of social realism in Hindi Cinema, the author argues that in the cinema of realism rooted itself through melodrama.

Joshi (2000) in her study says that Cinema impacts the society in a considerable manner. Difference in mainstream cinema and off-beat cinema is basically the difference between good cinema and bad cinema. The offbeat cinema and realistic cinema was created by the persons extremely aware of Indian conditions and were influenced earlier by leftist leanings. These kinds of themes have not only explored in Indian literature but in the cinema in pre-independence era also.

The Cinematic Imagination, Indian Popular Films as Social History by Jyotika Viridi. Viridi (2003) book is a scholarly work on Indian Cinema. This book tries to examine how the Hindi Cinema has been successful in maintaining a national identity throughout its existence despite minor aberrations in the general formula. She examines the post-independence Hindi Cinema through a reading of the narratives and structure of Hindi Cinema through various periods like Nehruvian socialism and anti-establishment genre. In this book, she deconstructs the nation, its content; form and history by putting the theory forward that how Hindi Cinema tends to naturalize the concept of nationalism by appealing emotionally through visual medium. Viridi approaches Hindi Cinema as national-popular matrix in which one can trace the narratives of an emergent nation. Viridi asserts that in the decade of 1950's the hero represented mainly the aspirations of a nation. He was a crusader of the nation and optimistic about his future. He was engaged in the nation building process. Films by Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy were influenced by many factors, IPTA being one of those. *Pyasa, Shri 420 and Sujata* remain the works which envision a utopian and idealistic future where corruption and nepotism will disappear from the higher echelons of society. The book is helpful in taking the Hindi Cinema itself as a social history.

A Guidebook to Hindi Popular Cinema by Tejaswini Ganti. Ganti (2004) work provides a guide to the cultural, social and political significance of Hindi Cinema. She traces the development of Hindi Cinema since 1930's. The book covers a brief history of Hindi Cinema, themes of significant films made in Hindi, production values, distribution and commercial aspect of Hindi Cinema. The book reveals the inner workings of Hindi Film industry from a neutral angle. The book contains the five chapters. The book provides an array of information on Bollywood including the

various genres that Bollywood deals with. She has enlightened us on cultural, political and social significance of Hindi Cinema outlining the history of Hindi Cinema since its inception and the development of Hindi Cinema encompassing all the genres since 1930's. Characterized by dance, music, large spectacles, larger than life image of the main character, Hindi film industry has enthralled the viewers not in India but other countries also. Within this genre of entertainment, social message is also conveyed through the films.

Indian Popular Cinema-a narrative of cultural change by Wimal Dissanayake and K.Gokulsing. Dissanayake and Gokulsing (2004) provide sociocultural background to Hindi Cinema which is quite useful to the students and researchers on Indian Cinema. It covers contexts pertaining to history, culture, religion, caste and gender changes.

Benegal (2005) in his work has stressed upon the issue of nationalism from the point of view of religious minorities and also questioned the so called "nationalistic" cinema in Hindi as values as perceived in such cinema does not percolate down to every nook and corner of India. He opines that regional Cinema is more regional and nationalistic Cinema as such a Cinema is rooted in its own culture. His lecture is focused in a way mainly in which religious minorities have been betrayed in Hindi Cinema.

In Black and White, Hollywood and the Melodrama of Guru Dutt written by Darius Cooper is the book on Guru Dutt which is mainly focused on the use of melodramatic patterns in the films of Guru Dutt. **COOPER (2005)** work aims to lay before the reader the particular melodramatic tradition of the Hindi film that Guru Dutt typified. The book is divided into six chapters and mainly consists of theory of melodrama being used in Hollywood in the 1950's and 1960's and how Dutt's Indian melodramas, functioning around the same time, seem to be assembled in the similar ways. The author has not talked about social issues as such in the cinema of Dutt.

Fingerprinting Popular Culture, the Mythic and the Iconic in Indian Cinema edited by Vinay Lal and Ashis Nandy. Lal and Nandy (2006) have tried to re-examine the relationship between society, politics and culture. The book covers a

range of essays and offers insight to many issues relating popular Hindi Cinema. Though the concept of nationalism, nation building process and social realism in Indian Cinema is not directly covered in these essays still these essays and erudite scholarship of these authors give a peep into academic study of Indian Cinema which can help our cause. The essay “**Structure and form in Indian popular film narrative**” somewhat helps our cause to explore the structure of those movies where nationalism has been used to sell the film but one still gets a feeling that a specific chapter on the topic of nationalism in Indian Cinema must have been included in the scholarly work like that.

Sarkar (2009) has done a path breaking study in the field of Hindi Cinema. Main focus of his book **Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the wake of partition** is on the sense of mourning after the traumatic event of partition of India and a sense of loss being felt by the two major communities affected by this event. Besides that, the book also deals with the concept of nationalism and nation building process and issues like a duel between modernization and primitive means etc. Linkage of partition of the country with the advent of nationalism and its representation in Indian Cinema is stressed upon in this work. Sarkar draws attention to a gradual and complex process of cultural mourning in this book. He has pointed to the mutilated bodies, amnesiac protagonists and unrequited love in the wake of partition in this book. “Nation” as envisaged by Sarkar is in perpetual mourning. The book provides a striking history of Indian Cinema and his “nationalism” forces the reader to think about the forces which delineate the myth of a nation. This is the first book-length study which attempts to study the historicity of cinematic genre of partition and the wounds that “Partition” inflicted upon the masses. The study attests a sense of collective loss over six decades since the independence of India. The author has argued for the point that realism in Hindi cinema was somewhat pushed forward by the coming of leftist cultural movement led by Progressive Writer’s association and Indian People’s theatre association. It promoted realism in the arts as a means of initiating social change. The work as such in detail does not dwell upon the works of Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy.

Bimal Roy: The Man who spoke in pictures edited by **Rinki Roy Bhattacharya (2009)** is an important book written on the life and works of Bimal Roy. Very few books have been written about Bimal Roy so this book becomes an important reference point for exploring Bimal Roy further. **Bhattacharya (2009)** work is not just a eulogy to the great director who has been a pioneer in making socially relevant films but it is also an insight into Roy, the man, the director and his art. His Bengal phase of film-making has been seen through the eyes of Tapan Sinha, Amit Choudhary and Mahashweta Devi whereas his Bombay phase of film-making has been seen through the eyes of Gulzar and Khalid Mohammad. The work is basically a journey of Roy as a film-maker and as such representation of social issues in his films and the comparative style of film-making in context with his contemporaries have not been dwelled upon in detail.

The Kapoors, The First Family of Indian Cinema (2005) is written by **Madhu Jain** and traces the life of the Kapoor Family of Indian Cinema from Prithviraj Kapoor to Ranbir Kapoor. The book helps us in discovering the influences on the Cinema of Raj Kapoor and other anecdotes connected with Raj Kapoor.

50 Indian Classics by **M.K.Raghvendra. Raghvendra (2009)** work discusses the classic Indian Cinema of various genres from silent era till now. It provides detailed critical account of some of the important films till *Rang De Basanti*. Films like *Awara* and *Bandini* by Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy respectively also gets discussed meanwhile. These films show a trend of social realism directly or indirectly. These perceptive essays introduce the reader to the various moods representing Indian Cinema though the author has not dwelt with miniscule details of every film that he has written about.

Gehlawat (2010) work is different from other works on Indian Cinema which had been published lately in respect that in this work various theories associated with Hindi Cinema have been discussed. The relation between the viewer and what he is viewing has been discussed as well as the question how the viewer is going to perceive the celluloid images in his mind has been put forward. Various theories of filmmaking especially the religious frame, the musical frame, the subaltern frame and

the crossover frame of making Hindi films have been discussed in the book. The work helps in understanding the milieu of Hindi Cinema in a broader sense. Indian film studies have become popular only in the last decade when various works based upon the film study have been published to understand Hindi Cinema, critically and this scholarly work helps us in the better understanding of Hindi Cinema in depth.

Beyond the Boundaries of Bollywood (The many forms of Hindi Cinema) (2011) edited by Rachel Dwyer and Jerry Pinto: The book is a general book related to Indian Cinema and various essays including in this book throws light on many issues related to Cinema. In the process, Raj Kapoor and Mehboob Khan also get mention in two of the essays. **Dwyer and Pinto (2011)** in their work bring new vigor and vitality to analyze the Hindi film, critically. Framed around the productive problematic of “Bollywood” and what that excludes and around what is “old” and what is “new” in Hindi film, the volume has an interesting and compelling rationale. The first half of the book is more formal as Rachel Dwyer discusses various issues concerning Hindi films broadly in comparison to lively second half, comprising mainly interviews of the persons connected with the film industry by Jerry Pinto. The aspect of “nationalism”, “nation building process” and social realism gets mentioned somewhere in between these topics. The book has not taken these aspects in the larger sense.

Indian Cinema: the faces behind the masks written by Anil Saari is a general book on Indian Cinema. Anil Saari is a renowned name in film journalism. The book is in form of various articles and interviews with film personalities. One gets a glimpse of Raj Kapoor in one of the articles.

Guru Dutt, A Tragedy in three acts by Arun Khopkar is another important book on Guru Dutt and his Cinema. The book was originally written in Marathi and has been translated by Shanta Gokhale. Various chapters of this book throw light mainly on the style of film-making of Guru Dutt. **Khopkar (2012)** work is based upon the analysis of films of Guru Dutt specifically in the light of treatment of these films. He sheds a new light on Dutt’s genius through a close examination of Dutt’s three best known films- *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam*. He analyses the

intricacies of the medium -acting, lighting, music, editing and rhythm-that Dutt has carefully deployed to create his masterpieces. Depiction of social issues has not been discussed in detail.

Raj Kapoor Speaks by Ritu Nanda is a sort of biography of Raj Kapoor which helps in exploring the life and works of Raj Kapoor from an insider's view. **Nanda (2002)** works throws an interesting light on Raj Kapoor.

Bollywood Nation, India through its Cinema by Vamsee Juluri. Juluri (2013) work charts the evolution of Indian Cinema from its early mythological films to the terrorist dramas of today. Vamsee Juluri has tried to place Cinema as a voice of the nation and why Cinema has been important to Indian psyche. As far as our topic is concerned, no direct help or reference can be found in this book.

Mahatma Gandhi and Cinema by Jayprakash Chowksey. Chowksey has tried to co-relate Mahatma Gandhi with Cinema. The book mainly discusses how certain directors have incorporated the elements of Gandhism in their films.

V.Shantaram, the man who changed Indian Cinema by Madhura Pandit Jasraj. **Jasraj (2015)** book is a biography of V.Shantaram which throes light on the Cinema of V.Shantaram. He is pioneer in depicting social issues in Hindi and Marathi Cinema. The book is helpful in getting insight of these two film industries.

Films and Feminism (Essays in Indian Cinema) edited by Jasbir Jain, Sudha Rai. Jain and Rai work (2002) is useful to understand the concept of Feminism in Hindi Cinema. Chapter three of the book titled 'Female Bodies and the Male Gaze: Laura Mulvey and Hindi Cinema' by Bindu Nair helps in analyzing various types of Gazes in Hindi Cinema. The chapter tries to analyze the spectacle through the eyes of Laura Mulvey whose seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," is important in understanding the placing of women in Cinema in relation to her male counterparts. Chapter five of the book titled, 'Women in Indian Cinema: Fictional Constructs' by Vrinda Mathur provides the viewpoint about the representation of women in Hindi Cinema.

Popular Hindi Cinema (Aesthetic formations of the seen and unseen) by Ronie Parciack. Parciack work (2016) is an important one to study various facets of Indian Cinema. Raj Kapoor's *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* has been analyzed in one of the chapters, 'Efficacy on the screen'. This chapter of the book is useful in understanding the character of Rupa in the film.

Salaam Bollywood (Representations and Interpretations) edited by Vikrant Kishore, Amit Sarwal and Parichay Patra. Second chapter of this book is useful in our study. The chapter 'The left encounter' by Binayaka Bhattacharya helps in the construction of leftist ideas and idea of nationalism in Hindi Cinema in the decade of thirties. Various social issues came to be depicted in Hindi Cinema during this decade only. Role of IPTA has been discussed in bringing the social issues in Hindi Cinema.

Online Articles Consulted

Various online articles have also been explored by the researcher related mainly to the field of Indian Cinema which are as following.

1. **Portrayal of the concerns of the marginalized in mainstream Hindi Cinema:** A critical study of *Do Bigha Zameen and Chakravayuh*: a research paper written by Shawan Roy, B.H.U Varanasi. The article sheds light on the issue of marginalized elements in Bimal Roy's film, *Do Bigha Zamin*. Role of feudal forces, industrialization and migration issue has been discussed and compared with another film, *Chakravayuh* of Prakash Jha.
2. **Fire and Rain, The Tramp and the trickster:** Romance and the family in the early films of Raj Kapoor, online article written by Rachel Dwyer.
3. **The eternal Tramp: Chaplin's imitation and Resonance** in Raj Kapoor's Cinema by Ranjamrittika Bhowmik.
4. **Frames in Harmony-A critical analysis of song sequences** in the films of Guru Dutt by Anagha Kulkarni
5. **Tarun Bose and the world of Cinema** by Shilpi Bose. The article discusses the life of Tarun Bose as an actor and his relation with Bimal Roy
6. **The outsiders: Women as outcastes in Bimal Roy's Films** by Maitreyee Mishra and Manisa Mishra. The article sheds light on portrayal of women in Bimal Roy's films especially the characters of Sujata and Bandini

Thesis consulted

Popular Hindi Cinema and Nation Building: A period study from its beginnings to 1970's (Dissertation submitted in Jawaharlal Nehru University for M.Phil degree) by Samarpita Ghosh. The study is helpful as it discusses various theories of Indian Cinema, films as a medium of cultural expression and political identity gets discussed in one of the chapters. The framework within which Hindi films are made has been discussed in detail.

Portrayal of women in Mainstream Hindi Cinema: A Sociological study (Dissertation submitted in Jawaharlal Nehru University for M.Phil degree) by Shramana Mazumdar. The dissertation looks at the women issues in Hindi Cinema. It looks at how women have been represented in Hindi Cinema. It talks about the objectification of women in the Cinema. The work is useful in the construction of various patterns of representation of women in Hindi Cinema. The work has got no direct reference to the production houses selected for this study.

Portrayal of Rural Culture in Hindi Cinema (1950-2010) (Thesis submitted in Jawaharlal Nehru University for Ph.D. degree) by Shivam. The work while discussing the rural culture becomes important for our study as the problem of Poverty, Peasantry and rural-migration gets discussed. These issues pertain to our topic of study. *Do Bigha Zameen and Parakh* by Bimal Roy are two of the films discussed in this thesis. As Bimal Roy is part of our study, a look into the style of Bimal Roy helps our study.

1.5 Objectives

1. To analyze the depiction of social issues (women centric issues, issue of education, tradition and modernity issue, the crisis of conscience, class division and the issue of poverty and peasantry) in the Cinema made under Mehboob Productions.
2. To study the representation of social issues (Poverty, Class conflict, Problem of Marginalized elements of society, decay in the values of society, child labor, hypocrisy in society, problem of migration crisis of conscience, and women-centric issues) in the Cinema made under the banner, R.K. Films.

3. To analyze the depiction of social issues (class conflict, crisis of conscience, hypocrisy in society, women-centric issues and feudal decay) in the Cinema made under the banner, Guru Dutt Films Pvt. Ltd.
4. To highlight the social issues (Peasant related, poverty, rural-urban migration, issue of caste system, corruption, and decay in values of society and women-centric issues) in the Cinema made under the banner, Bimal Roy Productions.

1.6 Research methodology

Many films have been made in Hindi Film industry based upon representation of social issues in Hindi Cinema. Proposed work of research is basically an exploratory one exploring the social issues in the selected films of the Select Production Houses. For this work, the researcher has relied upon first hand viewing of selected films of Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan and Raj Kapoor. Apart from it, the researcher has got recorded interviews of some persons (critics, journalists, Film scholars and persons associated in any capacity with the films of Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan and Raj Kapoor). The format of the interviews is unstructured one. The films and interviews form the primary source.

The majority of Sources are the secondary sources in form of Books and online articles. Data (Newspaper reports, unpublished matter, reviews published, and magazines of that era like Cinemaya, Rangbhumi, FilmIndia, Filmfare, Complete Cinema, Rajatpat Masik, etc. and Reports of various committees on Cinema) available in National Film Archives of India and Archives of various Studios have been consulted for the relevant information regarding our study.

Interview Format: Unstructured Interviews with the prominent persons associated with these production houses or Critics and film journalists have been done. The researcher has taken interviews of nine persons in this context.

1.7 Films chosen to be analyzed

These films have been quite a few in numbers in comparison to typically commercial formulaic films made in Hindi film industry. The movies depicting social issues try to bring forth certain issues which had been ailing Indian society in the decade of sixties mainly. Purposive sampling has been done so as to take those movies only

which belong to the above-written select production houses and depict any kind of social issue. A total of twenty three films have been taken for our study.

S. No.	Release Year	Title of The Movie	Production House	Director	Social Issue Taken
1.	1943	<i>Najma</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Women education in Muslim society
2.	1946	<i>Anmol Ghadi</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Class Division and Poverty
3.	1947	<i>Elan</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Religious Bigotry, Education in Muslim Society
4.	1949	<i>Andaz</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Tradition and Modernity, Feminism
5.	1954	<i>Amar</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Crisis of Conscience, Guilt and Vulnerability of Rural Folks
6.	1957	<i>Mother India</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Poverty, Peasantry Issue, Chastity of Women
7.	1951	<i>Awara</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Poverty, Hypocrisy
8.	1953	<i>Boot Polish</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Poverty, Child Labor
9.	1955	<i>Shri 420</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Corruption, Hypocrisy, Rural-Urban Migration

10.	1956	<i>Jagte Raho</i>	R.K. Films	Shombhu Mitra	Hypocrisy in Society
11.	1960	<i>Jis Desh mein Ganga Behti hai</i>	R.K. Films	Radhu Karmakar	Rehabilitation of Marginalized elements of Society
12..	1978	<i>Satyam Shivam Sundaram</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Crisis of Conscience, Women Issues
13.	1982	<i>Prem Rog</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Feudal Society Issue and Plight of Widows
14.	1985	<i>Ram Teri Ganga Maili</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Corruption, Hypocrisy in Society, Exploitation of Women
15.	1955	<i>Mr. and Mrs. 55</i>	Guru Dutt Films Private Limited	Guru Dutt	Modernity of Women
16.	1957	<i>Pyasa</i>	Guru Dutt Films Private Limited	Guru Dutt	Class Conflict, Societal Decay, Crisis of Conscience
17.	1959	<i>Kaagaz Ke Phool</i>	Guru Dutt Films Private Limited	Guru Dutt	Societal Decay
18.	1962	<i>Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam</i>	Guru Dutt Films Private	Abrar Alvi	Feudal Decay and Women Oriented

			Limited		Issues
19.	1953	<i>Do Bigha Zamin</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Poverty, Peasantry, Urban related Issues
20.	1958	<i>Madhumati</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Class Division, Exploitation of Poor
21.	1959	<i>Sujata</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Caste related issues
22.	1960	<i>Parakh</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Corruption and Moral Decay in Society
23.	1963	<i>Bandini</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Women related Issues

1.8 Organisation of the study

The study has got seven chapters in all.

Chapter One: Introduction

This is the chapter in which an introduction to Hindi Film Industry is given. Stress is made out to give the introduction of major production houses of Hindi Film Industry. Production Houses being selected for the study belong to Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Mehboob Khan and Guru Dutt so their filmography is discussed in brief in this chapter. The chapter also discusses the research methodology, hypothesis, objectives of the study, review of literature and contribution of these stalwarts to Hindi Cinema.

Chapter Two: Cinema, History and Indian Society

The chapter explores the relation between Cinema, History and Indian Society. The researcher has tried to see Indian Cinema in the context of Indian National Movement. A brief study of Indian society has been taken in order to connect it with Cinema.

Chapter Three: Depiction of social issues in the films made under the banner ‘Mehboob Productions’

Mehboob Khan has been on the forefront of making films on social issues along with V. Shantaram. Mehboob’s films have got a Pan-Indian appeal. Six films of Mehboob Khan have been taken for the purpose of our study. These films are *Najma (1943)*, *Anmol Ghadi (1946)*, *Elaan (1947)*, *Andaz (1949)*, *Amar (1954)* and *Mother India (1957)*. While studying and analysing these films, the concept of time and space has been taken care of as a particular period of time and space drives a particular kind of Cinema (Spectacle wise) though the theme remains universal more or less.

Chapter Four: Representation of social issues in the Cinema made under the banner ‘R.K.Films’

Chapter three deals with the study of selected films made under the banner, R.K. Films. In total, eight films *Awara (1951)*, *Boot Polish (1953)*, *Shri 420 (1955)*, *Jaagte Raho (1956)*, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai (1960)*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978)*, *Prem Rog (1982)* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili (1985)* have been chosen to study various social issues

Chapter Five: Social issues in the films made under the banner, ‘Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd’

Fourth chapter focuses on the films of Guru Dutt to study the social issues where four films have been taken to understand the style and presentation of various social issues in these films. The films thus chosen are *Mr. and Mrs.55 (1955)*, *Pyaasa (1957)*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959)* and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam (1962)*.

Chapter Six: Highlighting the social issues in the movies made under the banner, ‘Bimal Roy Productions’

This chapter deals with the films of Bimal Roy to understand the social message and issues as taken in the films of Bimal Roy. The films chosen for this purpose are *Do Bigha Zameen (1953)*, *Madhumati (1957)*, *Sujata (1959)*, *Parakh (1960)* and *Bandini (1963)*.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In this chapter, an effort has been made to compare the style and presentation of the four film-makers. Some suggestions have also been made so as to take the study of Cinema further

CHAPTER-II

CINEMA, HISTORY AND INDIAN SOCIETY

2.1 Relation between Cinema and History

Cinema has been enriching the lives of millions of people since the beginning of the 20th century. Though, Cinema had been a potent tool of edutainment since ages, this domain was ignored by historians for a long time. Cinema as a medium of social history, political history and economic history has been gaining importance lately in various institutions. This study is an attempt to view Cinema as a social history by studying the depiction of social issues in Hindi Cinema. The social importance of culture and identity in the modern world has opened new avenues for study of India Cinema. Cinema is an integral part of general cultural pattern of any country and various social-economic, cultural and political forces shape and condition the Cinematic language of any specific area. When , the question comes of the sources of History then the archival and written sources of History provides only ‘official side’ of the history writing and doesn’t provide the details about the life of common people whether economic life or social life. The latter kind of history writing gets reflected through the visual medium very effectively and represents various movements which had taken shape in a specific time period in a specific area. Lately many changes qualitatively have been witnessed in the domain of history writing. New dimensions have been added to the traditional method of history and history writing though the new initiatives depends on various factors. Using popular culture as a tool of history writing and seeing history through a visual medium is a new field in India. Western countries have realized the importance of this medium as a potent tool for depicting history as well as a medium of social change long ago. Inspired by such a situation, Indian historians too have tried to find and unearth new ways to know about the social history of a specific period. The study of popular culture which includes movies, television industry, music, video games, sports, politics, fashion technology etc. as a tool of history writing is gaining popularity. In the realm of popular culture, Cinema is the most important one as it combines various art forms very effectively to entertain as well as inspire masses. The history of holocaust and atrocities seen during the Nazi

era seen through film recordings of that era is an important source of documenting history of that period¹. This is just one example of preserving history, many such examples in the world history can be taken highlighting the importance of Cinema in documenting history of a nation or a specific period. In India, Cinema has always been instrumental in making a nation's mood. Various facets of Indian political life and social life have been represented time and again in the commercial cinema format of Hindi film industry. Though the name 'commercial' is a bit misnomer as every movie strives to earn money. For the convenience, typical formula Cinema of Hindi film industry is taken to be as commercial cinema. The Indian society has got a penchant for patriarchal, upper class and caste Hindu male and this is evident in a majority of films. By and large, Hindi cinema in post-colonial period represents a bourgeois colonialism with its caste, provincial and religious prejudice. The worth of Cinema as a tool of nation building was recognised much earlier by many filmmakers and used this medium as a potent tool for this purpose. The homogenising tendencies of cinema and TV were very well detected as early as 1950 by Panna Shah when an argument came forward that one of the important social effects of cinema is that it makes for similarity of outlook and attitude among people of different professions, earnings, classes and nations.² It has been widely accepted now that various forms of art media and literature play an important role in constructing history then in such a scenario, Cinema can also be an important tool in this construction. It is an important raw material for history-writing as various facets of social, political, economic life of a nation gets documented on celluloid in this process. The impact of Cinema in influencing people is widely known as the medium has got the capability to influence food habits, beliefs, fashions and merchandising habits of people to a large extent.³ In the process of developmental journey of various art forms, Cinema holds a unique place as it has got a capability to bind a large number of people and a diverse audience while expressing minute details. Now, this can be explained by taking the

¹Deshpande, Anirudh. 2009. *Class, Power and Consciousness in Indian Cinema and Television*, Delhi. Primus Books, p. 104.

²Shah, Panna. 1950. *The Indian Film*, Bombay. Motion Picture Society of India, p.4.

³An advertisement within the films is quite popular. Celebrities endorsing various brand products are also very popular. Such type of endorsement increases the sale of a commodity.

example that the classic works of literature are not read by the masses, in general but the films based upon that work can be seen by the masses, in general. Examples of *Tamas* and *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* can be taken in this context.⁴ M.S.Sathyu's *Garam Hawa* and Dr. ChandraPrakash Dwivedi's *Pinjar* are based upon Ismat Chughtai's short story and Amrita Pritam's novel respectively but it is the Cinema which is more remembered than the written works. Another important example in this context is that of novel *Devdas* written by Saratchandra Chatterji which has been filmed again and again and different versions of this movie has almost been seen by all the Indians. The film created a deep impact when it was first made as a film in 1936 and became a motive force for the films in one form or another form. Bimal Roy adapted *Devdas* in 1955. Many other socially relevant films made by Bimal Roy were based on literary works like *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Sujata*, *Bandini*, *Biraj Bahu*, and *Parineeta* etc. The life of Bhagat Singh as a martyr has been documented in various books but when the life of Bhagat Singh was picturized on silver screen it created more influence than the books. The life of Bhagat Singh has been immortalized in the films like *Shaheed* (1965), *Shaheed-E-Azam* (2002), and *The legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002). Similarly, the influence of *Lage Raho MunnaBhai* has been much more on the Indian masses than the writings of Mahatma Gandhi. *Lage Raho MunnaBhai* gave the Gandhian ideology, a practical shape. The film gave a new word, Gandhigiri and helped in the revival of Gandhian ideology. Anything which influences masses becomes an acting force of history and a historian has got full right to use that force as an effective means of writing history. Gaston Ruberg, a noted film scholar, on relation between history and cinema commented that like history, cinema also takes the past events as its subject and the work of film-makers is akin to the work of a historian.⁵ R.G.Collingwood sees the seeds of history in the Mesopotamian literature namely the myth⁶. The writings of Greek legendary author consisted of mythical elements and legends. The presence of such mythic elements can also be seen in the writings of Thucydides also. He is dubbed as father of scientific history. The writings

⁴Tamas, a novel was made into a tele-film by Govind Nihalani and *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* was based on a story by Munshi Premchand.

⁵Roberge, Gaston. 1984. *Another Cinema for another Society*, Calcutta. Seagull Books, p. 131-133.

⁶Collingwood, R.G. 1974. *The idea of History*, New York. OUP, P.14-16.

of Herodotus are also frequented by the mythical and legendary elements.⁷ Rajtarangini by Kalhana is considered to be the first history book written in Sanskrit language. The book is the first one to document the history of Kashmir but this book has also got more elements of literature than pure history. Commenting on Rajtarangini, A.L.Basham states that all the parts of this book cannot be classified as history. Basham writes that Kalhana never regarded himself as a chronicler of past events. His work is more like poetry. Thus Basham tries to point out that there is a very less difference between an author and a historian.⁸ Basham further writes that from the tenor of the whole work, it appears that for Kalhana teaching moral lessons were more important than conceptualising the whole truth. A historian cannot exist in isolation. He is also a product of its times and a representative of society to which he belongs. Consciously or unconsciously, a historian shapes the society to which he belongs. Different conditions and events happening in a society play an important role in shaping the mindset of a historian. Though the approach of an historian should always be objective but subjectivity do enters the mindset of an historian. The statement of Ranke that the task of a historian is to show how it really was gave the domain of history, a status that of science but it seldom happens.

2.2 Historians and Cinema

The Birth of a Nation made by D.W.Griffith prepared a common ground for the assumption that the film depicts the history of an era simply because it is a product of its times and carries the cultural burden of presenting the realistic mage of that society.⁹ In the context of relation between historians and Cinema, the comment of Woodrow Wilson, then president of U.S.A becomes important that Griffith had written history with lightening. This statement became the watchword for those persons who were well versed in blending film with history. Ferro treats film as both as a source as well as an agent of history. When film acts as an agent then it promotes

⁷Collingwood, R.G. 1974. *The idea of History*, New York. OUP, P.18.

⁸Basham, A.L. 1967. *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Delhi. OUP.

⁹Dissertation of Pandey, Shekhar A. 1991. *Historical representations in the Cinematic apparatus and the Narratives of popular Memory*, University of Illinois, p. 8.

and depicts particular values, principles and cultures in a given frame of time and society. Afterwards, it is the task of a historian to treat a film as a source and dig out the facts beneath the discourses of the films.¹⁰ Pierre Sorlin, renowned academician and author of books based upon European societies and media gives a very important role to a historian of extracting the information from audio-visual works. In his words, if historians neglect the audio-visual material, it shall be their fault. The audio-visual material shall exist in spite of its neglect. Historians must take an interest in audio-visual work if they are not to become schizophrenics, rejected by society as the representative of an outmoded erudition.¹¹ Movements and impersonal processes are the themes of a good deal of written history all over the world but as a film has the capability to draw attention of individuals, we must realize that it is quite possible to make films that show the group as protagonists. Soviet Cinema has shown examples of such kind of Cinema. *Battleship Potemkin* made by Sergei Eisenstein provides a meaningful model to depict collective historical moments. *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible* are other notable examples of historical films made by Eisenstein to depict historical moments. Noted French historian Mark Ferro who has also worked on the issue of representation of history in Cinema has noted down that the Cinema is an image object whose meanings are not exclusively Cinematographic in nature. According to him, “Film is precious not only because of what it unveils but also because of the socio-historical proposition it validates. Thus, the scrutiny will not essentially concern the totality of a work. They may be based upon excerpts; they may look for series or create ensembles. Nor will they be restricted to the film itself. They will blend the film into the world that envelopes it and with which it essentially interacts. Under this situation, it is insufficient to undertake the scrutiny of films or pieces of film, or shots, or themes while considering the knowledge and approach of the various human sciences. It is essential to exercise these techniques to each filmic element (images, sound images, images which resist sound) and to the interrelations among the constituents of these elements. It is necessary to scrutinize the film’s narrative as well its sets and language and the relation between a film and what is

¹⁰Ferro, Marc. 1983. “*Film as an agent, product and source of History*” in *Journal of Contemporary History*, p.358.

¹¹Sorlin, Pierre. 1980. *Film in History: Restaging the Past*, Barnes and Noble Imports, p. 12-30.

extra filmic. In this manner, we can hope to understand not only the work but also the reality it represents.¹²In the effort to study film, the historians do not have any difficulty with accuracy and adequacy of their methods or their deductions about the historical meaning of history. But sometimes a desire and tendency to maintain the identity of the discipline overshadows the effectiveness of focusing on the question of historical meaning alone. Marxist historians are the historians who are considered to be having a scientific outlook towards history despite that they haven't seen the role of Cinema in depicting history from a serious angle. But one thing is common both to Marxism and Cinema and that common thread is masses. There is a talk of oral history in the world and importance of oral history as a source of history is being talked about but audio-visual history is not being talked about much. If viewed from a close angle, films are just like any other historical documents. The films have to be analysed properly to deduct inferences. It is true that the events of past which become the subject matter for a historian are an objective reality but in determining the implements for selection of facts and their analysis, subjectivity of the historian is a deciding factor. The domain of history has got two components linked to each other. These components are subjectivity and objectivity. The objective history is also not objective completely. The commitment of a historian and the society's impact on him decides the direction of that historian. In ordinary sense, we can say that mentality, nature, thinking, interests and habits etc of historian play an important role in the subject selection, method of research and way of history writing. Neutral observation becomes difficult for a historian under such circumstances.

2.3 Cinema as a historical source

Cinema arrived on the world scene, more or less in the same time in almost all the major countries and the development of Cinema took place according to prevailing conditions, political or social in these countries. The political rulers of various countries, realising the power and impact of Cinema started controlling this media through censor. Films which could have been a good source of writing history have not been used much as a source of history. The very fact that the films have been used very little as a source of history is a clear indicator of step-motherly attitude towards

¹²Ferro, Marc. 1988. *Cinema in History*, Wayne State University Press, P. 29-30.

this medium as a source of history. Use of audio-visual medium as a source of history is very important for history writing skill in any country but a very little use of this medium to write history is not a good sign of historiography. There is a definitive social role of art which has to be understood properly and after understanding this, the social role has to be linked to the history as a branch of history named as social history. By expressing oneself through the medium of art, an artist not only gives vent to his feelings and emotions but also provides a shape to them thus helping in achieving the aspirations and objectives of a man. The interaction between social reality and artistic creations are more appropriate to the stream of Cinema as it is the most developed form of art combining various elements of art like dance, cinematography, music, songs, art direction, sound etc. This unique feature of Cinema helps this form of art to influence the people en masse whose interests are completely diversified. Thus having power to influence people extensively, Cinema becomes an acting force of history. It is very clear that Cinema, in spite of being labelled as live image of its time-space is comparatively, of more understanding character than history. The creators of Cinema create the images in their mind which are works of acting-reacting forces of society and then these images are projected on the screen. The cinematic images thus created by the film-makers have got a character qualitatively quite different from the character of that of history but in spite of this, Cinema is an integral part of and source of history. A historian despite his frailties and subjective nature looks for the facts to write history. He cannot be biased in the selection of facts to write history though the interpretation of the facts depend upon his own perception similarly a film-maker cannot divorce his creation from social reality or his creation shall turn into a fairy tale and a fantasy tale only. Social relevance is present in the creation of a film-maker but the creation of his image and work also depends upon his imagination. So overall, a film-maker is responsible for the creation of a fantasy world having a social relevance. The primary objective of a film-maker remains entertaining the masses through his imagination but he cannot run away from social responsibility. There was an era in Indian film industry in the initial stage of film-making process which was dominated by the stunt films like *Hunterwali*, *Diamond Queen*, *Miss Frontier Mail* etc. and Fearless Nadia ruled the screen in this genre of films made mainly by Wadia Brothers. Despite being stunt as

the core element of these films, such kind of Cinema had an undercurrent of victory of good over evil, demand for justice, freedom of speech, the question of oppression etc. In this manner, we find that literature/Cinema is not different from history because of the limitation of objectivity but because their world of creation is different. The projection of reality of a particular period shall be different in Cinema and history. If some material is required to write on events of partition of India then one can look for these events in Prof. Mushirul Hasan's book (India's Partition: Process strategy and Mobilisation, Delhi, 1994) as well as a few movies depicting partition events such as Govind Nihalani's *Tamas* (1987) and *Garam Hawa* (1973) made by M.S.Sathyu. But the work of Prof. Hasan and these film-makers could supplement each other only despite being based upon same events. The difference in medium is responsible for this. Cinema has always played an important role in the development of society especially in the 20th century. If we as historians ignore the role of Cinema as an acting force of history, it shall be a big mistake in historiography. Various streams of art are inter-related and a keen observation of these streams can help in analysing the historical events. Cinema does not have to be overlooked for writing history. History can only be studied in totality. We do not ignore the cultural specimens and sources of a specific area and time-period. Can history be studied and past events be analysed without taking Cinema and other forms into consideration? These questions deserve attention of research scholars and historians who should be analysing the applicability of this emerging source in history-writing.

Cinema is a powerful medium of communication which entertains as well as is a mirror of society, a cultural agent of change and source of history. Film-makers like Sergei Eisenstein, Desica, Rossellini and Godard created their Cinema in such a way that their Cinema ultimately became a source of documenting history as well a cultural agent of change apart from fulfilling the role of entertainment. Films like *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Alexander Nevsky* (1939), *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948), and *The Little Soldier* (1960) are fine examples of such a scenario. The films of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, G.Arvindam, Guru Dutt, V.Shantaram, Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, and Raj Kapoor etc. serve as important documents of the times in which these film-makers existed. These film-makers have

created a Cinema which is socially relevant and raises the pertinent questions prevalent in the society. “The message of the film sometimes is not contained in the dialogues but symbols also play an important part in the communication of an idea. Most often, these symbols play an important role in creating appropriate emotional response or climate among the audience”¹³. But the problem lies in the fact that how effectively a researcher is able to immerse himself in the period historically and culturally. This is very essential for the researcher as he is not trying to assess the film aesthetically but attempting to understand how it reflects its milieu and produces evidence towards the solution to the problem. A scientific analysis is necessary to deduct something out of a film. The film-maker is always subjective as Cinema is his perception only but as a historian keeping the subjectivity on sidelines, the objectivity has to dominate the work of a historian despite that sometimes subjectivity of a historian shall come forward. As the film which a historian is assessing is not made in the time period when that historian is working on that, the reviews and articles about that film shall serve the purpose of the researcher in analysing the film. Now one has to keep in mind that a film critic is not an ordinary member of an audience but a professional viewer of films with strong likes and dislikes. An argument can also be given that a number of films were made by a particular section of society, keeping in mind a very limited target audience, thus not reflecting the true social reality of that time but it should be remembered that these films were produced as well as consumed by the same society in the historical context identical that of other films.

2.4 Cinema and various phases of Indian National Movement

Cinema had a distinct relation with the Indian National Movement which is quite visible in the growth of National Movement as well as growth of Indian Cinema. Cinema evolved along with the evolution of the national movement in India. Various Socio-Religious movements had intermingled with the national movement as the time progressed and all the patterns of the national movement got reflected in Cinema. Prior to the proper production of films in India, various political events had caught the imagination of many stalwarts like S. Bhatwadekar, Hira Lal Sen and H.Sakharam who were instrumental in making short films on various political events like Partition

¹³ Short, K.R.M. ed. 1981. *Feature Film as History*, London. CroomHelm Ltd., P. 28.

of Bengal in 1905 and Gandhi Ji leading a huge procession along with leaders like Maulana Shaukat Ali. The annual sessions of Indian National Congress had begun to be recorded by private film companies. Thus started the initial connection of celluloid with the national movement. Swadeshi movement started initially in the wake of Partition of Bengal also caught the fancy of the Cinema people. The starting Swadeshi attempt in the film-making in India was the making of *Pundalik* in 1911. Even Dada Saheb Phalke had described his creation *Bhasmasur* as a Swadeshi Programme. Bal Gangadhar was quite impressed by Phalke and offered a partnership with himself and Seth Ratan Tata so as to make totally indigenous films.¹⁴

The Mythological genre dominated the scene of Indian film-making in the initial phase. The mythical notion of our cosmology that has enchanted us shaped the vision of the film-makers and provided the staple of early show business to be captured on celluloid. The starting of mythological genre was believed to happen by design as the early film-makers considered the genre as the only one which had a capacity to bind the people of India belonging to different faiths and cultures. The mythological genre also installed a sense of pride in the film-makers and also sometimes nationalistic elements were shown in the garb of mythological genre. Thus, the genre had an indirect relation with the nationalistic elements. Dharap says that acting as a spiritual guide provided a shared cultural basis of the public mind. During the first decade of film-making in India, the focus was mainly on the films like *Lanka Dahan* (1917), *Shri Krishna Janam* (1919), *Kalia Mardan* (1920) and *Ramayana* (1922). These mythical themes in Indian Cinema gave rise to the cult of Bhakti movement as the decade changed. Nehru had sought his inspiration throughout from the western institutions whereas Gandhi drew inspiration from the legacy of Bhakti movement. *Bhakta Surdas* (1920) and *Kabir Kamal* (1920) were the earliest Bhakti movies. Bhakti movement was initiated in India to remove social and religious evils. Gandhi in the year 1920 at Belgaum session of Indian National Congress exhorted the volunteers to bring a social revolution by removing the social evils of every kind. Gandhi's nationalism was very much interlinked with the social revolution. The veiled symbolism in the mythological genre did provoke Indian censors. Audience

¹⁴Kaul, Gautam. 1996. *Cinema and the India Freedom Struggle*, Orient Longman.

started identifying themselves with the cinematic subjects of myths, devotionals, cultural nationalism and historical.¹⁵ The Bhakti films were a continuation of theme of Congress doing work in social sphere. *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), *Sairandhri* ((1919), *Bhakta Prahlad* (1926), and *Gopal Krishna* (1938) are some of the films holding parallel with various facets of National Movement. The example of *Bhakta Vidur* made by Seth Sampat is perhaps the most important example of showing nationalism in the garb of Mythological. Sampat created a character donning Gandhian attire, clad in Khaddar and cap holding a bamboo stick. The First World War had denuded India of her resources. The Jallianwala Bagh incident had taken place. The national consciousness in India was on rise and this consciousness had found the expression in various artistic forms also. Shanti Niketan became the place for a revivalist genre of painting school. The style is best exemplified by the painting by Nand Lal Bose, which was a representation of 1930 session of Indian National Congress at Haripura. Theatre also showed this trend. The nationalist themes were represented in Tagore's plays like *Raja*, *Muktadhara*, and *Rakta Karbi*. Similarly Cinema also showed the nationalistic fervour along with the social issues. Socials had the beginning in the silent era itself and in the Marathi Cinema also, nationalism had found its voice in form of depiction of the stories from the life of Shiva Ji. After these events, the second decade of the century witnessed the rise of studio systems in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

Launching of Civil Disobedience movement by Gandhi Ji in 1930 gave a direct momentum to the already fervent movement. Now, the mood of nationalist fervour to be shown in Cinema was direct and to oppose this, regional Censor Boards were strengthened. Indian Cinema had entered into a conflict situation with the Censors in this phase. There are many examples in this phase of film-making where the nationalistic flavour of Indian Cinema was curbed by the Censor Boards. *Sone Ki Chidiya* had to delete certain dialogues and the title of *Mahatma* had to be changed to *Dharmatma*. The restrictive policies of the Government of that time pushed the artists to form 'The Indian Film Association' which showed its solidarity with the national cause being pursued by INC. J.B.H. Wadia was famous for making stunt films under

¹⁵Kaul, Gautam. 1996. *Cinema and the Freedom Struggle*, Orient Longman.

his banner Wadia Movietone but he agreed that his stunt films were in fact an exercise to promote the nationalistic Cinema¹⁶. The stunt genre became more popular in the smaller towns than the bigger cities. Congress workers were working hard to put a message through the people residing in Mofussil areas to work for the cause of the national movement. The stunt films also helped this cause. Thus a direct link is visible between the films of that time and the freedom struggle.

The time period from late 1930's to early 1940's was the time-period when the freedom struggle and national movement had evolved considerably. This reality was also reflected in the Cinema of that era. The period witnessed the release of many exciting films pursuing the social cause. Debaki Bose made *Puran Bhakta*, *Sita*, *Nartaki* and *Vidyapati* during this period. Shantaram created masterpieces like *Aadmi* and *Duniya Na Maane*. Nitin Bose was instrumental in making *Dharmatma*, *Chandidas* and *President*. The visual medium had started attacking traditional attitudes and social evils. This was the initial phase of meaningful Cinema which had a direct link with the cause advocated by Mahatma Gandhi of removing social evils from India. Problem of westernization was discussed in *Indira M.A.*, issue of caste and untouchability was the focus of *Achhut Kanya* and Shantaram's *Duniya Na Maane* had women issues at its core. The time-period of 2nd world war also witnessed some of the movies which were an honest attempt in making meaningful Cinema. *Humrahi* by Bimal Roy was one such film which had an everlasting impact on audience. Originally, made in Bengali language, *Udyaer Pathy*, the film was a refreshing change from the mythological being made by the studio, New Theatres, Calcutta. Shantaram came out with *Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani*. Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* and *Dharti Ke Lal* made by K.A.Abbas were also notable examples of meaningful Cinema.

2.4.1 Film-makers and Indian National Movement

The connection of History with Cinema is also seen in this that some of the film-makers had been associated with the nationalist movement in various capacities. Debaki Bose was a nationalist to core who had walked out of formal education in

¹⁶Kaul, Gautama. 1996. *Cinema and the Freedom Struggle*, Orient Longman.

response to Gandhi Ji's call for nationalist agitation and later on transferred his energy to the medium of films which reflected a nationalistic and historical flavour.

Mehboob Khan, an unlettered man from Gujarat was very much impressed by the ideology and efforts of Pandit Nehru in the freedom struggle. He also translated his creative energy in making patriotic and nationalistic Cinema which talked about various social evils.

Himanshu Rai, a student of Shanti Niketan was impressed by Mahatma Gandhi's visit to his institution. He was moved by Gandhi's call to remove social inequalities. Later on Himanshu Rai was the first man of film industry to make a film on the issue of untouchability. K.A.Abbas was also instrumental in waging a war against the inequalities through his writings and Cinema. His childhood memory engendered in him acute hatred for foreign rule. He met Mahatma Gandhi who told him to work against the social evils. Thus Abbas was a transformed man. Ace Cinematographer, V.K.Murthy was one of many thousands courting arrest during Quit India movement. Thus Indian National movement had a direct or indirect link with the film industry and it is observed that various historical events had certainly influenced the film-makers.

The Indian middle class and its historical self-consciousness resulted from British colonialism. It was an effort of colonial rulers to create a class which would be submissive to their colonial interests. Indian middle class, fascinated by the function of bourgeoisie class in European history, started to consider itself the forerunner of modernity in India. Modern enlightenment especially the liberal capitalist interpretations of it became a vehicle of progress and development. The history of Indian Cinema conveys to us that how the bourgeois nation has been historicized and defined differently in varying contexts. The Indian capitalist class has experienced a voyage from anti-colonialism, followed by a stint of nation building and planned development. The bulk of Indian media is capitalist owned and bourgeoisie controlled and represents and rationalizes these transitions in the name of liberalism, progress and development. Though the political emphasis of the ideal bourgeoisie nation –state altered in India from the early 20th century to the late 1990s, the social engineering

chosen by the Indian bourgeoisie has shown a significant consistency. In this scenario, film-makers collaborated with the state in the project of nation building. Many films like *Naya Daur*, *Paigham*, *Mother India*, and *Shri 420* etc. became proponents of Nehruvian model of development and removal of social evils.

2.5 Cinema and Society

The portrayal of any type of culture in Cinema gives an ample evidence to know the Indian society as well as India culture. Different institutions of society like the political institutions are represented by police and courtrooms, the economic aspect of society is represented by the market forces and the cultural aspect of society gets represented by the sense of dressing, costumes, and issues of caste, class and region. Cinema cannot exist apart from society and various elements embedded in society. Sudhir Kakkar and Ashis Nandy clearly opine that the Cinema has got a therapeutic effect on the masses. A healing touch is provided by Cinema to the society. Audience through the fantasies of Cinema find the mythic power in contemporary Cinema which is nothing but an extension of the values and myths which can be traced to the ancient traditions and customs. If we see the Cinema of the 1950's and 1960's which also form a bulk of time-period for this study also, we observe that the portrayal of city life and the village life was a subject often frequented by the film-makers of that period and the life in the urban dwelling was shown quite opposite to the life that existed in the rural area. City was depicted as a place where the employment opportunities are in ample, standard of living is high, materialistic happiness in form of removal of poverty along with the corrupt, immoral and unethical society (*Awara*, *Shri 420*, *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Boot Polish*). The village was shown as the place where the opportunity to earn a decent living is not much, poverty, underdevelopment and misery exist along with morality, ethics and purity of thought. (*Mother India*, *Do Bigha Zamin*). Ashis Nandy supports this kind of representation of rural and urban life who also finds the village to be regarded as the fantasy of a peasant or rural past as a paradise and urban milieu as full of fear and insecurity.¹⁷

Mehboob Khan, the film-maker whose films are part of our study romanticised the rural society in *Mother India* in the initial scenes with farmers being shown as the

¹⁷Peake, Harold. J. "Village Community" in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. 15., p. 254

segment of society happy making merriment and later on problems come in form of poverty and moneylenders and the loan sharks.

Raj Kapoor, who was the most urban film-maker out of the four film-makers, has also shown the village to be a faultless and pure place exemplified by the village women whom he has portrayed as innocent as pure as in the film *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*. In the same film, the scene when shifts towards Calcutta, the society becomes corrupt and immoral.

2.5.1 Social-economic-politico background of India: 1940's to 1960's (A majority of films chose for study belong to this time-period)

1940's was the decade when the freedom movement had reached its peak and in the wake of 2nd world war, international political situation changed. In the light of changed international scenario, India got independence in 1947 and a new dawn ushered in for the Indian people.

India became a sovereign democratic republic in January 1950. Population of India at that time was 350 million. A new constitution was formed and the stated goal of the constitution was to secure justice of every kind for the citizens of India. There was to be a liberty of thought, expression, belief and worship. The constitution was to establish a sense of fraternity amongst all the citizens.

On 26 January 1950 India became a sovereign democratic republic with a population of 350 million. The stated goal of the constitution was: "to secure for all" of India's Citizens "social, economic and political" justice; to establish "liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;" to establish "equality of status and opportunity;" and to promote among all citizens a "fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation."

Survey of Social Research and Social Anthropology (1969-1979) shows that 1950's and 1960's were the decades when rural sociology dominated the domain of sociology as studied by the sociologists. But 1970's onwards, the focus shifted to neo neo-liberal economic life and led to the erosion of the concept of developmental studies which was so common in the decade of 1950's and 1960's. When the rural agrarian

society was not a priority for the sociologists in the later decades then an impact was felt in the Cinema also. Thus where the study of sociology was going, the film-makers with a conscience were also moving on the same path and making a meaningful Cinema concerning with the problems of the common man. If we observe Cinema through the eyes of rural sociology, 1950's was the decade when bulk of village studies was done and acts passed. The abolition of Zamindari act 1951 gave way to agrarian reforms. It was also the time-period when the planning commission focussed on rural development. A lot of funds from the Government were earmarked for the rural development. When the first five year plan was presented by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951, India was facing a huge problem due to influx of refugees and a shortage of food resources. The thrust area of the 1st plan was to increase the expenditure on irrigation and thus increase the productivity. The community development programme was launched on October 2, 1952 through which an effort was made for the development of agriculture, irrigation, small scale industry, employment etc. Hirakud Dam and Bhakra Nangal dams were also constructed as a part of boosting the irrigation sector. Rural society at this time thus was engaged in the constructive development boosted by the inputs from the Government. These things got reflected in the Cinema of that time as exemplified by *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Mother India*, *Parakh* etc.

Peasants in the rural setting have got certain features which make them quite distinct from their counterparts living in the urban areas. One of these distinctive features is the closeness of a peasant with the land. Peasants are very close to their land which is a source of happiness and survival for the peasants. Bertrand observes:

“The close contact of the rural folks with the soil tends to make him view land as the most precious of possession. This is another way in which his close communion with nature tends to set him apart. In this regard, the farmer is quite frequently at a loss to understand the real estate dealer's attitude toward his land as having only an impersonal value. All in all, there are many personality traits of the farmers which can be traced to his close association with nature” (Alvin Bertrand 1958: 27) . The initial scenes in *Do Bigha Zamin* indicate towards this relationship clearly. Certain other features as associated with the rural life such as dependence on natural resources like,

forestry and water are also represented in the Cinema of 1950's and 1960's. The river becomes the fulcrum point in many such movies. The river itself has come out as a character in the films like *Jis Desh mein Ganga Behti Hai* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* thus highlighting the importance of this natural resource. It becomes a source to build dams as shown in *Mother India*.

Low density of population is another feature of rural life. This feature of villages keep them bereft of the facilities that can be supported only by the large population aggregates in the urban area. Thus the rural areas lack good education and medical facilities. There was very less participation of rural people in education and social activities. *Parakh* by Bimal Roy indicates towards such a life clearly where there is only one doctor for the whole village and the audience do not know even his qualification. Only one school teacher has been shown who is often engaged in the social activities other than the teaching.

2.5.2 Social mobility and migration

It is another feature associated with the rural life. This feature existed in the earlier decades as well as in the recent decades. The mobility refers to the movement of people within a given strata or from one social strata to another. The villagers were normally considered to be immobile people when we talk about rural Indian society, in general but in due course of time the rural people started moving towards urban areas in search of employment and other avenues to lead a good life. The land sharks and the trap of loan compelled the people from the villages towards cities. The caste bound occupations were ultimately replaced by the secular occupations. A notion existed earlier on that villagers were quite attached to their land for livelihood and the notion was true to a large extent but the division of land later on in the wake of increase in population and other problems associated with the occupation of agriculture, the process of migration increased. This picture of society has been shown in Indian Cinema to a large extent and exemplified by *Mother India*, *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Awara*, and *Shri 420* etc.

2.5.3 TABLE 1: Number of Urban agglomerations /Towns and Population by Residence in India: 1901-2001 (Provisional)

Census Year	No of Towns	Total Population	Rural Population	Urban Population	Urban Population as percentage of total population
1901	1830	238,396,327	212,544,454	25,851,873	10.8
1911	1815	252,093,390	2266,151,757	25,941,633	10.3
1921	1944	251,321,213	223,235,046	28,086,167	11.2
1931	2066	278,977,238	245,521,249	33,455,989	12.0
1941	2253	318,660,580	274,507,283	44,153,297	13.9
1951	2822	361,088,090	298,644,156	62,443,934	17.3
1961	2334	439,234,771	360,298,168	78,936,603	18.0
1971	2567	548,159,652	439,045,675	109,113,977	19.9
1981	3347	683,329,097	523,866,550	159,462,547	23.3
1991	3769	846,387,888	628,836,076	217,551,812	25.7
2001	4378	1,027,015,247	741,660,293	285,354,954	27.8

Source¹⁸: Census of India

It is clear from the table that an increase in the trend of Urbanization is visible as per census. Such a trend was also shown in the Cinema of 1950's and 1960's. Thus Cinema is reflecting the society of that time. The whole decade of 1941-51 shows a rapid increase in the trend of urbanization which is shown in the films like *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Awara* and *Shri 420*.

Indian urbanization has got certain features and it is marked by the slum like conditions, inhuman environment to live, environmental degradation, pollution of every kind, increase in unskilled labour in small scale industries and a very low wage rate. These features also got reflected in the Cinema of that time.

¹⁸ http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Newsletters/Newsletter_Links/eci_3.htm

2.5.4 Village reform and Village Self-Sufficiency

A prominent feature of Indian society in the decade of 1950's was the issue of village reform and to make villages self-sufficient in every aspect. The concept of village reform and village self-sufficiency had Gandhian ideology and thought in the background. Many films of the era under study showed the issue of village reform. Prominent among these films were *Naya Daur* and *Parakh*. *Parakh* made by Bimal Roy has been taken in this study. It becomes pertinent here to go in some detail about the Gandhian ideology of village reform which had become a prominent feature of Economic-politico background of India during the earlier years of free India.

For Mahatma Gandhi, every village was a self sufficient identity in itself which was capable to fulfill all the needs of the persons living in a village. For Gandhi, the model of village economy was the most viable means of economy as a system of localized production and distribution would never suffer from drastic inflation and recessions. Gandhi had a broader view of rural development and asked people to fully utilize the resources to become self-reliant and thus this model became the precursor of Swadeshi model of economy. In exchange of letters with Nehru, Gandhi had drawn a beautiful picture of his village where there would be no dirt and darkness. People had sufficient means to educate themselves. There would not be any dreaded disease like plague, malaria or smallpox and the basic amenities would be provided to the village folks¹⁹. Along with such an ideology for the villages, Gandhi also had a firm conviction that the idea of bread-labour is must for every individual. A must be able to earn his bread by doing physical labour. Tolstoy had developed the idea of bread-labour firstly and Gandhi, being inspired by this idea made this concept an integral part of his philosophy.

This Gandhian picture of rural life has been shown in many films made in the decades of 1950's and 1960's

¹⁹ Tendulkar, D.G. 1951-1954. *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (8 Volumes), Vithalbhai Jhaveri & D.G. Tendulkar.

2.5.5 Caste System and Untouchability

Indian society cannot be imagined without the Varna system which gave rise to numerous castes and sub-castes in due course of time. The concept of untouchability is an integral part of caste system and caste system itself is a closed group of social stratification. Caste groups in India are unequal and are ranked on the scale of hierarchy based upon the ritual status, from pure to impure and the position or status of a man having a particular caste ultimately determine with whom interaction can take place and with whom interaction is not possible. The caste system exists among Hindu community as well as minorities in India. The caste system has got a notion of purity and impurity and the concept of untouchability is an extension of this notion taking the caste system to next level of hierarchy where some persons just become untouchables for others. The concept of untouchability is very inhumane. The touch of an untouchable was considered to be polluting. The social and religious movements of 19th century also raised questions about the untouchability. Mahatma Gandhi was equally worried about this inhumane practice existing in Indian society. Along with the political struggle, a struggle against this inhumane practice was initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. He tried hard to end this practice. After independence, untouchability was made a legal offence but the practice still goes on. Though in some spheres of everyday life, the practice has been declined but in certain quarters, the practice continues to be high. Untouchability and the caste system which is an integral part of Indian society has been a central point for many film-makers especially in the decade of 1940's to 1960's. *Chandidas* (1934), *Dharmatma* (1935), *Achhut Kanya* (1936), *Sujata* (1959) and *Parakh* (1960) are some of the prominent movies raising the issue of untouchability and caste system in the earlier decades of film-making in India.

2.5.6 Child Marriage

Child marriage as another aspect of Indian society which no doubt has declined with the coming of industrialized phase of economy but this system has been an integral part of Indian society in many regions and states of India. The system is believed to have begun during the medieval ages of India. The political system at that time was turbulent and the rule at that time was absolute monarchy being run by the Delhi

Sultans on the basis of theocracy. Practice of child marriage became common in the period of Delhi Sultans. Caste system also contributed to the growth of child marriage. The caste system based upon heredity and birth was totally against the marriage of two persons belonging to two different castes. In order to prevent such a situation, there was a necessity to create the system of child marriage. Just like the caste system, the system of child marriage is primitive in nature. The child marriage system has also got an economic cause behind it. Parents of a child involved in the child marriage system are most of the times belong to poor households and such a prospect helps the parents in increasing their economic opportunity. Consequences of the child marriage have been bad and the system is a social evil. The issue of child marriage has been represented in various art forms. In Hindi Cinema also, one gets the examples of representation of this issue which has been ailing Indian society. *Ankur* (1974) and *Balika Vadhu* (1976) are two prominent examples of raising this issue.

2.5.7 Rural Poverty and indebtedness

In general, despite the existence of landlords in the villages, the rural society is considered to be poor overall and due to extreme poverty, sometimes, the villagers get trapped in the debt trap. This feature of people living in rural areas has been a part of Indian society. Poverty is basically defined on the basis of a minimum per capita consumption of 2100 calories in rural areas and 2400 calories in urban areas. Economically, poverty is defined as when the per capita monthly expenditure was less than Rs. 49 in rural areas and Rs. 56.64 in urban areas at 1973/74 prices. As per report of planning commission released in 2014, the data corresponds to per capita monthly expenditure in rural areas at Rs. 972 and Rs. 1407 in urban areas. The amount is very less. Even in today's time, the poverty amongst the people living in rural areas especially farmers compel them to take the harsh step of suicides. The situation is alarming in Marathwada area of Maharashtra and Punjab. Poverty gives birth to debt trap and it becomes impossible for the farmers to come out of this debt trap due to marginal profit of small farmers. If we observe the rural society, we cannot escape the fact that the poverty and indebtedness have become part and parcel of a farmer's life. Poverty is an integrated part of Society whether in rural areas or urban areas. As the decade of 1950's and 1960's had seen a number of movies based on life of people

living in the rural area, most of the film-makers engaged in making meaningful Cinema had shown the problem of rural indebtedness and the allied problems in the Cinema. *Mother India*, *Upkar*, *Roti*, and *Do Bigha Zamin* are some of the prominent examples of the Cinema showing rural poverty. *Awara*, *Shri 420* and *Boot Polish* are some of the prominent examples of Cinema in which urban poverty has been depicted.

CHAPTER-III

DEPICTION OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE FILMS MADE UNDER THE BANNER 'MEHBOOB PRODUCTIONS'

3.1 Mehboob Khan- The film-maker and his legacy

Mehboob Khan along with Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, and Guru Dutt forms the quartet of film-makers who had installed a new purpose to Hindi Cinema. Mehboob Khan came to be identified as Cecil B DeMille of Hindi Cinema. The films of Mehboob Khan have literally shaped the history of Indian Cinema through his pioneering effort of bringing Hollywood style to India. Though his *Mother India* remains the most talked about Hindi film, his other films also have been remarkable in the narrative as well as spectacle. The themes that he represented in his films have been related to Indian society in general.

Mehboob Khan appears to be a deeply religious man as his films start with the voiceover, '*Muddai Lakh Bura Chahe to kya hota hai, wahi hota hai joManzur-e-Khuda hota hai*'. On the other hand, the logo of his banner shows a yellow tombstone that contains the alphabet M inside the communist/Soviet emblem of Sickle and Hammer. According to his son Iqbal Khan, Mehboob was a deeply religious man whose belief in the dignity of labor and hard work was immense. This philosophy is also represented in his films deeply.

Mehboob Khan was a son of the soil who had received no formal education at all. He was a rustic man and this sensibility of association with rural traditions motivated him to make films like *Aurat*, *Mother India* and *Roti*.

At the age of twenty-three, Mehboob Khan came to Bombay to search for his destiny in the tinsel world. In his initial days, he struggled a lot and was ready to work upon whatever he could get. His career started as an extra in the films of Ardeshir Irani, the man responsible for making *Alam Ara*. He worked as a junior artist in many films before directing his first film, *Al Hilal* (1935) inspired by Cecil B DeMille's *The sign of the cross*. The film did a good business and thus Mehboob Khan's directorial career started. *Aurat* (1940) established him in the film industry. *Andaz* (1949), *Aan* (1951)

and *Mother India* (1959) consolidated his position as an ace film-maker in Hindi Cinema industry.

He is considered as a feminist film-maker. His most talked films have got strong female characters. *Mother India* has got a very strong female protagonist. The film is a remake of his earlier work, *Aurat* in which Sardar Akhtar had played the role which Nargis did in *Mother India*. *Andaz* also revolves around the character *Neena* played by Nargis in the film. *Amar* which flopped at the box-office also tells the story of a woman who is discarded by the man after having a one-night stand with her. *Najma*, first offering under Mehboob Khan's banner, also emphasizes the importance of education in Muslim society especially Muslim women.

Pirre Rissient¹, while giving his opinion about Mehboob Khan and Raj Kapoor has a belief that both were two of the greatest film-makers of India. He believed in the dictum that both the film-makers were considered as commercial film-makers but there were many moments in all their films which raised them to the level of great films. He further opines in the biography of Mehboob Khan by Bunny Reuben that in the films of both film-makers there was much more art than there was in the entire bulk of films made by Pseudo-intellectual directors. The statement by Rissient clearly looks into the Parallel Cinema movement of India with a huge question mark.

Mehboob Khan had very humble beginnings but he excelled himself as an ace film-maker. Lavish production value is the hallmark of the films made under his banner. Lavish production values did not undermine the thematic content of most of his films which are based basically on the theme of conflict between Bourgeoisie class and plebeian class. He is also the pioneer in taking Hindi films at the global level. *Aan* is the first Hindi film to be commercially released in England and other European countries. He is the film-maker who has put the stories of a fight between oppressors and oppressed on celluloid but in a grand style. Influence of Hollywood is clearly visible in the films of Mehboob Khan.

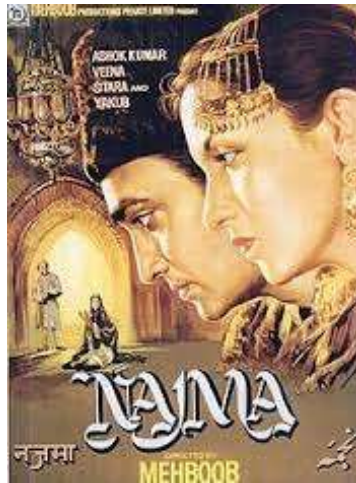
¹Pirre Rissient, born in France and a prominent face in organizing the Cannes film festival was simply known as 'man of cinema' and was instrumental in recognising the talent of Clint Eastwood as an actor.

Mehboob Khan is the film-maker who is responsible for establishing the career of many personalities of Hindi Cinema like Surendra, Dilip Kumar, Raj Kumar, Sunil Dutt, Nargis, and Nadira. Nargis made her debut in Mehboob Khan's *Taqdeer*. Mehboob Khan's legacy is that of a film-maker indulging in lavish style of film-making using huge sets, having a melodious musical score and never wavering from the themes which affected the society. All his achievements become more commendable in the light of fact that he received no formal education and he learned the craft of film-making at the job only.

3.2 Table mentioning the Hindi films made under the banner 'Mehboob Productions' depicting various social issues

SNo	Year	Name of The Film	Production House	Director	Social Issue Taken
1.	1943	<i>NAJMA</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Education in Muslim Society, Feudal structure
2.	1946	<i>ANMOL GHADI</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Class Division, Poverty
3.	1947	<i>ELAN</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Education in Muslim Society, Feudal structure, Religious Bigotry
4.	1949	<i>ANDAZ</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Feminism, Conflict between Modernity and Tradition
5.	1954	<i>AMAR</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	The crisis of Conscience, Emotion of Guilt, Women Issues
6.	1957	<i>MOTHER INDIA</i>	Mehboob Productions	Mehboob Khan	Poverty, Peasantry Issue, Women Issue

3.3 NAJMA (1943) ²



Release Year: 1943

Produced by: Mehboob

Directed by: Mehboob

Starring: Ashok Kumar, Veena, Kumar, Yakub and others

Najma (1943) is the film made under Muslim genre. This is the first film made under Mehboob Productions. The film raises many questions within the realm of the Muslim world especially the call to reform of decadent lifestyles and lack of education among Muslim women.

Social issues taken

1. Education
2. Development in Muslim society

3.3.1 Plot

The film is one of the earliest Muslim socials to be made in Hindi Film industry. Coming in 1943, even before independence of India, the film is rendered as a progressive one seeing the backwardness of Society especially Muslim society at that time. *Najma* rightly sets the tone of future Muslim socials to be made in the industry

²Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Najma_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Najma_(film))

like *Elan* (1947), *Choudhvin ka Chand* (1960), *Mere Mehboob* (1963), *Mere Huzoor* (1968) and *Pakeezah* (1972). These are considered to be classic Muslim socials.

In *Najma*, *Yusuf* (Ashok Kumar), a medical student falls in love with *Najma* (Veena) who is the daughter of his wealthy neighbour, *Nawab Rafatjah* (Majid). *Najma* considers *Yusuf* to be too progressive and forward. But their love blossoms on the occasion of Id celebrations held at *Nawab Rahatjah's* home. But unknown to *Yusuf*, his father has betrothed him to *Raziya*, his cousin brother's daughter and he now wants to uphold his word and honour by marrying *Yusuf* to *Raziya*. He considers this as his utmost duty to marry *Yusuf* within the family only. *Yusuf* opposes this match on the pretext that he did not want to marry *Raziya* as she was uneducated and she would not prove as a compatible life partner for him. Further, he is in love with *Najma*. But both *Nawab Rafatjah* and *Yusuf's* father refuses to buy his point of compatibility of minds and compels him to honour the tradition of marriages within the family only. *Najma* tells *Yusuf* to marry *Raziya* in the name of tradition but *Raziya's* marriage is fixed with *Muqarram* (Kumar) whose character represents the intricacies associated with Nawabs who are not progressive at all. Thus, both *Najma* and *Yusuf* marry the persons whom they do not love. *Raziya* gets to know about *Yusuf's* love for *Najma* and is jealous of her. *Yusuf* meanwhile gets depressed as he is unable to forget *Najma*. He gets depressed over the scenario. Meanwhile, *Muqarram* also comes to know about the old love affair of *Najma* and *Muqarram* and wants to kill her. Before that, *Muqarram* meets a serious accident and only *Yusuf* can save him. *Raziya* does not want *Yusuf* to go and treat *Muqarram* in the fear that *Yusuf* would kill *Muqarram* in order to marry *Najma*. But *Yusuf* ensures her that nothing of this sort was going to happen. Life of *Muqarram* is saved by *Yusuf* and he ensures once again *Raziya* and *Muqarram* that now both the families are settled, he does not want to take *Najma* away and would uphold the value of duty over desire.

3.3.2 The issue of education

Education as a subject of a Hindi film has not been a norm in the history of Indian film history. In the pre-Independence era, to make the issue of education as the core issue of a Hindi film was quite revolutionary especially in Muslim society. Since the medieval ages, the form of education delivered to the Muslim population was

basically religious education given in *Maqtabas and Madrasas*. With the advent of The British in India, education reforms started gradually and Macaulay's despatch was a turning point in the dissemination of education in India. Eventually, a few of the enlightened persons took fancy to this type of education and got attracted towards the western idea of education and progressive ideas. Hindu population embraced the changes in education in a more just manner than the Muslim population. As a result, the educational backwardness crept in the Muslim society in comparison to the other classes and communities. This resulted in social and economic backwardness eventually and Muslim society started lagging behind, stuck to the feudal mentality which they had come to represent in the past. A need was felt to tell the importance of modern education to Muslim society. *Najma* can be seen and studied in this context.

Najma emphasizes the importance of education in Muslim society. The film is basically a clash between the decaying feudal values as represented by Nawab *Muqarram* which accounts for traditional values and progressive educated ideas as represented by *Yusuf* which accounts for the idea of modernity. Neo-feudal values in this film are criticised in favour of education and professional development. The film dreams of bringing in an egalitarian society. The opening scene of the film which is an interaction between the Doctor and Nawab about the orphan children is indicative of the importance of the education.



Fig. 1.1 Doctor and Nawab discussing about education of the orphans: *Still taken from Najma (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Doctor and the Nawab are talking, indicating a care for the downtrodden and destitute classes of the society. The film also represents a clash between the call of the duty towards family and personal desires. Despite advocating the need of education to reform the society, the film fears to tread the unconventional and revolutionary path of going against the wishes of parents in the matter of marriage. The film thus advocates the bringing up of modernity in the wake of education but at the same time, it advocates upholding the value of family honour. Thus, this contrast comes out as a paradox in the film. Paradoxically, even as it makes the education of woman, central to the modernizing agenda, disciplining of the threatening desires become the key to this new reformed social body, according to Ira Bhaskar and Richard Allen.³ And who is representing this paradox in clear terms? It is *Najma* herself who negotiates this paradox. She is an educated woman but is ready to preserve family honour and tells *Yusuf* to marry *Raziya*. Feminism and tradition thus go hand in hand in this film. The director clearly points out that freedom in the name of feminism can't be accepted as it can lead to the decline of social values. It can be said that the concept of representing Traditionalism and modernity simultaneously is worked upon in this film. Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt have also used this concept in their films later on. This film also represents the *Tehzeeb* of Lucknow as the two main families shown in the film belong to a privileged class and are representatives of *Lakhnawi* etiquettes. How this film represents the matter of *Tehzeeb* and etiquettes of a *Nawabi* era has been talked of by Ira Bhaskar and Richard Allen also.

According to them, "*Najma* is equally invested in representing and ennobling the social customs of the community, as well as in presenting an image of elegance, beauty and refined courteous behaviour (*Tehzeeb*), as embodied by the family of *Nawab Rafatjah* and in the scene set up for his aristocratic home."⁴

³ Allen, Richard. & Bhaskar, Ira. 2009. *Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema*, India: Tulika Books, p. 244.

⁴ Ibid

3.3.3 Problems associated with aristocracy

Regarding *Najma*, Bikram Singh writes that *Najma* was a vintage Mehboob which had stood the test of time and the years⁵. To quote Bikram Singh from the same source, “Mehboob brings a fascinating fluidity to the narrative, deploying close-ups, to get the desired results. A towering source of strength for him is female actor Veena in the title role. The film succeeds in evoking the plush, cloistered world of the Muslim aristocracy of a bygone day”. *Najma* was one of the earliest works showing Muslim aristocracy, the issues attached to the aristocracy and the problems associated with Muslim world due to lack of education.

Both the main female characters in the film, *Najma and Raziya* presents a picture in contrast. *Najma* appears as a progressive lady who despite, her desire not being fulfilled, dedicates herself totally towards her marriage to *Nawab Muqarram*. She is presented as a dutiful and an educated woman who wants to consolidate her marriage. Mehboob makes it sure that getting an education does not come in the way of upholding the tradition through the character of *Najma*. Education does not make the female protagonist free to do anything in the society. For the film-maker, education does not mean disobeying the long travelled customs or one's parents. She has been shown as a character that is determined to make *Muqarram* mend his ways and become responsible. *Najma* has been shown as a very responsible and educated character that pays *Muqarram* in his way only. Mehboob has used the allegory of the game of chess to show the intelligence of *Najma* and it works. In a game of chess, *Najma* wins initially playing with *Muqarram* but loses the next game knowingly when *Muqarram* receives a letter about revenue affairs of his estate. *Muqarram* wants his sub-ordinates employees to look into the matter but *Najma* tells him that as in a game of chess every move and each piece has got an importance of its own whether it is the rook, bishop, knight or pawn. One wrong move can put the king in danger and the player is defeated similarly in life, one should not leave urgent matters to the subordinates.

⁵ Reuben, Bunny. 1994. *Mehboob, India's DeMille*, New Delhi: Harper Collins India., p. 87.



Fig. 1.2 Najma and Muqarram playing the game of chess: *Still taken from Najma (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd.)*

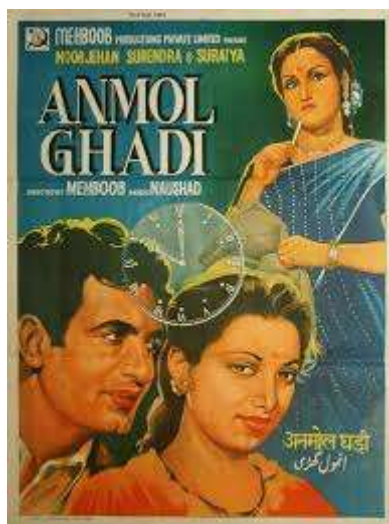


Fig. 1.3 Najma trying to put the point of responsibility through the game of chess :*Still taken from Najma (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd.)*

Muqarram sees her point and decides to answer the letter himself and take the revenue matters in his own hands now onwards. Here, Najma becomes a sort of mentor to her husband which gives a hint of early feminism. In a feudalistic set up as such, it was not possible for *Muqarram* to mend his ways, bending to his wife. It could have been seen as an insult in such a set up so the director resorted to such an example of the game of chess and successfully put forward his point.

Najma is an example of Cinema where tradition mixes up with modernity. Every kind of Cinema breathes within a specific space and time. The context in which narrative is presented has become outdated or is universal in nature has to be remembered. *Najma* was released in 1943. It is a pre-independence Hindi film. The issues which have been raised in this film thus become important in the light of this time frame. Being progressive and modern does not mean at all being ultra-feminist in the ideas where one overlooks the family and home. This is the main message of the film, which Mehboob has tried to give in this film, without going overboard.

3.4 ANMOL GHADI(1946)⁶



Release Year: 1946

Produced by: Mehboob

Directed by: Mehboob

Starring: Surendra, Noorjahan, Suraiya, and others

This film released in 1946, is a love story between *Chander* (Surendra) and *Lata* (Noorjahan). The story becomes a love triangle of sorts if we add the character of *Basanti*(Suraiya) to the story of *Chander* and *Lata* or addition of the character named *Prakash* (Zahur Raja) to the story of *Chander and Lata* also makes it an interesting

⁶Film Poster and film's crew details: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anmol_Ghadi

tale. The film has to be viewed in the context of the era of 1946 when the filming of this kind of love triangle was not common. High production values gave this film a high commercial value. The film became the highest grossing film in 1946.

Social issues taken

1. Poverty
2. Class Conflict

3.4.1 Plot

The film begins with the childhood scenes of *Lata and Chander*. *Lata* is the daughter of a rich man whereas *Chander* is a poor man whose widow mother (Leela Mishra) has taken many pains to run the household and to take care of *Chander*. *Lata's* father (Murad) who is a Government servant gets transferred one day to Bombay. *Lata* gives a pocket watch with a chain to *Chander* as a parting gift. After some years, *Chander* (Surendra) has now grown up to a man who loves to play his Sitar and reading books but he is still a poor man who lives with his mother in a small town, Jehanabad. *Prakash* (Zahoor Raza), his friend comes from Bombay to meet *Chander* and wants him to come to Bombay as the city can offer a big opportunity to *Chander* to earn a dignified life. *Prakash* sets up a musical instrument shop for *Chander* in Bombay. *Chander's* mother understands the practicality of life and warns *Chander* often to forget *Lata* as the class difference between the family of *Chander* and *Lata* was too much a divide for their love to be converted into marriage. *Chander* has not forgotten *Lata* at all and the watch gifted by *Lata* to *Chander* reminds him always of her. *Basanti* (Suraiya) comes to the shop of *Chander* for her Sitar to be repaired. When *Chander* shows her, how to play the Sitar, she is enamoured by *Chander* and starts loving him silently. *Chander* reads a lot of books written by *Renu Devi* (author name of *Lata*). One day he comes across a story similar to the childhood story of *Lata* and himself. He writes to *Renu Devi* in speculation that she might be knowing about *Lata's* whereabouts. *Basanti* and *Lata* read the fan mail of *Renu Devi* and decide to call a soulful fan of *Renu Devi* to meet her at a park. There, in the park, *Basanti* finds *Chander*. *Chander* loses his pocket watch in the park. *Basanti* finds this watch and shows it to *Lata*. *Lata*, after seeing the watch advises *Basanti* to return it to the man to whom this watch belongs to. She instantly recognizes the watch that she had gifted to

Chander years back. *Lata* has also not forgotten *Chander* all these years. *Basanti*, on the advice of *Lata*, gives the watch back to *Chander* who was frantically looking for it. *Basanti* also comes to know at that moment of time that *Chander* is in love with someone else. She reaches the house of *Lata* and discloses it. *Lata* is happy that his lost love would be soon coming back to her. Meanwhile, *Lata*'s marriage has been fixed with *Prakash*. *Basanti* once sees *Lata* with *Chander*. A misunderstanding is created in the mind of *Basanti* that *Lata* while knowing that she was in love with *Chander* has done something wrong. *Lata* tries to remove her misunderstanding. One day *Chander* also comes to know about *Lata* and *Prakash* and decides to leave Bombay for Jehanabad. His mother is very ill and dies after reaching Jehanabad. *Prakash* thinks that his mother had insulted *Chander* on the issue of poverty so he had left the city. On the day of the wedding of *Prakash*, he takes the vow to marry *Lata* only if *Chander* comes to the wedding. *Chander* comes to the wedding of *Prakash* and *Lata* and gives back that precious watch back to *Lata* as the wedding gift and leaves the place for an unknown destination. *Basanti* is shown running after him and joins him.

Anmol Ghadi is a film which is unparalleled in the context that the male protagonist is more attentive to the female lead than his sacrificing mother. His mother has sacrificed a lot to raise her son *Chander* and warns him constantly against his infatuation with *Lata* but *Chander* pays no heed to her advice. *Chander* is a poor man but not ambitious to make his career. He just wants to study to become something in life to be close to *Lata* only. His sacrificing mother is not anywhere in the scene. The situation that the director has created in the film is a complex one. Mother's bonding with *Chander* is quite visible at different moments in the film but *Chander* is indifferent to this bonding. The reason for such a situation has not been explained by the director. *Prakash*, as a rich man shows no hostility towards *Chander* who is a poor man. Poverty is the main social issue which has been raised in this film. In the year 1946, the depiction of poverty and complexities associated with it in Hindi Cinema was a revolutionary step. Mehboob has tried to pull the viewers towards such issues which are connected with the human beings practically. By raising the issue of poverty and its implications in life, the director has tried to bring a realistic touch to

Cinema wrapped in the melodramatic content. *Chander* is indifferent to the trials and tribulations of his mother but *Prakash* has got a humanistic attitude towards the mother of *Chander*. He cares for *Chander's* mother more than he cares for *Chander* but the director fails to give the reason for this sympathy. At many places in the film, there is a suggestion of a wide gap between the rich people and poor people thus indicating towards class divisions that exist in the society. The class division that is shown in the film is visible in the incident of *Lata* marrying to *Prakash* thus marking the stamp firmly that these divisions are very hard to break in the matter of marriage. The behaviour of *Prakash* towards the mother of *Chander* can best be explained as a sympathetic one only as she is his friend's mother and ill. Nowhere, it is suggested that *Prakash* is against the class division that exists in the society.

3.4.2 The issue of poverty

Hindi Cinema, as created under the banner of Mehboob Khan shows the poverty issues and conflicts thus arising from it in detail. *Roti* as a metaphor for survival has been a recurrent theme in the films of Mehboob Khan since the making of *Aurat*. This concept of *Roti* is associated with the poverty of protagonists and occurs to remind the protagonists of his films about the difficulty in survival. In *Anmol Ghadi* also in the scenes depicting the childhood of *Chander*, his mother has been shown explaining that flour is the product of wheat crop and this flour sustains a human being. It seems that for the director, basic issues concerned with the life and survival of a human being means a lot and this has been shown in *Anmol Ghadi* also. 'Poverty' as a theme and recurring motif comes again and again in the parallel cinema movement initiated in India in the decade of 1970's but the groundwork of such type of Cinema had been laid way back in the decade of the 1940's by the likes of Mehboob in the films like *Aurat*, *Anmol Ghadi*, and *Mother India*. Despite showing the issues concerning society and human beings, Mehboob was hailed as a film-maker of the popular stream only because of melodramatic content in his films heavily laden in the treatment of the characters. The initiators of popular Cinema movement in India have never considered the likes of Mehboob and Raj Kapoor in their own league. Initiators of new wave Cinema avoided these clichés so they were hailed as 'different' film-

makers but their appeal remained regional and could not connect emotionally with the cine-goers.

3.4.3 Class conflict

One can observe the class difference in *Anmol Ghadi* in the first scene only when *Lata* as a child croons the song ‘*Udan Khatole pe ud jaoon, tere hath naaon*’, whence clearly marking the societal gap between her and *Chander*.



Fig. 1.4 The song *UdanKhatola* indicating towards a class dichotomy between *Lata* and *Chander*: *Still taken from Anmol Ghadi (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*



Fig. 1.5 Running behind *Lata* sitting in *TamTam* shows the class conflict ever present in the film : *Still taken from Anmol Ghadi (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Word *Udan Khatola* has been used to indicate high status of *Lata*'s family. *Chander*, in the song, has been shown as running behind the carriage in which *Lata* is sitting and he has been shown in the film, always looking and searching for *Lata*. The class

difference and distinction which occurs in the film is never bridged and culminates in *Lata* marrying *Prakash* belonging to the similar class in the society.

Class distinction is much more than just the question of the very rich and the poor. The concept of 'haves' and 'have-nots' is the economic parameter of showing the class difference but the class difference and distinction spreads over a much wider range than just this concept. It is clearly marked in *Anmol Ghadi* as besides the economic gap between *Chander's* family and *Lata's* family or between *Chander* and *Prakash*, the characters are also separated by the cultural differences also. In Hindi Cinema, the film-makers have often tried to bridge the class differences so as to bring a happy ending to their films. They are more or less concerned with the box-office success of their films. Often, when a class difference is shown in Hindi Cinema, the gap in the starting of the film is ultimately bridged and the male protagonist is always successful in finding his match despite class difference. Mehboob's Cinema is different in this aspect that he has not bothered about the happy endings in his kind of Cinema to please the masses. A realistic touch is always present in his kind of Cinema. *Anmol Ghadi* is also an example of such kind of Cinema where social mobility is not possible as in real life. Thus, Mehboob, being a melodramatic film-maker was quite realistic in approach while tackling the issues of social concern. The poor have been shown as noble and suffering, often greater moral and ethical values are attached to such persons. The characterization of *Chander* in *Anmol Ghadi* is in this mould only. His character is made to suffer as he and *Lata* get separated. Mehboob and V. Shantaram have been pioneers of such kind of characterization and Cinema.

It is pertinent to mention here that in the review published in the film magazine, Film India had hailed *Anmol Ghadi* as a poor picture for Mehboob.

3.5 ELAN (1947)⁷



Release Year (1947)

Produced by: Mehboob Khan

Directed by: Mehboob Khan

Starring: Surendra, Munawwar Sultana, and others

This film comes under the Muslim social genre and is revolutionary in the sense that the film talks about the value of education and shedding of ultra-religious values way back in 1947. The movie was the first one to look into the Muslim society from inside.

Social issues taken

1. Lack of education in Muslim society
2. Poverty
3. Class conflict

3.5.1 Plot

This Muslim social starts with the scene with some children playing in an open space and creating a trouble for the passers-by. These are the children who do not study. Nearby a *Maulvi Sahib* is teaching some of the boys. The film thus starts with a contrast between the children who are getting the education and other children who do not want to get an education.

⁷Film Poster and film's crew details: www.imdb.com/title/tt0231522/



Fig. 1.6 The kids playing and doing ruffian things in the gully : *Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*



Fig. 1.7 The kids studying : *Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Javed belongs to a poor family. His mother (Leela Mishra) suffers a lot in raising him and wants him to study and rise in life. On the other hand, *Sajjad* belongs to a rich landlord family who considers study as a waste of time and always indulges in wrong things. His mother has pampered him whereas *Sajjad's* father is worried about his upbringing and always gives the example of *Javed's* upbringing. *Javed*, as a child, when invited to *Sajjad's* birthday party is insulted by *Sajjad* and his friends. *Javed's* mother and *Sajjad's* mother are sisters but a class difference exists between them. *Javed* (Surendra) grows up into a well-read man with articulate manners whereas *Sajjad* (Himalaywala) grows up into a man having a dubious character who

is into gambling, visiting nautch girls and into other notorious things. *NazParwar* (Munawwar Sultana) often visits the household of *Javed* to teach his mother. She also acts as a letter writer on the behalf of *Javed's* mother. *Javed* has been shown completing his education at Aligarh thus hinting at the nationalistic angle in the film through the representation of Aligarh movement and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's motivation and views about educating Muslims. *Javed's* mother wants to marry *Javed* to *NazParwar*. Similar is the attention of *Sajjad's* mother. *NazParwar's* father *Abid* agrees to the marriage of *Sajjad* and his daughter. He considers *Sajjad* as a man of noble values. He does not know the reality of *Sajjad's* character. The class difference also plays a role in this match. After marriage, *Sajjad's* ways of a notorious living remain same. He often takes a hefty loan from a character named *Sheikh Sahib*. *Sajjad* comes under heavy debt and wants to sell off his estate and residence but his mother refuses to hand over the documents for the deal. In a fit of rage, he wants to kill his son but gets himself killed in the hands of his mother. The trial begins and *NazParwar* is accused of killing her husband. *Javed* has become a big lawyer, meanwhile and fights the case on behalf of *NazParwar*. She is proven innocent in the end. She decides to donate his mansion for the cause of education of poor and orphan children partly to make amends for the vile behaviour of her family members and partially for her thinking that education is a potent tool for changing the society. The final song '*Insaan Ki Tehzeeb*' summarises the message of the film. Purdah-clad *NazParwar* gives the final message of anti-feudalism.

3.5.2 A call for reforms: Education

In Hindi film industry, Muslim characters have been represented as typical stereotyped images replete with peculiar forms of cultural symbols associated with Islam and Muslim society. *Tawaifs*, large havelis, a feudalistic mindset, *Ghazals*, *Tehzeeb (Lakhnawi)*, terrorism and gangsters are some of the motifs attached to the films representing Muslims. Stereotyped images have been constructed in relation to the characters associated with other religions also but these images and symbols are more common while representing the minorities in Hindi Cinema overall. Mehboob's Cinema, while representing the Muslim culture and symbols of Islam is different from other Muslim socials in the respect that his Cinema raises issues and concerns which

are hampering the growth of this community. The context and construction of traditionalism are not compromised in his kind of Cinema, at the same time his characters speak loudly for reforms and progressive ideas in his Muslim socials. *Najma* comes under this category of Cinema and *Elan* also has got the similar concerns. Mehboob is revolutionary in this respect whose characters are constructed to bring reform and on the way to reforms, he is ready to face the wrath of the rigid elements of his community, it seems. The title *Elan* in itself is a warning, a clarion call for reforms in Muslim society, a call to shun the rigid elements in society. Social issues raised in the film *Elan* associated with Muslim society are to be seen in the context of reforms taking place in the nineteenth century in the Indian society. Muslim society was not to be left behind and certain reformers grasped the moment to unearth the potential of Muslim society also. In the nineteenth and early twentieth-century main issue for the backwardness of Muslims was the lack of progressive and modern education. This film has clearly raised the issue of the importance of education. This film is the right platform to give a call to Muslim society to go for education.

Intellectual class in Aligarh rightly championed the cause of a liberal and modern education for Muslims. Under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aligarh movement gave the idea of liberal interpretation of Islam and an education based upon the Western concept. This was considered to be the only way for the progress of Muslim society in India.

While discussing the film *Elan*, Chimankant Gandhi states that *Elan* was filmed precisely when there was quite an unrest everywhere. It was an era of partition. Muslims had been going to Pakistan in a large number and an atmosphere of discontent and mistrust was there everywhere. The old order was crumbling and a new order was taking shape. In such a scenario Muslim world had its own problems which needed an important attention. In such a scenario, Mehboob had made the film,

Elan in which he in his own style has tried to discuss various issues concerning the Muslim society⁸.

Elan is a film based quite rightly on this premise only. A portrait of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan is there in the house of Javed and he has been shown to be clearly impressed by the ideas given by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. The portrait of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan clearly indicates a departure from representing other nationalistic icons like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru to make an appearance in form of portraits and photographs. A non-verbal reference to Sir Syed clearly indicates the objective of the director of highlighting his film *Elan* as a mirror to the Muslim society.

Education for the male members might not sound so revolutionary as the call for education for the female members of Muslim society. The reformers believed that the greater good of Muslim society could be achieved only through the education among female members. Such an education would help Muslim society to shed off false customs and traditions. The reformers considered such education as the transmitter of culture and tradition within the family. Syed Mumtaz Ali, a social reformer from Lahore saw education as a means to make women aware of their rights as given by Islam and their role to transform society in the light of these rights.

Similarly, in the film, if *Javed* has been shown as a character under the influence of ideas of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *NazParwar* is not behind in her pursuit of education. She has been shown as an educated lady who is aware of her rights. She even agrees to teach the mother of *Javed* who is illiterate. By showing *Javed*'s mother getting an education in the hands of *NazParwar*, an indication of Adult education programme has been there. It was a revolutionary idea especially in Muslim society in the decade of the 1940's. The national Adult Education programme was started by Indian Government in 1978 whereas we get a hint of it way back in 1946 film.

The way, the character of *Sajjad* behaves in this film is the result of his not caring about education. His mother has also not thought about education as a potent tool to

⁸ Reuben, Bunny. 1994. *Mehboob, India's DeMille*, New Delhi. Harper Collins India, p.130.

make a good life. *Sajjad* has been shown leaning towards a notorious life. Construction of the character of nautch-girl is to show *Sajjad* leading a nefarious kind of life. There is a similarity between the character of *Muqarram* shown in *Najma* and *Sajjad* in this film as both belong to a feudal setup and leads a sedentary life replete with the symbols associated with such lifestyle.

3.5.3 The issue of class conflict and division

The issue of class division and class conflict is clearly visible in the film. *Javed's* mother and *Sajjad's* mother have been shown as sisters but a gap, both economic and social is visible between both the families. This gap results in a distinct class division in these families. In the starting scenes of the film only, *Javed* gets insulted at the birthday party of *Sajjad*, her mother gets insulted in the hands of *Sajjad's* mother (an indication of higher class dominating the lower class). This class division is visible throughout the film. Rejection of proposal of marriage of *Javed* with *NazParwar* and acceptance of *Sajjad* as *NazParwar's* husband is another visible indication of class conflict. Mehboob's approach in dealing with the class struggle and conflict is practical one as he shuns the approach of showing *Javed* and *NazParwar* as the rebels, who would break the tradition and marry against the wishes of the elders. A realistic approach to the question of class conflict is visible in this film. *Najma* also had a similar approach towards the question of class struggle. For Mehboob Khan, if social mobility is impossible in the real life (in the decade of 1940's and 1950's), then his films also tried to depict such an approach only, avoiding larger than life formula which is the norm of making Hindi Cinema, more or less.

3.5.4 Some dialogues from the film indicating various issues



Fig. 1.8 Class Conflict(While fixing the marriage of *Sajjad* with *NazParwar*):*Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd.)*

Sajjad's mother, "Raison ke rishte raison ke sath hi hua karte hain".



Fig. 1.9 When *NazParwar's father Abid* states that her elder sister, *Javed's mother* was also there for the same purpose then *Sajjad's mother* replies as such:*Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Sajjad's mother, "Aji, Khuda Na Kare, meri koi humsheera ho. Hum aise acchhon logon ke sath Rishta Nahin rakhna chahte. Unka Naam Lena Bhi Apni Shaan ke khilaf samajhte hain"



Fig. 1.10 Feudal Mindset (When Sajjad's mother confronts NazParwar in the house on the question of Sajjad being away for four days from the home): *Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Javed's mother: "Sab raiszaade, nawabzaade aise hi hua karte hain, Allah ne jinko Diya hai wo sair, tafreeh Nahin Karega to kya Begum ke kadmon mein baithega"



Fig. 1.11 Stress on Education of a child and mother's role in it : *Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Khan Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Javed: “Aaj ka jalsa school khulne ki Khushi mein bulwaya gaya hai . Begum Sajjad mehroom ne apna makaan bachchon ki talim ki nazar kar diya hai, hum unke bahut shukarguzar hain”



Fig. 1.12 Speech of NazParwar on the reopening of the school : *Still taken from Elan (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

NazParwar: “Hazrat, mera khitab auraton se hai. Maan ka aagosh, bachchon ka pehla madrasa hota hai aur Jo bachcha us pehla marhale mein sahi tarbiyat nahin paata, wo aag echa lke apne aur begane, dono ke liye bawal-e-jaan ban jaatahai”

3.6 ANDAZ (1949)⁹



Release Year: 1949

Produced by: Mehboob Khan

Directed by: Mehboob Khan

Banner: Mehboob Productions

Starring: Dilip Kumar, Nargis, Raj Kapoor, Murad, and others

Released in 1949, his film is said to be the most 'modern' film to be made under the banner of Mehboob Khan. The film having all the commercial ingredients in it tried to convey the message that too much of freedom and independent thought was given to females can create troubles. The film had a lyrical quality to it and a flow like a free-flowing river which had appealed the cine-goers. This film was successful commercially.

Social Issues taken

Issue of conflict between tradition and modernity

3.6.1 Plot

Neena (Nargis) is the daughter of the business tycoon *Sir Badri Prashad* (Sapru). She is a pampered and spoilt girl who is free-spirited in nature. *Badri Prashad* always worries about her future and rues the fact that *Neena* is such a free-spirited girl. One

⁹Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaz_\(1949_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaz_(1949_film))

day, *Dilip* (Dilip Kumar) saves her when she is riding bolts without warning. This incident brings *Neena* and *Dilip* on familiar terms with each other. *Dilip* starts visiting *Neena's* home often. *Neena* and her friend *Sheela* (Cuckoo) entertain *Dilip* often despite the disapproval of her father. *Dilip* gradually falls in love with *Neena* although *Sheela* attempts to disabuse him of the notion that *Neena* cares for him. After the death of *Sir Badri Prashad*, *Neena* appoints *Dilip* as the manager of his business interests. *Dilip* starts believing that *Neena* is also attracted towards him and loves him. In the narrative, *Neena's* real feelings towards *Dilip* are never shown till the arrival of *Rajan* (Raj Kapoor) on the scene. *Neena's* free-spirited nature creates this misunderstanding in the mind of *Dilip* that *Neena* might be romantically inclined towards him but that is not the case. *Rajan* comes back to India from abroad. He is also the scion of a rich family and *Neena* and he has been engaged for several years. As *Rajan* was in England, he could not marry *Neena* earlier. *Neena* and *Dilip* are duly married, after which all the relationships in the film become murkier. *Dilip* is not able to forget *Neena* and confesses his love to her who is shocked at this revelation. She declares that she has got such feelings only for *Rajan* and has always considered *Dilip* as a friend. *Rajan* has got a person, *Prof. Trivedi* always in his attendance who wants to make a match between *Sheela* and *Dilip*. *Dilip* shows clear displeasure over this proposal and makes his indifference quite clear to *Sheela* also. Gradually *Rajan* starts becoming suspicious of *Dilip*. He reacts coldly towards *Neena* and jealously towards *Dilip* after the birth of their daughter. *Neena* receives a telephone call from *Dilip* one day which prompts *Rajan* into one of his sarcastic outbursts. *Dilip* arrives at the scene and *Rajan* hit him with a tennis racket in the rage. *Dilip* is injured badly. *Neena* prays for his recovery as he is the only one who can prove that *Neena* is innocent. But the circumstances in which *Rajan* and *Dilip* show a violent behaviour and animosity towards each other compel *Neena* to shoot *Dilip*. *Neena* faces trial for this crime. *Rajan*, in the name of upholding tradition also comes out against her in the court. *Neena* gets life term for her crime. A letter written by *Dilip* is discovered timely, exonerating *Neena* of all the wrong-doings does not help her in the court. As a last request, *Neena* pleads with *Rajan* to bring their daughter in a manner where she is not able to repeat the mistakes which her mother did. The apparent discourse in the film is against the perils of

modernity where the director holds a modern upbringing of *Neena* responsible for *Dilip* misreading her behaviour and all the misunderstandings.

3.6.2 Traditionality and modernity

Andaz is the film which pioneered the love triangle concept in 1949 and many film-makers have milked this concept to the hilt. The unique point of this film is the 'modern' angle given to the film which presented the heroine in a manner which was unthinkable of in that era. In the era of Saree clad coy female characters, Mehboob presented Nargis in a new '*Avatar*' of carefree spirited independent girl who knows her mind and does not mind having a friendship with a male despite her engagement to another person. Was society ready to accept this kind of relationship in that era or in fact in this era even was the moot question raised in the film? Though the ending of the film is a conventional one with the main female character reverting her stand and confesses her mistakes. It raises a moot question whether the platonic relationship can exist between the two members of the opposite sex. The issue raised in the film is concerned with the Indian social norms. *Neena's* open behaviour with *Dilip* creates misunderstandings all over. She is frank and friendly with *Dilip*. Such behaviour of a woman might not have created any problem in the western society but in Indian society, *Neena's* coquettish behaviour is taken as an assault on her character. The film raises the moot question of being modern also. Is being modern means having western norms, etiquettes and appearing in western attire only or being modern transgresses this kind of definition is one of the issues raised in the film. It has been suggested in the film through *Neena's* character that she was just on friendly terms with *Dilip* but somewhere the scenes and dialogues reflect *Neena's* openness with *Dilip* to a limit where *Dilip* misunderstood *Neena's* behaviour as love for him. *Neena* also did not tell *Dilip* about her engagement with *Rajan* or her relationship with *Rajan*. She answers the straightforward questions of *Dilip* in a teasing and flirts' manner. This all suggests that somewhere in her subconscious mind. *Neena* loved *Dilip* but could not be open as *Rajan* had come earlier in her life. Sometimes, a person does not know the intensity of the relationship with the person of the opposite sex. Subconscious mind of a person plays a great role in hiding such feelings. She seems to be attracted to *Dilip* and this attraction had taken the form of love. *Neena's* subconscious mind often compels her

to believe this fact. An important scene when Neena is in front of a mirror, *Dilip's* image appears when *Neena* is fighting the demon in her subconsciousness.

To what extent, a woman can go on friendly terms with a member of the opposite sex is the moot point that the director has raised in the film. Even, today in the contemporary Indian society, women are confronted with the kind of issues raised in the film way back in 1949. 'Where are you going at this time'? 'Who is the man with whom you are so open and friendly'? 'This is the time limit for you to come home', 'Good girls don't go out with the strange men' and in simpler words, 'Men and Women can't be just friends in Indian society' are the questions and points a majority of Indian women are confronted with in the contemporary times also.

Andaz is the film that raised the curiosity of the audience at many levels. It is the film where Raj Kapoor and Dilip Kumar have been pitted against each other. It is pertinent to mention here that in 1949, both the actors had not reached the level of stardom for which they are famed but they were on their way to stardom. Mehboob, as a film-maker might have realized it earlier than other film-makers and thought about this project where apart from Raj Kapoor and Dilip Kumar, he signed Nargis for the pivotal role as a free-spirited girl. Apart from it, the film was billed as a 'modern' film which could take the audience by surprise. Film-makers often use different tactics and devise various strategies to attract the audience to their films. Roping Raj Kapoor, Nargis, and Dilip Kumar together might have been such a strategy of publicising his film by Mehboob Khan but the way film was shot and the way narrative and spectacle was handled by Mehboob took the film to another level. M.K. Raghavendra¹⁰ has included this film in his book, *50 Indian Film Classics*. Ravi S Vasudevan has also argued that both *Andaz's* narrative strategy and the elements of its publicity campaign were oriented to generate an image of modernity for the Indian audience¹¹. He further

¹⁰ Raghavendra, M.K. 2009. *50 Indian Classics*, New Delhi: Harper Collins India.

¹² From "Making meaning in Indian Cinema" by Ravi Vasudevan, 2001, India: Oxford University Press.

argues that *Andaz* may be seen in combination with the publicity strategy used by Liberty, the Cinema Hall which showed *Andaz* as its inaugural film. The exhibitors drew attention to the modern projection equipment and elegant auditorium thus indicating that the viewing conditions of the hall met the standards of an audience used to view western films. Thus, the publicity campaign of the film coincided with the 'modern' thoughts of the female protagonist in the film. Western ambience might have suggested as the main female character, *Neena* has been shown as quite western in her attire as well as free-spirited nature. Vasudevan has also pointed out that the film employs Barthes 'hermeneutic code', the mechanism whereby, the information is deferred in order to engage spectatorial curiosity This statement is given as a witness to the scenario where, there are illusions that *Neena* might have been involved with a man other than *Dilip*, but this involvement is shown as elliptical only.

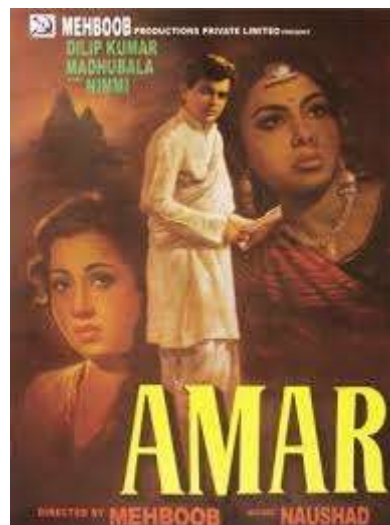
In the film *Andaz*, Mehboob has tried to say something between the lines. The film's storyline is an apt message for the youth in the mid-forties. The message for the youth is to shun western culture, behaviour and fashion. Mehboob has tried to convey the message that sometimes too much openness can create trouble for a happy household.

M.K. Raghavendra contends that *Andaz* basically is a love story with a difference as the film does not sing the paeans to the ode of 'triumph of love'. According to him, even the tragedies like *Devdas* can be described in the genre of 'triumph of love' although the spoils of victory may be deferred to the next life. Whether it is a tragedy or it is the Hindi film where lovers win against all the odds, the point is that love is being reciprocated. But in *Andaz*, one sees the love remaining as unreciprocated and therefore actually failing.

Andaz has a free-flowing pattern of filming the scenes. The picturization of the scenes in the film follows the Hollywood pattern of film-making where the characters talk and behave as, like the human beings in real life, A theatrical style of presentation of the characters and styling of the mis-en-scene is absent in most of the scenes. At that time, the Parsi style had a great influence on the pattern of film-making in India. Mehboob's films also had an influence on Parsi style of heavy dialogues and costumes in most of his movies but *Andaz* broke this tradition to a large extent and except for

the last few scenes where Neena repents for her behaviour and modern views in a melodramatic style nowhere in the film, we observe the tradition of film-making that was being followed at that time. If *Andaz* is hailed as the most modern film of Mehboob, it is not only because of its content, albeit technically also, the film follows the modern outlook.

3.7 AMAR (1954)¹²



Release Year: 1954

Produced by: Mehboob

Directed by: Mehboob

Banner: Mehboob Productions

Starring: Dilip Kumar, Nimmi, Madhubala and others

Released in 1954, *Amar* is a psychological drama featuring three main characters. The film revolves around the feeling of guilt of the main male protagonist. In the aftermath of the incident of sexual assault on one of the main female characters of the film, the main male character feels the emotion of guilt, repentance, and penitence arising from this incident.

¹²Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amar_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amar_(film))

Social issues taken

1. Feminism
2. Feeling of guilt
3. Crisis of conscience

3.7.1 Plot

The film starts with *Sonia* (Nimmi) taking care of her pets. In the house are *Sonia's* step-mother (Husnbano) and father. *Sonia* has been shown as an innocent village girl. Then, there is a character named *Sankat*(Jayant) in the village. Every year, there is an annual village fair on his land but in the narrative, it is shown that he has refused to hold the annual fair on his land. The issue becomes a large one and drags on in the court. *Anju* (Madhubala) is a lawyer who wants to help the villagers in this issue. On the other hand, *Amarnath* (Dilip Kumar) is also a well-known lawyer who is hired by *Sankat* to plead his case in the court. Meanwhile *Amarnath* comes to know that his father has selected *Anju* as his bride. *Anju* thinks that *Amar* was going to plead the case in favour of *Sankat* but *Amar* has already made up his mind to take the case in favour of the villagers. The villagers win the case and it is decided that the village fair would take place. *Sonia* gets infatuated with *Amar* and starts loving him silently. On the other hand, this gesture of *Amar* wins the heart of *Anju* and she falls in love with *Amar*. *Sankat* is possessive about *Sonia* and does not want her to sing and dance at the fair but she does not agree to this. This incident infuriates *Sonia* and she runs away from there. It is a stormy night and she reaches *Amar's* house. *Amar* succumbs to one weak moment and rapes *Sonia*. She is shattered but does not raise voice against it due to her infatuation with *Amar*. After this incident, he is shown as in possession of extreme guilt and crisis of conscience. He suffers from a behavioural change. His guilt makes him brooding and is drawn inwards. Meanwhile, he gets the news of his father's death. *Anju* and her father think that behavioural change in *Amar* is because of his father's death but he is getting the nightmarish dreams of that incident. *Sonia's* step-mother arranges her marriage with *Sankat* but *Sonia* refuses to marry him. An accident reveals *Sonia* to be pregnant. She does not reveal the name of the person even after much persuasion. *Anju* saves *Sonia* from rabble-rousers.

Aar's struggle with his conscience is continued but can not tell the truth until one-day *Sankat* attacks *Amar* and this struggle ensues the death of *Sankat*. *Sonia* is standing near the scene of confrontation. She takes the blame for this murder. *Amar* gets moved by her gesture, tell the truth and accepts *Sonia* as his wife.

3.7.2 Feminism

Anju knows her responsibility as a lawyer and is always at the forefront to fight for the cause of the village community. She is very rational in her approach, articulate and sensitive. It is she who is responsible for instilling a sense of social responsibility in *Amar*. In the year 1954, this was a very revolutionary characterization to show a female dominating the male in the thoughts which are more evolved than the thoughts of the male protagonist. She is the one who helps *Sonia* when the latter is found to be pregnant. The character of *Anju* is modern in the sense that as she extols the virtues of modernity. Despite being progressive and modern in thought, her belief in Hindu divinities is unshakeable. The character becomes akin to that of the character of *Najma* in *Najma* (1943). This paradox runs almost in all the films of Mehboob Khan. The interplay between traditional values and modernist values is an integral part of films of Mehboob Khan. The characterization of women in the films of Mehboob Khan is always one above the characterization of women as was being shown at that time in the sense that Mehboob has got no inhibition in showing his male protagonist as a weakling in his films. *Najma* dominates the thought process of her husband *Muqarram* after marriage in the film *Najma*. Similarly, *Neena* is a strong character in the film *Andaz*, where her strength comes out of her deep belief in the idea of feminism. *Mother India* represents the strongest character ever in Mehboob's films. *Anju* and *Sonia* in *Amar* represent the similar trend of strong characterization. These characters have got a mythic cult attached to it. *Anju's* character is based on 'Sakti' cult. The character sacrifices her desire to uphold a sense of social order and a sense of justice. This type of characterization was quite different from the female characters being represented in the decade of fifties. *Anju* has been shown as a lawyer who is concerned with the causes associated with the community as exemplified by her concern for the land which *Sankat* does not want to give for the annual mela of the village. Normally, the female characters in Hindi Cinema are represented only as to

engage the attention of viewers and male characters. There is a set pattern of the depiction of women in Hindi films where their own identity is not shown often. Mehboob's characterization of *Anju* and to some extent *Sonia* breaks this convention. Both the characters are very strong emotionally. Strong characterizations of females indicate towards the feminist mindset of Mehboob.

3.7.3 Class difference

Normally, the rural folks are quite vulnerable socially in the hands of urban people. Women from rural areas are more vulnerable in the hands of elite people from cities, socially. *Sonia* belongs to a much lower class than *Amar* who belongs to a much higher class socially and economically. A class division is clearly visible between *Sonia* and *Amar*. When *Sonia* gets sexually assaulted in the hands of *Amar*, she keeps mum. It is due to her infatuation with *Amar* as well as due to her belonging to a social class quite different from that of *Amar*. She is clearly under the inferiority complex due to this kind of social division. Normally when elite and suave members of a higher class take advantage of the rustic and innocent girls (especially the girls belonging to low castes and lower class). Such cases when happen are hushed off by intimidation of muscle power or money power in society itself as well as when shown in Hindi films. This film becomes different in this respect that *Amar*, being a man of principles, gets covered by the emotion of guilt and remorse. The feeling of guilt and remorse produces a crisis of conscience in his heart. But this remorse also makes his character a weakling and full of cowardice whereas *Sonia* comes out to be a strong character that remains silent despite a social stigma attached to her. Again, the class difference and a widening gap between the social status of *Amar* and *Sonia* might be responsible for the silence of *Amar* and not accepting the crime he had done. *Amar* by nature is not a criminal. What he had done to *Sonia* was a weak moment in his life. His character has been shown as a principled lawyer. He is a socially conscious man. All these factors drive him to the 'Guilt' factor. It may be assumed here that his reputation as a successful lawyer in the society shall be at stake if he confesses his crime. But director Mehboob Khan has raised here a larger question that the reputation of a man in the worldly society is of lesser importance than the reputation of a human being in the eyes of God and his conscience. The song, 'Insaaf ka mandir

haiyeh, Bhagwan ka Gharhai', repeated a few times in the film constantly pricks the conscience of the protagonists. Mehboob has used the symbol of the temple to show the divine presence and to remind the protagonist that God knows all. The title of the film *Amar* is significant here as it contains a deeper allegory of man becoming *Amar* only when he confesses to his wrong-doing, he is relieved of his guilt and becomes immortal in the eyes of God, despite mortality of human beings.

A class division has been shown in the film but this division becomes problematic only when Amar has sexually assaulted *Sonia*. It is at that point that he fears for his reputation to be shattered otherwise he and *Anju* are sympathetic towards the problems of rural poor. *Anju* is more worried about *Sonia* than herself. M.K.Raghvendra has brought about the class division in the film like this:

3.7.4 Crisis of conscience

“The interesting point about *Amar* is not only that the advocate should stand the trial in the court but also that *Sonia* is not represented as poor but only as belonging to ‘the people’. *Sonia* lives in a milieu where domestic animals always surround her and the implication is that the land has so much to offer that a humble person may not be the ‘poor’. This also implies that the antagonism between the poor and the rich is not problematized in *Amar*. If *Amarnath* and *Anju* belong to the ruling class, there is no antagonism between them and the common people because *Anju* always has *Sonia*'s interests at heart and, rather than drawing *Amarnath* away from her, she is actually attentive to the girl's predicament” The film brings about the ‘guilt’ factor and ‘crisis of conscience’ in a vibrant way.

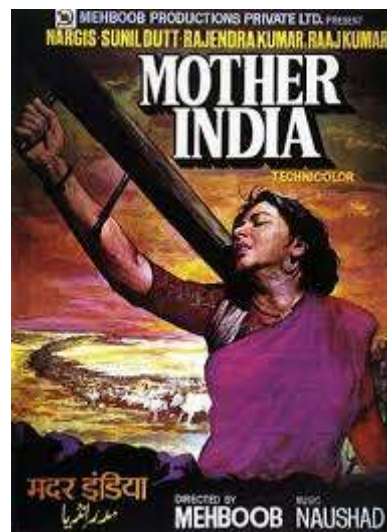
3.8 MOTHER INDIA (1957)¹³

Release Year: 1957

Produced by: Mehboob Khan

Directed by: Mehboob Khan

Starring: Nargis, Sunil Dutt, Raj Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, Kanhaiya Lal
and others



Mother India is a magnum opus filmed by Mehboob Khan. This film put Indian film industry on a high pedestal and the international recognition that this film got was unprecedented so far. This Cinematic offering by Mehboob is the remake of his earlier work *Aurat*.

Social issues depicted

1. Poverty
2. Peasant related issues
3. Chastity of a woman

3.8.1 Plot

The film is set in the rural background and represents rightly the concept of ideological agrarianism. The decade of the fifties is the time period in Hindi film

¹³Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MotherIndia\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MotherIndia(film))

industry when some of the classics have been created by the stalwarts like Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan, Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy. With *Mother India*, Mehboob touched just the right chord in audiences when he chose to present the story of his protagonist *Radha*.

Radha (Nargis) is married to *Shamu* (Raj Kumar). Mother of *Shamu* lives with them. He has been shown as a good-hearted farmer who is happy living along with his family. *Radha* not only is the good wife, she proves to be a good co-worker also as she helps *Shamu* in the fields also and shares his burden. *SukhiLala*(Kanhaiya Lal) is the money-lender of the village. Most of the villagers are under debt, *Shamu's* family being no exception. Most of the farmers being illiterate do not understand that the fortunes of *SukhiLala* keep on increasing whereas the farmers are becoming poorer day by day. *Radha* is blessed with three children. As kids, the eldest one, *Ramu's* docile and obedient whereas *Birju* is more rebellious and even as a child clashes with *SukhiLala* at times. Trials and tribulations of *Radha* and *Shamu* continue. *Shamu's* arms get crushed one day when using his arms as levers; he tries to move a big boulder out of their fields. He has lost both his arms and *Radha's* burden gets increased. Her responsibilities are increased. *Shamu* could not be a witness to this condition of *Radha*. He deserts her one early morning, removing the vermilion from her forehead. *Shamu* proves to be a weak husband in this scenario. *Radha's* mother-in-law dies soon after. She also loses her youngest child who succumbs to a fever caught during the rains. The conditions become tough for *Radha* and her two children, *Ramu* and *Birju*. *Sukhi Lala* wants to ease the life of *Radha* and make sexual advances towards her only to be rebuffed by her.

Undeterred by adversity, *Radha* works in the fields to make both ends meet with children in tow. Both the children grow according to their inherent natures. *Ramu* (Rajendra Kumar) flows with the time and takes adversity as the part and parcel of his mother and his life whereas *Birju* (Sunil Dutt) is not ready to take the life in its stride. *Ramu* gets married to a girl in the village only but *Birju* is considered as an idler by the villagers who plays truant with most of the girls in the village. *Birju* gets entangled with *Roopa*, daughter of *Sukhi Lala* although he continues to cross the swords with her father. During a Holi festival, he finds *Roopa* wearing the silver bangles of his

mother which had been pawned with *Sukhi Lala*. He wants to take these bangles by force but *SukhiLala's* power and clout see *Birju* being evicted from the village. He is spared on *Radha's* entreaties but *Birju* fails to mend his ways. He becomes a bandit eventually. He returns to the village on the day of the wedding of *Roopa*, kills *SukhiLala* and abducts *Roopa*. *Radha* appeals to him to leave her. *Radha* shoots down *Birju* when he does not oblige. *Birju*, before dying, makes over *Radha's* silver bangles to her. The film ends with the flashback and with *Radha* inaugurating the newly-built dam in the film.

Status of *Mother India* is legendary in the history of Indian film industry. This is the first film to bowl over western audiences with its narration and spectacle. In India, the film has enjoyed a continuously long run in the theatres. *Mother India* has got the distinction to be nominated as official entry from India in the section of Best Foreign film category. Full of emotions and sentiments, *Mother India* is considered as quintessential Indian film rooted to the soil.

3.8.2 Nationalism

Mother India is the Hindi film which has used the set pattern of film-making in Hindi film industry still the film made a powerful impact on the audience world-wide almost in every corner of the world despite the way of making films different everywhere. The film just missed the academy (Oscar) award by a single vote. The film is a celebration of various elements shown in Hindi Cinema from time to time but this is the film which glorified those elements on a large scale. Audience identified themselves with those elements and emotional angle of the film. *Mother India* can be seen within the arena of chastity of women, morality angle which is set around the Indian tradition, feminism, making of modern India and mythic characters. The concept of nationalism cannot be directly linked with this film but certain visuals are presented in such a way by the director that the spectacle brings out the imagery of nationalism. Inauguration of a newly built dam in the village by *Radha* is such a moment. The visual of dam remind the viewers, the statement of erstwhile Prime Minister Sh. Jawaharlal Nehru who had hailed the dams and multipurpose projects as the temples of modern India. Thus, a pattern of nationalism or making of modern India is provided to the spectacle. M.K.Raghvendra points out that several sequences

in the film showing *Radha* and *Shamu* together or *Shamu* alone are designed in such a way so as to remind us of Soviet images of working men and women thus marking the presence of Marxist motif and pattern in the film. He further contends that the political discourse in *Mother India* carries echoes of Soviet Cinema of the decade of the 1930's and 1940's.



1.13 Harvesting the crops : Still taken from *Mother India* (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)

Mother India has drawn considerable attention worldwide even from diverse film critics because of the elements that Mehboob incorporated in the film. E.H.Johnson's reaction to the film is summed up like this:

"Without a doubt, Mehboob's greatest triumph is *Mother India* if only because of the place it occupies in Indian popular culture. Screenings of the film still produce "House Full" signs every time it plays anywhere in India; the appearance of Nargis on the screen produces the kind of idolatry which Greta Garbo evokes in the west. Basically, a reworking of *Aurat*, it undercuts social comment with a poetical use of mis-en-scene. The story is once again the plight of the poor, snatching at happiness during the respite from the ceaseless toil, marriages and festivals are brief occasions when oppression is momentarily lifted. Yet in this oppression, comes spiritual solace and strength, which is where it has been accused of being ultimately reactionary in the message it preaches. But the way the plot has been constructed, suggests that the film deserves a closer look than a superficial dismissal. The ending appears negative but is

actually open-ended leaving the audience to decide for itself the solutions to the social problems."¹⁴Inspired by a large extent from the Italian neo-realist cinema, Mehboob applied similar aesthetics to create magic in *Mother India*. Mehboob showcased the neo-realist Cinema in Indian sense. Songs and Dances along with melodrama is not part of Neo-realistic Cinema but Mehboob and other film-makers who have been inspired by neo-realism incorporated the songs and dances within the story so as to increase the emotional connect with the audience. One can say that the theme and content were inspired by neo-realism but the visualization of the spectacle was pure Indian.

Co-relating the elements of realism in *Mother India*, S.H.Raza¹⁵ voices his opinion in these words.

“We writers must come to grip with reality. Let's stop manufacturing stories from the studios, but out of life. Life is certainly not always this so-called love. It has many more interesting aspects and always shall have. We must learn to handle these aspects artistically. In our selection and juxtaposition of these aspects we have to bring, a sense of form, taste, choice and rhythm as well...it is high time for all concerned with the film industry, writes in particular, to realise that in realism is the salvation, the escape from escapism”¹⁶

Mother India has also been hailed as the film which locates its birth in the folk art traditions prevalent in India. To quote Allen and Bhaskar, “It is not surprising if one locates Mehboob’s work in the context of folk art traditions with their pictorial language of frontal and profile tableaux and tableau montages”¹⁷

¹⁴ Chakravarty, Sumita S. 1996. *National identity in Indian Popular cinema 1947-1987*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 151.

¹⁵ Raza, born in 1922, a Padma Vibhushana awardee, lived and worked in France as a renowned painter. Raza has commented upon the works of artistic expression, a number of times.

¹⁶ From the film tabloid, Screen dated January1, 1954

¹⁷ Allen & Bhaskar. Jan-March 2008. Article from Indian Horizons, Delhi, Vol. 53, no 1.

Perhaps, the mythic element in the film combined with the Indian experience of suffering has lent such a success to *Mother India*. Mehboob himself makes a statement about the making of *Aurat* and *Mother India* in the light of the tendency of woman to become a mother figure:

"I had studied village life in Kashipura in Baroda state, my mother's hometown, and I have always had the most profound respect for Indian womanhood. The story of *Aurat*, as visualized by me and developed by Babubhai Mehta, was centred around the fact that the true Indian woman enters her husband's home when she marries and leaves it only when she dies, that she will never sell her chastity for any price on earth. Now that times have changed and life is different, I thought of remaking *Aurat* in the context of the changing world. But the main character has not changed: the Indian woman who is one with the land she works on"¹⁸.

Mother India hits at the hypocrisy and manipulation strongly through the character of *Sukhi Lala* who has been given the dialogues through which he appears to be a God-fearing man but his behaviour and work in the film by any such thought. He often mouths the lines in the film accusing others of outrageous behaviour and constantly swears on the Ganges that he speaks the truth-his special talents are cheating and conniving. The characterization of *Sukhi Lala* is in the typical mould of the village landlords who behaved like money sharks.

3.8.3 Reviews

Mother India got a scintillating praise in the review published in the magazine *FilmIndia*.¹⁹ The review has praised Nargis for the magnificent performance in the film as *Radha*. According to the reviewer, Nargis has lent body and soul to the theme of agrarian crisis. India was facing the food crisis at that time and the film was made amidst this food crisis lending a sort of credibility to the storyline. The issue of farmers had hit the rural economy badly and in the wake of such a crisis, Mehboob

¹⁸ Chakravorty, Sumita S. 1996. National identity in Indian Popular cinema 1947-1987, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 151.

¹⁹ Patel, Babu Rao. Dec. 1957. Review of film *Mother India* in *Film India*, p.56-57.

Khan had made a genuine film thoroughly embedded in Indian values. Babu Rao Patel, in the review, has hailed *Mother India* as the greatest picture produced in India in past 40 years (since the advent of film-making in India). The film has been hailed as the film portraying the eternal story of the soil the mother of millions of human beings. The film had been bracketed in the category of epics in the review hailing it as an epic of human race pitted against violent forces of nature and the vicious designs of men. Various technical departments also lend a helping hand in bringing alive the content and substance of a film. Patel praised the effort of Faredoon Irani as a cinematographer as well as Kaushik's sound recording in *Mother India*.

The character and drama of *Mother India* draw heavily from Pearl S. Buck's description of peasant life in China in the novels *The Good Earth* written in 1931 and *The Mother* written in 1933.

3.8.4 Issues concerning women

Radha's character in the film is multi-layered and multi-dimensional. She appears in various '**avatars**' to different people. Primarily, her character is based on the '**Shakti**' cult, the all-powerful image of Goddess and **Kali** and **Durga** who is a protector. But this is not the only myth associated with the character of *Radha*. She appears in the film as ideal wife for whom her husband is her life. She shares her work burden also. In such a scenario, she becomes a co-worker also. She appears as an ideal mother who does not want her children to starve. After the disappearance of her husband *Shamu*, *Radha's* life revolves around the life of his children only. She also appears as the mother of a whole community. This role of *Radha* unfolds after her son *Birju* become a dacoit. Mother of a whole community is mythical than being the mother of her own child which appears to be realistic. The mythic element brings more melodrama and hence more connection with the audience. Her character has been glorified in every aspect she appears in the film.

As Sumita S. Chakravarty contends, "As a bride, her beauty and virtues are the talks of the village, as a wife, her devotion to her husband is envy of other males, as a woman she fulfils her biological and social role by giving birth to the sons, as a mother she fiercely protects and supports her offspring, and as a peasant she battles

fire and flood to make the earth yield a rich harvest." The motifs of **Durga** and **Kali** are not the only ones to be seen in the character of *Radha*. She is akin to **Sita** also (archetypal, dutiful wife whose trial with fire and abandonment with the two sons are invoked), *Radha* is '**Radha**' also, the signs of whom can be seen in her merriment with her husband *Shamu*. Some reference is found of *Radha* being **Lakshmi** also who brings prosperity to a household. *Sukhi Lala* often likens *Radha* to Lakshmi. Normally, only one mythic element comes to represent a character in a Hindi film and that mythic element becomes all-powerful but here a combination of mythical elements in *Radha* made *Mother India* such a success.

The honour of a woman and issue of chastity are also raised in this film in an effective manner. *Radha's* character, on one hand, represents the power, '**Shakti**' cult, on the other hand for her, protecting her honour is of utmost importance. The circumstances in which *Radha* and her family are surviving are the circumstances where a woman being so vulnerable due to the factors surrounding her could have become helpless especially when her children are facing hunger. In these circumstances, the character of *Radha* becomes the amalgam of **Sita** and **Durga**. For *Radha*, chastity of women matters a lot. Not only she is concerned with protecting her honour, she is also concerned that the honor of not even a single woman should be compromised. For her being, a mother is important and her bonding with her children is very strong but the element of being a 'woman' dominates this 'mother' concept, as clearly seen in the climax. It is the scene where *Radha* shoots her son, *Birju*: When *Birju* abducts *Roopa* he is confronted by *Radha* who is ready to go to any extreme to save *Roopa*. The conflict between the emotions of *Radha* as a mother and her sentiments as a protector of *Roopa* from her own village is clearly marked in this sequence. There is a paradigm shift in the representation of *Radha's* character, the character who in most of the scenes in the film is concerned with the upbringing of her children in severe circumstances, has now be transformed as a character who is 'mother' to whole community/nation thus justifying the title of the film. The issue of chastity and honour has been mentioned in one of the songs in the film also.

3.8.5 Peasantry issues

Peasant issues and poverty-related issues were a regular fare to be depicted in Hindi Cinema in the decade of 1950's. The depiction of rural life and nationalistic elements was in tandem with the Nehruvian ideology of socialism. As earlier mentioned, Mehboob was the film-maker who was deeply impressed by socialistic ideology and has tried to incorporate such elements along with feminist ideology in his films. A humane face of Cinema is clearly visible in *Mother India*. Land and related issues form the backdrop of *Mother India* and trials of tribulations of *Radha* have been shown against this backdrop only. The issue of poverty and other problems which the peasants face have not been the scenario of the decade of the 1950's only. The problem and issues remain the same even in contemporary times with many farmers resorting to suicides after getting trapped in debt trap (akin to *SukhiLala's* trap in *Mother India*). It is a fact that the banking system has made strides since the decade of the fifties but the marginal farmers, despite this banking system trust money-lenders to save them from a precarious position. Rural India comes under a cycle of debt which continues to haunt the farmer and when he is no more; his family gets trapped in this cycle. In any distress situation, the moneylender (say, *SukhiLala* of *MotherIndia*) is the first call for help. Nearly 48 % of farmers across the country took loans from the money lenders and informal sources as per a survey conducted in 2012.

Land is the main resource and theme of *Mother India*. Land as a resource is mentioned again and again in the film. Land becomes a metaphor in the film. It is the source of happiness for the household of *Shamu* and *Radha* as well as a source of misery. The land is the metaphor in the film with which whole life of *Radha's* family has been associated. As a source of happiness, it is the land only which has been given the highest respect as it produces the grain needed for the survival of a person. Land here is akin to '**Mother Goddess**' of Indus valley civilization, the highest seat of reverence. Happiest moment scenes in the film are those in which the whole village celebrates the cutting of crops. It is a festive season for them. Land proves to be a source of misery also for *Shamu's* family as *Sukhi Lalaha*s taken away the land (25 Bigha) as *Shamu* is unable to pay back the loan amount of Rs. 500. 5 Bigha of land

which the family of *Shamu* possesses is sterile land and this piece of land only becomes the cause of *Shamu* abandoning his household and family. For a farmer, the land is not only a piece of land, albeit honour of the family and when a farmer loses the land, family honour is lost, is one of the messages conveyed in the film.

3.8.6 The depiction of poverty

Poverty in the film *Mother India* has been depicted in a realistic manner. The poverty is basically, a financial one. Film-makers down the line in Hindi film industry have got a habit of representing 'stylised' poverty in Hindi films. Mehboob is the film-maker who has got a knack for doing things differently and bringing in some realistic elements to his creations. *Radha's* family has been shown as poor and all the symbols attached to the concept of poverty are present in this movie. Some of the symbols attached to *Radha's* family living in penury are as following:

1. The family of *Shamu* is living under debt trap (A situation of farmers in many states of India even now)
2. The family of *Radha* has been shown in the situation where nothing is available in the home to eat
3. Selling of utensils and jewellery to make both ends meet
4. Vulnerability to the advances and exploitation by *SukhiLala*
5. Possessing a land which is not fertile and productive
6. *Radha* losing her youngest child to fever (Similarity here to Satyajit Ray's classic, *PatherPanchali* which was released in 1955)
7. *Radha* not able to save his house in the fury of flood

3.8.7 Dialogues in the film showcasing the problem of poverty and other issues

The scene where *Radha's* mother-in-law wants to sell off utensils to save the family from hunger. *Birju* refuses to give his 'thali' The dialogues in this scene depict penury as well as the bonding between *Birju* and *Radha*:



Fig. 1.14 Dialogue between Radha and Birju : Still taken from Mother India (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)

Radha, “*Tu Ye Thali Nahin dega Birju to Baba bhokha rahega, Ramu bhookha rahega, Dadi bhookhi rahegi*”

But *Birju* relents only when he realizes that his mother shall also remain hungry.

The scene where Shamu's Ox has died and SukhiLala want to take the control of the situation by offering his Ox but Shamu does not want any undue favor:

Ramu, "*Jaise Bail Mar Gaya hai, sare Ghar-Bar ko mar jaane de na*".



Fig. 1.15 Dialogue between Ramu and his Mother :Still taken from Mother India (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)

Ramu, "*Jaise Bail Mar Gaya hai, sare Ghar-Bar ko mar jaane de na*".

The scenes where *SukhiLala*, after learning that *Shamu* has left the home and *Radha* has got nothing to till her lands come to the house to offer his Ox for tilling the lands but *Radha* realizing that *SukhiLala* wants her honour to be compromised in lieu of it:



Fig. 1.16 Radha, "*Radha ke daam na laga.....*" Still taken from *Mother India* (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)

The scene where floods have ravaged the house of *Radha* and she and her family have nothing to eat. *SukhiLala* comes to *Radha's* house to offer his sympathy but his intentions are not right. *Radha* refuses to accept the chickpeas being offered by *SukhiLala*. *Ramu* is hungry but does not want to hurt his mother:



Fig. 1.17 House damaged by the floods : Still taken from *Mother India* (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)

Ramu: "Maa, bahut bhookh lagi hai"

Radha: "Phenk de , Phenk de chane Birju, "

The scene when the girls from the village complaint to **Radha** about **Birju's** mischief that he often teases the womenfolk of the village. **Radha** takes it as an insult to her honour



Fig. 1.18 Scolding Birju on the issue of teasing village girls : *Still taken from Mother India (Mehboob Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Radha, "Ramu, isko bol do, meera jhagda abhi khatam nahi hua hai. Dekh Birju, aaj kaan khol ke sun le, main teri har harkat bardasht kar sakti hun, par yeh marte dam tak bardasht nahi kar sakti To gaon ki kisi ladki ki izzat aabroo par hath daale, teri meri jaan ek kar doongi. Mujhe sakht nafrat hai in baaton se".

The climax scene of the film where **Birju** has abducted **Roopa** is the scene where the character of **Radha** is finally converted into the character of 'Mother of whole community' and her being as a woman dominates her character as 'mother of **Ramu** and **Birju**'



Fig. 1.19 The Climax scene of the film : *Still taken from Mother India (Mehboob Khan Productions Pvt Ltd)*

Radha: Birju, Rupa ko chhod de, main tujhe jaan se maar dalungi

Birju: "Tu mujhe nahi mar Sakti, main tera beta hunMaa"

Radha: "Main ek aurat hun, Rupa saare gaon ki beti hai, wo meri laaj hai"

Radha: Birju, main beta de sakti hun, laaj nahin de sakti

3.9 The style of film-making of Mehboob Khan

3.9.1. Inspired by Hollywood

Mehboob Khan is the first film-maker of India who is said to be inspired by Hollywood style of film-making of 1940's. This style was unique in the sense that narration and spectacle used to complement each other. The spectacle was constructed on lavishly mounted sets which would present a royal look to the visuals. Initially in the 1940's, his films had an expressionist look borrowed from Germany. Soviet Cinema's influence could also be seen on his Cinema of 1940's but as Mehboob enters the decade of 1950's his ambition of filming his films in Hollywood style clearly becomes visible and the production costs of his films increase in order to put more grandeur to his films. But Mehboob took care of the fact that narration should not be lost in the grand spectacle. For him, the spectacle was the lure which would bring the audiences to the theatre. His frequent trips to Hollywood had made him familiar with the names like Cecil B De Mille and Mike Todd. *Aan*, released in 1952 got him the international recognition he was craving for. Though the film was well praised by Cecil De Mille, it did not get an overwhelming response in Hollywood but it had a very successful U.K release. *Aan* boasted of spectacular sets like the sets of the films made by De Mille. De Mille had made the kinds of films where huge sets, props, and costumes had become necessary for his projects. Similar was the technique of Mehboob Khan. He was the first film-maker who took Indian Cinema to the international audience and wanted to showcase that Indian films are no less than its Hollywood counterparts in the matter of production value. The content in the films of Mehboob Khan remained typical Indian showcasing the problems of Indian people but technically he was highly influenced by Hollywood. A letter dated October 30, 1952, written by Cecil De Mille, the prominent film-maker of Hollywood and president of Paramount pictures compliments Mehboob Khan on making *Aan*. Even

after *Humayun* (1945), Cecil De Mille considered it to be the finest work ever comes from an Indian film-maker. Mehboob Khan, because of his film-making style may be rightly called as the first showman of India though this title has been more associated with Raj Kapoor.

3.9.2 Representation of social issues

Though technically, Mehboob was inspired by Hollywood style of film-making, the content of his films remained typically Indian. His films showcased the stories of the poor people, the confrontation between the oppressor and the oppressed, the gap between the haves and have-nots, the vulnerability of rural folks etc. Mehboob seems to be very particular about the content and theme of his films and the presentation of this theme in an entertaining way was his style of pushing the message of his films into the minds of the audiences. Mehboob never forgot that unless the message gets through the audience, it is useless. He used every commercial aspect, be it songs, dances, melodrama, high production values, grand sets etc to push the social messages across his audience. Common people vs. the rich Bourgeoisie class have been a common motif running through almost all his films. In, *Roti* (1942), there is a struggle between the poor tribal people and the capitalist class. *Najma* (1943) had the issues concerning education among Muslims as the main theme, *Elan* (1947) was a revolutionary film concerning about the backwardness of Muslim society due to lack of education, *Aan* (1952) had a commoner pitted against the ruling class and *Mother India* (1957) had a poor peasant woman pitted against the vile zamindar. Mehboob seems to have a deep love for his motherland as well as his community which showed in his films. Mehboob's name as a film-maker of the genre depicting social issue is commendable in the decade of 1940's as a majority of the film-makers were making films of Mythology and fantasy genre with a few exceptions here and there like V.Shantaram. But V.Shantaram's works, barring a few exceptions, had a stamp of Marathi sensibility over it and these films were more successful in and around the area of Nasik, Kolhapur, Bombay, and Pune whereas Mehboob's grandeur style and content of social issues had a Pan-Indian appeal to it.

3.9.3 Star Appeal

Another important feature of Mehboob's films was the presence of stars in his films. Every film industry creates a star system in their respective domains. Hindi film industry is no exception to it. Earlier, in the nascent stage of Indian film industry, actors and technicians were on the payroll of big studios. They were the employees of that specific production house just like the people working in other industries. Gradually, the power of the production houses which ruled the Hindi film industry waned. With the decline of major production houses in the decade of 1940's, a concept was born of freelancing. New production houses which came in lieu of the older ones had the convenience of signing any technician and actor. Though the technical team almost remained same belonging to a specific production house, the popular appeal of an actor decided the star factor of that specific actor. Thus, a system was born where the mannerisms, style, imagery, off-screen image of an actor gave him a cult status and the actors became all-powerful despite some of the producers and director being the big names. Mehboob also depended on this star appeal of the actors. His belief was that face value of a popular actor was necessary to sell the film and to maximize its reach. Nargis, Dilip Kumar, Noorjahan, Suraiya, Madhubala and to some extent Surendra were already stars in the system that had taken birth in Indian film industry.

Nargis was well absorbed in R.K.Films and had given some of the very memorable films made under that banner. She had got an immense popularity and appeal when Mehboob had signed her for *Mother India*. *Jugnu* (1947), *Shaheed* (1948) and *Mela* (1948) had made Dilip Kumar a star on his own and were riding a wave of popularity when Mehboob signed him for *Andaz* (1949). Suraiya had not tasted big commercial success in her initial years but she was a singing star which mattered a lot to the film-makers of that era. Mehboob encashed her popularity as a singing star in *Anmol Ghadi* in which another singing star of that era, Noorjahan also acted. This was pre-Lata Mangeshkar era and lilting music with soulful lyrics was a prominent step in achieving success in those times. Mehboob seemed to be well aware of this fact. Similarly, Madhubala also had attained a star status with her film, *Mahal* made under

the banner, Bombay Talkies. She acted in Mehboob Khan's *Amar*. Mehboob's films had an amalgam of big stars and new talented actors.

3.10 Interviews conducted during the study

A.Rai²⁰ while talking telephonically with the researcher, has stated that often a creative artist is known by his one iconic work. In the case of Mehboob Khan, it is *Mother India* which has put Mehboob on a high pedestal. *Mother India*, a remake of the earlier work of Mehboob, *Aurat* has given an international recognition to Mehboob Khan. He is the film-maker who is proficient in telling the stories of hinterland. According to the film-maker, *Mother India* deserved the Oscars but never got one (telephonic interview, April 7, 2019)

P.Malhotra²¹, international fame artist considers Mehboob Khan as a very progressive man despite his illiteracy. He considered Mehboob Khan as a master film-maker to be created by the school of life. *Mother India* is best example of the values in Cinema. Malhotra opines that values might have been changed but the core values remain the same. The problem of villagers remain the same. The debt trap is similar as it was beforehand so the relevance of film-makers like Mehboob Khan still holds value (telephonic interview, April 7, 2019)

Film Critic S.Sharma²², in a telephonic chat (April 6, 2019) with the researcher opines that *Mother India* by Mehboob Khan remains a cult classic. The film, in her eyes is incomparable. She lauds the role of the landlord as played by Kanhaiya Lal. According to her, "The times were such that Indian banking system was coming up still the rural folks flocked to the local landlords because of lesser formalities in getting the amount needed for the farming".

²⁰ Amit Rai is internationally recognized film-maker famous for his award winning film, *Road to Sangam*.

²¹ Pavan Malhotra has been associated with film industry for last 30 years and has won recognition for his role in national award winning film, *Bagh Bahadur*.

²² Suparna Sharma is a film critic associated with the news paper, *The Asian Age*.

H.Singh²³ considers Mehboob Khan to be a pioneer film-maker who had specialized in making socially relevant Cinema (personal communication, April 3, 2019)

He hails *Mother India* to be a cult classic and the character of *Radha* is iconic. He considers the Cinema of Mehbob Khan to be relevant in contemporary times as issues of rural debt of farmers and rural poverty is still there.

While analysing the place of Mehboob Khan in Indian Cinema, Mr. H.Dutt²⁴ states that Mehboob Khan was a very tough taskmaster. Not only Mehbob Khan, all his contemporaries were very tough taskmasters. These film-maskers were like open books. If we talk about the settings in which Mehboob Khan worked, nothing was finalized in one sitting, many sittings took place with the people belonging to different departments and then only the output was there (telephonic interview, April 4, 2019). Talking about realistic touch in the Cinema of Mehboob Khan, Haridutt takes the example of the role of landlord as played by Kanhaiya Lal. While analysing the women characters in his films, he believes that the characters were very strong in Mehboob's films as in *Mother India* and *Aurat*.

B.Singh²⁵, when interviewed (telephonic communication, November 5, 2019) considers Mehboob Khan famous for his *Mother India* only.

²³ Harjit Singh is ex producer-director , Doordarshan Kendra, Jalandhar

²⁴ Hari Dutt had been associated with film industry in various capacities as assistant director, producer and director for last 30 years .

²⁵ Bobby Singh is a media creative consultant associated with music and film industry.

CHAPTER- IV

DEPICTION OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE CINEMA MADE UNDER THE BANNER 'R.K. FILMS'

4.1 Raj Kapoor-The film-maker and his legacy

Born on December 14, 1924, in Peshawar in Punjab Province of India, Ranbir Raj Kapoor was the eldest son of Prithviraj Kapoor and Ramsarni Kapoor. Younger Raj was ensured of a nomadic life in the earlier phase of his life as his father Prithviraj Kapoor was a famous actor pursuing the career on stage as well as on screen. Prithviraj was continuously on move with his theatre group, Prithvi theatres to various parts of India. Such a life ensured did not help young Raj in his education and he was often in and out of various schools, he was admitted to in various parts of India. Formal education eluded Raj Kapoor but he had gained enough experience in learning the various facets of dramatics during his travels along with the Prithvi Theatres troupe. Younger Raj had told his father, Prithviraj Kapoor that had got no interest in the academics and wanted to join Indian film industry to learn the trade and establish him as a film-maker.

Young Raj Kapoor was sent to Kidar Sharma to hone his skills. Prithviraj Kapoor ensured that Raj Kapoor did not get any special treatment in the hands of Kidar Sharma¹. He was an ace director at that time. Kidar Sharma appointed Raj as his third assistant. But the story of Raj being more interested in acting and posing in front of the camera often is well known in the film industry. Raj just messed up one day with his duty as a clapper board, caught the hero's beard in the clapperboard and it just came off. Kidar Sharma, being a strict and disciplinarian as a film-maker slapped his third assistant. Kidar Sharma particularly did not like that he had lost his temper. He wanted to repent for his behavior and having seen Raj interested in acting, he took a chance and gave him a break in the film, he was about to make, *Neelkamal*. This film was also to be debut film of Madhubala as a lead heroine. She had acted as a child artist like Raj Kapoor, in a few films. Raj had acted in *Neelkamal* and a few more

¹ Kidar Sharma is a renowned film-maker of Bollywood whose best known films are *Neelkamal*, *Baawre Nain* and *Jogan*.

Hindi films but his interest lay in becoming an independent film-maker where he could use his imagination in every department of film-making. He was not to be bound by the diktats of other producers and directors.

Thus was born, the famous banner, R.K.Films in 1947 with an office at Famous Studios² and he produced and directed his first film *Aag*.

Raj Kapoor rose to become one of most influential film-makers of his times in the times to come. His studios, R.K.Studios became the most influential address for the newcomers trying to get the hold in the film industry. Raj Kapoor was not only a popular actor, producer, and director; he was arguably one of the most controversial figures in the film industry also. It seems that earlier socially –oriented Cinema helped Raj Kapoor in the labeling of him as an intellectual film-maker but Raj Kapoor always considered himself as a popular film-maker who just wanted to entertain masses with an inkling of some social message in his films. He did not want masses to read much into his movies in the name of social messages. His style of making socially-oriented films follows the distinct pattern of Hindi film-making taking care of all the commercial elements. He could not establish himself in the league of New wave film-makers due to this fact only. But Pan-Indian and international appeal of his films assured a mass following unprecedented in the history of Hindi film industry. His *Awara* and *Shri 420* are touted as earlier examples of Indian realist Cinema inspired by the neo-realist style of film-making originated in Italy in the aftermath of Second World War. Deeply inspired by the work that Charlie Chaplin had done in the west, he had tried to incorporate Chaplinesque streak in his earlier Cinema but this streak was thoroughly Indianized. His association with Khwaja Ahmed Abbas³ was a unique one and this combination was behind the early international recognition of Raj Kapoor. Abbas was a Marxist whose leftist leanings had inspired his early scripts for Raj Kapoor. According to Shashi Kapoor, the combination of these two men was unique in the sense that Raj Kapoor added romanticist elements to the depth of

² Famous studios is located in Mahalaxmi area of Mumbai.

³ Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, born in 1916 is famous for his work in offbeat Cinema. He made his name in the film industry as script-writer, producer and director. He has won four national awards for his Cinema.

thoughts⁴ of Abbas. Raj Kapoor's earlier works, *Awara*, *Shri 420*, *Boot Polish* and *Jagte Raho* had clearly marked his path as a different film-maker who wanted to carve a niche for him within the set parameter of popular film-making. Abbas himself had also made films as producer-director but he was unable to produce that impact which he created in combination with Raj Kapoor⁵.

Raj Kapoor had no political ideology of his own. He was not inclined to tread a specific political line though he was clearly influenced by Nehruvian ideology just like Bimal Roy, and Mehboob Khan. For Raj Kapoor, humanism was the most important ideology He believed in the common people and the major characters in the films made under his banner had raised issues concerning with the common people only. Raj Kapoor in his personal life was a down to earth person who never pretended to be an intellectual or belonging to high society.

Bunny Reuben, in general, has talked about Raj Kapoor's knowledge about the rich legacy of music of all kinds. He has stated that Raj Kapoor was explored to rich artistic and musical life of Bengal and this often reflected in his films.

According to H.Singh, the canvas of Cinema of Raj Kapoor was always large. He had a knack of telling his story in a unique way. Raj Kapoor stamp was visible in every film that he made. (personal interview, April 3, 2019)

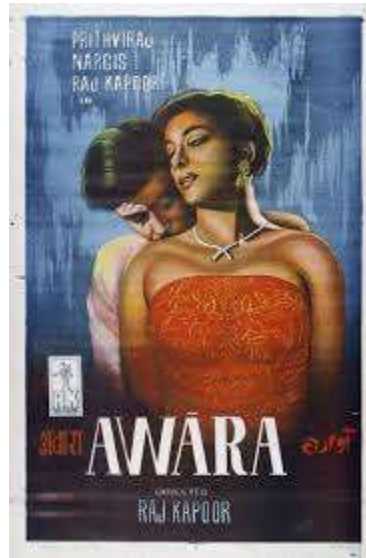
⁴ Taken from a documentary on Raj Kapoor by Simi Grewal.

⁵ Abbas had produced the films like *Shehar aur Sapna*, *Bambai Raat ki Baahon mein* and *Saat Hindustani* but these films were box-office disasters.

**4.2 Table mentioning the Hindi films made under the banner ‘R.K.Films
‘depicting’ various social issues**

S No	Release Year	Title of the Movie	Production House	Director	Social Issue Taken
1	1951	<i>AWARA</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Poverty, Initiation to Crime, Class Conflict
2	1954	<i>BOOT POLISH</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Child Labour, Poverty
3	1955	<i>SHRI 420</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Poverty and Rehabilitation of marginalized elements
4	1959	<i>JAGTE RAHO</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Societal Decay
5	1960	<i>JIS DESH MEIN GANGA BEHTI</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Rehabilitation of marginalized elements
6	1978	<i>SATYAM SHIVAM SUNDARAM</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	The crisis of Conscience and Women related issues
7	1982	<i>PREM ROG</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Women related issues
8	1985	<i>RAM TERI GANGA MAILI</i>	R.K. Films	Raj Kapoor	Exploitation of Women and Societal decay

4.3 AWARA (1951)⁶



Release Year: 1951

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Raj Kapoor

Starring: Prithviraj Kapoor, Raj Kapoor, Nargis, K.N.Singh and others

Awara, released in 1951 was a resounding success not only in India but abroad also especially the erstwhile Soviet Union, China and Eastern European countries. The film made Raj Kapoor, an overnight star. The film rightly represents the amalgam of commercial elements and a touch of realism.

Social issues taken

1. Poverty
2. Initiation of Crime
3. Class Conflict

4.3.1 Plot

The central theme of the film is the premise that criminals are not born, they are created by the society and it is not necessary that a child taking birth in a good home

⁶ Film poster and film crew details: https://Wikipedia.org/wiki/Awara_film

shall become a civilized man only. It is his upbringing that shall determine his conduct in the society.

The film opens with a court scene where *Raj* (Raj Kapoor) has been facing a trial and is accused of attacking *Justice Raghunath* (Prithviraj Kapoor). *Rita* (Nargis) is the defence lawyer for *Raj*. During the verification and cross-verification, the film moves into the flashback.

Jagga, a bandit (K.N.Singh) abducts the wife *Leela* (Leela Chitnis) of *Raghunath*, who at that time is a famous lawyer. *Jagga* is of the belief that *Raghunath* had wrongly convicted himself of the crime of rape on the prenotion that as *Jagga's* father was a notorious man so *Jagga* was bound to be a bad man. On finding *Leela* to be pregnant, *Jagga* sends her back to her home. *Raghunath* on finding his wife to be pregnant refuses to accept her and consider her as the infidel. *Jagga* takes her with him and the son is now being raised in the slum area of Bombay. *Leela* is trying hard to instil good and moralistic values in the young *Raju*. He goes to school as well as work as a shoeshine boy. In the school, he is on friendly terms with *Reeta*. On a visit to *Reeta's* home, on the occasion of her birthday, he comes face to face with Judge *Raghunath* who does not have any liking for *Raju* on the pretext that he is poor and does not belong to a good family. *Leela* and her son are mired in the life of poverty. Circumstances push younger *Raju* into the world of crime and *Jagga* becomes his mentor in this world of crime. Leading such a life, *Raju* once again meets *Reeta* (Nargis) who has now become a lawyer and after the death of her father, *Raghunath* is his guardian. She takes *Raj* as a good man not knowing about the profession of *Raj*. *Raj* and *Reeta* come close to each other but *Raghunath* objects to this friendship on the issue poverty and *Raj* belonging to a family who is not up to the status of that of *Raghunath*.

Again, the occasion is the birthday party of *Rita* and *Raj* brings for *Rita*, the present which he has stolen from Judge *Raghunath*. *Rita* comes to know about the reality of *Raj*. He confesses to his bad deeds and starts leading a life of an honest man. *Rita* helps *Raj* in his new life.

Circumstances force *Raj* to know about the truth that Judge *Raghunath* was his father and after knowing that how he and his mother had suffered in the hands of *Raghunath*, *Raj* wants to kill the judge but is unsuccessful in this pursuit. He faces the trial where *Rita* defends him citing the circumstances which had forced *Raju* to turn towards the life of crime. *Raj* decides not to defend himself and holds poverty and indifference of society towards the children like him for embracing the life in crime. Judge *Raghunath* ultimately accepts *Raj* as his son. He is sentenced to three years for his life in the world of crime.

4.3.2 Central Theme of *Awara*

Criminals are not born, they are created by the society, is the central point around which the story of *Awara* has been woven. Raj Kapoor, after the success of his earlier film, *Barsaat* had chosen this story by Khwaja Ahmed Abbas for his next cinematic creation. Abbas, being an artist of non-conventional nature had this story in his mind where he could present the scenario in a Marxist and humanist way. *Awara* was not only influenced by the socialist writer Abbas, it had another form of inspiration in form of Shailendra, and the poet who was a close team member in R.K.Films set up. Shailendra genuinely believed that in order to checkmate hunger, poverty, economic underdevelopment, and class inequality, it was absolutely necessary to dissipate the idea of humanitarian socialism among the masses. Even Raj Kapoor credits the perfect timing of the script of *Awara*. “This script came exactly at that time when India was evolving a new social concept and acceptance for millions of those people and just not the handful of the haves but the rest of have-nots on one side”.

While discussing the film *Awara*, one must be in knowhow of socio-economic conditions prevalent in India in 1947. British rule had ended leaving behind a society shaken by the after-effects of British leaving India. The economic structure of the society had weakened considerably with the migration of human beings on a large scale affecting the country's economy further. Scenarios of hunger, poverty, and unemployment were common in the streets of large urban conglomerates and Bombay was no exception to this scenario. This scenario fuelled the storyline of *Awara* to some extent.

Writing about Raj Kapoor and his association with K.A. Abbas, Abbas clarifies that while no great ideologue, he was not allergic to ideas. Indeed, with his basic sympathy for the case of common man, he was more amenable to the socially progressive ideas and humanist ideals, so long as their presentation does not interfere with the popularity potential of his films.

Awara, made under the banner of R.K. Films was made under the impact of neo-realism. Though the first international film festival held in India in 1952 gave the chance to many film-makers to watch and observe the Cinema other than the movies from Hollywood, Raj Kapoor had started depicting the issues before that only and in K.A. Abbas, he had a Marxist script-writer in his team. *Awara* rightly combines the elements of socially conscious cinema with progressive causes and the representation of Indian reality of post-independence era without compromising on the important aspect of songs, dances and make-believe world. It is the reason that despite making socially relevant Cinema, Raj Kapoor has never been categorized as a parallel Cinema maker. His place in the world Cinema is due to his entertaining appeal.

Commenting on the title *Awara*, Gayatri Chatterji mentions that the title *Awara* itself is very significant socially and the word *Awara* should not be taken in the negative sense⁷. The character of *Awara* as Raj Kapoor has visualized in the film is a poor fellow; he has got no money and is not bound to the ways of society. *Awara* can be engaged in any kind of activity. Circumstances are responsible for the creation of such a character. According to Chatterji, such characters were to be found in abundance in the literature written in 19th and early 20th centuries like *Oliver Twist* and Charles Dickens.

Kapoor himself saw the film as representing the innocence of the republic, which was born just a year before the film was released, and learning to cope with a new and a difficult world. To quote Raj Kapoor, “*Awara* came at a time when films were of a totally different nature. We still had remnants of British imperial dominance and we wanted a new social order. I tried to create a balance between entertainment and what I had to say to people. *Awara* had everything. It had the theme of class distinction. It

⁷ Chatterji, Gayatri. 1992. *Awara*, India: Wiley Eastern.

had the greatest juvenile romantic story wrapped in the poverty that the post-independence era had inherited. It bloomed like a lotus in the mud and it went to people as something they had never seen before. Could this ever happen, to a young man in such circumstances? With a song on his lips and a flower, he went through all the ordeals that socio-economic disruptions could bring about. The change that people wanted, they saw in the spirit of the young man, who was the vagabond, the *Awara*.”

Awara is a product of a beautiful creative collaboration between Raj Kapoor and Khwaja Ahmed Abbas. He had always respected Raj Kapoor as a master technician whose sense of the popular was virtually infallible while Raj Kapoor acknowledged the integrity of the writer and always consulted Abbas before making any changes to his scripts.

Post-independence India was bestowed with a majority of problems and an underlying tension was affecting the social consciousness of the nation. India was changing, established norms and values had been in shattering stage and the people were expecting new ideas and norms. Nehruvian ideology was in vogue and a few films were depicting the problems of poverty, filth, squalor, rural-urban migration and such other issues. *Awara* depicted the issue of poverty in detail along with other issues. A major issue, apart from poverty, in this film, is the central point in the debate, how criminals are formed or created? How a vagabond is produced in a society is the moot question which his film tries to figure out. There are many conflicting theories, how a criminal is produced, the film tries to resolve the issue by taking the side that environment, the society and the upbringing are more important in producing a criminal in the society. *Awara* becomes unique in the sense that while tackling certain social issues the director has taken the help of mythical elements in abundance to push his story. The mythical elements in *Awara* are symbolized by the name of the judge *Raghunath* itself. How, he abandons his wife *Leela* who is pregnant also remind the viewers of one of the episodes of the epic, Ramayana. Raj Kapoor's films have shown a confluence of modernity and tradition in most of the films and this is clearly reflected in *Awara* also. On one side, K.A. Abbas has written the story containing the elements which are clearly Marxist and socialist in nature and on the other hand Raj Kapoor has introduced the elements of mythology in the film which is a clear

indicator of the director engaging the audience in one of the episodes from the Epic Ramayana which is retold through the eyes of Judge *Raghunath*.

4.3.3 Reviews of the film

Reviewing *Awara*, the reviewer in the film magazine FilmIndia has hailed the movie to be the best picture of 1951. To quote the review, “The story is a subject of great social significance in this country of millions with the poverty, starvation, social injustice and innumerable adjustments in life⁸”.

Awara got rave reviews in the film magazines of that time and almost everyone lauded the story, screenplay, and music of the film. One criticism of the film which one finds in the magazine FilmIndia is that of sets. The reviewer has only found that the set design and structure of the film does not comprehend with the reality. Raj Kapoor has often been compared with Charlie Chaplin in the sense that both the maestros have raised the voice of the downtrodden in their films in a manner and pattern very similar to each other.

4.3.4 The Chaplinesque traits found in *Awara*

Some distinct Chaplinesque traits can be seen in *Awara*:

- There is a scene of a courtroom speech by the character, *Raj*, during the climax of the film where he talks about the unjust society and system. The scene is a takeoff from Chaplin’s *Monsieur Verdoux* speech.



Fig. 2.1 Raj in the court during the climax scene: *Still taken from Awara (R.K. Films)*

⁸ Patel, Babu Rao. 1952. Review of Film *Awara*, in *Film India*, p. 49.

The dialogues in the courtroom reflect the injustice done to Raj and the circumstances which had compelled Raj to embrace crime:

Rita: *Ab Aap jaante hain ki wo kyu aur kaise apradh ke raaste pe pad gaya.....apradhi wo nahin, apradhi uska baap hai.....Agar Raj ko uske apradh ki sazaa di jati hai to uske baap ko bhi sazaa milni chahiye....*

Raj, when asked by the Judge if he wanted to speak in his defence:

Raj: *Apradh banne ke baad kam se kam itni azaadi to mili ki apni aawaz Aap tak pahunchta sakun.....*

Kya Aap samajhte hain ki mujhe phansi देने se apradh, hinsa aur krodh jo faila hua hai, wo samapt ho jayega..... Apradh ke keede mujhe apne Maa-Baap se nahin mile, yeh us gatar se mile the Jo hamari chawl ke paas behta hai.....



Fig. 2.2 Rita in the court sermonizing on how criminals are born: *Still taken from Awara (R.K. Films)*

- Gas lamp post scenes from the film carry echoes from Chaplin's film, *Easy street*, *Citylights* and *The Kid*.



Fig. 2.3 The scene reminiscent of Chaplin's style: *Still taken from Awara (R.K. Films)*

4.3.5 The Class Conflict

Awara is the film which initiates the journey of Raj Kapoor as a socially conscientious film-maker. A foreign magazine has stated that *Awara* is perhaps the most viewed Indian film in the world through various means of projecting. *Awara* remains the film which has been loved by the communist bloc countries as well as the U.S.A. The Worldwide appeal of this film has remained unparalleled and time-tested. The social issues which had been depicted in *Awara* remain as important even today as these were in the decade of 1950's. How the persons sitting in the upper echelons of society perceive and judge the persons living in the conditions which are far different from the conditions of people belonging to higher strata. The people belonging to higher strata often holds an image of the people living in slums or poor quarters of society as of criminal bent of mind. This image is often reflected in the behavior of the persons belonging to upper strata towards the persons belonging to proletariat class. Certain assumptions take birth in the minds of upper-class people which are very hard to break and a struggle ensues thus a cold war or an invisible class struggle takes birth. This is what happens in the film *Awara* also and *Raju* is taken to be of a criminal bent of mind only on the premise that he lives in the slum area and does not know about his father's exact status and place in the society. The circumstances and deprivation in the hands of society have compelled the main protagonist *Raju* towards leading a life full of poverty and squalor. The deprivation and injustice in the hands of society is the main negative thing in the film and not the bandit *Jagga* who has also been wronged by the father of *Raju*. In the depiction of a wide gap between the aspirations of the upper strata of society and the proletariat class, Marxist undertones are clearly visible. The conflict between Justice *Raghunath* and *Raju* is not a personal conflict, it is the conflict between the two classes per se. *Raju* is a criminal but his crime has not been taken birth due to his inherent nature. His circumstances especially his upbringing have dictated the life of *Raju* full of petty crimes. He is basically a motivator full of positive thoughts singing '*Zakhmon se bhara seena hai mera, hansti hai magar yeh mast nazar*'. Being a vagabond brings sympathy for *Raju*. His character being anti-thesis of the characters which were in vogue at that time become all lovable especially his Tramp image.

4.3.6 The Elements of realism

One of the factors responsible for the elements of realism in *Awara* is the characterization in the film. Opting Prithviraj Kapoor, Raj Kapoor, and Nargis to play the main roles, Raj Kapoor, the producer had already gone for realism value. Abbas was sure that casting Prithviraj Kapoor in the role of father of Raju shall lend a curiosity value to the film and would enhance the commercial value of the product. Nargis had already become a very important part of the set up at R.K.Films and this troika had lent a realistic characterization in the film which had got a social appeal and a certain message to be given to Indian society but the film did not deviate from the usual making style of Indian film-makers where melodrama plays an important role in heightening the visual appeal. *Awara* confines to the paradigm that it offers a series of sensationalist pleasure and spectacle. The co-incidences dominate the logic.

4.3.7 The question of poverty

The concept of poverty which has been taken in this film is that of economic poverty. The lack of basic needs and deprivation of a living where all the basic needs of a family are met, define the condition of poverty in which *Raju* and his mother live. The poverty has been a product of their circumstances, the concept of poverty as shown has not been hereditary. Despite being a poor boy and well aware of his conditions, *Raju* in his initial stage of life wants to study and work as a shoeshine boy as well so as to sustain his and his mother's life. His entering into the world of crime has not been romanticised by the director. It is an extreme circumstance of not having anything to eat in the house, when his mother, who is extremely ill wants to eat something, compels *Raj* to steal *Roti*. The theft of *Roti* has made *Raj*, a criminal. *Roti* becomes the symbol and metaphor of struggles of *Raj*. Transformation of the character of *Raj* from just being a *Roti* thief to a hardened criminal under the patronage of *Jagga* represents an underlying anger against the so-called high society belonging to honest people. Many scenes in the film indicate towards this anger. While coming to know about the house where *Rita* lives that the house belongs to a judge, he astonishingly says that a judge in possession of such a big house is quite surprising.



Fig. 2.4 *Raju* being surprised on such a huge house of a judge: *Still taken from Awara (R.K. Films)*

Raj: Bada shaandar makaan hai.....

Rita: Ji, Judge Sahib Ka hai....

Raj (surprised): Ek Judge Ka itna shaandar makaan.....

This indicates towards a hint of Judge *Raghunath* might have acquired his wealth by wrong means. There is a hint of a conflict here between the two classes. *Raj*, being a petty criminal considers himself as a man of integrity being wronged by the circumstances only where as some of the people belonging to the higher class amass the wealth by all wrong means.

4.3.8 The Grey characterization in the film

Jagga, as a character, is a representation of the native who continues to remain underprivileged and wronged. This underprivileged and wronged character is an outcome and product of an environment⁹. It seems that the environment in the question is the one where for years and years were a few persons possessing power and money had controlled the destiny of millions of others and the situation has not

⁹ Chatterji, Gayatri. 1992. *Awara*, India: Wiley Eastern.

changed considerably in the contemporary times, making *Awara* as an evergreen product with an everlasting message for the society. *Jagga's* character in the film is not an outright black character. The characterization of *Jagga* has been done to show his humanistic angle also. Such a characterization mocks the prevailing tradition in the society of having misconceptions about certain black characters in the society. Normally, the people living in slum areas and filthy conditions are said to be holding immoral values that always resort to crime. One tends to generalize the situation but the circumstances around such persons are often ignored. The film thus through the characterization of *Jagga* and later on *Raju* questions the hypocritical stand of people in Indian society. The grey shade of *Jagga* becomes visible in the scene where he let *Leela* go to her house. The scene proves that even outlaws live by a moral code. *Jagga* is an outlaw just to show the barrister *Raghunath* that his thesis about the criminals is wrong.

Hoffheimer has compared film *Awara* with the Hollywood film *Les Miserables* in the context of the scene where the young *Raju* steals the bread¹⁰.



Fig. 2.5 Scene of stealing the bread: *Still taken from Awara (R.K. Films)*

¹⁰ Directed by Tom Hooper and released in 2012, the film based on the 1862 French novel of the same name by Victor Hugo portrays the French society in the 19th century.

4.3.9 Strong women characters

Women characters in this film are also strong ones, especially *Leela* and *Rita*. The female characters in the film are not only props or glamorized figures. They are not central characters in the film but become the pivot point of the film. Though the name of the film is *Awara* but the momentum to the film is given by the main female characters, *Leela* and *Rita*. *Leela* becomes the crux point of the film as the story moves only when she is thrown out of the house by Judge *Raghunath*. She is disappointed by the scenario but not devastated as she gives life to her son, *Raj*, single-handedly. She is strong in the sense that despite being habitual of living a life of luxury she lives in the slums of Mumbai where the circumstances have forced her and her son to live. She is strong enough to motivate *Raj* to lead an honest life and study hard to become a Judge.

4.3.10 Feminist Thought

Rita's character has been built on the premise of progressiveness. The female characters at that time were mainly built around a coy image. These characters were built in order to glorify the Indian cultural tradition in which a woman could do no wrong. *Rita*, in the film, has been shown as a lawyer, having her own distinct identity. She becomes alter ego of our male protagonist. She is responsible for bringing *Raj* back to the mainstream of life. Her love is responsible for *Raj* being on mending his ways. She is sympathetic towards *Raj* in every circumstance. She believes fully that the circumstances in which *Raj* had been abandoned were responsible for making him, a criminal. In the struggle between the proletariat and Bourgeoisie class, *Rita* represents a hope who considers *Raj* as an innocent man. She is not a believer in the theory of her guardian, Justice *Raghunath* that a person born to a criminal shall remain a criminal. *Rita's* character has been designed in such a manner as to highlight her modern and progressive ideas on the forefront. The love shown between *Raj* and *Rita* is not the love which was being shown at that time in the films which were being made. *Rita's* and *Raj's* love as per many critics was as natural as it should be. *Rita* is the benefactor of *Raj* in every circumstance. Whenever '*Awara*' is on a wrong path, the image of *Rita* confronts his soul and he listen to her voice as the voice of his own soul. *Awara* is basically a male-oriented film but the emotional central point of this

film is the female protagonist. Male protagonist in form of the character of *Raj* is weak one whereas *Rita's* character is strong enough to guide Raj in the world. Raj Kapoor, being himself, the director of the film has tried to put the entire spotlight on his character but Nargis in the role of *Rita* has made the role memorable. It is the character of *Rita* only whose mere thought compels *Raj* to tread on the path of honesty, truth, and love. Raj Kapoor has given such strength to the main female character in the times when it was just unthinkable. *Rita* becomes his soul, not a mere shadow. She belongs to a class which is higher than the class to which *Raj* belongs but in the ensuing struggle between the two classes she shows sympathy towards him. Her sympathy towards *Raj* takes birth not only on the point that she loves him but she is aware of the social demarcations and complexities and wants to rectify those wrongs existing in the society.

4.3.11 The Problem of rural-urban migration and slum dwellers

Another major social issue that has always been there in the society is rural-urban migration issue and problems associated with such migration. Three films of Raj Kapoor, *Awara*, *Shri 420* and *Jaagte Raho* have dealt with this issue though the manner and content related to this issue is different in each film. In *Awara*, the rural-urban migration issue has been dealt with in the initial stage only and that stage of the film is the most crucial one as *Raj* gets his education in crime living in slums only. Slums have been shown as the places in *Awara* as the places where the children are not getting any education and they are initiated into petty crimes from a very early age. Slums itself are breeding grounds for crimes. The conditions in the slums are not ripe for upright and honest upbringing. The man thus raised in such areas is bound to have certain weaknesses which are acquired as the time passes. The negative shade in the film is neither of *Jagga Bandit* or *Raj*. This role of providing negativity has been thrust upon the circumstances which are dark. The darkness which *Raj* has acquired in his heart has come from his upbringing in the slums. For him being an *Awara* is a sort of heroic deed. As an adolescent when he asks his mother that why the children living in that area do not go to school like him, he gets the answer that those children are vagabonds (*Awara*). *Raj* innocently tells her mother that he also wanted to be an *Awara* like those kids. He is witness to the hard life and struggle of his mother for

survival. For *Raj*, his struggle with the society starts in the slums only, the circumstances where he has been raised. This struggle is very realistic in the sense that even in contemporary times, this struggle is going on. This is the struggle of a common man to get only basic objects for survival. The issue of survival amidst the big sharks had always been there and it still exists. Such a struggle ultimately takes the shape of a struggle within the man between his conscience and his acts to survive in this world. Ethics take a back seat in this struggle. *Awara* thus raises the concerns which are very basic that a common man has as much right to lead a dignified life as the persons belonging to the upper strata has got. Chatterjee¹¹ has also commented upon the migration issue and one direct reference can be found to the issue of migration after *Leela* is driven out of the house of *Raghunath* and then the courtroom scene starts. In the scene, *Rita*, the young lawyer is seen confronting *Raghunath* and blaming him for the Plight of *Leela* and *Raju* living in the slums of Bombay in a pathetic condition. To quote, “Because of this act of cruelty of yours, your blameless wife had to leave Lucknow and your innocent child was left to be brought up in the slums of Bombay” It seems clear from the reference that slums of Bombay were considered to be pathetic and were generally considered to be breeding ground of criminals.

The urban question and an important issue concerning the consumerism trend have also been referred to in the film *Awara* when the character of the young lawyer *Rita* has been shown on buying spree and shopping most of the time.

Awara raises the various issues wrapped in the basic premise that it is not necessary that criminals take birth in the house of criminals only. The male protagonist of this film raises the issue of exploitation and a wide gap between the various classes of the society as an aware citizen of the society. He is aware of the injustice being prevalent in society and this injustice has converted him into a petty criminal having a golden heart. He raises his voice against the injustice, is concerned about the future of so many children living in deplorable conditions in the dark alleys of society but he is not a rebel. Rebelliousness is not the nature of *Raj* who possesses an everlasting smile on his face. Raising the concerns about the unjust society, *Awara* is the film searching

¹¹ Chatterji, Gayatri. 1992. *Awara*, India: Wiley Eastern.

for the light in the darkness. *Awara* stays aloof from the formula which was to be adopted by the parallel cinema. Parallel Cinema, in the future, was to be an intellectual exercise which did not reach the inner echelons of hearts of cine-goers. *Awara* raises the issues in an emotional manner connecting with masses at large. K.A.Abbas is the man behind the progressive storyline of *Awara*¹².

4.3.12 Theories about Crime and Criminals

By hating a criminal, we cannot bring a change in the society, No man is born criminal. There are different theories about criminals being born in the society¹³. Raj Kapoor has based his film on the premise that society brings out the negative elements of a person to the forefront. The society where class division occurs on a large scale and a large part of society are forced to live in filth and squalor shall divide the society further and criminals are born out of this class division. The leaning of the character of *Raj* towards criminal activities has been based upon the Social disorganization theory which states that a person's physical and social environment is primarily responsible for the behavioural choices that a specific person makes. A neighbourhood fraying with poor facilities for its inhabitants is likely to have seeds of crime in such an atmosphere, according to this theory. Poor schooling facilities, poor sanitation, a sense of feeling of discontentment and poor opportunity to rise economically up to the level of more affluent classes are cited as the main reasons of crime, according to this theory.

Apart from this theory, the elements of social connection theory can also be applied to the main protagonist of this film. The theory states that a person resorts to crime in the company of a person with whom he is associated. The theory is applied to the character of *Raj* in the film as his association with *Jagga* is one of the reasons of him resorting to crime apart from his social, cultural and economic condition. These theories which have been applied in the film have got its roots in Marxism and socialism.

¹² Chaukse, Jai Prakash. 2010. *Raj Kapoor: Srijan Prakriya*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan. From the book, "Raj Kapoor: Srijan Prakriya", by JaiPrakash Chaukse, 2010, India: Rajkamal Prakashan.

¹³There is not one theory about the criminals being born in the society. Different theories about the birth of criminals have been framed time to time like Biological theories of crime, Psychological theory of crime, self-control theory, rational theory of crime etc.

4.4 BOOT POLISH (1954)¹⁴



Release Year: 1954

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Prakash Arora

Starring: Baby Naaz, Master Rattan, David and others

Boot Polish (1951) produced by Raj Kapoor was filmed as a small budget movie in which the issue of child labor, poverty and exploitation of marginalized people had been taken. Though the movie is directed by Prakash Arora, Raj Kapoor marked his stamp through various song sequences. The film got a special mention for Master Rattan at Cannes international film festival in 1955.

Social issues taken

1. Poverty
2. Exploitation of marginalized elements
3. Child labor

¹⁴ Film poster and crew details: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boot_Polish_film.

4.4.1 Plot

Boot Polish starts its journey on a dark night in some slum area when a social worker, carrying two toddlers is searching for the home of *Kamla*, a lady living in that neighbourhood. Mother of the toddlers has died of Cholera. *Kamla's* house is locked and the social worker has got no option other than leaving the toddlers in front of her house along with a letter addressed to *Kamla* to take the responsibility of these kids as they belong to his husband's family only. *Kamla* is not happy with the situation as she blames the father of the toddler for her misfortune. Meanwhile, John Chacha (David), who is a bootlegger, is sitting with the kids, when *Kamla* returns from work. Soon, the viewers discover that *Kamla* is the aunt of these kids. Soon we witness the scene where *Kamla* is teaching the kids how to beg. She wants these kids to beg in the trains and at other public places. The scene shifts to a few years later.

Kids who now had become adept and skillful at begging are shown as begging on the train. The boy *Bhola* (Master Rattan) and the girl, *Belu* (Baby Naaz) feel remorse at the begging but they have no choice for the time being. Both the kids have perfected the art of begging; sometimes they become blind, or fake some other disability and sometimes simply sing their way to begging. In the train and on platforms, both the kids see shoeshine boys. *Bhola* thinks that polishing shoes have got a certain dignity attached to it and earnings are more than the begging. He dreams of owning a shoe polish and a polish brush. He tells about his dream to *Belu* who also supports him in his aspiration but both fear *Kamla*. *Bhola* and *Belu* start keeping their hard-earned money in a tiny cloth which they hide under a rock. It is hard work but children are ready to toil just to live a life of dignity and to have some more earnings. There's a wily character in the shape of *chutku* who wants to steal their earnings. *Kamla* also resents that the kids are not earning much. Their childhood is lost in the hard work and *Kamla* further compounds their misery when they are forced to do household errands also. *John Chacha* helps them when they fall short of some money to buy the boot polish and brushes for their work. Finally, they are able to buy these things but their misery does not end there only. Both do not know how to polish properly. They ruin the socks and trousers of their customers while polishing the shoes. In spite of earning something, they are scolded by the customers. Here also, *John Chacha* comes

to help them and gives them some tips in good shoe polishing. Next day, the kids are successful in making good money. *Chutku* comes to know that *Bhola* and *Belu* have left begging. He threatens them to tell *Kamla* about it. *Bhola* bribes *Chutku* four annas a day in lieu of not telling *Kamla* about this.

The kids tell *John Chacha* that they had met a person near the bridge who was saying that anybody who would bring a bottle of tharra, he shall give Rs. Five to him. This is a trap to catch the bootlegger, *John Chacha* which the kids fail to realize. Police arrest him who, in the jail with some of the bald inmates prays for the rain which finally comes. But rain as a simile, if brings solace to some people then it befalls misery for some people as has been seen in a few films boasting of realism. Poor and homeless people often become victims of the rain. The children in the absence of *John Chacha* are left for themselves to fend. People stop having their shoes polished in the rains. *Bhola* and *Belu* are in a big trouble as their earnings are stopped. They do not want to beg now and are ready to starve. Police are looking on for the children. While trying to escape from police, *Belu* boards a train and gets herself adopted by a family. Meanwhile, *Bhola* is arrested and is sent to juvenile home. After coming out of the juvenile home, he tries to find some work but is unable to do so. As a last resort, he decides to beg once again. He is begging at Railway station when *Belu* sees him while going on a vacation with her adopted parents. She runs after *Bhola* who just wants to go away from there as he does not want to lower the dignity of his sister. *John Chacha* also joins the chase but falls down. *Bhola* and *Belu* are re-united in this scenario. The family who had adopted *Belu* adopts *Bhola* also. The miseries which *Bhola* and *Belu* were experiencing in their life turn into happiness. The film, which for most of the time has got realistic tone, in the end, is full of co-incidences and the happy ending is in the line of typical Hindi film ending.

4.4.2 IPTA and Raj Kapoor

After gaining political independence, a sense of national awakening, cultural renaissance and a sense of achieving social equality engulfed the Indians in general. A majority of Indians were now feeling that the time has come now to achieve a particular goal for India in which there would be social harmony everywhere. In the wake of newly found independence and partition, there was a need of maintaining

social harmony at all costs and to work for the eradication of class and caste difference. A few film-makers were also working in this direction, Raj Kapoor is one of them, who apart from influenced by the plays of Prithvi theatres, was also influenced by IPTA. K. A. Abbas, having his background in IPTA helped Raj Kapoor in achieving the goal of message-oriented commercial Cinema. Raj Kapoor, influenced by the spirit of times, used the medium of Cinema to create awareness about various issues ably assisted by the commercial elements of Hindi Cinema. His *Boot Polish* is one such endeavour which has got a clear social reformist content and humanistic outlook. The film raises many concerns and issues, in particular, the issues associated with the stark and dark life of downtrodden in a big city. The metropolitan city of Bombay, itself become a character in this film where there is a cut-throat competition in every field. The city thrives upon the class division clearly visible in the film. The haves has got every amenity in the world where as the have-nots of the society starve and find it very difficult to survive in the big city.

4.4.3 Boot Polish: A Stamp of Neo-realism

Boot Polish has been inspired by Vittorio De Sica's *Shoeshine*. *Boot Polish* came eight years after the release of the film, *Shoeshine*. This film represented the school of Italian neo-realism as it had taken place in Italy and *Boot Polish* was deeply inspired by this thought. Inspired and imitated to the core, *Boot Polish* represents one of the best in Italian neo-realistic school of Cinema. Of all the films which have been inspired by neo-realistic Cinema of Italy, *Boot Polish* comes closest and it comes out to be strikingly apart as the main protagonists are the kids and the storyline is fully submerged in the socio-political reality of those times. Post-war Italy is the scenario of desperation as Italy represents a defeated nation-state whereas India's representation at that time is that of a newly independent nation. The situation and scenario in *Shoeshine* are that of from hope to hopelessness whereas the situation and scenario in *Boot Polish* are that of from hopelessness to hope. Nehruvian ideology finally takes over the neo-realistic elements of the film.

4.4.4 Issue of Poverty and its by-products

Kabita Sarkar, commenting on the film *Boot Polish*, “It remains for me the most significant and sincere effort of the film-maker to date”¹⁵. Sarkar considers *Boot Polish* to be the most honest work of Raj Kapoor. Commenting on *Boot Polish*, Eliot Stein remarked, “It is in there with *Stela Dallas* and *Les Miserables*. Kapoor squeezes every drop out of every scene... and then a few more for good measure. The film’s oddly lyric neo-realism underlines an inordinate string of vicissitudes worthy of Victor Hugo.”¹⁶ Misery, sufferings, hardships and the slum are the words which are in abundance in this realistic film. The theme of opposition between poverty and self-respect runs in the film continuously. Extreme poverty is the condition in which *Bhola* and *Belu* are raised. The condition is same for *John Chacha* but he has learned to live life in this condition and is flowing with the tide of time. The kids, when exposed to different people doing some form of work to earn a living clearly feel that begging hurts their self-respect. There is a constant battle of the poor to achieve the basic amenities of life in an indifferent and at times a very hostile environment. The setting of *Boot Polish*, especially the rain sequence and life of kids is similar to the setting of Satyajit Ray’s earlier films especially *Pather Panchali*. Rain has been used by many film-makers as a metaphor of romance and love but when seen in reality, rain just brings misery to the life of poor people. It alleviates the already deplorable condition of poor people. Where, there is a lack of basic amenities and proper infrastructure, in that place rain plays havoc with the lives of the people. People living in the slum area are affected most by the rain. As there is no *pucca* house for *Bhola* and *Belu*, the shack in the slum where they are staying becomes useless. Rain is traumatic for the countless immigrants to the city forced to live in the shanties in the slums. The deplorable condition of the people living in the slums has been filmed by the director in a realistic way. The poor condition of *Bhola* and *Belu* are heightened by the onslaught of rain. The poverty of *Bhola* and *Belu* along with *John Chacha* indicates towards poor urban planning and lack of sensitivity towards the marginalised people.

¹⁵Cited by Sarkar, Kabita. in Reuben, Bunny. 1995. Raj Kapoor, the fabulous showman, India: Indus, p. 106.

¹⁶ Cited by Stein, Eliot. in Dissanayake, Wimal & Sahai, Malti. 1988. Raj Kapoor’s Films, Harmony of Discourses, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 46.

This scenario seems to be taken straight from life as in real life also; we witness extreme deplorable conditions of people living in slums.

To quote J.P.Singh on the condition of the people living in the slums, “The people in the slums live in most deplorable conditions with little access to effective social and health care services, potable water or sanitation facilities and are thus more vulnerable to epidemics and developmental challenges. The plight of the urban poor is a real one with 33% of big city's population living below poverty line in sub-human conditions. Poverty or misery is so transparent in the lives of slum-dwellers that there is no need for any criteria, measurement or probing analysis to recognize raw poverty and to understand its antecedents.”¹⁷. Similar conditions of poverty and filth are encountered by the protagonists of *Boot Polish* and the art comes closer to reality in a real sense.

4.4.5 The message of communal harmony

Social realism is everywhere in the film to see and it seems natural that petty crimes take birth in a society dominated by slum culture. The premise of Raj Kapoor's previous venture *Awara* was that the life of an individual depends a lot on the environment in which he is living. The surroundings and environment of the protagonists in *Boot Polish* is dark and full of gloom. *Bhola* and *Belu* are being raised in such an environment but instead of resorting to petty crimes, they learn the dignity of labour in such surroundings. They hate begging and consider begging to be undignified work hitting at self-respect of a human being. Living with self-respect and dignity is a major lesson which the protagonists get in this film. The director is successful in spreading this message through this film. *John Chacha* becomes motivator for both the kids. He inspires the children to give up begging and start polishing shoes to live a life of hope and optimism. The message of communal harmony is also spread through the film in form of *John Chacha* who's a Christian. He is the pivot around whom the lives of the children revolve. He belongs to a religious minority but becomes the inspiration for the children belonging to religious majority thus spreading the message of humanity.

¹⁷ <https://www.coursehero.com/file/24092613/Singh-Idoc/>

Discussing the Hindi film, *Boot Polish*, Bunny Reuben, the famous film publicist says that the film was a miniature masterpiece. In this film, perhaps the bitterest jibes are flung at a complacent society and the bequeathed social awareness of the creator has resulted in one of the most moving efforts.

Ritu Nanda has stated that the film *Boot Polish* spread the message of humanism by sending a positive message how rich couples can adopt street urchins like *Bhola* and *Belu*. Such an adoption process gives the kids like *Bhola* and *Belu* in the society a better tomorrow by educating them.

According to Pankaj Jain, if one looks at the most popular song of the film, *Nanhe Munne Bachche Teri mutthi mein kya hai*, many lines in this song indicate towards living the life with self-respect and saying no to the life of begging and alms. The song written by the lyricist, Shailendra also weaves a world full of optimism for the children. The song also rightly blames the capitalist class for the miserable life of the downtrodden classes. The question is raised by the children that why some of the people are living a harsh life whereas some people in the world live a luxurious life? Would the life be a balancer? *John Chacha* is perplexed by this query and he just motivates the children through this song to keep marching ahead for the goal. The dark night shall end and the golden morning would surely come¹⁸

¹⁸ [https://www.academia.edu/204075/Virtue Ethics_of_Boot_Polish_and_Dosti_as_Compared_with_Slumdog_Millionaire](https://www.academia.edu/204075/Virtue_Ethics_of_Boot_Polish_and_Dosti_as_Compared_with_Slumdog_Millionaire)

4.5 SHRI 420¹⁹



. Release Year: 1955

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Raj Kapoor

Starring: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Nadira and others

Written by Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, *Shri 420*, made under the banner of R.K.Films carries on the message of Raj Kapoor's previous movie *Awara* forward in a broader framework encompassing many issues which had come to trouble Indian nationhood at that time like corruption, unemployment rural-urban migration issue and decaying standard of life in the big cities as a result of crass urbanization.

Social Issues taken

1. Poverty
2. Migration and Rehabilitation of marginalized elements,
3. Unemployment
4. Crass urbanization.

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shree_420

4.5.1 Plot

Raj (Raj Kapoor) is a young man having dreams in his eyes of building a new and bright future in New India. He comes to Bombay in search of work from a small city. First song of the film, “*Mera Joota Hai Japani*” itself sets the nationalistic mood of the film and helps in building the character of *Raj*, idealistic to the core. Innocently, on reaching the big city, he asks about the employment opportunity and some work from a beggar (Kumar) standing at a busy crossroad. He, as a matter of fact, tells him that what qualification and eligibility *Raj* possesses to push his case for work and employment. Then we as an audience come to know that *Raj* possesses a medal for honesty and is a graduate. The beggar tells him that with these qualifications, he would not get any work in the big city, Bombay. The city has got ample opportunities to earn money with wrong means (420 opportunities) and honesty shall not bring any dividend for *Raj*. There is a shop at the busy cross-section of the city which deals with the selling and pawning of things. *Vidya* (Nargis) often comes there to sell her books and trinkets to make her ends meet. She is a poor school teacher who also has got the responsibility of looking after her ailing father. *Vidya* is idealistic to the core and remains so, not compromising in her ideology of honesty and integrity. *Raj* and *Vidya* meet at the shop when he goes there to pawn his gold medal. *Raj* meets a lady selling bananas on the pavement (Lalita Pawar) who is rechristened by *Raj* as *Kele Wali Lady Dilwali*. She takes *Raj* under her wings and *Raj* spends his nights with other persons of his ilk who lives on the pavement in front of the mansion of *Seth Dharmanand Sonachand* (Nemo). All these persons do sundry jobs for their survival. *Raj* meanwhile gets a job in a laundry. He poses himself as the owner of the laundry in front of *Vidya* whom he has started liking. She has also got a soft corner for *Raj* and is attracted towards innocence of *Raj*. Once while delivering the clothes from laundry to a hotel, he comes face to face with vampish *Maya* (Nadira) who gets to know about *Raj*'s talent and knack for playing cards. *Maya* uses him to win in gambling through cards. Thus, she introduces *Raj* to the wily tricks of the trade to lead a comfortable and luxurious life. At one such gambling game, *Seth Dharmanand* recognizes *Raj* whom *Maya* has introduced as a rich heir to an estate. *Seth* compels *Raj* to leave her and work for him full time to earn money by wrong means. *Raj* becomes a partner in the wrongdoings of *Seth Dharmanand*. *Raj* and *Seth Dharmanand* sells shares of

bogus companies and commits such other small frauds to earn money in a big way. *Raj* and *Vidya* soon drift apart due to the ways of *Raj*. The conscience of *Raj* is awakened ultimately when *Seth Dharmanand* plans to dupe the poor persons of their hard-earned money in the name of building cheap houses for them. *Raj* believes him and helps *Seth Dharmanand* in this project but soon comes to know that Seth does not have any plan to build any house and just wants to commit a fraud in the name of the scheme. This infuriates *Raj* and after a confrontation with the Seth returns to his innocent and honest ways of earning a living.

4.5.2 Shri 420: Rich in Symbolism

Shri 420 is rich in symbols in bringing about the hopes and aspirations of the Indians in the wake of newly found independence and also to bring about the pitfalls of post-partition India. The youth in those years had dreamt of a utopian society which was not materializing in any way. *Vidya* (whose name means knowledge) represents a life full of hard work and honesty yet poor whereas *Maya* (whose name represents a world of illusions and deceit) represents a capitalist society who has started earning money by the wrongdoings. *Raj's* coming to a big city in search of work also symbolizes a transition from agricultural society to modern industrialized society.

The elements of Nehruvian ideology and socialism can be seen at various places and scenes in the film. As stated earlier, with *Shri 420*, Raj Kapoor has combined various issues to be dealt cinematically. The film also solidified his tramp image which was firstly seen in *Awara*. *Shri 420* consolidated the image of Raj Kapoor as a common man in Chaplinesque style. Raj Kapoor has represented poverty in Chaplinesque style. Charlie Chaplin had taken the cause of the common man in Hollywood in the films like *Limelight* and *Modern times*. Raj Kapoor adapted the style and Indianized this streak in creating the masterpieces. Association of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas with this film also succeeds in bringing in Marxist and socialistic elements to Cinema. 'The common man' as represented by *Raj* shares the feelings and tribulations of the men living in the streets and pavements. These people represent the issue of poverty that was prevalent in India during the nascent years of Indian independence. Through his movies, Raj Kapoor has succeeded immensely in giving a message to the society while retaining the commercial elements in his films. *Shri 420* uses many metaphors

and symbols to put forward the point that poverty, unemployment, homelessness and such other challenges ahead of Indians were still present for a vast multitude despite British leaving the country. While dealing with various issues, Raj Kapoor leaves the sermonising tone aside and resorts to the pattern, typical of Hindi film industry, appealing to masses²⁰.

The confrontation between the haves and have-nots is clearly visible in this film almost in every scene. The script helps the audience in identifying that the world is heavily prejudiced against the world of have-nots and honest living. To symbolize the living of have-nots and poor, Raj Kapoor has used the symbol of the downtrodden people living on the pavements just in front of the huge mansion of *Seth Dharmanand*. *Vidya* becomes the metaphor for an honest living whereas *Maya* represents the gaudy lifestyle. *Vidya's* father is known as *Shastri* in the film. The word *Shastri* is akin to a learned Brahmin but he is shown as very poor and helpless in making his ends meet. Poverty as represented by the director in the film is economic poverty, not ideological poverty.

4.5.3 The Humanist Elements

The film through the sensitive portrayals of the characters and the dialogues in form of conversation help in portraying various issues ailing Indian nation which had got independence just eight years ago. *Shri 420* rightly helps in identifying the hollowness embedded in the name of civilization and development. Political freedom is of no use in the absence of economic freedom, is the main message that the film has tried to impart. Sub-issues occur within this broad parameter only. The characters may be poor and helpless in the film but they are not displaying negative emotions. They are happy living within their own circumstances not showing any negative feeling towards life. A grudge is present in the hearts of these people against the injustice and dishonest people but they do not rebel or resort to any revolution against these elements. Marxist elements are converted into humanist elements in *Shri 420*. Marxist ideology pushes a man towards rebellion and revolution whereas such rebellious moments in *Shri 420* are missing. The humanist tendency of 'poor' characters is shown in the film. The characters in the film despite facing various issues just want a

²⁰ Salam, Ziya Us. 2012. *Housefull The golden age of Indian Cinema*, India: Om Books

life of dignity to be given. The issues which were raised in the film in 1955 are quite universal in nature and are present in the contemporary times also, more or less.

4.5.4 Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and Raj Kapoor

Earlier works of Raj Kapoor got international acclaim due to its presentation style which was typical of Raj Kapoor and the writing of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas which was the soul of masterpieces like *Shri 420*²¹. Khwaja Ahmed Abbas was the man who had advised Mahatma Gandhi not to be against the films and in return, Mahatma Gandhi had advised Abbas to keep on writing thought-provoking articles for Bombay Chronicle where at that time, he was working. Converting some of the plays which he had written for IPTA into movie scripts, Abbas ventured into the territory of films with a mission and produced and directed the films which did not comply with the set pattern of Hindi film-making. The films created by K.A.Abbas did not do well commercially but when he partnered with Raj Kapoor, giving him the similar ideas of making films with a social message, both of them created masterpieces; *Shri 420* is one example of such partnership. This clearly indicates that the creative genius of Raj Kapoor lifted the script of Abbas, a notch higher. The intellectualism of Abbas mixes up with the emotional appeal of Raj Kapoor to create the middle path Cinema. *Shri 420* questions the audience, tries to find answers to the problems that have come to haunt India just a few years of finding independence. The utopian feeling of finding our nation as perfect after the British left from India was dwindling. The movie does not force anger on the cine-goers but helps them to find the answers in an emotional way.

4.5.5 Capitalist society and Shri 420

"The capitalist society controls the process of exploitation in a very cunning manner. To exploit the gullible masses, the people belonging to upper class can resort to using religion, culture, sentiments and sweet talk in order to get a result which suits this upper class". *Shri 420* points out to such a scenario as stated by JaiPrakash Choksey. A few scenes are indicative of using such a tactic to befool innocent people. The scene where *Raj* is selling toothpowder in his innocent way, it helps in attracting the

²¹ The typical style of Raj Kapoor in the initial years of his film-making combines the judicious use of elements of social realism with the commercial elements of film-making which includes the use of lilting music and soulful lyrics.

customers. All the people who were listening to the political discourse of *Seth Dharmanand* get attracted towards *Raj*. When asked if the tooth powder contains the mashed bones of the animals, *Raj* innocently replies that his toothpowder only contains the sand and coal only.



Fig. 2.6 Raj selling toothpowder at the beach: *Still Taken from Shri 420 (R.K.Films)*

Thus, the cunningness of a capitalist society gets in a confrontation with the innocence of masses. The cunningness of capitalist class and sweet talk is used to crush the dreams of innocent people.

4.5.6 The problem of unemployment and underemployment

The movie is a harsh comment on the gap between the haves and have-nots, the rich and the poor. There was a dream in the eyes of Indian people that all their aspirations would now be fulfilled but the political scenario just after eight years of independence had been beset with many problems. The movie is a satirical treatise on how even the dreams of poor people get exploited by the rich people. The movie is a telling comment on the modern education system also that how the system had produced graduates and postgraduates but for them no employment was available. The issue of unemployment is as relevant today as it was in those times. The gold medallist *Raju*

had to pawn his gold medal to get some money. Through this film, Raj Kapoor had pinpointed towards the problem which is contemporary in nature. The problem of unemployment which existed in the decade of 1950's has increased to a massive proportion in today's times. The movie also indicates towards a bleak future of teaching community through the character of *Vidya*, who is a school teacher but her salary is not enough to lead a decent life and a dignified life. The contemporary times also reflect such a saddened state of affair where the teachers are being paid pittance in comparison to other professions in India. Without being sermonising in nature, *Shri 420* looks at the life of poor people and lower middle-class people through the angle of realism.

4.5.7 Exploitation of the downtrodden classes

The movie is a telling comment on the pattern of exploitation in India which had started after a few years of independence when the youth of India got disenchanted with the state of affairs. A pattern of exploitation that comes through the film is that the capitalist class has always used the educated middle class to further its own interests. It is shown in the movie through the character of *Seth Dharmanand* that the people belonging to the rich class have got money but no talent other than a knack of exploitation of gullible masses and in the absence of any such talent, this class buys the talent of persons belonging to lower classes to increase their wealth. A nexus with the system helps the people belonging to the upper class create a demi-god type of character who rises from within the masses. The masses believe in this demi-god type of character in toto and are in awe of such a character. The masses believe that this character shall fulfill all their aspirations and shall help them in the remedy of the disease which is in form of poverty, exploitation, class gap and caste system but this character is just a pawn in the hands of the leaders and their stooges. The character of *Raj* is such a character whose image has been built gradually by *Seth Dharmanand* where the character cannot go to his honest ways and has been enmeshed in the wrongdoings²².

²² Chaukse, Jai Prakash. 2010. *Raj Kapoor: Srijan Prakriya*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, p. 77.

4.5.8 The futility of Higher Education System

The earlier scenes of the film rightly establish the scenario of futility of the higher education system where the education has just become a means of getting job only but due to corrupt atmosphere and nepotism, when an honest graduate fails to get a good job, his survival becomes difficult and he becomes a toy in the hands of capitalist class.

Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai contend that three thematic strands run through the film: the urban rich are society's parasites preying on the poor and the naive: the tragic comedy in life results in looking at the mask and not at the man behind it; evil derives its power from the moral weaknesses within man. Almost whole of the script of this film has been woven around these three strands²³.

4.5.9 The Problem of Migration

Human Migration is a world-wide phenomenon. Human beings migrate or move to a new place leaving the place of origin due to many factors. The phenomenon of migration can be permanent or temporary. Various theories have been ascribed to the phenomenon of migration. *Shri 420* also deals with the issue of migration from a smaller place to a big city in search of a job and economic security. *Raju* is an educated unemployed person like many other persons. His small town has nothing to offer to him in the context of employment and security (social and economic). He moves to the big city, Bombay in search of a better life. Like all the migrants, whether from the village or small town or from across the borders, he is also full of anxieties and deep fears. Migration, if, helps a person in providing a sense of security then it also instils dark fear in the heart of a person who migrates. Migration often sends a person to a risk zone. *Raj* also enters such a dark zone. Often in Hindi films, a city is represented as a dark zone and a place where the innocence of the person migrating from a village is the first casualty. The person feels displaced in such an atmosphere. The darker side of the city is introduced through conversations with the beggar, who is the first person encountered by *Raj* in the city. His statement that in a city like Bombay, there are 420 ways to earn money in a dishonest way surprises *Raj*. There is

²³ Dissanayake, Wimal. & Sahai, Malati. 1988. *Raj Kapoor's Films, Harmony of Discourses*, New Delhi; Vikas Publishing House, p. 51.

no place for an honest person like *Raj* to earn a living in the city further pushes him towards a situation which he had not expected but it fails to dampen the spirit of *Raj* who sees the positive side of the city in the *Kelewali* lady who is full of love for him. Migration of Human beings in search of greener pastures do not always bring about positive results and a life of harsh struggle begets a man who undertakes migration is one of the messages which the director has tried to put forward through the character of *Raj*. Assimilation of migrant human beings with the native population of the city becomes difficult as the native population of the big city considers the migratory population as encroachers on already dwindling facilities of the city. He only gets solace in the company of the people belonging to his own class, the slum and pavement dwellers. One example of such assimilation and imbuelement is shown when on learning that the new person's name is *Raju*; one of the pavement dwellers calls out, "Ganga mother, did I not say some day Raj (Kingdom) of the poor shall come. He has come". *Raju's* identification with the pavement-dwellers and fulfilment of their dreams is thus established²⁴. He becomes the symbol of aspirations for these persons.

4.5.10 Class Conflict

Class conflict, the conflict between the rich and poor is another issue that has been raised in the film. Such a conflict has been shown in a few films made in the decade of 1950's, but the style and pattern of representation of such a conflict make the difference whether audience identifies with the cause or not. Raj Kapoor has used many symbols and metaphors to represent such a conflict. In fact, he uses a song in *Shri 420* to play up this conflict. The song, "*Dil Ka Haal Sune Dilwala, Seedhi si Baat Na Mirch masala*" brings about a pathos in the life of downtrodden people through the character of *Raj*. The song talks about the poor being the sons of the same mother but brought up in hunger. It talks of being unfairly discriminated against by the police. It says: we are not free and prosperous yet. Our destiny is right in front of us but the rich are tripping us before we can reach it. While showing the pavement-dwellers dancing to these lines, the director intercuts to shots of the *Seth* being

²⁴ Ibid, p. 53.

disturbed by their din and calling the police, who come in the end and disrupt the singing and dancing.

“Dil Ka Haal Sune dilwala

Seedhi si Baat Na Mirch masala

Keh ke rahega kehne wala/dil ka haal sune dilwala

Chhote se ghar mein garib ka beta

Main bhi hun maan ke naseeb ka beta

Ranjo-gham bachpan ke sathi

Aansuon mein jail jeevan –baati

Bhhokh ne hai bade pyaar se pala/dil ka haal sune dilwala

Gham se abhi azaad nahin hun

Khush hun, magar aabad nahin hun

Manzil mere paas khadi hai

Paon mein lekin bedi padi hai

Taang adata hai daulatwala/dil ka haal sune dilwala

The song represents pathos and tears of not only *Raj* but many more people like him who are living a life of despair and remorse. The song talks about the desire of a poor person. It brings out the pathos that being born in a poor house does not mean that the person is bereft of aspirations and dreams. *Raj* talks about the hunger which has nurtured and nourished him. It talks about the hurdles that capitalist class creates in the way of poor people. In a nutshell, the song is instrumental in bringing the class conflict between haves and have-nots. This song through the character of *Raj* tells the story of millions of Indians living in deplorable condition.

4.5.11 The Problem of Homelessness

Homelessness is a major social disease connected with the rampant urbanization. People who migrate to the big cities from the peripheral and marginal areas often face this problem. Economically, they lack the means of owning their house and the cunning people uses this point against them to sell dreams of a small house to such

gullible people. A similar scenario is placed in the film also when *Seth Dharmanand* sells such a dream to the slum and pavement dwellers. In the pursuit of chasing this dream, those people take out their hard-earned earnings to the last and are ready to give this money to own a roof over their heads. But again, the seller of this dream belongs to the upper class and does not have anything to do with the sentiments of poor people. The interests of the two classes vary a lot and a gap is clearly visible between both the classes. These class divisions are quite visible in many scenes in the film. The poverty is seen in the film in many scenes. Their poverty throughout the film has been depicted against *Seth's* exploitation. The film is a testament to the exploitation of the masses in the hands of rich people.

4.5.12 Review

Rich accolades apart, *Shri 420* got its share of criticism and brickbats also. Criticising the film *Shri 420*, the reviewer, while reviewing the film in the film magazine FilmIndia has criticised the film by writing that film was full of farce with a lot of clowning and sermonizing. The critic rips apart the acting of Raj Kapoor as the main protagonist by stating that other than clowning, the hero had no other virtue. The protagonist adopts unfair and immoral ways of earning money on a slight provocation. To this critic, the main protagonist did not seem to be doing any hard work. The theme of the movie was stupid and confused, according to this reviewer.”

Despite this review, one cannot ignore the social issues raised in the film in the typical style of Raj Kapoor.

4.6 JAGTE RAHO²⁵



Release Year: 1956

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Raj Kapoor

Starring: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Moti Lal and others

Written by Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and produced under the banner of R.K.Films, *Jagte Raho* was directed by Sombhu Mitra and Amit Mitra. This film is considered to be the most realistic work of Raj Kapoor. The film won the Crystal globe Grand Prix at Karlovy Vary international festival in Czechoslovakia in 1957.

Social Issues taken

1. Hypocrisy in Society
2. Corruption

4.6.1 Plot

The film starts with the scene of a villager (Raj Kapoor) coming to a big city. Both the city and the villager are nameless. This is a ploy of the director to indicate towards the worthless position of an innocent villager in the big city which can be ruthless. The villager is thirsty and is roaming on the road in search of water. He finds the taps at

²⁵ ²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagte_Raho

that time of night as dry. The watchman is rude to the villager when he tries to drink water from a fire hydrant. The villager befriends a dog with whom he shares *chana*. The scene sets the tone for rest of the film. The villager sees a drunkard man (Moti Lal) who offers him alcohol which the villager refuses to have. On finding that the villager does not lie, neither takes alcohol nor he gambles, he takes the villager as a rare specimen. The villager returns the drunkard his wallet. The drunkard is surprised beyond his vision. But even the drunkard could not help the villager in quenching his thirst. He is left on his own to quench his thirst. He sees the drops of water coming out of a tap in the compound of a large building. His canine friend, the dog is quenching its thirst there. As soon as the villager puts forward his hand to quench his thirst, the dog's bark and the watchmen of the society takes him as a thief. In the confusion, the villager enters the building and the real story of the film unfolds in front of his eyes. He sees the hypocrisy and white collar crimes being committed in the building and is surprised at the events being unfolded.

In the first flat where the villager enters, he is overjoyed to see a bucket full of water but before he quenches his thirst, he is again interrupted by a pair of lovers who, in the wake of fear that the father of the girl might wake up, are finding some space to hide. The lover (Pradip Kumar) has got a fear in his mind not to be caught in the act. On the other hand, the villager is also afraid of being caught. At one moment, the lover and the villager find themselves on the same side of the fence but the lover does not speak against the thief lest he is caught. The villager is on run continuously in the building and witness many contradictions and hypocritical elements in the building. He comes face to face with the person who is making spurious liquor in his flat, he finds some people in the building engaged in the smuggling of the drugs. There is an illegal factory running in the basement printing the counterfeit currency and when these people get a sniff of police coming and searching every flat in search of the thief, they use the services of the charitable hospital being run in the building to get rid of the counterfeit currency. The doctor employed in the hospital helps them in doing so. Circumstances make the villager a pawn in this game of hiding and seek and the rich man involved in printing the counterfeit currency fills the pockets of the villager with this currency. The villager also comes face to face with a family where

the husband is stealing the jewellery of his wife in order to gamble on the horse races. He also observes a man searching for the image of a prostitute in his wife.

Thus, the film unfolds gradually over the length of one night and in the course of this one night, the villager witnesses all the crimes being committed by the people living in the building. Ironically, all these persons hold a respectable position in the society and their image is that of honourable and honest people. The film, *Jagte Raho* brings about the dichotomy prevalent in the society in a right way. In the end, his thirst is quenched by a lady singing '*Jago Mohan Pyare*', thus trying to awaken the conscience of the human beings.

4.6.2 Time-Realism

Jagte Raho is unique in the sense that Raj Kapoor for this film makes his team with the Bengali theatre doyen, Shombhu Mitra and Salil Choudhary, the versatile composer who brought his IPTA leaning to Raj Kapoor film. The movie is also unique in the sense that it brings time realism to the cinema of Raj Kapoor. The movie tells the story of one night only and in the movie, the time at the starting of the movie in the clock is midnight and the film ends with the advent of the dawn. A Bengali sensibility is clearly visible in the movie, in the settings as well as the costumes of the main characters. Influence of theatre is also clearly visible in the film and this is for the first time for a Raj Kapoor movie to witness such an influence. The message which the movie tries to push through the story is also unlike a typical movie and more like a tradition of theatre which was quite popular in Bengal at that time. Association of Shombhu Mitra with Raj Kapoor surprised many persons in the film industry. Raj Kapoor who had shown his prowess in the movies like *Awara* and *Shri 420* had been hailed now as a film-maker with his own unique appeal and style. With *Jagte Raho*, he has tried to break that pattern in order to create a masterpiece more in the mould of realism than to create a message-oriented entertainer in the mould of his previous works. The title *Jagte Raho* becomes a cry for the soul of a human being to remain awake in the wake of so much hypocrisy spread around in the society. The words *Jagte Raho* through the mouths of watchmen alert the sleeping people but in actual sense, re-awakening of the souls become the moot point of this movie. The movie is a clarion call to remove the masks behind the real faces of human beings.

Scene per scene, *Raju* is seen running in the building lest he is caught in the process he witnesses and exposes a range of vices that masquerade as bourgeois respectability. The scenes mercilessly reveal that only a thin line separates petty crimes from a domestic civility. The film revolves around the storyline of catching a thief but who is the thief in the building. *Jagte Raho* may suitably be placed in the genre of satire. While watching *Jagte Raho*, one gets a feel of film-maker hitting the norms and traditions of a civilized society very hard.

4.6.3 The elements of Neo-realism and influence of Satyajit Ray

Jagte Raho is the movie made under heavy Bangla influence. Coming from the house of Raj Kapoor under R.K.Films, as stated earlier also, the film was very unlike Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor's stamp on this film is visible in form of songs and music which became very popular like other R.K.Films offerings. Apart from that, the film looks like having the essence of Bangla art film made in the Hindi language. Raj Kapoor's first schooling in the field of Cinema has been associated with New Theatres in Calcutta. He had stayed for a few years in Calcutta and was influenced by Bangla culture and the intellectual impact of Bangla Cinema. He was fluent in the Bengali language. Through the film *Jagte Raho*, Raj Kapoor has given a tribute to Bengali sensibility and aesthetic sense. Raj Kapoor had always admired the Cinema being produced in Bengal but he could not settle himself in Bengal perhaps because of limited appeal of the Cinema being produced in Bengal which had got a regional flavour whereas, Bombay had already established as a centre of film-making having pan- Indian appeal. By making *Jagte Raho*, Raj Kapoor had perhaps tried to quench his thirst of making a classic film and to some extent it seems that he was able to walk along Satyajit Ray, the director famous for his off-beat Cinema. One might say that Raj Kapoor had been suffering from Satyajit Ray complex²⁶ and with the films like *Jagte Raho*; he was trying to get even with that complex. *Jagte Raho* was a miserable commercial disaster.

²⁶ Jain, Madhu. 2009. Kapoor's: The first family of Indian Cinema, New Delhi: Penguin, p. 94.

4.6.4 Episodic in nature

The film is also unique in the sense that there are small stories episodic in nature embedded in the film. The film overall is giving a message to the society but when one tries to cut the film into different parts or episodes, these independent episodes themselves are successful in conveying powerful messages. Different situations in the film are symbolic of fickle-mindedness of human nature and human behaviour. These stories also highlight the fragility of a man's image and his stature in the society. In general, various stories of this film pin-point towards the hypocrisy in the society where in the daylight, he is honest and full of integrity earning the honour from his counterparts in the society but the nights push a man towards the alleys of darkness. The people shown in the film are not criminals per se. They do not have any criminal record. They are the people belonging to a respectable stratum of society where the crime and the criminals have got no role and standing but seeing the behaviour of these persons, one gets an impression that there is a very thin line differentiating these people from the persons whom the society has branded as criminals.

The first episode in the film deals with the fear psychosis of a man. At night a man has entered the flat of his lover and the father of the girl does not know about the going-on in his house. The chaos outside the flat of catching the thief results in a fear psychosis in the mind of the man (Pradip Kumar). *Raju*, the so-called thief in the question has entered the flat in question. The lover sees him; they hide together under a cot still he is unable to publicly proclaim that the thief is here as he fears for his own image in the society. He is aware of the point that the thief is an unknown entity, he shall be caught and no one shall be bothered about him any longer but if he is caught at this time of night along with the girl he loves, his image shall be shattered. The important question that the film has raised here is that of building and shattering of images. A few situations come where the man has got ample time and space to help the others in catching the simpleton (thief) but the man (the simpleton villager, thief) is able to survive the situation because of fear psychosis of another person. The situation may be taken as being emerged from the crisis of conscience and it often happens in the human beings who are on slippery ground. Human beings coming face to face with such a situation does not dwell well for society as such situations help in

promoting corruption in the society. This episode brings about a lot in form of masked persons existing in the society. This story compels the audience to have a look towards the society which has become quite hypocritical.

Running through the building, *Raju* confronts many such situations which compel the audience to look into the mirror and have an open audience with the soul and conscience. Only he is not the protagonist of this film, very man who is watching the film becomes a protagonist of the film as the story of the film becomes the story of every man who is confronted with the crisis of conscience and fears for his well-cultivated image in the society.

4.6.5 The question of Hypocrisy

Raju hides in a flat where a person crazy for gambling at races (Pahari Sanyal) is trying to steal the jewellery of his wife (Sulochana Chatterji) so as to arrange the finance for his pursuit. *Raju* is hiding near the cot where the lady is sleeping. He tries to divert the attention of the lady, tries to make her aware of the plans of her husband. When the lady wakes up and becomes aware of the situation, she and her husband indulges in a battle and throws various things on each other. The irony is that in the room, the audience sees the two frames having the lines “*Pati Param Guru Hai*” and “*Patni Lakshmi Swarup hai*”.



Fig. 2.7 The scene depicting hypocrisy in the relations between husband and wife: *Still taken from Jagte Raho (R.K.Films)*



Fig. 2.8 The scene depicting hypocrisy in the relations between husband and wife: *Still taken from Jagte Raho (R.K.Films)*

The scenes become an ultimate satire on the marital life and the situation in which a majority of couples find themselves in after a few years of their marriage. The episode is a telling comment on the issue of deceit, dishonesty, and non-commitment between the married couples. It points out towards the hypocrisy that the religious scriptures have hailed the marriage in India as an affair of the journey of seven lives but defying all religious norms, in reality, the marriage becomes a battleground on a very petty issue. The issue of hypocrisy is at the core in this episode.

A similar type of situation is witnessed by *Raju* in almost every flat. The hypocrisy lies in every corner of the building. More the person is the hypocrite, more he rises to become a do-gooder and charitable. Example of the man, the *Seth Ji* (Nemo), who is involved in printing the counterfeit currency, can be taken here. He is the one who announces the reward for catching the thief. By doing so, he becomes a sort of Messiah in the eyes of the residents of the building and by announcing the award, he also wants to divert the attention of other persons so as he can clear all counterfeit currency. He is able to clear this currency with the help of the simpleton only when he fills the pockets of *Raju* with this currency when he is suspended with a rope outside the building. Downstairs, the residents of the building are thirsty for his blood but the money comes here as a rescue point. Money becomes god here. People forget the thief and are after the money only. This becomes again an ironical situation as Indian value system least gives importance to money and our scriptures hold the money as the illusion (Moh Maya) but this illusion is more powerful in the scene. Again, the director is able to pinpoint the hypocrisy of Indian society who is generally considered as more religious than money-minded.

Dr. Mahendra Mittal²⁷ has stated that the inherent message of the film lies in the last sermon given by the character, *Raju*. Incidentally, this is the only occasion when *Raju* speaks in the whole film. Through this message, *Raju* is able to pin-point the issue of hypocrisy in Indian society. “Whoever will come forward, I shall give him a thrashing with my rod. What is my fault? I am a son of a poor farmer who had come into the building in search of water. Why are you having the notion that I am a thief? I am not a thief. Wherever I have gone in the building, I have seen many persons doing the

²⁷Madhuri, July 1979, p. 64-66.

wrong things. I have seen a man stealing the jewellery of his wife, persons involved in smuggling of goods, people involved in printing counterfeit currency. You people are educated and rich people but you have taught me that without theft, no-one can become a big man. If you want this thing only then from today I have learned this message".



Fig. 2.9 Raju's only spoken words in the film: Still taken from Jagte Raho (R.K.Films)

The monologue is a hard-hitting one which is there in the climax of the film. The purpose of the monologue is to awaken the souls of the people.

4.6.6 A Hint of Marxism

The building shown in the film *Jagte Raho* becomes a metaphor for India. The building in the question becomes a microcosm for the country which is India. People shown as residents of the building belong to various professions and are from diverse areas thus representing a diversity which is common to India. Various floors of the building represent the people belonging to different classes. The classes have been compartmentalized in the film floor wise thus pointing towards the economic disparity existing in the building. Another ironical situation shown in the film is that the persons belonging to lower strata are more passionate to catch the thief whereas the persons belonging to upper strata have got certain images to protect. A very important question of white-collar thief's hoodlums is raised by the director.

4.6.7 Reviews

Jagte Raho has been hailed as a praiseworthy picture by the film magazine FilmIndia. Film India, the magazine has a standing of its own in the decade of 1940's and 1950's, while reviewing the film *Jagte Raho* held the view that the film was a scintillating satire with a purpose²⁸. It was a praiseworthy picture providing entertainment as well as food for thought. The building and its inmates symbolize the modern society, its hypocrisy, where the substance is missed and shadows are chased. According to this review, the surfaces are scratched and depths are rarely probed, where morality is a mask and prejudices are principles.

The above review clearly indicates towards the prevalent hypocrisy in the society.

4.7 JIS DESH MEIN GANGA BEHTI HAI²⁹



Release Year: 1960

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Radhu Karmakar

Starring: Raj Kapoor, Padmini, Pran and others

²⁸ Patel, BabuRao. January 1957. Review of film *Jagte Raho* in Film India, p. 70-71.

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jis_Desh_Mein_Ganga_Beheti_Hai

Released in the year 1960, Hindi film, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti hai* was based upon the central theme of rehabilitation of dacoits. The area around Chambal valley was famous as the place where many dreaded dacoits lived in the ravines. This film also marked the post-Nargis phase of the films made under the banner of R.K.Films

Social issues taken

1. The message of humanism
2. Rehabilitation of marginalized elements

4.7.1 Plot

Based on the original story by Arjun Dev Rashk, Hindi film *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* is a tale to reform the bandits. The story basically is of a simple village man, *Raju* (Raj Kapoor) who reveres the river Ganges. While wandering through the forest and barren land, *Raju* meets the head of the dacoit who is on run after a police hunt and is injured badly. *Raju* takes him to be a policeman and thinks that the man is on the run hiding himself from the bandits. On the other hand, the head of the bandits fear *Raju* as one of the policemen. But he gets convinced that *Raju* is just a simpleton. He helps him by giving food and water. The bandits come at the place to take away the headman. *Raju* is mistaken as an informer or a cop in civil uniform. He is dragged away to the ravines along with the Sardar of the dacoits. *Raka*, (Pran) the second in command in the ravines is convinced that *Raju* was making fool of everyone and every dacoit shall be in trouble because of *Raju*. But the *Sardar* is convinced of *Raju*'s simplicity, innocence and harmless nature. *Sardar* counters *Raka* and other dacoits that *Raju* had saved his life and he could not let *Raju* out of ravines. *Raju* continues living in the ravines. The familiarity with *Kammo* (Padmini) starts when *Raju* collides with her. *Kammo* comes to know that *Raju* had saved her father's life. The familiarity slowly changes into romantic angle between the two characters. This familiarity angers *Raka* who is in love with *Kammo* and wants to be Sardar in the near future.

Raka plans to use *Raju* in his evil designs. The bandits are planning to raid the township of Rajgarh. They get an opportunity to raid Rajgarh in the wake of a marriage ceremony there. The dacoits see this an opportune moment to loot the

jewellery, the necklace of the bride being a special one. The plan is that the dacoits would be under the garb of musicians with *Raka* on upfront with his *dafli*. A lot of firing and looting happens at the place of wedding. *Raka* shoots down the bridegroom, bride's necklace is stolen. In this chaotic situation, *Raju* realizes that his opinion about the dacoits as harmless socialists was wrong. These dacoits ruin the innocent lives. A distraught and disappointed *Raju* decides to go to the Superintendent of Police (Raj Mehra) to inform about the outrage and plan of Dacoits to attack Rajgarh. *Raju* shudders at the thought that the dacoits would be decimated. He then goes to the dacoits and pleads with them to shelve off their plan to attack Rajgarh as there would be Police there. *Raka* sends a dacoit at Rajgarh to see if Police was stationed at Rajgarh. The dacoit gets killed. Now *Raka* and other fellow dacoits are convinced that *Raju* is a police informer. *Raju* convinces the womenfolk that he had already told *Raka* about the plan of Police but *Raka* insisted of sending the man. *Raju* is trying hard to convince the dacoits to surrender for the future of their children. After a hard convincing, the dacoits agree to surrender. Thus *Raju*, from the simpleton changes into the reformer and succeeds in reforming the dacoits. The road to the climax is filled with many melodramatic sequences. The film, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti hai* combines a socialistic theme with Indian mythology in form of the revered river Ganga.

Raj Kapoor had been fascinated by Hindu mythic elements and was a deeply religious man. His reference to Ganga would again feature in the film *Sangam* (the title is taken to be an analogy as the confluence of the three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati). The film-maker would again come to his favorite river as the central theme of the film *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*. but the journey from *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti hai* to *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* would be the one in which the film-maker Raj Kapoor had changed his socialistic outlook full of Nehruvian ideas to the contemporary theme of pollution and defiling of women. Along the way his outlook also changed from the aesthetic way of looking at women to more skin show, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*, perhaps being the film bringing about this change.

4.7.2 Central theme of the film

The basic premise of the film and the social issue that is raised through this film is that of rehabilitation of marginalized elements, the dacoits. It is not that this was the only film in that era to talk about the reformation. V.Shantaram's *Do Aankhen Barah Hath* had also talked about the reformist idea at the core. Sunil Dutt's *Mujhe Jeene Do* also dealt with the story of the dacoits. The time was ripe when the newspapers were full of loot and murders by the dacoits in the ravines of Chambal. There were many dreaded bandits at that time in the ravines. Acharya Vinoba Bhave undertook a Chambal *padyatra* to plead with the outlaws to surrender. Some of the dacoits surrendered in the 1960's on this appeal and the second phase of the surrender of the dacoits was in 1972 as a part of Jai Prakash Narayan's *Sarvodaya* movement. It seems that the film, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*, to some extent had seen the coming time of surrender of the dacoits.

4.7.3 The message of Humanism

Non-violence and socialism had been the core messages contained in *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*. As stated earlier, the message had a deep relevance and appeal to the period in which the film had been made. Raj Kapoor had turned his attention from the urban issues to the rural issues. The problem of bandits is mainly a rural one and at the core of these issues, somewhere laid highly rigid caste system and oppression of lower caste people in the hands of upper caste people. The opinion of the film-maker and the message that he wanted to convey through this film was the power of compassion and love. It was trying to spread the message that even hardened criminals can mend their ways when approached with sympathetic and productive vision. When the criminals get assurance of mercy and humanistic treatment in the hands of the authority, the criminals get reformed. Gandhian trait of compassion, love and non-violence can be clearly seen in the film. Non-violence as a trait of the character, *Raju* has been brought on celluloid through many symbolic gestures. *Raju* saving the wounded dove from the hands of Dacoit children shows him as a compassionate man. He wanders and shuttles back and forth between the dacoits and police as he wants to save both the parties. He wants the dacoits to be reformed, not to be decimated. The evocation of family sentiment is another way of bringing

compassionate nature of *Raju* on the forefront. The reformist ideal of *Raju* has been put forward on the lines of Buddha and Gandhi. The premise seems to be mere theoretical but its practicality is evident when in real life the dreaded bandits surrendered, firstly in front of Acharya Vinoba Bhave and then later on, in front of Jai Prakash Narayan.

The Nehruvian ideal of socialistic state and socialism also gets mentioned in the film. When asked about what the dacoit's work is, he gets an answer from *Kammo* that they were the people who were engaged in bringing the economic equality. Hearing this, *Raju* answers it meant that they were the socialists.



Fig. 2.10 *Raju* and *Kammo* chatting where *Raju* considers the dacoits as socialists: *Still from Jis Desh mein Ganga Behti hai (R.K.Films)*

4.7.4 Representation of Socialist ideas

In his viewpoint, only socialists were doing the work of bringing equality between the different classes existing in Indian society. Nehruvian socialism referred to mainly a policy to bring the lower classes, upwards. Traditional socialism meant mainly socialism in the economy where as erstwhile Prime minister wanted to adopt certain elements of such an economy to bring equality to the society. For him, the mixed economy was the answer to the ills concerning India at that time. Nehruvian socialism has found takers in Hindi Cinema frequently in the decade of 1950's and 1960's.

Along with the surrender of dacoits, the moot question that was raised through the film was that of quantum and method of punishment to be given to these dacoits. *Raju*, the simpleton was worried about this aspect also. It is evident from certain scenes in the film when he shuttles between the police and the bandits that he is in favour of rehabilitation of dacoits with minimum punishment. The concept of hating the crime, not the criminals surface here.

The problem of rehabilitation of the dacoits (marginalized elements of the society) has been dealt with strictly on the basis of the ideology of compassion and love. In modern India, this ideology has been synonymous with the ideology propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. Historically, these ideologies of reforming the bad elements find its echo in the philosophy propagated by Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha. *Raju* is successful in instigating the emotions of the dacoits. He works on the premise that every man has got intrinsic good nature and it is only to bring forward the points of this good intrinsic nature that the problem can be solved totally. An eye for an eye shall make the world blind is the basic theme of this film. *Raju* convincingly tries to take *Bhau Ji* in confidence. He questions the future of the children of the dacoits. He probes that in such an atmosphere, no one shall have a secure future.

When the Dacoits, in reality, surrendered in 1972, motivated by the Sarvodaya movement of Jai Prakash Narayan, they were moved by the compassion and humanity of Narayan. When asked about the terms and conditions of their surrender, the dacoits reposed full faith in J.P and just had one condition that the dacoits should not be hanged. J.P.Narayan had involved the state governments of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in the surrender of these dacoits and advocated open jail system and land for their rehabilitation. It seemed at that time that the society had mirrored the situation shown in *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*. The situation and screenplay in the film *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti hai* is more a utopian and idealistic one which, at one point in time looked impossible to achieve. It is only the screen presence of Raj Kapoor and the film coming out of the banner of R.K.Films that has helped in achieving the impossible.

4.8 SATYAM SHIVAM SUNDARAM (1978)³⁰



Release Year: 1978

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Raj Kapoor

Starring: Shashi Kapoor, Zeenat Aman, Padmini Kolhapure and others.

The film produced and directed by Raj Kapoor is as social romantic drama which is based n the premise that spiritual love is truer than physical love. A metaphysical concept of love was present in this film

Social issues taken

1. Crisis of Conscience
2. Identity of women

4.8.1 Plot

The film opens with the narrator (Raj Kapoor) explaining the meaning of three words, “*Satyam*”, “*Shivam*” and “*Sundaram*”. The narrator makes the point that beauty is

³⁰Poster and crew details: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyam_Shivam_Sundaram

love and devotion and this feeling is in the eyes and minds of the beholder. Even a normal stone by the roadside can be converted into a stone of object. The film is basically the story of *Rupa* (Baby Padmini Kolhapure as young *Rupa* and Zeenat Aman as the adult *Rupa*). The narrator says that *Rupa*'s life has been full of ill-fortune as her mother had died while giving birth to *Rupa*. She is considered unlucky and no one is willing to marry her as her face is also scarred. The film goes into the flashback with Janmashtami celebrations at the temple. The Pundit is called home where he is told that his wife has died after giving birth to a girl child. She is named as *Abhagan* all over the village. Having gone to the temple to celebrate the landlord's son's birthday, questions her father that why her birthday was not celebrated. On pursuing the issue further, her father agrees to celebrate her birthday and, on that day, while frying *Pooris*, her half face is burnt and her father curses her more on this pretext. The transition of *Rupa* into adulthood takes place in the temple itself and she is taunted continuously for being so ugly. *Rajiv* (Shashi Kapoor) arrives in the village. He is an engineer who has come to the village to complete a dam project. He gets introduced to *Rupa* in the early morning when she wakes up the whole village with the song. *Rajiv* gets mesmerized by the song and thinks that the bearer of this golden voice must be very beautiful. *Rajiv* has been shown in the film as a character who cannot withstand ugliness in any form. When they meet for the first time, *Rupa* keeps her face half covered. They meet a few times and finally *Rajiv* proposes to *Rupa*. She tries to stop the wedding on the ground that *Rajiv* does not know that she was very ugly but finally she is persuaded by the *Panchayat* to marry *Rajiv*. He finally comes to know that *Rupa* is not beautiful as he had imagined and she had got a scarred face. *Rajiv* does not want to live with her and believes that she is not that *Rupa* who sings every morning. *Rupa* again meets him covering his face with the veil. *Rajiv* takes her to be the *Rupa* whom he has loved. *Rupa* tells him not to follow him and promises to meet him every evening. At the waterfall, *Rajiv* tells her that he cannot love his wife as she was not his *Rupa*. He wants to lift the veil of *Rupa* but she is not ready and tells *Rajiv* that the veil would be lifted automatically if he accepts his wife unconditionally. Meanwhile *Rajiv* while visiting *Rupa*'s father comes to know about *Rupa*'s pregnancy. He returns from the town and disclaims responsibility for having fathered the child. Finally, *Rupa* confronts him after his rejections and warns him of nature's

fury which shall destroy everything. The gates of the dam are opened and once again the words *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* resonate through the narrative. Finally, *Rajiv* realizes that both the *Rupa*, his wife and mistress are same and he was wrong. The water gushes over the village and carries *Rajiv* and *Rupa* to an anchorage. *Rajiv* then confesses to her that he does not feel cheated at all and his *Rupa* was both beautiful in mind and face. Melodramatic elements mixed with chance elements and mythic icons are in abundance in this film

4.8.2 Complexities in the film

Satyam Shivam Sundaram is a complex film to start with. The theme which Raj Kapoor has tried to tackle in this film contains a lot of mythological elements in it. Even the title of the film indicates towards the fact that the God is the only truth, the truth is love and love is sublime. The basic premise of the film that beauty is not only skin deep, is well embedded in Hindu Mythology. The main character, *Rupa* has been modelled upon the mythical figure, *Radha* in the film. *Rupa* and *Rajiv* are akin to *Radha* and *Krishna*. Religious symbols and motifs dominate the spectacle and narrative. This is the only film of Raj Kapoor in which he has tried to mix the element of religion with sensuality. *Rupa* has been shown as the daughter of a priest and thus religion and spiritualism get attached to this character automatically. Raj Kapoor had been inspired to make this film by the life of Lata Mangeshkar. He even wanted Lata Mangeshkar to act in the film but it could not materialize. Raj Kapoor had publicized making of '*Satyam Shivam Sundaram*' as the greatest gamble of his creative life. According to him, making a woman-oriented film showing the metaphysical premise of beauty being associated with soul in the age of violence and sex was a gamble indeed³¹. It seems that his intention was good but seeing the trend even he was not convinced fully that his film would be commercially viable. This fear converted the character of *Rupa* fully as an object of desire and voyeurism dominated the spectacle. The character of *Rupa* was believable at the superficial level only. The character failed to convince the audience. *Zeenat Aman* as *Rupa* could not convince the cine-goers that *Rajiv*, without seeing her full face had been attracted to him. The character as created by Raj Kapoor is neither here nor there and oscillates between an ample

³¹ Aggarwal, Prahlad. 2007. *Raj Kapoor: Adhi Haqeeqat Adha Fasana*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan.

desire to show her body so as to attract *Rajiv* and on the other side; she talks about an embodiment of love akin to Radha and Krishna. The critics say that the weakest point of the film was Zeenat Aman herself whose image in the film industry was that of a glamour girl and even Raj Kapoor could not save himself by showing this glamour in form of *Rupa*. What could have been a memorable character created in Hindi films, *Rupa* became the victim of whims and fancies of the director himself. Women characters of Raj Kapoor in the past had been created tastefully and aesthetics was an integral element of representing women characters in the films of Raj Kapoor made under his production house but the bad representation of sexual orgy in the name of presenting the theme of sublime love killed the character *Rupa*. The issue which Raj Kapoor tried to raise in the film is an important one and many girls, especially in Indian society, cannot be married on the pretext of their dark color or some facial deformity only. The theme has got the universal appeal and the film itself and the character of *Rupa* could have achieved a classic connotation only if Raj Kapoor had not resorted to the gimmicks of sex and over-relying on Hindu mythology to make his point.

Then, there is a paradox of strange opposition between the two sides of the same woman as represented by the two “*Rupas*” in the film, one as a mistress and lover of *Rajiv* and other as wife. Here *Rajiv* holds a schizophrenic tendency of love and could love and hate the same woman at the same time. It is where the question of perception and reality comes. Often the women characters as represented in the Hindi films are not based on reality. These are the characters which are based on the perception of male characters in the films as well as cine-goers. *Rupa's* characterization also is based on the perception of *Rajiv* and the character that is loved by *Rajiv*, in fact, does not exist.

If we consider the stereotypes for the women characters and roles that have been represented over the years in Hindi Cinema then the category in which the character of *Rupa* falls is that of objectification of women. The character of *Rupa* confirms the features associated with the objectification of women.

4.8.3 Objectification and Identity of women

Tribal Costume

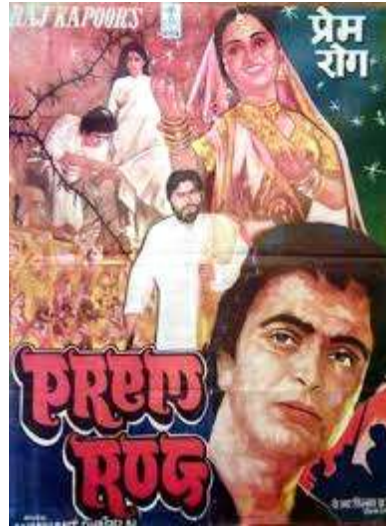
Rain Dance or Waterfall scene

Framed in a sensuous way: wearing a low back blouse so as the body is framed to show back or waist Appearing in revealing clothes (Exposing large parts of thighs, waist, and back),

Another unique point of the character of *Rupa* is that the character is unseen in the film. The character of *Rupa* with whom, *Rajiv* falls in love is not seen by him. This is one of the few rare instances where the role of the main central woman character has been built around the sublime voice. It is the voice of reality which has infatuated *Rajiv*. The face of *Rupa*, he has not seen and only has got apperception that the person having such a sublime and ethereal voice has to be beautiful. But perhaps, the director here wanted to compensate the disfigured face of *Rupa* with a voice which is dominating, maintaining space and pacing time. Raj Kapoor here goes with the concept similar to Biderman's depiction of ritual voice. Going against the concept of showing beautiful faces of Heroines in the Films, Raj Kapoor takes a big bangle in making the voice of the main female character as the cause of attraction and infatuation for his male protagonist. Nowhere in the film, *has Rajiv* been shown being attracted to *Rupa's* body. He just wants to see the face of *Rupa* as he is bewitched by then thought of a beautiful face in possession of heavenly voice. Sometimes, it seems that Raj Kapoor was not worried about who is acting in the film as *Rupa* as for him Lata's voice was the inspiration and this was the basic premise around which the character of *Rupa* had been modelled. *Rupa's* morning singing makes the sun rise, enables the morning to form and outlines the path of time. These qualities of *Rupa* become important in the light of the statement that she is not a professional singer. It seems that the director here wants to make a point that she is raw and pure, unexplored by the worldly pulls and these features make her voice sublime. The aspect of purity becomes an integral part of Raj Kapoor's films. In the build-up of *Rupa's* character, one can see a concept of seen and unseen going side by side. The objectification of *Rupa's* character seems to be for the gaze of the audience and not

Rajiv. Overall the film Satyam Shivam Sundaram represents a case of crisis of conscience and brings forward the deeper questions of beauty of body and soul.

4.9 PREM ROG³²



Release Year: 1982

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Raj Kapoor

Starring: Rishi Kapoor, Padmini Kolhapure, Shammi Kapoor, Nanda and others

Released in 1982, Hindi film Prem Rog in the typical Raj Kapoor style mixes the elements of a social message with the typical formula of a commercial Hindi film. The film raises the issue of the plight of widows and the pattern of feudal society in India.

Social issues taken

1. Feudal Society issue
2. The plight of widows

³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prem_Rog

4.9.1 Plot

Prem Rog is the love story of *Devdhar* (Rishi Kapoor) and *Manorama* (Padmini Kolhapure) but this love story is indeed with a difference as this is the story of an orphan boy and a widow who belongs to a higher status. *Manorama* is a pampered child who belongs to a household of Thakurs. *Devdhar* is nephew of family priest (Om Prakash) of the Thakurs who is brought up and educated on the charity of the Thakurs. *Manorama* has been shown as a chirpy, innocent good-hearted and stubborn girl whose attitude falls just short of an arrogance. She and *Devdhar* know each other well and their familiarity just fall short of friendship due to their belonging to different classes. *Devdhar's* cousin *Radha* (Kiran Vairale) knows this. In the Thakur household are *Bade Raja Thakur* (Shammi Kapoor), a patriarch sort of figure for whole of the village, *BadiMaa* (Sushma Seth), a traditional woman belonging to this household, *Virendra Vir Singh* (Kulbhushan Kharbanda) and *ChhotiMaa* (Nanda) essays the role of father and mother of *Manorama* respectively. After completing his studies, *Devdhar* comes back from the city. He is invited by *Bade Raja Thakur* to his haveli. He is treated as a member of the Thakur household because of his simpleton nature and because of the fact that his studies were sponsored by *Bade Raja Thakur*. *Manorama* becomes quite friendly with him and her relationship with *Devdhar* is that of innocence. She pulls many pranks on *Devdhar* in her innocence. He starts loving her in his heart but is aware of his class status also. Meanwhile *Devdhar's* cousin gets married to a man who is widower and bald. She accepts her condition as belonging to a poor family readily. She is aware of *Devdhar's* growing attachment to *Manorama* and warns him that this would not lead to anywhere. She tells *Devdhar* not to mistake *Manorama's* "meherbani" for love. But he does not agree to this and plans to visit the Thakur household the next day to ask for *Manorama's* hand for marriage. He goes to the household only to find that *Manorama's* marriage has been fixed with Narendra Pratap Singh (VijeyndraGhatge) of Sunerganj. He finds *Manorama* quite happy about this match as for her; marriage is none other than another name for a good life. Her husband gets killed in an accident on the wedding night itself. *Manorama* becomes widow at a young age and her hardships start as a widow. On returning to her parents' household, she sees that a custom of cutting her hair is going to follow on the insistence of *Bua Ji* (Leela Mishra) and *Badi Maa*. She does not want to go through

this ritual and pleads in front of everyone not to allow this. *Bade Raja Thakur* and *ChhotiMaa* are helpless. Just in time, comes *Manorama's* sister-in-law (Tanuja) and takes *Manorama* to her husband's household. *Manorama* gets attached to *Rattan*, her sister in law's child. One day the sister-in-law goes for a wedding and *Thakur Virendra Pratap Singh* rapes her. When her sister-in-law comes back, she comes to know about whole incident but tells *Manorama* to keep mum and sends her to her parent's home. At her parents' home, *Manorama* is now not allowed to live the life of a carefree lady. She is asked to stay in a room downstairs, to sleep with no bedding except a mat and eat sparsely only once a day. *Devdhar* has not forgotten her. He learns of her condition from *Radha* on returning to the village. He is aghast at the treatment being meted out to *Radha* in the name of tradition of widowhood. He comes to *Manorama's* household often and cannot see *Manorama* die a slow death under the garb of traditions and customs. Gradually, *Devdhar* confesses his love for *Manorama* and declares in front of all villagers that he wanted to marry her. She considers this act of display of love as a betrayal on the part of *Devdhar*. Slowly her mother makes her aware of her love for *Devdhar*. *Bade Thakur Sahib* and *Manorama's* father are against this scenario and feels that she has disgraced the family. *ChhotiMaa* comes out of the Purdah and her inhibition and tells the story of rape of *Manorama* by *Thakur Virendra Pratap Singh*. *Bade Raja Sahib* sees the point and is convinced that *Manorama* is also entitled to all the happiness. He wants *Devdhar* and *Manorama* to elope and marry but *Devdhar* refuses to marry like this and declares that he was fighting a *Dharma Yudh*. Meanwhile *Manorama's* father and *Virendra Pratap Singh* hatch a plot to kill *Devdhar*. In the climax scene, *Chhote Thakur* is shot by *Virendra Pratap* and he gets killed in the hands of *Bade Thakur*. *Devdhar* marries, *Manorama* breaking the old customs and traditions.

4.9.2 Prem Rog in the eyes of Raj Kapoor

Prem Rog is nothing special if we are looking for this film breaking any new ground in the film-making. This becomes unique only due to the treatment given to it by the director. It becomes special only because of a hard-hitting message being put through within the parameter of a set formula of Hindi film-making but in Raj Kapoor style of having heavy and emotional dialogues, visually enriching spectacle, some high-

spirited performances and chartbuster music. In the words of Raj Kapoor himself, he returned to making purposeful films with *Prem Rog*. Commenting on the theme of *Prem Rog*, Raj Kapoor has said:

"In today's society, we say one thing and practice another. I wanted to unmask the double standards and hypocrisy of those who lay down the social norms. I'm talking about the decadence of rituals, customs, and traditions which have no relevance in our lives now. Norms that permit a widower to marry within four months of his wife's death, whereas in the name of tradition, a young girl's mind is conditioned to accept the life of an outcast even though she is a widow for no fault of his own. It is a pity that in an age when there is so much scientific advancement we have to tackle subjects like this, but it is still a gory reality in our society. See how many rapes and dowry deaths we have." Pure entertainers with a sprinkle of a message to be given without being preachy have been forte of Raj Kapoor's style of film-making since the days of *Awara* but during the middle phase of his cinematic journey, a deviation from this path is clearly visible. A major reason for this deviation could be the demise of the members of his set-up at R.K.Films. But gradually, he found his feet again and with *Prem Rog*, he started a new chapter under his banner of making purposeful films. The film clearly shows the position of women in Modern India. It may not be the general condition of women everywhere in India but at most of the places even now, the condition of widows is not better that has been shown in the film.

4.9.3 The Plight of Widows as shown in the film

Widow as a specific gender construct in Indian society carries altogether different meaning when compared to the women in rest of the world. In traditional Hindu society, a widow is much more than a woman whose husband has died, certain symbols get attached to a widow and she is supposed to carry these symbols throughout his life. The term has carried with it the suffering and deprivation, in general. There is a specific code of conduct which is prescribed for the widows. This code of conduct works through the food habits and attire of a widow. Raj Kapoor fully uses these symbols of widowhood to the narrative in the film and when conjoined with the spectacle these symbols of widowhood become emotional tools in

hands of Raj Kapoor and as a director, he fully uses these tools to further his narrative.

The character of Manorama has been built up on two extremes. Before marriage, *Manorama* has been shown as a pampered and chirpy girl who is born with the golden spoon. She is well ensconced in Thakur household and quite aware of her class and caste status. Her character has not been build up in the mold of a girl who would like to break the societal norms. Like all the women of the Thakur household, she is also supposed to marry in a rich household enjoying all the luxuries of life. She is very much indulged by her family and spoilt by her family. The trait of innocence in *Manorama* has been built up to the extent that she does not understand the meaning of love and *Devdhar's* advances towards her. *Radha* and *Manorama* are of the same age group and are childhood friends but *Radha's* character shows a maturity level not to be seen in *Manorama's* character till she becomes the widow. A subdued arrogance is there in the character of *Manorama*. Opulence, luxury, and innocence are the traits around which the character of *Manorama* has been build up by the director. It seems that showing a girl from a middle-class urban household could not have brought up the extreme sympathy for the character when she becomes the widow. The two extremes put together create a vision and spectacle which engrosses the cine-goers.

4.9.4 Presence of the Mythological Elements

Raj Kapoor has always tried to put mythological elements in his films and in *Prem Rog* also, Raj Kapoor has brought up these elements to build up the characters. Again, after *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, he is stuck up in creating this love story along the lines of Radha -Krishna, a platonic type of bonding which goes beyond the worldly desires. An association with *Karna's* wheel being stuck in the battle of Mahabharata has also been referred to in certain scenes while building up the character of *Manorama*.

When *Virendra Pratap* tries to rape her while running away *Manorama's* foot is tuck in the glass and she is unable to move and this ultimately become the point of her being raped. Then, there is a scene when *Devdhar* pulls out a thorn out of *Manorama's* foot when she is returning from the temple barefoot after attaining

widowhood. The scenes are quite symbolic in terms of incorporating traditional mythic elements to *Manorama's* character.

4.9.5 Symbolic representation of widowhood

Manorama's character as a widow has been built up using the symbols which have come to be attached to the Widows in traditional Hindu society. The scene when *Manorama* is called in the hall for her hair to be cut is a poignant one. The scene becomes an important one as in the first scene itself and in subsequent scenes before marriage, the camera is widely focused on *Manorama's* hair. Hair here becomes the symbol of desire and vitality for *Manorama*. Her character as widow also attains a height and a sense of reality when she is shown as sleeping on a single mattress in a corner of a room devoid of any luxuries or even basic things in her room. The way the character of *Manorama* is presented in the first half of the film bears direct anomaly to her character as a widow. The opulence and luxurious life get converted to a life of hardships unseen or unheard by her. The director could have taken a lenient or middle path showing the plight of a widow but showing the two extremities is his way of building up the melodramatic elements in his film. An innocent girl who has been grown up in a pampered way for whose happiness whole Thakur household is keen. *Manorama* who is so innocent to the point of her marriage becomes so mature after that incident of her becoming widow. In the feudal society, a woman is just an object of desire and nothing else. Separated from a man, she has got no identity of her own in a feudal society is the question that has been successfully raised in the film through the character of *Manorama* in this film. *Prem Rog* is not only told through the character of *Manorama*, the director here has given small but meaty roles to Nanda and Tanuja also. Nanda in the role of mother of *Manorama* subtly represents the pain through which *Manorama* is going through. Without going overboard, the characters of the mother of *Manorama* and wife of *Virendra Pratap* (Tanuja) represents the desire to get free of the feudal mentality and a desire to get out of imprisonment of minds and bodies which are wrapped in fine silks and are bejewelled. Both these characters convey their message through the character of *Manorama* but it is their pain only which they are expressing. A similar sort of

characterization had across in Hindi Cinema in form of *Chhote Bahu* in Guru Dutt's *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam*.

Talking about *Prem Rog*, Ritu Nanda opines that the character of a woman in India forms a paradox. She is Devi as well as a figure of distortion. The representation of the character of *Manorama* has been done in this typical Indian form of representation³³.

Prem Rog is a hard take of Raj Kapoor on the position of women in general actually. The main character is shown as a widow just enhances the point of the director which he wants to make. How a woman gets entrapped in the boundaries made by the patriarchal society and how a woman believes these norms to be her destiny is represented by the character of *BadiMaa*. She is good-hearted but helpless in front of societal norms. She has accepted injustice as a societal norm without which society cannot run. She has merged her personality in the daily religious rituals. She is the one who has pampered *Manorama*, the most but she is the one who is at the forefront in the scene where the elderly ladies want the hair of *Manorama* to be shorn off. Through this film, Raj Kapoor not only hits at the hypocrisy of the traditional society, he also pinpoints at the helplessness of womenfolk in a traditionally patriarchal society³⁴.

In *Prem Rog*, Raj Kapoor has sought to focus attention on a social and cultural issue of great significance. The director has rightly pointed out the negativity of certain traditional beliefs and practices even as he upholds the general tenor and ethos of tradition. In a sense, what he is ultimately saying is that the best way of preserving and utilizing a tradition is to give up its weaker and more harmful elements and cultivate the more positive ones.

³³Nanda, Ritu. 2002. *Raj Kapoor speaks*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, p. 184.

³⁴ Aggarwal, Prahlad. 2007. *Raj Kapoor: Adhi Haqeeqat Adha Fasana*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, p. 211.

4.9.6 Reviews

Reviewing *Prem Rog* in the Hindi film magazine, Filmfare, Shalini Pradhan writes that the message of widow re-marriage may give a purpose to the movie but somewhere magic is lacking in the film. Pradhan feels that the film is unrealistic to some extent as the Thakurs were quite particular about the dress sense of the ladies of their households especially the younger lot of women but *Manorama* in the film has been shown as wearing brief cholis and ghaghras which give the film a make-believe sense more than the realism.

Review in the magazine, Bombay “Within the parameter of such a theme, Kapoor has managed to create a plausible tale”

4.10 RAM TERI GANGA MAILI³⁵



Release Year: 1985

Produced by: Raj Kapoor

Directed by: Raj Kapoor

Starring: Mandakini, Rajiv Kapoor, Kulbhushan Kharbanda and others

³⁵ Poster and crew details: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram_Teri_Ganga_Maili

Social Issues taken

1. Corruption
2. Hypocrisy in Society
3. Exploitation of women.

Ram Teri Ganga Maili is a Hindi film directed by Raj Kapoor. One of the last films to be directed by Raj Kapoor, the film is a love story between an urbanite man, *Naren* and a girl living in the hills, *Ganga*. Raj Kapoor has used religious and spiritual metaphors to boost the narrative.

4.10.1 Plot

The story opens in Calcutta where two politicians are fighting the election; one is a simple honest politician who is fighting an election on the issue of purifying Ganga. A corrupt politician, *Bhagwat Choudhary* (Raza Murad) is also fighting the election on the question of cleaning Ganga but his intentions are not pure. *Bhagwat Choudhary* is the friend of *Jiva Sahai* (Kulbhushan Kharbanda) who is industrialist making money with wrong means and he uses his friendship with politician *Bhagwat Choudhary* to make money. *Bhagwat Choudhary* wins elections with the help from *Jiva Sahai*. *Narendra Sahai* or *Naren* is introduced in the film as the son of *Jiva Sahai*. He is shown as a follower and avid reader of Swami Vivekananda. His character is least interested in the money matters. *Naren* tells his grandmother that he wanted to find out answers to his questions and inner peace. He goes to a party organized by *Bhagwat Choudhary* where *Radha* (Divya Rana) professes her love for him but for *Naren*, it is just friendship. Witnessing and observing the wrong tasks of his father and *Choudhary*, *Naren* decides to go to Gangotri as a part of the college trip. His grandmother supports his decision supported by his uncle, *Kunj Bihari* (Syed Jaffrey). The bus carrying the college party arrives at the hills. Roaming in the hills he comes in contact with *Ganga* (Mandakini). *Naren* has to go to Gangotri and *Ganga* agrees to guide him on his excursion. He finds *Ganga* both in human form and river form very pure. Meanwhile, *Ganga* has fallen in love with *Naren* who reciprocates her feelings. As per the tradition of hills, a *Swyamvar* is organized on the night of full moon where *Mangroo*, the man chosen by *Ganga's* brother to be his bridegroom is also present. *Ganga* chooses *Naren* on this occasion to be her bridegroom. *Ganga's* brother dies to

protect *Naren* and *Ganga* from *Mangroo* and his goons on their wedding night. *Naren* has to go back to Calcutta now. On reaching Calcutta, he finds that arrangements are being made of his engagement with *Radha*. He tells his grandmother about *Ganga*. On listening to this, *Naren's* grandmother suffers a heart attack only to regain consciousness for a moment to tell him that she wanted *Ganga* as her Bahu. *Naren's* father holds him responsible for the death of the old lady. *Naren* goes into the seclusion.

Meanwhile, *Ganga* comes to know about the forthcoming engagement of *Radha* and *Naren* from *Radha's* letter. *Naren's* mother tells him to leave for the hills. He is confiscated in his home till the culmination of his marriage to *Radha*. On the insistence of *Naren*, *Kunj Bihari* leaves for the hills to bring back *Ganga*. She has given birth to the son of *Naren* and on hearing the contents of the letter from the postman, she just wants to hand over her son to *Naren*. She leaves for Calcutta with her son. *Kunj Bihari* misses *Ganga* at the bus stop. Persuaded by his sister, he tells *Naren* that *Ganga* had gone mad and disappeared from the village. On the way to Calcutta, the ordeal of *Ganga* starts in a real way. At Haridwar on feeling trapped, she spends the night at the Ghats. Next morning, she asks a Pandit to show her the way to the station but he tries to rape her. She again escapes somehow and the Police buy her ticket to Calcutta. A passenger *Mani Lal* (Krishan Dhawan) posing as a blind man persuades *Ganga* to accept the life of a brothel where she would be safe. She is chosen to entertain *Bhagwat Choudhary* on his visit to Benares. Here, he is confronted by *Ganga*. Choudhary takes *Ganga* with him to Calcutta to amuse him. He wants to share *Ganga* with *Jiva Sahai*. When *Jiva Sahai* sees *Ganga*, he immediately recognizes her as the girl whom *Naren* had wanted to marry as he had seen *Ganga's* photographs. He tells *Bhagwat Choudhary* about *Ganga* and wants Choudhary to send her back to Banaras. *Mani Lal* has got a change of heart now and he brings *Kunj Bihari* to *Ganga*.

Naren who is ignorant of *Ganga's* whereabouts is compelled by his mother to marry *Radha*. *Kunj Bihari* brings *Ganga* to the wedding of *Naren* and *Radha* to dance and sing. *Naren* lifts the veil of the singer and realizes that it was *Ganga*. *Naren* accepts both *Ganga* and their child. In the climax scene, *Bhagwat Choudhary* compels a

policeman shoot at *Ganga*. *Naren* attacks *Bhagwat Choudhary*. *Naren* and *Ganga* are shown leaving the scene with their child.

4.10.2 A brief analysis of the film

After making *Prem Rog*, Raj Kapoor went back to his forte of making entertainers by mixing mythology, spiritualism, and elements of commercial appeal which includes showing his heroines in a manner to pander to the voyeuristic instincts and inclinations of the audiences. As done previously in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, the film is having a love story as its backdrop with highly spiritual overtones. By choosing the river Ganga as the pivotal point and drawing the parallel with *Ganga*, the vulnerable woman from hills, Raj Kapoor is able to capture the imagination of the audience in the right earnest. The similarity of *Ganga* being polluted and *Ganga* being exploited has been rightly intermixed in the narrative and spectacle of Gangotri and hills add to the narrative and compliments the story. Raj Kapoor has tried to project a moral vision which he feels is of deep relevance to modern society³⁶. In the earlier films of Raj Kapoor, there was just a splash of spirituality and reference to mythology here and there but in *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*, a continuous thread to harmonize the discourses of passion and spirituality is visible throughout the film. Shooting the film at locales like Rishikesh, Haridwar, Gangotri, Benares, and Gangasagar adds to this spirituality

Ram Teri Ganga Maili has been criticized in certain quarters about too much stress on nudity and voyeurism but critics like Dasgupta has taken the body form of *Ganga* as represented in the film as the glorification of form and not pornography. Raj Kapoor himself has defended the picturization of the character *Ganga* in the film by saying that glorification of body form has always been a part of Indian culture giving an example of Khajuraho temples.

Reuben, while commenting on the film has indicated that Raj Kapoor was fascinated by the river Ganga since his childhood and paintings by Raja Ravi Verma had captured his imagination. The character of *Ganga* was perhaps inspired by the calendar art of Raja Ravi Verma who has popularized the paintings of Hindu Gods

³⁶ Dissanayake, Wimal & Sahai, Malati. 1988. *Raj Kapoor Films, Harmony of Discourses*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 98.

and Goddesses amongst the masses. Reuben, writing about Raj Kapoor points towards the fact that various facets of Hindu philosophy, culture and heritage were very dear to him and it was his imagination to give shape and colours to this culture and heritage.

4.10.3 The Problem of Pollution

Commenting on the film, Raj Kapoor remarked that he wanted to focus attention on the rapidly changing values in society, the changing morality, loss of spirituality and socio-economic corruption. It is his belief that a rapid decline in spirituality, which according to him, is the real source of Indian culture becoming a disintegrating and disruptive force. The film deals with the twin evils of social corruption and moral decadence. Thus, the film represents the evil of corruption overall. According to Malti Sahai and Wimal Dissanayake, the film seems to pose a number of different questions. When *Ganga* is pure, can she be polluted? Is this pollution only superficial or is it fundamental? Does she retain her purifying capabilities even after being polluted? Where does the essence of our traditional culture lie and can its values withstand the processes of challenges of time? Through a consideration of these questions, what is being suggested is that just as the soul is more precious than the body, so also is the essence of our cultural values more precious than changing social phenomenon? This film rightly points out the hypocrisy which the elements of religion have brought in Indian society. The film rightly questions the doings in the name of religion.

Another mythological trait that is to be found in the film comes as a Mahabharata motif: that of a human prince's union with a river Goddess (as in King *Shantanu's* marriage to *Ganga* incarnate). The film also indicates towards the divine origin of Ganges and then meandering through various regions to reach Ganga Sagar. On the way, the river gets polluted in the way *Ganga* gets exploited on its way from Gangotri to Calcutta. Motifs from the story of Radha-Krishna and Meera are also thrown in.

4.10.4 Exploitation of Women as shown in the film

Ram Teri Ganga Maili is the Hindi film which is fully women oriented. An important issue of exploitation of women is the central theme of this film. In the words of Raj

Kapoor, to portray *Ganga* in the naivety and purity he wanted a pristine face to act in this film. Mandakini was chosen to portray the character of *Ganga*. According to Raj Kapoor, “Ganga the pure, Ganga the virgin, Ganga the Himalayan beauty, Ganga the faithful. The word Ganga has got so many meanings that any girl who had never been seen before and could not be identified with anything else. And that is how I got this new girl Mandakini, who looked like Ganga and who *Ganga* became. Although there was a tremendous criticism of the so-called nudity, and the scantily dressed *Ganga*, it was the faith in the purity of the Ganga (the river) which sustained the faith in the innocence of *Ganga* (the character in the film). That is what held on and despite all the criticism, the Ganga still runs and flows”. It seems that Raj Kapoor never wanted her heroine to act in this film. For him, rawness of her purity was more important and this he tries to maintain in the film. For him, the innocence of his heroine was of utmost importance as the film is the journey of an innocent girl from the hills to Calcutta in the same manner as River Ganga flows. Issue of exploitation of women got manifested in a realistic way only because it was pure innocence which was to be exploited. It is human follies which have polluted the river and exploited the woman. Hindi film industry is witness to many women-oriented films specifically in the golden decade of the fifties but this was happening for the first time that a parallel way of pollution of river and exploitation of women had been shown. Raj Kapoor's films are not visual scenarios where silence dominates. His narrative is backed by the eye-catching spectacle, emotional dialogues and firebrand performances from his artists. *'Ram Teri Ganga Maili'* scores on all these fronts.

The social messages which the film tries to convey are quite clear. A river has been compared with the life of a woman. Both are pure at the point of their origin and birth. Ganga, the river is bereft of any pollution and Ganga, the woman from the hills is innocent and pure but as the journey of the river and woman starts, the river gets polluted gradually and the woman loses her virginity and is exploited time and again.

4.10.5 The film and Ganga action plan

Reuben³⁷ considers this film to be inspired by the media coverage in those times on the topic of pollution in the river Ganga. The Government of India had started applying mind and was planning to diversify some funds to the cleaning of the river. A plan named Ganga action plan, in fact, was launched under the stewardship of erstwhile Prime Minister Sh. Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. The initiation of such a plan in 1986 itself indicates that a thought process was going on in the corridors of power in the decade of early eighties to have a plan to purify river Ganga. Raj Kapoor was not a well-educated person in the formal sense but he had a knack of connecting with the common folks as well as he remained always aware about the goings on in almost every field and picked his subject from the contemporary issues.

4.11 Chaplinesque traits in Raj Kapoor's Cinema

Often one talks about the relationship between Raj Kapoor and Charles Chaplin that how the earlier works of Raj Kapoor had been influenced by the works of Chaplin. A Chaplinesque trait is to be found in the works of Raj Kapoor in the decade of 1950's but it is not only Charles Chaplin who had influenced Raj Kapoor in his youth. An impact of Orson wells is also seen in the films of Raj Kapoor. Chaplin and Raj Kapoor find similarity in the content as well as picturization of certain scenes in the films of both.

Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* has tried to show human avarice for wealth especially gold. A similar theme, one encounters in *Jaagte Raho* of Raj Kapoor where the protagonist has been shown having avarice for the wealthy people. Similarly, in the film *A Dog's life*, Chaplin leads the life of a street dog as he is an honest man. Raj Kapoor's *Awara* and *Jaagte Raho* have got certain scenes where *Raj* is seen with a dog in some places to portray the harmonious relationship between the life of a dog and the life of an individual. Life of a dog becomes a metaphor for the life of an honest man. It seems that this harmonious relationship between a dog and a human being in the earlier works of Raj Kapoor tend to portray the society, in general as indifferent to the needs of poor and honest human beings.

³⁷ Reuben, Bunny. 1995. *Raj Kapoor the Fabulous Showman: An intimate Biography*, New Delhi: Indus, p. 327.

4.12 Portrayal of women in Raj Kapoor's Cinema

When the question of portraying women in his films came, Raj Kapoor had his share of criticism of portraying the women characters in nudity and as the objects of desire. Raj Kapoor has never denied this charge and responded to this charge that he had shunned hypocrisy. His ultimate goal always was to make an entertainer in a typical Raj Kapoor style and portraying the women characters in his movies was just a part of that film. He was more concerned with the final product and to achieve the desired results in a specific film, he resorted to commodifying his women characters also. Raj Kapoor has been a complex character throughout his career and the women characters created by him for his films have also been complex ones. These characters cannot be defined in any simple sense. Raj Kapoor, as a person seems to be an amalgam of opposites. His films became immensely popular in Eastern European bloc having the communist ideology as the core element of these countries but on the other hand use of Indian Mythological motifs, an appeal to Indian tradition and names associated with Indian mythology are abundant in his films. Modernism, as well as traditionalism, exists simultaneously in his films and this is true of his women characters also. Whatever is the way, women characters have been portrayed in his films, his films can be easily categorized as Nargis phase as well as post-Nargis phase.

During Nargis phase of his films under R.K.Studios, it seems that Nargis had dominated the set up with Raj Kapoor just playing his part in the films. Nargis was not only her co-star in the six films of R.K. banner and in numerous other films outside this banner; she had become his soul mate. People in the decade of fifties had vouched that Raj Kapoor considered Nargis as the mother of his films. The characters which came under Nargis's way were in no way, weak characters. Even in pure romantic films like *Barsaat* where Raj Kapoor had nothing to say much except for lilting music, exotic locales and romance to the core, it is the characters played by Nimmi and Nargis which become the back-bone of the success of this film along with the lilting music by new music directors, Shankar JaiKishan. Nargis in this film provided an uninhibited love and passion which had not been seen before. The coyness and 'Sati-Savitri' image of the heroines were nowhere to be seen in *Barsaat*

and same was true of Nargis character in *Awara* also. This became the trend with the films of Raj Kapoor where the women characters did not hide their feelings when portraying a romantic role. *Awara*, though made to establish Raj Kapoor as a progressive film-maker, also had Nargis as *Rita* in her one of the most independently looking roles. In *Shri420*, Nargis in the role of *Vidya* becomes the inner voice of *Raju* who has taken to wrong means in order to earn money. Even in this film, the Main woman character in form of *Vidya* is not just a prop. She is the alter ego of *Raju*. *Maya*, as played by Nadira, has been shown as a westernized woman who initiated the entry of *Raju* in the corrupt and greedy world. *Vidya* and *Maya*, the names themselves represent the two opposite ends of the world, one world having a simple life full of education and the other one representing the world full of greed. The complexity of the personality of Raj Kapoor is clearly visible in the pattern in which women characters of his films have been presented. Some of the very strong characterizations of Women can be seen in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor and on the other hand, he had resorted to voyeurism also. Resorting to Voyeurism and showing Women's body to engage the audience got roots in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor during post-Nargis phase of his banner, R.K.Films.

It seems that Nargis leaving R.K.Films for other avenues had shattered the confidence of Raj Kapoor for the time being and he was not sure of how other female actors would represent the various characters on the screen. Post-Nargis phase of the banner R.K.Films witnessed a change in the style of film-making of Raj Kapoor in the sense that commercial angle got increased in his films.

This phase of films of Raj Kapoor saw the deviation of Raj Kapoor in which he was portraying the women characters in his films till 1956. Though, he saw commercial success in the post-Nargis phase also but somewhere, the innocent beauty and romanticism got converted into voyeurism, eroticism and a desire to show nudity. Raj Kapoor, himself has attributed this change to the changing times. It seems that Nargis leaving R.K. Films shattered the confidence of Raj Kapoor as a film-maker and he was sure that no other heroine could portray the characters as Nargis used to portray in his films. *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* started this trend of portraying women in Raj Kapoor's films where lust dominated the raw passion which was a unique special

point of the banner, R.K.Films earlier. The departure of his muse-*sphurti* as he called it- coincided with the time his erotically charged romantic stories acquired their prurient tint when sex overtook sensuality. Somewhere along the line, the poetic photographer of romance and passion became a peeping Tom of sorts³⁸. *Padmini* in a way started all this for Raj Kapoor in *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*. Though a highly message-oriented film of rehabilitation of marginalized elements of society in form of dacoits, Raj Kapoor put all the limelight on showing the body of Padmini in the name of cinematic liberty that the daughter of a Dacoit living in the ravines had to be given such costumes as she wore. *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti hai* started the trend of famous waterfall scenes in Raj Kapoor films. In the depiction of the famous waterfall scene and the heroines clad in half wet sarees, the character of *Kammo* somewhere got lost in this process. *Sangam* with Vyjyanthi Mala in lead only increased this trend. Padmini's induction as a heroine of R.K. Films changed the way women characters were being filmed under the umbrella of R.K. Films. Raj Kapoor had taken a journey from sensuality to sexuality³⁹. The camera turns voyeuristic in *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* and the trend continues in *Sangam*, *Mera Naam Joker*, *Bobby*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*. *Prem Rog* remained an exception in this later phase of Raj Kapoor as a film -maker. Thematically his last three films, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, *Prem Rog* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* were close to the films which Raj Kapoor had made during Nargis phase but the style and build-up of women characters in the films had taken a turn. The presentation of the ladies in these films was akin to only body show but Raj Kapoor being Raj Kapoor always had a way with the censors and was never taken as a B Grade film-maker. Despite the presentation and characterization of women in his films especially during the later phase, he is hailed as a film-maker who had presented his women characters aesthetically. One reason that Raj Kapoor deviated from his original path of presenting his women characters as aesthetically erotic to sensual and sexed bodies might be that he didn't want to lose his position as ace film-maker whose films were always commercially viable. With the coming of Amitabh

³⁸ Jain, Madhu. 2005. Kapoor's: The first family of Indian Cinema, New Delhi: Penguin India, p. 117.

³⁹ Ibid, p.139.

Bachchan phenomenon and violent trend that had started in the film industry, it had become very difficult to maintain the position of numero uno film-maker and he might have resorted to a different pattern of showing his women characters in the light of this trend. *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* even resisted the newly came trend of video and was a blockbuster. It seems that real turning point in Raj Kapoor's film-making phase came with *Mera Naam Joker* being unsuccessful at the box-office. This was the second turning point in the creative life of Raj Kapoor, first one being the films made under R.K.Films without Nargis as a leading lady.

4.13 Classification of Raj Kapoor's films

Elliot Stein has classified the films made in India under the following categories:

- The first category of films is highly commercial which are bent to a typical formula, are glossy in lookalike and are enjoyed throughout the subcontinent. The happenings in these films take place in a fantasy universe and these types of films are destined for the middle class, in general.
- The second category of films consist of regional films with dialogues and songs in regional languages and have got a limited audience. Example of such type of films is the films made by Ritwik Ghatak and Satyajit Ray. Such type of Cinema in India has been hailed as offbeat Cinema.
- The third category of films consists of the films made by Raj Kapoor, made in Bombay in the Hindi language, the best of which use the all Indian formulas to enhance serious themes. These quality films made for the masses have been smashing successful in India, elsewhere in Asia, in the Soviet Union and in the Middle East. Stein holds Raj Kapoor as a star director and producer who occupies a unique niche in Indian film industry⁴⁰.

According to Gayatri Chatterji, films made under the banner of R.K.Films represent a blend of personal statements, humour and emotional outbursts. Elements of unabashed sexuality are found here and there in almost all the films of Raj Kapoor.

⁴⁰ From the article, "*Raj Kapoor-the showman auteur of Indian Cinema*", special collection, National Film archives of India: Pune.

The categorization which has been done by Eliot Stein to showcase Indian Cinema clearly hints at the hold which Raj Kapoor held on the masses in various parts of the world.

Raj Kapoor had earned immense popularity in his lifetime due to his prowess in film-making. Paying tribute to Raj Kapoor, after his death, a leading newspaper in the English language, **The Statesman** had the following words in the newspaper dated June 5, 1988.

“Friend and entertainer for fifty years, Raj Kapoor meant many things to many people. Some saw the tramp in him, some the imp. Some saw in him, the funny man who could make you laugh and cry at the same time. Others saw him as the ultimate romantic. Some, who knew him from close, thought his ways were a little boorish and yet there was something in the man’s personality that attracted everyone”. Overall Raj Kapoor had a unique quality of entertaining masses as well as satisfying the critics.

4.14 Interviews Conducted

According to H.Singh, the female male characters of his movies were always very strong as such in *Prem Rog* and *Awara*. There is no doubt that he courted certain controversies in the depiction of female characters in movies like *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* but his aesthetic sense was always strong. The way he captured the female characters was unique (personal interview, April 3, 2019)

B.Singh, when interviewed, regarding the Cinema of Raj Kapoor feels that women representation in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor was just as in other films. They were not central characters in his Cinema (telephonic communication, November 5, 2019).

Haridutt has got a view contradictory to Bobby Singh. Haridutt considers Raj Kapoor as a film-maker having a deep aesthetic sense in whose Cinema women were central characters. He takes the examples of *Prem Rog* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* in this regard. (telephonic interview, April 4, 2019)

Talking about Raj Kapoor, D.Dua⁴¹ says that he was a complete film-maker who mixed the masala of entertainment with the social message. People waited for his films. His banner was amongst the most established one. Deepak considers him a bit controversial film-maker due to the manner in which women were represented in some of his movies still there remains no doubt that Raj Kapoor had a very good aesthetic sense with which he made the films (telephonic interview, November 21, 2019).

The pattern of film-making changed gradually under his banner. But two things remained unchanged in R.K. Films. First one being, the lilting music which has been the mainstay of R.K.Films and the representation of social issues in his films. Raj Kapoor has dealt with a wide range of social issues in his films like the depiction of poverty, rural-urban migration and problems arising from this trend, exploitation of women, hypocrisy in the society, pollution of the rivers, the crisis of conscience and unemployment.

Raj Kapoor is the film-maker in whose films, even the lyrics represented the pathos of a common man and a sense of nationalism along with the social issues. Punita Bhatt writes that the songs, *Awara Hun and Mera Joota Hai Japani* delineated the potpourri of cultural influences at work in a newly independent nation striving for identity. There are very few film-makers in India whose sense of social consciousness gets reflected through the songs. Raj Kapoor is one of those few film-makers.

4.15 The style of Raj Kapoor

4.15.1 Chaplinesque trait in Raj Kapoor's Cinema

There is a distinct Chaplinesque trait to be found in the cinema of Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor carefully cultivated the image of 'The Tramp' in the initial phase of his film-making career. This image of 'The Tramp' is quite visible in his earlier films like *Awara* and *Shri 420*. In *Awara*, the image of 'The Tramp' is not visible throughout the film but *Shri 420* established this image profoundly. One of the reasons, in the words of Raj Kapoor only for cultivating this image of 'The Tramp' who shares his joys and sorrows with the common man is that Raj Kapoor finds his Cinema near to

⁴¹ Deepak Dua is a renowned film critic.

the common people more than the classes. According to Raj Kapoor, when the audience sees and feels the pain of the tramp, they consider him as a part of their own identity. The audience feels like that this man is just like us and a sense of belonging develops. It is not that only Raj Kapoor has tried to put the thoughts of the common man on the silver screen. A few other directors have tried to represent the common man along with all his hopes and fears on the screen but it is only Raj Kapoor who has borrowed the style of Charles Chaplin to portray such an image. This is a unique style of film-making exclusively belonging to Raj Kapoor. Pure comedy is not visible in the films of Raj Kapoor especially during the initial phase of his film-making. It is always a mixture of pathos and comedy that has held the fort for him. Optimism is a trait found in such characters. Despite all the misunderstandings and victimization, 'Raj' or 'Raju' is always the optimist about life. Raj Kapoor's Tramp has borrowed the hat, the cane, the ill-fitting clothes, and shoes as well as the vagabond and downtrodden characters to represent on celluloid. Amidst the films being made around him, it was quite innovative and daring at that time of Raj Kapoor to cultivate such an image and that also quite successfully.

4.15.2 The Cinema of enriching spectacle

A rich spectacle is another unique feature of the cinema of Raj Kapoor. Though a majority of films of Raj Kapoor has talked about the joys and sorrows of the common man and is content driven, a rich spectacle dominates the Cinema of Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor, under his banner, R.K.Films always believed in a Cinema of rich spectacle. It is not the only spectacle that dominates the Cinema of Raj Kapoor; the narrative holds an equal importance. Raj Kapoor's Cinema is basically a Cinema of the common man but presented in a style which is very rich. Huge sets and foreign locales with high production values have been a hallmark feature of Cinema of Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor got the title, 'The Showman' due to the large canvass of his films. The large canvass of the films and a lavish style of filming various scenes bracketed Raj Kapoor along with the traditional film-makers making formula films whereas his Cinema should have pushed him in the queue of film-makers famous for content-driven Cinema. To push his agenda of entertainment which is message-driven, Raj Kapoor got isolated somewhere from the film-makers known for their meaningful Cinema. Cecil De

Mille, the producer-director in the American film industry was firstly called as the showman because of lavish production style of filming. Film critic Hemchandra Pahare does not agree with this branding of Raj Kapoor. He insists that it is wrong to call Raj Kapoor a mere showman and this labelling hides the actual talent of Raj Kapoor. According to him that the central theme in Raj Kapoor's Cinema was always very powerful and he had the backing of a writer like Khwaja Ahmed Abbas in his films. He never allowed the spectacle to dominate the content. The observation seems to be partially true as Raj Kapoor's Cinema is basically an amalgam of content and spectacle and remains unparalleled in this sense. He used the lavish style of film-making and spectacle to lure the audiences to the Cinema halls in order to drive his message home. This style of film-making saved him in becoming the film-maker who felt the need of a parallel Cinema movement in India. Raj Kapoor's love and obsession with the lavish sets might have come from his early association with Prithvi Theatres founded by Prithviraj Kapoor. The spectacle had attracted Raj Kapoor from the initial stage of his career. He used to spend a lot of amount in creating huge sets and making his make-believe world.

4.15.3 The world of symbolism in Raj Kapoor's Cinema

Observing the Cinema of Raj Kapoor minutely, one can gauge that in the films made under the banner, R.K.Films, Raj Kapoor had perhaps realized the power of symbolism in pushing the storyline on the celluloid. The names of the protagonists and lead actors, as well as the character artists, are indicative of the type of characters those actors played. One of the earliest and prominent examples of such symbolism is the names *Vidya* and *Maya* given to the roles played by Nargis and Nadira respectively as they represented the good moral force and bad force full of evil designs respectively. *Vidya* represents the reality whereas *Maya* represents the illusion towards whom, *Raj* gets attracted but returns ultimately to reality. Similarly, the building in *Jagte Raho* is a microcosm of the country which is India. The different floors of the building are occupied by the people belonging to different classes thus symbolizing the space for various classes in India which cannot be universal and uniform in nature. The thirst that the main protagonist has to bear is the thirst for the real happiness, a search and thirst for finding the ultimate truth. The symbol in form

of a dog has been used in *Awara*, *Shri 420* and *Jagte Raho* successfully to show that the condition of a poor man in India is similar to that of a dog. Raj Kapoor has used the dog as the symbol to represent the cause of downtrodden classes in India. In *Prem Rog*, an important scene featuring *Devdhar* and *Bade Thakur* has used the light as a symbol. There is darkness in the haveli of Bade Thakur Sahib when Devdhar comes to meet him. *Bade Thakur Ji* tells *Devdhar* to run away along with *Manorama* in order to marry her. But *Devdhar* refuses this proposal and talks about the principles and moral values. He insists on marrying Manorama with the permission of elders only. At this juncture, the haveli gets illuminated in the light. Raj Kapoor with this symbol has tried to show the immoral values as full of darkness and the moral values as light. Similar use of symbolism is found in other films also made under the banner, R.K.Films.

CHAPTER- V

SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE FILMS MADE UNDER THE BANNER 'GURUDUTT FILMS PVT. LTD'

5.1 Guru Dutt: An introduction and legacy of his films

Born as Vasanta Kumar Shivshankar Padukone on July 9, 1925, in Bangalore, Guru Dutt made his name and place in the annals of Hindi film industry by creating some of the masterpieces of Hindi Cinema. In the decade of 1950's, which is hailed as the golden period of Hindi Cinema, Guru Dutt along with Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy and Raj Kapoor gave us the films which are meaningful as well as autobiographical. Their Cinema is personal as well as belonging to society simultaneously. Guru Dutt has got some of the classics against his name such as *Pyasa*, *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam*, and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*. Guru Dutt is master of creating hard-hitting films which could expose the hypocritical elements of the society. His films are hard-hitting lyrical dramas which are able to make a mark in the heart of the common man. Though a born Kannadiga, Guru Dutt spent his early years in the state of Bengal in the house of his mother's cousin B.B.Benegal who was a great influence over Padukone children. Guru Dutt wanted to join legendary dance maestro Uday Shankar's dance academy at Almora. He joined Uday Shankar's center in 1941 and remained there for one more year. War years saw the closing of Uday Shankar's center. The closing of Uday Shankar's dance academy coincided with the end of adolescent years of Guru Dutt. Meanwhile, the family of Guru Dutt had shifted to Bombay. Guru Dutt being jobless after the shutting of the Academy of Uday Shankar, it was once again B.B.Benegal who helped Guru Dutt. He recommended Guru Dutt to Babu Ram Pai of Prabhat Pictures, Pune where Guru Dutt was placed as an assistant choreographer for three years. It was at Prabhat Pictures where Guru Dutt struck a friendship with another new boy, Dev Anand. This friendship was to initiate the directorial career of Guru Dutt in future.

Guru Dutt joined ace director Amiya Chakraborty as an assistant and assisted him on the film *College Girl*. He got this break after a long struggle. Then he joined Gyan Mukerji, the ace director who was working with Bombay Talkies at that time. Guru

Dutt assisted him on the film *Sangram*. Meanwhile, Dev Anand had started his production house, Navketan. He had promised Guru Dutt to give chance to direct the film under his banner. Thus materialized the first film of Guru Dutt as a director which was named *Baazi*. The film was released on June 15, 1951¹. Thus started the illustrious career of Guru Dutt as a director but he got critical acclaim only after he started making Hindi films for his production house, Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd (Earlier Guru Dutt Productions). The production house was established in 1953 and the first film to be produced under this banner was *Aar Par*.

Some of the films of Guru Dutt have placed him amongst the ace world directors like Orson Welles² and Mizoguchi.³ Guru Dutt, in the eyes of critics, had an innovative cinematic form and deep humanism and compassion. *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* remains his masterpieces. These are the films having a personal signature of Guru Dutt which are autobiographical in nature. In these films, Guru Dutt has given importance to an independent style of film-making over commercial elements. Guru Dutt is known to be a maverick of playing with the shadows in his films. It is a well-known fact that Guru Dutt had a very democratic set up under which he was making the films. According to ace cinematographer V.K.Murthy who had been associated with Guru Dutt for a long time, he was never dictatorial on his sets. He never behaved like a director on the sets rather he considered himself just as a worker. He was quite meticulous in planning the shots and the retakes did not bother him. He was always searching for that perfect shot⁴. Artists who have worked with Guru Dutt vouch for the fact that he always discussed his shots even with everyone on his sets, if possible. Lately, Guru Dutt is being

¹ From the website: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baazi_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baazi_(film))

² Orson Welles is a renowned name in the world of theatre and cinema. Born in 1915, this American director is famous for the films like *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). He is known for his non-linear approach to the storytelling and chiaroscuro technique of lighting.

³ Kenji Mizoguchi, the Japanese film-maker, born in 1898 is famous for his unique style of taking the long shots in order to heighten the impact of the story-telling.

⁴ Salam, Ziya Us. 2012. *Housefull: The Golden age of Hindi Cinema*, Noida: Om Publications, p. 25.

recognized world over as a master craftsman and his *Pyaasa* has been included in Time magazine's list of best 100 films of all times.

D.Dua considers the Cinema of Guru Dutt to be a personal one. According to him, Guru Dutt's personal life was in turmoil and this got reflected in his Cinema. Social issues got depicted in his cinema but these issues were an extension of Dutt's personal anguish (telephonic interview, November 21, 2019)

5.1.1 Lyrical quality in Guru Dutt's Cinema

A certain lyrical quality is always found in the works of Guru Dutt. He is hailed as a sensitive film-maker with a literary bent of mind. Though he is not a Bengali by birth, the culture and heritage of Bengal existed in his films to a large extent. His upbringing in the state of Bengal had perhaps inspired Guru Dutt to incorporate the Bangla sensibility in his films. Learning the art of Cinema under Amiya Chakraborty and Gyan Mukerji, both of whom belonged to Bengal, might have influenced Guru Dutt in the realm of film-making. Darius Cooper has discussed the influence of Hollywood on Guru Dutt in his book, **In black and white-Hollywood and the melodrama of Guru Dutt** especially the picturization aspect of songs in the films of Guru Dutt and the melodramatic content.⁵

Guru Dutt has been hailed as a master story-teller and also recognized as a brilliant master craftsman when the question of song picturization comes. According to Majrooh Sultanpuri, Guru Dutt was a unique director in the sense of picturization of songs and dances. He had two things in mind while picturization of the songs. Guru Dutt never wanted his song to start from the musical prelude. He wanted his songs to be an extension of the dialogue and storyline. Majrooh says that he was the only director whose songs had pace. He gave the songs an importance and thought.⁶

⁵ Cooper, Darius. 2005. *In Black and White: Hollywood and melodrama of Guru Dutt*, Kolkata: Seagull Books.

⁶ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2004. *Guru Dutt: A life in Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 84-85.

5.2 Interviews Taken

S.Sharma while harping on lyrical quality of Cinema of Guru Dutt gives the examples of ‘*Jinhe Naaz hai Hind Pe*’ and ‘*Waqt ne Kiya kya Hasin Sitam*’ that how Guru Dutt used to structure the scenes beautifully. (telephonic interview, April 6, 2019)

According to A.Rai, Guru Dutt, in his initial phase of film-making was known for making routine commercial Cinema as exemplified by *Baaz* and *AarPar*. His association with Abrar Alvi changed the equation for him. His films like *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam* and *Pyaasa* were made as a result of his collaboration with Abrar Alvi. He was far ahead of his times. *Birdman*, a Hollywood movie released in 2014, seems to be inspired clearly by the film *Kaagaz Ke Phool* Thus, Amit Rai clearly indicates the influence of Guru Dutt on contemporary Cinema (telephonic communication, April 8,2019).

While commenting on the Cinema of Guru Dutt, A.Gill⁷ says that Guru Dutt was a philosopher type man who excelled in the film-making. His *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* and *Pyaasa* are classics. Feudal decay and mindset was clearly represented in *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* (telephonic interview, April 7, 2019)

A.Tyagi⁸, while talking about the Cinema of Guru Dutt opines that his control on the medium of Cinema was all powerful. According to him, *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* were not depressing at all albeit these are examples of best Cinema (personal interview, January 2, 2017)

S.Sharma holds the viewpoint that Guru Dutt’s Cinema was unique in many aspects. The cinematography in the films of GuruDutt was best amongst the contemporaries. He was influenced by French Noir Cinema who used light and darkness to an ultimate effect.

⁷ Amrik Gill has been associated with the film industry in various capacities as dialogue writer, actor and assistant director

⁸ Amit Tyagi has been associated with Film and Television Institute of India as faculty member and later on retired as Director FTII, Pune

It often happens that the incidents taking place in the life of an artist often gets reflected in the work of that artist. Guru Dutt was an unhappy man in his real life and this unhappiness and depression often got spilled over to his films. *Pyasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and to some extent *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* is dominated by melancholy and anguish and are depressing movies to a large extent. These are the films belonging to mid-phase of Guru Dutt's film-making. Nasreen Munni Kabir has contested that there was very less difference between off-screen Guru Dutt and on-screen Guru Dutt⁹. The real life incidents taking place in the life of Guru Dutt were being reflected in his films. In his letters to Geeta Dutt and his sons, Guru Dutt had mentioned that he was getting angry with the world, that the more he saw the world, more bitterly he was becoming. Guru Dutt also mentioned his diminishing faith in human nature and people. It seems that the classics of Guru Dutt have been born out of this despair.

5.3 Table mentioning the Hindi films made under the banner 'Guru Dutt Films Ltd and Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd 'depicting various social issues

S No	Year of the release	Name of the film	Production house	Director	Social issue taken
1.	1955	<i>MR. AND MRS. 55</i>	Guru Dutt Films private limited	Guru Dutt	The modernity of women, Feminism
2.	1957	<i>PYAASA</i>	Guru Dutt Films private limited	Guru Dutt	Class conflict, societal decay, the crisis of conscience
3.	1959	<i>KAAGAZ KE PHOOL</i>	Guru Dutt Films private limited	Guru Dutt	Societal decay
4.	1962	<i>SAHIB BIWI AUR GHULAM</i>	Guru Dutt Films private limited	Guru Dutt	Feudalism, Women oriented issues

⁹ Kabir, Nasreen Munni.2006.*Yours Guru Dutt*, India: Lustre.

5.4 Mr. and Mrs. 55¹⁰



Release Year: 1955

Produced by: Guru Dutt

Directed by: Guru Dutt

Starring: Guru Dutt, Madhubala, Johnny Walker and others

Mr. and Mrs. 55 may not be in the league of intense Cinema of Guru Dutt exemplified by *Pyaasa*, *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam*, and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* but this film; in the lighter vein raises the question of feminism and traditional role of women in Indian society. The film can be bracketed in the genre of a satirical comedy and first attempt of Guru Dutt of putting some social relevance in his films.

Social issues raised in the film

1. Modernity of women
2. Feminism

5.4.1 Plot

Mr. and Mrs. 55 is a story whose idea Guru Dutt got from a play written by Abrar Alvi, his writer. The play '*Modern Marriage*' was written by him when he was a student at Nagpur University¹¹ This play became the base for this film.

¹⁰ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._and_Mrs.55_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._and_Mrs.55_(film))

Anita (Madhubala) is an orphan girl living with his firebrand feminist activist aunt *Sita Devi* (Lalita Pawar). *Sita Devi* has been shown as a character that is anti-men and is advocating for the controversial Divorce bill to be passed. She is a leading public figure who campaigns actively for the Hindu Code Bill. She has become singularly devoted to her cause. *Anita* learns on her twentieth birthday about the will that her father had made. The terms of the will clearly state that she would inherit his property only if she marries within one month of her birthday. *Sita Devi* is aghast at these terms of the will and she wants to arrange a contract marriage for *Anita* (quite a modern system in 1955). She is on the lookout for a man who agrees for this contract marriage. *Sita Devi* finds *Pritam* (Guru Dutt) who is unemployed at that time. *Sita Devi* arranges for the registered marriage of both *Pritam* and *Anita*. The marriage had to be a secret affair and *Pritam* would have to divorce *Anita* when *Sita Devi* would ask. *Pritam* is offered a monthly salary for this work. He agrees for this registered marriage as he is already in love with *Anita*. It appears to *Anita* that *Pritam* had married her for the money but *Pritam* attempts to win her heart instead of cashing his monthly cheques. *Pritam* is not successful in winning *Anita's* heart so he wants to let go of *Anita*. He conjures false pieces of evidence against him so that *Sita Devi* can procure the divorce which she wants. *Sita Devi* is expected to win the divorce case for her niece. But finally, she learns about the machinations of her Aunt, grows uncharacteristically defiant, challenges her aunt and finally unites with *Pritam*.

Social issues raised in the film

3. Modernity of women
4. Feminism

5.4.2 Issue of feminism and modernity of women as depicted in the film

The film *Mr. and Mrs. 55* has got many unique points. Not only the film is a satirical comedy, Guru Dutt created this film having many political overtones also. One of the unique points of this film is to look at the traditional gender positions by reversing the positions. Traditional gender positions which have been created in Hindi films are

¹¹ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2004. *Guru Dutt: A life in Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.92. .

typical of that of a patriarchal society. The film has got a modern look. By inverting traditional gender positions-setting up the woman with means and the man in a state of penury, a converse of social reality is shown in the film and as the film was made in 1955, this was quite new and revolutionary thing to do at that time. Reversing the social scenario shifts attention to a playful and improbable scenario which is not quite impossible. The decade of the 1950's was the golden age of Indian Cinema but the women in most of the social movies were shown as positioned as vulnerable and their position could be ascertained as of homely ladies. The ladies were more or less represented as characters that are coy, shy and submissive in nature. *Mr. and Mrs.55* bring out the unconventional in women and they are shown as the social butterflies. The film is a satirical comedy made in Hollywood style, as Abrar Alvi contends.¹²

The ‘**social butterfly**’ concept of a woman character was also being screened on the celluloid, perhaps for the first time. The butterfly as a recurrent metaphor occurs in the film again and again. The metaphor is used for "women of leisure" in popular discourse and evokes images of restless, flighty, colorful creatures that are difficult to pin down or control. Most important, the similitude admits compelling charm and captivating lure for the beholder. *Sita Devi* is labeled as the "eccentric woman" whose eccentricities have been born out of her high-class status¹³. Though both *Anita and Sita Devi* speak for the subaltern the subaltern does not exist in their minds. The subaltern is a mere chip in the arguments that take place between *Sita Devi* and *Anita*. The talk about the poor and oppressed women is just a lip-service to their problems. Here, Guru Dutt is reflecting a contemporary society where high-class ladies, in general, are found to indulge in hollow talks. The privileged women are shown as the characters speaking for women’s assertion for rights and liberty. *Sita Devi* joins the ranks of a long list of spinsters, dowagers, prohibitionists, mothers-in-law, suffragettes, career women and women's libbers. In this way, the film is similar to the Hollywood romantic comedy. Here, class and gender conflicts are rolled together as

¹² Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2004. *Guru Dutt: A life in Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

¹³ Viridi, Jyotika. 2003. *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*, India: Rutgers University Press, p. 86.

the struggle for women's rights becomes a fanciful pursuit for the leisured rich, a sign of female anarchy that the hero effectively contains.¹⁴ The film is a satire on the high-class status ladies who assemble and organize to discuss any issue. This assemblage is akin to the assemblage of ladies in contemporary India also. The film rightly depicts the hollowness of such a society where these rich ladies have nothing concrete to do and further the cause of feminism in the name of freedom and liberty. How women get organized to discuss political or social issues have been depicted in the film. This public organization of the ladies was also a new phenomenon in Hindi films. It is another way of showing assertiveness of women. How the organizing capability has been shown in the film can be depicted from many dialogues and scenes.

The film opens with a young newspaper boy's full-throated sales pitch: "*Assembly mein zordar behas-talaq...*" (Heated debate in the assembly-divorce), which refers to the passing of the contentious 1955 Hindu Marriage act.



Fig. 3.1 The opening scene of the film: *Still taken from Mr. and Mrs. 55 (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)*

A crowd gathers, clamoring for the paper, and the camera follows a young bespectacled woman buying a copy. Soon after this opening scene, the camera pans to a meeting of a woman's organization. In a few cuts, it singles out *Sita Devi* as she

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.84

addresses a group of women, telling them of recent developments: in the past month, the women's Union sent a deputation to the government to lobby on behalf of the "divorce bill". "You all know", she declaims, "how important this bill is for women to gain self-respect in our patriarchal society where a woman's place is at her man's feet and she is expected to be happy as his slave."¹⁵ This organization sets the tone of the film as anti-patriarchy. A question of feminism is thus raised in the film. *Mr. and Mrs. 55* remains one of those rare films especially in the decade of the 50's when feminism and talk of modern women became the central theme of the film.

5.6 PYAASA¹⁶



Release Year: 1957

Produced by: Guru Dutt

Directed by: Guru Dutt

Starring: Guru Dutt, Waheeda Rehman, Mala Sinha, Johnny Walker and others

Released in 1957, *Pyaasa* has been hailed as an all-time classic of Guru Dutt. The film is basically a story of *Vijay*, a struggling poet trying to find his mark as a poet in the

¹⁵ Viridi, Jyotika. 2003. *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*, India: Rutgers University Press, p. 78.

¹⁶ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyaasa_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyaasa_(film))

world. *Gulabo*, a prostitute helps him in this venture. *Pyaasa* speaks for the struggling people and raises a question mark on the hypocritical ways of the world.

Social issues raised in the film

1. Class Conflict
2. Societal Decay
3. The plight of Women (Prostitution)
4. Crisis of Conscience
5. Secularism

5.6.1 Plot

Originally based upon a story titled *Kashamkash*, written by Guru Dutt somewhere in 1947-48, the Hindi film *Pyaasa* explores the journey of a struggling poet, *Vijay* through the life. The story of *Pyaasa* has got an uncanny similarity to the story of Sahir Ludhianavi, the famous Urdu poet. The film starts with a narrative prelude showing a young man lying on the grass in a park composing his poetry. This is how *Vijay* (Guru Dutt) is introduced to the audience. Trying to make a name in the field of Urdu poetry, the poetry of *Vijay* is rejected by established publishers. *Vijay*'s brothers (Mehmood and Mayadas) consider him as a recluse, good for nothing. They sell the poems of *Vijay* as wastepaper. Only his mother (Leela Mishra) is sympathetic towards him. After losing his home, while roaming in a park, *Vijay* hears his verse being recited by a young prostitute, *Gulabo* (Waheeda Rehman). *Vijay* is compelled to go after *Gulabo* to her house. She firstly considers him as a customer but later on discovers that he is the poet whose verses, she is fond of. *Gulabo* becomes protective towards him and gradually falls in love with him. Wandering on the streets of Calcutta, doing many menial jobs, one day, *Vijay* sees *Meena* (Mala Sinha). *Meena* and *Vijay* were in love in the college but *Meena* being worldlier wise and practically leave him to marry a wealthy publisher *Ghosh* (Rehman). *Ghosh* invites *Vijay* to his home where many poets are present. *Vijay* thinks that *Ghosh* might be interested in publishing his poems but *Ghosh* is not interested in publishing his poems instead he is keen to insult *Vijay* as his curiosity has been aroused about the relation between his wife, *Meena*, and *Vijay*. It is only at the party at the home of *Ghosh* that *Vijay* discovers that *Meena* is the wife of *Ghosh*. *Vijay*, already in a depressing state of

mind becomes more melancholic. He discovers one day about his mother's death co-incidentally. *Vijay*, who was very close to his mother gets very depressed and takes to drink. He becomes suicidal. Despite *Gulabo's* consolation and love towards him, *Vijay* wants to end his life. While heading towards the railway tracks to end his life, *Vijay* gives his coat to a shivering poor beggar. A suicide note is in the pocket of that coat. The beggar follows *Vijay* and gets caught in the tracks. A train is coming near him. *Vijay* tries to save him but the beggar is dead. The suicide note which was meant for *Vijay* is found and everyone assumes that the poet *Vijay* is dead. *Gulabo*, who is grief-stricken, wants to publish *Vijay's* poetry at any cost. She goes to Ghosh and offers all her worldly possessions to pay for the publication of *Vijay's* poetry. *Ghosh* agrees to the proposal. *Gulabo* only wants to see *Vijay's* name as a famous poet. The book of poetry, *Parchhaiyan* is printed and is an instant success everywhere.

Meanwhile, *Vijay*, in a depressed state of mind is in an asylum. In the asylum also, everyone is gushing about his book of poems. *Vijay* is surprised to see this and tells everyone that he was the author of that book but nobody believes this. He wants to run away from the asylum. He is successful in his attempt with the help of his old friend, the masseur, *Abdul Sattar* (Johny Walker).

Vijay, after his escape from the asylum, finds out that his first death anniversary was being commemorated at a lavish scale. He reaches the venue and finds that he is being hailed as a great poet after his 'death'. The situation of a stampede occurs at the venue and the confusion prevails. Now, there is a situation where the stakes are high on recognizing *Vijay* but he refuses to be recognized as the famous poet. He is disillusioned by the happenings and leaves the venue.

5.6.2 Pyaasa: A study in Psychology

Pyaasa is a film made by Guru Dutt when he had Dilip Kumar in his mind to play the intense role of the poet *Vijay* but the things could not be materialized and Guru Dutt himself played the role of *Vijay* with an intensity needed to portray such a character. *Pyaasa* had many issues embedded in the screenplay. The movie is perhaps one of the finest comments on human psychology. The main philosophy behind the story of *Pyaasa* is that every human being however deplorable he might have been still he is

capable of being loved and lives with dignity. *Vijay's* personal anger gradually gets transformed into anger against the ways of unjust society. He is aghast at the treatment meted out to him and this scenario is quite prevalent in the society where an artist when alive does not get recognition and fame as is his due but posthumously his greatness is recognized. The film rightly points out the predicament of getting recognition in one's lifetime. There seems to be a similarity between the theme of *Pyasa* and *Notes from underground* written by the Russian author, Fyodor Dostoevsky. **Notes from Underground** written in 1864 by Fyodor Dostoevsky had a similar theme of a disillusioned man in a society. He considers himself aloof from the society and thinks that no one understands him as he is a highly intellectual man having great capabilities to do wonders. The theme of *Pyasa* indicates towards the times to come where commercialization of art shall take precedence over emotions and sentiments. *Vijay* is a poet but instead of penning out the poetry of love, he writes poetry of despair and anguish, of unjust treatment in the hands of the society. One can see clearly the image of the Urdu poet, Sahir Ludhianavi in this character. Sahir's poetry also had revolutionary elements more often. *Pyasa* has been filmed in the mold of *Devdas* but the basic difference between the character of *Devdas* and *Vijay*, whose character has been modeled on *Devdas*, is that *Devdas* is lovelorn whereas *Vijay* is pained seeing injustice around him. His depression is not his alone, he feels for the downtrodden classes of this world. *Vijay's* poetry takes the form of a social commentary.

It seems that *Pyasa* was not made keeping any specific social issue in the mind. What happens is that through the life's journey of *Vijay*, certain very personal incidents take place and these personal incidents compel him to have a pessimistic look at the society. The social issues in *Pyasa* arise out from the personal anguish of the protagonist, *Vijay*. It is his personal anguish turning into a voice for social reform. His personal anguish has been evident in the opening scene only through the words of lyricist Sahir Ludhianavi which have been put in the mouth of the poet, *Vijay*.

Ye hanste hue Phool,

Ye khila hua gulshan.....

Ye Phoolon ka ras pee ke machalte hue bhanware...

Main Doon bhi to kya Doon tumhein Ae shokh Nazaro

Le de ke mere paas

Kuchh aansoon hain kuchh aahen



Fig. 3.2 First scene of the movie depicting anguish of Vijay: *Still taken from Pyaasa (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)*

5.6.3 The problem of unemployment

He has lost his love as his beloved *Meena* leaves him in search of greener pastures. This incident changes the outlook of *Vijay* towards the people with moneybags. He is jobless and is striving for his job only but failing to get any decent job reflects on his personality and he becomes aware of the critical situation of the unemployed and the problem of unemployment. The pertinent problem of unemployment is depicted in the initial scenes of the movie. Through the question of unemployment of *Vijay*, Guru Dutt has tried to look into the problem of unemployment in the country in the decade of the 1950's. *Pyaasa* has been looked at from many angles but the least discussed angle and social issue is that of unemployment. The telling comment by a passenger

When *Vijay* offers to pick up his luggage as a coolie reflects the society of that time in the context of unemployment.



Fig. 3.3 Vijay doing the work as a coolie: *Still taken from Pyaasa (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)*

Ajnabi Aadmi: Coolie, oh Coolie

Mujhe Coolie chahiyye

Vijay: Ji haan main hoon

(The expression of the man here is that of a surprise as from no angle, Vijay looks like an impoverished coolie.)

Ajnabi Aadmi: Kya halat ho gayi hai duniya ki, aikal padhe likhe log bhi coolie ban rahe hain

5.6.4 Class struggle

Class consciousness and class struggle is an important point shown in the film. *Vijay's* affection and attachment to *Gulabo* and *Abdul Sattar* clearly points towards the empathy that he has got towards the rich class. The masseur *Abdul Sattar* and the prostitute, *Gulabo* belongs to a lowly and downtrodden class of society. A class distinction is clearly shown in the film with the likes of *Meena* and *Mr. Ghosh* on the one end of the spectrum whereas *Sattar* and *Gulabo* belong to the other end of the

spectrum. The upper-class end of the spectrum clearly loathes the downtrodden classes. In between the two ends lies the position of *Vijay* whose personal anguish brings him closer to *Sattar* and *Gulabo*. She likes him, loves him and one can say that she reveres *Vijay* as a deity. It is only in form of *Gulabo* that *Vijay* has found the love he is longing for. It is only in form of *Abdul Sattar* that *Vijay* is able to find a true friend. The pessimistic environment of his home comprising of his greedy brothers turns into a bit optimism only in form of *Abdul Sattar* and *Gulabo*. *Vijay*, who belongs to a middle class, finds sympathy for himself in the characters that had been rejected by the society at large. The dichotomy between the two classes has been clearly visible in many scenes of the film. Class consciousness provides a push to the film.

5.6.5 The issue of Prostitutes

The film for the first time perhaps in the history of Hindi film industry shows sensitivity towards the prostitutes which is unparalleled in Hindi Cinema. Prostitutes have been shown as the human beings belonging to a mainstream society. Through the plight of prostitutes, Guru Dutt has tried to show societal decay. *Vijay's* initial attitude towards *Gulabo* is that of sympathy and not that of love. He rues the wretched condition of this category of society. This class of society has been shown as human beings who are not to be despised. More often, the character of Prostitutes and courtesans have been used in films mainly to titillate or provide a song sequence but Guru Dutt through the character of *Gulabo* has provided a certain dignity to such types of characters. The song '*Jinhe Naaz Hai Hind par.....*' written by Sahir Ludhianavi and inspired by his long poem *Chakle* brings pathos to the scenario which ultimately becomes the paean to the sufferings of the exploited women.



Fig. 3.4 The song...*Jinhen Naaz hai hind par*: Still taken from *Pyaasa* (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)

Ye kuche ye nilamghar dikashi ke
Ye kuche ye nilamghar dilkashi ke
Ye lute hue karvan zindagi ke
Kahan hai kahan hai muhafiz khudi ke
Jinhe Naaz hai hind par wo kahan hai
Kahan hai kahan hai kahan hai.....
Ye sadiyon se bekhauf sahmi si galiyan
Ye masli Hui adhkili zard kaliyan.....
Jinhen Naaz hai hind par wo kahan hai
Madad chahte hai ye Hawwa ki beti
Yashoda ki hamjins Radha ki beti
Payambar ki ummat Zulekha ki beti
Jinhen Naaz hai hind par wo kahan hai.....

A bond develops between *Vijay* and *Gulabo* in the starting scene only and this remains the true and honest bond on the border of a platonic relationship between the two characters. Prostitutes in the film *Pyasa* have been presented as the souls in blood and flesh, which is a sensitive portrayal of such characters, rather than stereotype portrayal of such characters. Guru Dutt does not resort to a voyeuristic style of presenting such characters and remain true to the style which can be classified as a touch of realism. *Vijay* is very much concerned with the plight of downtrodden classes is very much evident from the scene where he saves *Gulabo* from a policeman by saying that she was his wife. At this moment he is not in love with *Gulabo*. It is only his compassion towards her that he resorts to save her in such a manner. This compassion is on the basis of class consciousness that *Vijay* harbors in his mind.



Fig. 3.5 Vijay telling the policeman that Gulabo was his wife: Still taken from *Pyasa* (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)

Policeman: *Bau ji, is taraf koi ladki to bhag ke nahin aayi*

Vijay: *Nahin to*

Policeman (on seeing Gulabo): *Yeh kaun hai*

Vijay: *Yeh meri biwi hai*

Vijay shows the compassion of selfless humanity in the manner he saves *Gulabo*. Hence, the social difference is ignored by *Vijay* in this scene. It is not that the compassion of *Vijay* was reserved for *Gulabo* only; the beggar on the railway tracks also got a compassionate touch of *Vijay* in form of his coat. The compassionate feelings of *Vijay* towards the downtrodden classes indicate towards the communist and socialist inclination of *Vijay* but nowhere in the film, has the political ideology of *Vijay* been discussed directly. His overtures are more as humanist rather than Marxist.

French critic, Henry Miciello, commenting on *Pyaasa* has written that it was difficult to imagine *Pyaasa* without Guru Dutt. His acting has got none of the mannerisms associated with the well known professional actors. He is at all times discreet. He remains sensitive underplaying the role. In the context of Hindi Cinema, he is an actor way ahead of the time.¹⁷ Thus Guru Dutt's reluctance to act in his own productions and his belief that his acting skills were very limited, in fact, become a positive point while portraying the characters like *Vijay*.

5.6.6 Depression and helplessness in the characterization of Vijay

A sense of helplessness surrounds the character of *Vijay*. His character is defined by a certain moroseness and pessimistic flavor of life. *Vijay* is disgusted by a society that is ruthless and is marked by the broken relationships. Through this character, Dutt as a director had given an indication of the times to come. *Vijay* as a character and Dutt as a person were perhaps treading on an almost same path. After the initial phase of film-making by Guru Dutt ended, a favorite theme of his films was death and self-destruction. Social issues like depression and suicidal tendency have also been discussed in the movie. The character is anti-establishment but instead of fighting the system, represented by Amitabh Bachchan phase of Cinema later, the character *Vijay* in *Pyaasa* just observes the ways of the society and adopts a defeatist approach where he thinks nothing of such a society and rues the fact even if such a world becomes his, that shall be of no use. The character represented the aspirations of countless young persons who had found the atmosphere of those times as defeatist one does not want to fight the system; instead, he feels apathy towards such a system and wants to shun the system. He has been shown more as a man who wants to shun the world. The

¹⁷ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2011. *The dialogue of Pyaasa*, New Delhi: Om Books.

character does not want to fight with the society. He thinks the evils of the society as a huge burden which cannot be damaged by a single man.

5.6.7 Vijay as a symbol of sacrifice

The image of crucified Christ has been used for last 2000 years in various forms of art, touching the people's hearts. That image of crucified Christ has symbolized human suffering all over and has been used to evoke sympathy and a feeling of pathos. The film-makers have used various symbols in their Cinema to connect with the masses in an effective manner. *Pyasa* has been a specific case where Guru Dutt has depicted the feeling of suffering through the Christ image. The first case of this Christ image occurs at the party scene at the publisher *Ghosh's* house. The mannerisms of *Vijay* while singing the song, **Jaane Woh Kaise log the jinke Pyaar ko...** points out to a Christ-like image.



Fig. 3.6 Vijay's hands spread out like the image of Christ: Still taken from *Pyasa* (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)

Vijay is pointing towards the suffering of his unrequited love in the scene and believes that he has been crucified at the altar of money and societal position as represented by the character, *Meena*. The scene where the beggar dies accidentally on the railway track wearing the coat of *Vijay* containing a suicide note of *Vijay* in one of the pockets is again reminiscent of the image of Christ. It is observed that after being run over by the train, the arms of the beggar are flung like the image of the Christ.



Fig. 3.7 The beggar as the sacrificing figure: *Still taken from Pyaasa (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)*

The beggar has sacrificed his life for *Vijay* accidentally. The image of Christ appears again when *Ghosh* breaks the news of *Vijay's* death to *Meena* at the breakfast table. *Meena* opens LIFE magazine on whose cover is a picture of Christ, nailed to a golden cross. The picture gets exactly superimposed on the face of *Meena*. The Christ as an image resurfaces again in the final moments of the film when *Vijay* appears at the supposedly first death anniversary of himself as a resurrected image of Christ.



Fig. 3.8 Vijay at the death anniversary of 'the poet Vijay': *Still taken from Pyaasa (Guru Dutt Films Ltd)*

He is aghast at the hypocrisy of the world and his war cries to burn the world is held against the social system recognizing the works of dead people only, not caring for talented people when they are alive. Through the symbol of Christ images, Dutt has tried as a director to create the ambiance to get the sympathy of his audience. The depressed state of Vijay's mind help in making him a hero without even being presented as a super-hero.

Social psychologists believe that the theory of rejection sensitivity has been applied in the film *Pyaasa*. The rejection of his ideas by the society, the rejection of love and the rejection towards his sensitivity perhaps made him rejection sensitive which got reflected in the character of *Pyaasa*.

5.6.8 A glimpse of Leftist ideology

The leftist leaning of *Vijay* and ideas of socialism is clearly reflected in most of the scenes of the film in the form of humanism. *Vijay's* reference to the famous revolutionary poets, Josh Malihabadi¹⁸ and Faiz Ahmed Faiz¹⁹ in the film reflects the left of the centre leaning of the poet and his penchant for penning revolutionary poetry instead of love poems. *Pyaasa's* socialist message is well conveyed through the songs, *Jinhe Naaz hai hind par wo Kahan Hain....* and *ye duniya agar mil bhi jaye to kya hai*. *Vijay* is not an intellectual per se but seeing the plight and condition of downtrodden classes of society and hypocrisy prevailing in the society, he turns to pen such thoughts.

Pyaasa is like *Devdas* as well as, unlike *Devdas*. The film may be taken as remolding of the concept of *Devdas* into an urban setting to some extent only. *Devdas* is unable to reciprocate positively to the love of a prostitute but *Vijay* in *Pyaasa* finds solace in *Gulabo*, apparently, a wretched figure in the so-called civilized society. Dutt by his ways and means reject the tradition and becomes bacon light to embrace the unconventional viewpoint in the eyes of the society. A message is thus being imparted

¹⁸ Born as Shabbir Hasan Khan, Josh Malihabadi was a popular Urdu poet in the British India era. Popularly, known as Shayar-e-Inqilab, Josh had written over one lakh Urdu couplets.

¹⁹ Faiz Ahmed Faiz is famous in the literary circle as a noted leftist poet. Born in Punjab in British India, Faiz remained a staunch Marxist and was honored by the Pakistan Government with Nishan –e-Imtiaz award in 1990.

through the platonic love and bonding which *Vijay* and *Gulabo* shares. Romanticism and revolutionary thoughts go hand in hand in *Pyaasa*. *Devdas* is somewhat egalitarian in nature whereas *Pyaasa* represents the humanistic angle.

5.6.9 A question of leadership

The song, *Jinhe Naaz Hai Hind par wo Kahan hai* itself has invited many comments. The song is a slap on the leaders of that time who had shown the dream of a utopian society to the Indians just after attaining the independence. Depicting various social evils especially associated with the downtrodden women, the song is a telling comment on the plight of women. Coppola commenting on the song writes that it was specifically in this use of political and social comment that Sahir had mastered and this added further substance to his film songs. Guru Dutt, while considering Sahir Ludhianavi to write the lyrics of *Pyaasa* had ensured that the poetry for which Sahir was famous would mesmerize the audience with the message embedded in the poetry.

5.6.10 Pyaasa: A study in Secularism

Secularism is another message which Guru Dutt tries to convey through this film. His best friend in the film is *Abdul Sattar*, a Muslim. We, as the audience are not sure whether *Gulabo* is a Muslim or a Hindu. There is no reference to her religion. Many Hindu prostitutes resorted to taking Muslim names in that era. *Gulabo* symbolizes a fragrance and an innocent soul. It seems that Guru Dutt was more concerned with class. Caste and religion did not matter to him. A Marxist trait in the garb of humanism is visible in *Pyaasa* as the film is more concerned about the issue of class consciousness. We get to know his viewpoint about secularism and religion in the sense that in a talk with the famous poet and lyricist, Kaifi Azmi, Guru Dutt had mentioned that he was not a single entity from head to toe, that he was a part Muslim, part Christian and part Hindu. He was prone to think in one language and speak in another. He believed in a composite culture.²⁰

This concept of composite culture and idea of secularism often got reflected in the cinema of Guru Dutt and *Pyaasa* is not an exception in this regard.

²⁰ Cited by Azmi, Kaifi. Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2011. *Guru Dutt: A life in Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Commenting upon *Pyaasa*, Waheeda Rehman opines that the subject of *Pyaasa* could never date, that the film was all about human values and the things which people seek in real life: love and recognition. Social concerns as expressed in *Pyaasa* are universal. Further commenting on this, she states that when asked the head of the Japan Foundation Asia center, when a festival of Guru Dutt films was held there, why he loved the film, the answer came that *Pyaasa* is everyone's story and the experiences mentioned in the film were beyond national cultures.²¹ *Pyaasa* remains a hard-hitting film of Guru Dutt but the film also got a negative review in the most popular film magazine of that time, FilmIndia.

5.6.11 Reviews

Reviewing *Pyaasa* in FilmIndia, BabuRao Patel writes that *Pyaasa* is an uninspiring film, pretentious in tone and dull and confusing in effect. For him, this was the film which makes much noise without knowing what exactly it wants to say. The criticism of *Pyaasa* also alleges that the setting of the film, *Pyaasa* is in Bengal where Urdu poetry is not very popular but the basic storyline revolves around the character of an Urdu poet. Patel sees it as an unrealistic stuff. Guru Dutt's acting has also been criticised by Patel and he thinks that the character is a vain attempt of Guru Dutt to look intelligent. Amidst all the praise by other critics and commercial success, the review in FilmIndia is a rare criticism of the film.

A distinct style of picturization of songs and the key scenes had always been a hallmark of Guru Dutt. He is famous for his lighting sense. He has often played with the light and darkness in his films. This low key lighting effect has produced a signature style of Guru Dutt. The frames shot in dark represent the gloomy characters in the films of Guru Dutt.

²¹ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2014. *Conversations with Waheeda Rehman*, India: Viking.

5.7 KAAGAZ KE PHOOL²²



Release Year: 1959

Produced by: Guru Dutt

Directed by: Guru Dutt

Starring: Guru Dutt, Waheeda Rehman, Johnny Walker and others

Kaagaz Ke Phool released in 1959, failed at the box office and was a commercial disaster initially at the time of its release but later on the film has been counted amongst the classics of world cinema. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* gets the honor of being first Hindi film in Cinemascope.

Social issue raised in the film

Societal Decay

5.7.1 Plot

The storyline is told through the technique of flashback. *Suresh* (Guru Dutt), once a famous director visits a film studio and starts reminiscing about his old days. He is seen busy surrounded by his many assistants and workmen in the studio. He is in the midst of the process of filming *Devdas*, the character of a lovelorn man made famous

²² Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaagaz_Ke_Phool_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaagaz_Ke_Phool_(film))

by the novel of the same name written by Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya in 1917. He is in search of a suitable female actor to play the role of *Paro*. *Suresh* is travelling to Delhi to see his daughter *Pammi*, (Kumari Naaz). We learn that *Suresh* is separated from his wife, *Veena* (Veena Sapru) and is a loner. His wife and her parents think the film industry to be a lowly place and thinks that *Suresh* by associating himself with the film industry has lowered himself in the eyes of her parents. During his visit to Delhi, *Suresh* comes across a lady in a park in the rain. The lady is *Shanti* (Waheeda Rehman). *Suresh* loans her, his umbrella. Later on, *Shanti* comes to Bombay to find work and visits the studio to return the umbrella. Accidentally, she stumbles upon the scene being perfected and mixed. *Suresh* is in awe of her screen presence and finds that her innocence and grace would be best suitable for the role of *Paro*. *Suresh* and *Shanti* start coming closer to each other. When *Suresh* is seen seriously injured in an accident, *Shanti* looks after him lovingly and their closeness and mutual attraction is slowly turning into love for each other. *Suresh* tells *Shanti* that he was a married man but this attraction and love for each other grows into a passion. Gossip mongers start their work and the word is fast spreading that *Shanti* and *Suresh* have got something going on between them. The news reaches *Suresh's* daughter *Pammi* also. She comes to meet *Shanti* and requests her not to ruin her father's life. She compels *Shanti* to go away from there. Film *Devdas* helmed by *Suresh* as the director is a runaway hit. *Shanti* could not enjoy the success of the film. She gives the sweater to *Suresh* which she has been knitting for him and just goes away from the industry. *Suresh* is aghast at the happenings. He also loses the case of custody of *Pammi* in the court. *Suresh* begins drinking heavily and starts losing his focus as a director. His films start flopping all over. His producers are backing out as they do not consider him now as a winning proposition at the box office. *Suresh* becomes a face of failure. *Shanti* has gone back to her old profession of teaching. The time passes by and she is coerced by the Bombay producers to fulfill her contractual commitments and return back to the film industry. *Shanti* is considered now as a winning proposition. *Suresh* has become a penniless and hopeless drunkard without any work. *Shanti* searches for *Suresh* and on finding him in such a pitiable condition, *Shanti* tries to arrange some work for him as a director but *Suresh's* pride becomes the hurdle in accepting such an offer. *Shanti* is in love with *Suresh* but she is not able to tell him about her feelings.

The story moves forward. *Suresh's* daughter *Pammi* is being married. *Suresh* accepts a small role as an extra in a film which incidentally stars *Shanti* as the female character. *Suresh* becomes speechless in front of *Shanti* and is sacked. *Shanti* recognizes him when he removes his makeup but he does not want any recognition now and runs away from the scene with *Shanti* chasing him. Flashback ends. *Suresh* sits in an empty chair, director written on that chair and dies while being sitted on that chair.

5.7.2 Autobiographical elements in the film

It is said that *Kaagaz Ke Phool* is part autobiographical in nature and some critics believe that the film was a tribute of Guru Dutt to Gyan Mukerji ²³whom he considered his Guru in the film-making process.

While Guru Dutt's *Pyasa* had larger social concerns expressed in the film, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* is a very personal film for Guru Dutt still through the personal agony of the character *Suresh*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* tries to solve some mysteries associated with one's life. It is widely believed that the situation of doom which befalls on *Suresh* was of his own making and he could have found a way out of the situation of despair. *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, despite its fallacies as pointed out by some of the critics, points towards an important issue that the world only knows the successful people. Talent without materialistic success holds no value for the world at large and this maxim is truer for the film industry. The film is a telling comment on the hypocritical ways of the world. Success in form of materialistic things rules the world, according to the main theme of *Kaagaz Ke Phool*.

5.7.3 The question of art and artist

A pertinent question of looking at a work of art arises in the film. For an artist, a work of art is a work of art and the commercial value for such a piece of art should be at the backburner. If a piece or a work of art is turned into a mere commodity then the day would not be far away when the commodities shall rule and the businessmen would become artists. *Pyasa* also raised such questions and a similar point has been raised in *Kaagaz Ke Phool* also where a few flops have raised a question mark over the

²³ Gyan Mukerji was a famous Indian director associated with the films of the production house Bombay Talkies mainly. He is best known for his films *Jhoola* and *Kismet*.

talent and credibility of Suresh as a director. *Suresh* is an artist first and foremost. He is not looking into the commercial angle of the film *Devdas* which he is making. The point becomes evident when he chooses *Shanti* as his lead female actor to play the role of *Paro*. *Shanti* is a new face having no credibility in the film industry but in the deft hands of *Suresh*, she acquires a star status and foothold in the industry. This speaks volumes for the talent of *Suresh* but a few flops render him useless and untalented. This irony reflects in the real life also and such a scenario abounds in the real lives of many successful persons. Guru Dutt through the character of *Suresh* questions this fallacy of society.

Kaagaz Ke Phool is a telling comment on the relation between the industrious aspect of life and an artist's life. The film expresses the degenerative impact that an industrializing society can have on an individual's artistic freedom. Guru Dutt through this film has conveyed in a right manner that the films if considered as commodity shall lose the artistic appeal and value. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* has got an intrinsic value as a work of art. The film is a visual treat for the audience.

5.7.4 The significance of the title

The title of the film, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (paper flowers), itself indicates towards the fickle mindedness of the world. The title *Kaagaz Ke Phool* itself is the indication of the selfish nature of the world and the maxim that one has to bear his own tribulations and trials and nobody shall support him. In the success of a man, every one shall sing paeans to him but in the failure, nobody shall support him. As there is no fragrance in the paper flowers, the world is also bereft of any fragrance. The theme of the selfishness of the world and prevailing hypocrisy in the world has been covered in a large no. of movies but Guru Dutt here has tried to show the fleeting nature of Hindi film industry.

Kaifi Azmi considers *Kaagaz Ke Phool* as the best work of Guru Dutt technically. He has praised the lighting and cinematography of the film but says that the movie was a confused one. Confusion prevailed on the sets and Guru Dutt did not know how to

proceed in the film. Azmi contends that *Dekhi zamane ki yaari; Bichhde sabhi baari baari* represented the mental state of Guru Dutt at those times²⁴.

The film failed commercially and a big loss of Rs. 17 Lakh was incurred by Guru Dutt, a huge amount at that time. Raj Khosla, the famous Hindi film director contends that Guru Dutt was not perturbed by the financial loss as much he was perturbed by the attitude of people around him. He could not comprehend the fact that the audience had failed to respond to this sensitive story.

Dutt considered his work, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* in the league of its own and believed that some pictures were made for oneself only. Some works of art have got the purpose to satisfy oneself beforehand any appreciation is to be found amongst the lovers of that work of art. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* had such factors in it which could place this movie as such a piece of artistic expression.

Kaagaz Ke Phool is more autobiographical than a social comment. The social issues raised in the film are quite subtle. The lives of *Suresh Sinha* and Guru Dutt run parallel. The way, *Suresh Sinha* in the film goes on with his life to resemble the life of Guru Dutt. His mannerism, passion for cinema, compassion for his co-workers, love for photography, and an effort to achieve perfection has been duly reflected in the life of *Suresh Sinha*.

Raj Khosla, while commenting upon Guru Dutt says that Dutt was not a man who could express himself in the words. He considers Dutt as a man who perhaps could express himself best in visual form. He had a knack for talking through his Cinema. He was introverted, reserved and not resorting to his sharing his problems. His real life used to reflect in his films.

Guru Dutt's childhood was very insecure. His parents used to fight a lot. The atmosphere was very uncondusive at his home which took a toll on Guru Dutt's thinking. Psychologically, he was leading a traumatic life.

²⁴ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2014. *Conversations with Waheeda Rehman*, India: Viking, p. 159.

Researchers have shown that conflict in interpersonal relationships lead has a detrimental effect impact on the psychological adjustment of children. Guru Dutt can be considered as an example of a product of such a relationship. What he observed in his childhood, reflected in his personality as a film-maker and a human being. His films, to be specific *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* represented these overbearing sentiments of Guru Dutt.

5.7.5 The Cinema of Guru Dutt is clearly distinguished by the three phases

The first phase of Guru Dutt's Cinema is represented by the films like *Baazi*, *Baaz*, *AarPar* and *Mr. And Mrs. 55* when Guru Dutt was living a life of tranquillity.

The middle phase of cinema consisted of *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* when Guru Dutt had entered a tumultuous phase of his life. Lalita Lajmi, Guru Dutt's niece states that his marital life was not in a good state. He had become psychologically very weak. The kind of films, he made affected him more so, in this phase of film-making. (1988)

V.K.Murthy, the ace cinematographer of films of Guru Dutt states that during a search for a location for *Choudhvin Ka Chand*, Guru Dutt uttered the words, "*Ye Duniya agar mil bhi jaye to kya hai*". Murthy says that when he asked Guru Dutt about this despondency, Dutt replied in a pessimistic tone, "*Dekho Na, Mujhe director banna tha, ban gaya. Actor banna tha, ban gaya, picture achchi banani thi, bana di, paisa hai, Sab kuchh hai par kuchh Bhi Nahin*"²⁵

The statement by Guru Dutt reflects his state of mind and articulates that he was in a state of melancholy and depression. Dutt perhaps was a very unstable character and this trait of his personality reflected in his films.

5.7.6 Bushman Psychology viewpoint

Renowned psychologist Bushman says that one of the basic jobs of the human self is garnering acceptance and in order to meet what people what people prefer and expect

²⁵ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2004. *Guru Dutt: A life in Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

one needs to change. In addition to garner acceptance, the culture one lives in imposes systems of morality and one of its major thrusts is to do what is best for the community rather than what is best for the self. Dutt perhaps failed to carve a niche for himself where and his ideas were appreciated

5.7.7 V.K.Murthy and Guru Dutt

Murthy has stated in an interview that Guru Dutt had become a loner. In a conversation with him on the issue of Murthy migrating to Bangalore, Dutt had pointed out that Abrar Alvi had gone to Madras for some work, Dutt's family had left him and Dutt was feeling like an orphan.

A suicidal tendency was to be found in the family of Guru Dutt, perhaps. Guru Dutt and both his sons had committed suicide. Geeta Dutt had become morose after the death of Guru Dutt only and had died a broken soul. The films of Guru Dutt in the middle phase of his Cinema making reflected the tormented personal life of Guru Dutt clearly.

According to Murthy, Dutt had the ability to see what others could not see, he had the knack and ability to grasp the subtle, delicate layers of the society and the times in which he lived. His sensitivity had brought a revolution in Hindi Cinema and the same sensibility had created a void in his life leading to his untimely death.

Murthy's point clearly holds the theory that the personal life of a person clearly gets reflected in the work in which a man is engrossed. As artists are sensitive souls to a large extent, their creativity comes to reflect the personal life more than the human beings who are not involved in any kind of work of art.

5.7.8 Characterization of *Shanti*

The women in the films of Guru Dutt got a very just treatment in a sense that the women characters were projected in an unconventional manner, set against the backdrop of work and some vocation when there were impediments over women and their freedom. Examples of *Pyaasa (Gulabo)* and *Shanti (Kaagaz Ke Phool)*, very prominent to take.

Film-maker Mani Kaul has reiterated that the greatest contribution Dutt made to Bombay films was that he began to redefine the roles played by women. The characters of *Gulabo* and *Shanti* redefined the roles played by the female actors of that time.

Guru Dutt felt never shy in representing his women characters in untraditional roles. These roles were quite unique in the sense that contemporary Cinema at that time had fewer roles of such kind at that time. Characters of *Gulabo* and *Shanti* are very unconventional. These characters are unconventional in the sense that these women belonging to downtrodden classes protect and care for the male protagonists.

Characteristic features of Guru Dutt's cinema have been incompleteness, loneliness, and alienation whether it is *Pyasa* or *Kaagaz Ke Phool*; these elements are in full bloom in these two films.

Kaagaz Ke Phool has embedded the tragic elements till the end of the film. *Shanti* appears as a well-wisher for *Suresh* but her efforts remained a mirage and failed to rejuvenate his spirit.

5.8 Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam (1962)²⁶



Release Year: 1962

Produced by: Guru Dutt

Directed by: Abrar Alvi

Starring: Guru Dutt, Meena Kumari, Waheeda Rehman, Rehman and others

Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam is a classic Hindi film based on the literary work of Bimal Mitra. The film explores the topic of fall of feudalism and a platonic relationship between the youngest Daughter-in-law of a feudal household and a career driven part-time servant of the mansion.

Social issues raised in the film

1. Issues concerning women
2. Feudalism (Nature and Downfall)

²⁶²⁶ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahib_Biwi_Aur_Ghulam_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahib_Biwi_Aur_Ghulam_(film))

5.8.1 Plot

This Hindi film captures the essence of decaying feudalism in Bengal in true spirit. The film opens with the scene of dismantling of a Haveli by the laborers. The work is being done under the supervision of overseer *Atulya Chakraborty* alias *Bhootnath* (Guru Dutt). During lunchtime, *Atulya* wanders into the Haveli (mansion), where once he had worked as a part-time servant and developed a bonding with *Chhoti Bahu* (Meena Kumari). The film then enters the flashback and *Bhootnath* recalls his days at the haveli. It is the story set at the end of the nineteenth century. Flashback unfolds through the eyes of *Bhootnath*. The story of the sprawling mansion which is lying now in ruins unfolds before the eyes of *Bhootnath*. The mansion belonged to Choudharys, a family of Bengali Zamindars. *Bhootnath* works at the Mohini Sindoor factory which is owned by *Suvinay Babu* (Nazir Hussain) but lives in the mansion along with the multitude of other servants. *Suvinay Babu* has got a daughter, *Jabba* (Waheeda Rehman) who keeps on teasing *Bhootnath*, making fun of him due to his simple rustic behavior. The family of *Suvinay Babu* has been shown as that of following the Brahma Samaj. *Bhootnath* comes back from the work late in the evenings and gets fascinated by the goings on in the mansion. He observes minutely the decadent lifestyle of *Manjhle Babu* (Sapru) and *Chhote Babu* (Rehman). Orthodox widow (Pratima Devi) of the eldest brother also lives in the mansion. The decadent lifestyle of the feudal lords has been captured by showing the money being spent on nautch-girls, arranging musical ‘*mehfils*’ in the mansion, spending money on the marriage of their pets and their nature comes true when they confiscate the land of a farmer who is unable to give the dues. Wife of *Chhote Babu*, *Chhoti Bahu* (Meena Kumari) is a neglected lady of the household. Her husband is busy spending time with a *tawaif* and comes back home in the wee hours of the night. *Bhootnath* observes all this in the mansion. The Zamindars just want their wives to remain busy by having jewellery made and remade and supervising the household chores. One night servant *Bansi* (Dhumal) takes *Bhootnath* to meet *Chhoti Bahu*. *Chhoti Bahu* develops a liking for *Bhootnath*. When she comes to know that *Bhootnath* works in the Mohini Sindoor Factory, she implores *Bhootnath* to bring some Sindoor in the hope that applying that Vermillion would keep her husband at home. Gradually *Bhootnath* becomes a close confidante of *Chhoti Bahu*. But *Chhoti Bahu*’s attempt of winning her husband

through Mohini Sindoor fails. When asked by *Chhoti Bahu* that what would please *Chhote Babu*, he directly tells her that what *Chhoti Bahu* can do. Can she dance and drink like a tawaif?

Chhoti Bahu takes to liquor in order to appease her husband and gradually becomes his drinking companion which takes a toll on her health. *Bhootnath* becomes a trainee architect and goes away to work on a building project. When he returns to Calcutta some years later, he finds that *Suvinay Babu* has died and through a quirk of fate it is revealed that *Jabba* and *Bhootnath* had betrothed as children.

When *Bhootnath* visits the mansion, he finds it in partial ruins. The health of *Chhoti Bahu* has also been deteriorated and *Chhote Babu* has become paralyzed. *Chhoti Bahu* wants *Bhootnath* to accompany her to a nearby shrine to pray for her ailing husband. *Manjhle Babu* overhears this conversation and orders his henchmen to attack the carriage in which *Chhoti Bahu* and *Bhootnath* are traveling. The carriage stops abruptly in the night. *Bhootnath* is knocked unconscious and wakes up in the hospital some days later to find only that *Chhote Babu* had died and *Chhoti Bahu* had disappeared. The flashback ends at this time. Some laborers inform *Bhootnath* that a skeleton has been found in the ruins of the haveli. *Bhootnath* comes to recognize the skeleton of that of *Chhoti Bahu* from the jewelry she has been shown wearing. The film ends.

5.8.2 A brief analysis of the film

Guru Dutt, after the success of *Choudhvin Ka Chand*, brought the rights of Bimal Mitra's literary work, *Sahib Biwi Saur Ghulam*. He wanted Abrar Alvi to direct this film. Raj Khosla who was assistant to Guru Dutt in his earlier films considers *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam*, a very mature film.

In his words, "I think *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* was closest to Guru Dutt's heart. Raj Khosla considers that *Pyaasa* was his youth, a story of a young man joining life. *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam*, on the other hand, was totally mature. It's an immaculate film."²⁷ The film can be understood and analyzed from the point of ruin and self- destruction

²⁷ Kabir, Nasreen Munni. 2004. *Guru Dutt: A life in Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 174.

also. *Bhootnath* is witness to the self-destruction ways of the Zamindars. He is witnessing the destruction from outside the realm of the scenario. He becomes a part of the circumstances and external forces which are compelling this doomed future for the people of the mansion. Guru Dutt comes out as a film-maker relying on the concept of melodrama very much especially in his three best-renowned works, *Pyasa*, *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*. His films combine the realistic elements with a heavy dose of melodrama and this is clearly visible in *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* also which in the words of Arun Khopkar is a work that transcends the self-imposed limits of personal tragedy and takes the melodrama to a new height. The characters shown in the film appear to be real. The realistic element of the film is enhanced by Guru Dutt's eye for the detail in the Department of Cinematography and costumes. It is said that Guru Dutt sent Bhanu Athaiya, the costume designer of this film to Calcutta and arranged for her meeting with some Zamindar families to become acquainted with their culture and observe their attire.²⁸ V.K.Murthy has been cinematographer in most of the works of Guru Dutt and his deft lighting and camerawork have produced the classic images and characters in this film. Main women characters in the film of *Chhoti Bahu* and *Jabba* bring an interesting contrast. The film is not only showcasing the feudal decay but it is also making a point explaining the position of women in a feudal household and on the other hand in a progressive 'Brahmo Samaj' household. Incidentally, Guru Dutt was unsure of his 'Chhoti Bahu'. Meena Kumari was the last artist to be signed up for this film. Her capability of portraying tragic roles brings a unique depth and subtlety to the interpretation of this character.

5.8.3 Characterization of Women characters

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the characters of *Chhoti Bahu* and *Jabba* present a contrast in the same space and time. *Chhoti Bahu's* space is limited to her room in the mansion. Her character is not outgoing. She is deprived of the love by her husband, *Chhote Babu* and longs for his love. Darkness and shadows are associated with the character of *Chhoti Bahu*. The character of *Chhoti Bahu* is such that she asserts her sexual feeling quite openly but is helpless in the feudal household where

²⁸ Ibid, p. 185.

she is not more than a commodity. The character that she represents is sexually starved and she wants that her husband should not only be present at home but fulfils her desire also. The character of *Chhoti Bahu* is pivotal in the film and has got multi-dimensional shades to it. She is presented as an ethereal figure to *Bhootnath*. He considers *Chhoti Bahu* as a person who has got some mysterious quality to it. Initially, he is enamored by the enigmatic personality of *Chhoti Bahu* but later on, when he becomes a confidante of *Chhoti Bahu*, he finds her a lonely figure that is starved of love and is decaying just as the mansion is decaying. The story of a crumbling mansion and decaying body of *Chhoti Bahu* unfolds simultaneously. The desires of *Chhoti Bahu* are same as that of desires of a normal female but being placed in a feudal setup, she cannot express her desire openly and fully. For the male members in the feudal setup, these types of desires can only be expressed by the women of low strata. Suppression of desire is continuously connected with the character of *Chhoti Bahu*. Through the character of *Chhoti Bahu*, Guru Dutt has tried to carve out a role which speaks of feminism in the context of expressing sexuality.

How *Chhoti Bahu* is mysterious and enigmatic to *Bhootnath* initially has been projected in the first scene only when we hear a ghostly voice that of *Chhoti Bahu's*, beckoning *Bhootnath* into the ruins of what used to be her lavish quarters. The entire sequence of *Chhoti Bahu's* introduction is seen from the perspective of *Bhootnath* only. In the first meeting itself, an intense and tragic aura of *Chhoti Bahu* startles *Bhootnath* and the character of *Chhoti Bahu* gets mystified. Her character becomes mythical. As a wife, *Chhoti Bahu* has been presented as a property of the Choudhary household, just a showpiece, an object of desire. But the aesthetic appeal while showing the character of *Chhoti Bahu* never projects her in a voyeuristic style whose sexual desire is making her mad. *Chhoti Bahu* in the household of Choudharys is the property of the household. A lost identity is attached to the personality of *Chhoti Bahu*.

Jabba, on the other hand, represents the modern, progressive woman. She is straightforward, honest and a woman of integrity who has got full freedom in her

house as per 'Brahmo Samaj'²⁹ tradition. She is a dominating figure whose words run the household of *Suvinay Babu. Jabba* thus represents that lot of women of modern India who has got progressive ideas. She has been shown in total contrast to the character of *Chhoti Bahu. Jabba* is helping her father in running the Sindoor factory thus an entrepreneurship skill is visible in her.

5.8.4 Feudal decay as shown in the film

Social issue of feudal decay is the main theme of the film. Decay, dissolution, and death seem to be favorite themes of Guru Dutt for his Cinema and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* is no exception to it. Bengal had started losing its prominence as a politically dominating state as this position was on the verge of being transferred to the city of Delhi soon. The political decay ushered in an era of cultural decay, dismantling of older feudal structure and the rise of a new Bourgeoisie class of which *Bhootnath* is a representative. As the film is the visual representation of famous Bengali writer, Bimal Mitra's novel of the same name, the signs of decay are very prominent in both the works of expression. Rudyard Kipling suggests the decay in the epigraph of the novel as such:

Thus the midday halt of Charnock-more's the pity grew a city

As the fungus sprouts chaotic from its bed so it spread-

Chance-directed, chance-erected, laid and built

On the silt—

Palace, byre, hovel, poverty, and pride

Side by side;

And, above the packed and pestilential town

Death looked down³⁰

²⁹ Brahmo Samaj, a reformist movement started in 1828 in Calcutta, Bengal by Raja Ram Mohan Roy was an important socio-religious movement which wanted to link the religious idea with progressiveness and scientific spirit. Emancipation of women was one of the doctrines of Brahmo Samaj.

³⁰ Chakravarty, Sumita S. *National identity in Indian popular Cinema 1947-1987*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 175.

The film also sets the mood of decay and dissolution through the opening scene only. Workers are shown dismantling the building, there are ruins of a building; there are shots of broken pillars and walls, and high angle shot of the ruins gives an impression of ruin all over. The ruin shown in the film is not of buildings only; there is a ruin all over the lives of the feudal lords.



Fig. 3.9 The initial scenes in the film showing ruins of the Haveli: *Still from Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam (Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd)*



Fig. 3.10 The ruins of the Haveli: *Still from Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam (Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd)*

It seems that initially to some extent, the story of *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* confirms to the Marxist paradigm of the decay of the old feudal aristocracy and the rise of new bourgeoisie class. One social order is giving birth to another social order. The character of *Chhoti Bahu* is anti-thesis to the character of the feudalistic men shown in the film. She is nameless; forever mentioned as *Chhoti Bahu* in the film. This pattern of having a nameless female protagonist in the film points towards the millions of nameless exploited masses. In the character of *Chhoti Bahu*, one is clearly able to see the symbol of suppression similar to the common suppression of the common people.

The film refers to the changing scenario in the context of socio-religious reform movements which had started in the nineteenth century. One gets a glimpse of Brahmo Samaj, a major reform movement initiated in Bengal by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In direct contrast to the decay and dissolution of Zamindari system and household is the household of *Suvinay Babu*, a prominent Brahmo Samaji. The household is a progressive one. Optimism is the main feature of this household. The character of Jabba represents the woman who is always on her own thus representing a lady having a mind of her own helping her father in running the business.

The film is a beautiful example of a representation of a feudal system which dominated the social life of Bengal in the nineteenth century. The existence and fall of the feudal system are more prominent in Bengal as this is the state where the British established their foothold firmly before spreading to other parts of India. The British forces acted as a catalyst in the decay of the feudal order in Bengal. All the prominent features associated with the Zamindars have been shown in the film. The Zamindars lived by their own rules in an enclosed world given over to its own pleasures and pursuits. They have been shown as the exploiter of the masses. The Zamindars are shown as the patrons of music and dance and despite crumbling economic structure used to spend a lot on these frivolities of life. The scenes of pigeon fighting and cat wedding are other symbols of representation of this rich idol class sitting on the symbols of decay and ruins, themselves



Fig. 3.11 Bade Zamindar Babu supervising the preparation of Pigeon flight: *Still from Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam (Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd)*



Fig. 3.12 Pigeons in the sky: *Still from Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam (Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd)*

The exploitative character of Zamindars is fully visible in the scene where an emancipated villager shouts at the landlords for robbing him of the land which was rightly his. Suddenly the *Manjhle Babu* appears on the balcony and nods to his henchmen. These henchmen strike down the poor man (dialogues and scene). The camera captures the images of the wedding of the pet cat of the *Manjhle Babu* hence

the situation of this exploitation in hands of landlords is starkly juxtaposed. The exploitation is clearly visible on the lines that Marxian theory had suggested.

5.8.5 A comment on Superstitions

Superstitions and various rituals associated with the concept of religion survives the decaying households of the feudal lords has been exemplified clearly in the film. The ritualistic and superstitious element as a social issue is not in the foreground but clearly finds mention through the character of the widowed *Badi Bahu* of the household. *Bhootnath's* first glimpse of the *Badi Bahu* of the household clearly establishes this relation. Obsessively ritualistic, the character, which is Badi Bahu, goes for a dip in the Ganges in a tent like Purdah. For the fear of being polluted, she is shown washing her hands sixty-five times. The scenes featuring the character of *Badi Bahu* symbolizes not only representation of a lady of a Zamindari household, the character represents the plight of a typical Brahmin widow in Bengal of that era. She is shown as a representative of an era which is under pressure from the progressive households like that of Suvinay Babu. The decay and dissolution of the feudal system have been shown distinctively through these three Bahus of the household of the Zamindars though the ladies of the household are not on the foreground directly.

The *Badi Bahu* represents the decay through her ritualistic way of life and superstitions, very common in those days, the Manjhli Bahu represents the decay as she has got nothing to do much in the household, always indulging in the jewelry and catering to the whims and fancies of the Zamindars. The decay represented by this character is a moral decay. Chhoti Bahu represents a type of decay which is the most dangerous one. She is a wife to Zamindar as well as an unwilling whore to him. She has got an image of a goddess but falls slave to her desires of sexuality. She has nothing to do with the progressive thinking as represented by the character of Jabba as long as her husband is hers.

5.9 The style of film-making of Guru Dutt

5.9.1 The Cinema of anguish

The Cinema of Guru Dutt is mainly that of anguish especially the three films for which he got fame at the world level: *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, and *Sahib Biwi Aur*

Ghulam. Melancholy, despair and anguish occur again and again in these films. The Cinematography, lighting and overall set up of these films tends to enhance these emotions associated with a human being in a beautiful way. The initial phase of the cinema of GuruDutt was typical formula based phase of film-making but the later phase of Guru Dutt's Cinema put Guru Dutt on to a high pedestal in the realm of World Cinema. There are many instances in *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* bringing pathos in a realistic way. The character of *Vijay* in *Pyaasa* is a disillusioned man, initially, this disillusionment has stemmed out of his anguish due to his beloved leaving him for greener pastures. This feeling of sadness turns into a deep anguish for society, at large. Seeing the condition of prostitutes, the concern of unemployment and seeing the prevailing hypocrisy in the society, *Vijay* becomes a pessimistic man having a suicidal thought on his mind. One can find a very thin case of optimism in the characters of main protagonists of these films. The social issues raised in the films are shown in a very realistic manner. *Suresh*, the director of *Kaagaz Ke Phool* is also shown as a very disillusioned man who is fed up with the ways of a materialistic society. He has been shown as an ultra-sensitive person who does not want any sympathy. Again this character is an example of pessimism personified. A similar trait can be found in the character of *Chhoti Bahu* in *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam*. Anguish, disillusionment, pessimism, sensitiveness, and compassion are the emotions which dominate the scene in these films.

5.9.2 The Cinema of impoverishment, rejection, and suffering

The Cinema of Guru Dutt especially the films *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* represents the Cinema where the feeling of impoverishment, rejection, and suffering dominates the scenario. The space in these films is used more to hide other than to lead a proper life. The poet *Vijay* is often found in rags in *Pyaasa*. He is a hungry man devoid of any food for days when *Gulabo* feeds him at a Dhaba. By giving his coat to the beggar, *Vijay* again shows a sign of renunciation and is not bothered about his materialistic possessions. Similar scenes of renunciation, impoverishment, and suffering have been shown in *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* also. *Suresh* in *Kaagaz Ke Phool* is in the rags after losing his prominence as a director. At the end of the film, he virtually possesses no property or

possessions worth its name except for a pullover which *Shanti* had knitted for him. He is living in a shanty after falling from grace as a director. He has lost his sheen. When *Shanti* comes to meet him, he offers an upturned bucket to her to sit on. A sense of suffering is clearly visible in the way the character of *Suresh* had been built. *Chhoti Bahu* in *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* is also such a character that is full of suffering and gradually impoverishment comes to dominate her. Always wrapped in exquisite silks, the jewelry of *Chhoti Bahu* has been sold so as to treat her husband, *Chhote Babu*. *Chhoti Bahu* also like other characters as mentioned rejects the material possession and is in a mode of rejecting the society. These are some of the shreds of evidence of Cinema of Guru Dutt full of instances of renunciation and rejection.

5.9.3 The philosophical lyrics showing angst

Guru Dutt's Cinema has got an aesthetic flavor in the sense of filming the storyline. His Cinema is near to realism as well as blended with commercial appeal. He was never in favor of songs in his films yet the three films, *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* had some of the lyrics which were quite philosophical in nature. The dark pattern of the Cinema of Guru Dutt has placed him in a different league of his own. The dark pattern of this Cinema is interspersed with the lyrics which are quite embedded with the storyline. Philosophical lyrics are part of Cinema of Guru Dutt. The song which has got deep meanings and represents the emotions of the characters in these films is a unique point of Guru Dutt's Cinema. *Pyaasa* has got *Vijay*, the poet as the main protagonist whose poetry reflects his anguish and suffering. Sahir Ludhianvi's words have given life to the lyrics of *Pyaasa*. The Cinema of anguish is finely represented by the songs which completely fit into the situation. The two songs of *Pyaasa*, *Jinhe naaz hai Hind pe wo kahan hain* and *Ye duniya agar mil bhi jaye to kya hai* are fine examples of philosophical lyrics. These songs were written by Sahir Ludhianavi truly represent the despair of poet and bring out social issues in the foreground.

CHAPTER- VI

HIGHLIGHTING THE SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE MOVIES MADE UNDER THE BANNER, 'BIMAL ROY PRODUCTIONS'

6.1 Bimal Roy- The film-maker and his legacy

Bimal Roy was born on July 12, 1909 in Suapur, Dhaka which is now part of Bangladesh. His father was a landlord but after the death of his father, he was thrown away from his estate. Young and penniless Bimal Roy came to Calcutta in search of work. He entered the film industry as an apprentice to the ace cinematographer, Nitin Bose¹ who was at that time with New Theatres Pvt Ltd. After working with Nitin Bose for a few years, Bimal Roy worked with New Theatres Pvt Ltd, Calcutta only as the studio's main cinematographer. He was at the helm of affairs in the Cinematography department from 1934 to 1944 at this prestigious studio handling eighteen feature films in total. Out of these feature films as a cinematographer, Bimal Roy got a lot of appreciation for his work in films like *Devdas*(1936), *Grihadah* (1936), *Mukti*(1937), and *Humrahi*(1944). While analyzing the work of Bimal Roy as the cinematographer, B.K.Karanjia² had observed: 'After a period of apprenticeship under Nitin Bose, a Dacca-born cinematographer, Bimal Roy was put at the helm as a full-fledged cinematographer in *Daku Mansoor* (1934). A string of films followed for Bimal Roy as a cinematographer, including *Devdas*, *Manzil*, and *Maya* but it was the evocative outdoor camera work for Barua's *Mukti* that made Bimal Roy a star. In 1944, the career of Bimal Roy got initiated as a director of feature films with the feature film, *Udayer Pathey* (1944) in the Bengali language which was remade as *Humrahi* (1944) in the Hindi language. When *Udayer Pathey* came out of the stable of New Theatres Pvt Ltd, Bimal Roy was not a known entity at the studios. He was only recognized as the cinematographer working in this studio. But the film *Udayer*

¹ Nitin Bose was an ace Indian film director, cinematographer and screenwriter who, in his initial days worked for New Theatres, Calcutta but later on made films for the production houses like Bombay Talkies and Filmistan. He was chosen by the actor Dilip Kumar to direct his home production, *Ganga Jamuna*.

² Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy. (ed.) 2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Penguin India.

Pathey and its Hindi version *Humrahi* took the nation by storm and paved the way for a new path in Indian Cinema which had not experimented till now with the nationalistic and anti-British genre in a big way. These films helped Indian cinema to come out of shadows of the genre of stunt films and mythological genre which had been dominating the Indian film scenario till now. Amit Bose³ states that he must have gone to the famous Chitra Cinema in Hatibagan, Calcutta to watch *Udayer Pathey* at least hundred times. This statement indicates the popularity of the film itself. Mr. B.N.Sircar had been apprehensive about the success of the film *Udayer Pathey* and many staffers at New Theatres had dissuaded Mr. Sircar not to go forward with this film but its huge success annulled all the fears and in fact motivated him to produce its Hindi version as well. The film also paved a new path for Bimal Roy who in the times to come was to become a film-maker having a social responsibility in whose films women were not represented just as only prop albeit very strong characters were assigned to the women in his films. These women-issue oriented films were tackled in a directorial way which was typical that of Bimal Roy, as discussed later in this work.

Partition of India affected the developed film industry at Lahore (Punjab) as well as Calcutta (Bengal). Major production houses located in these cities were on the verge of closing down or had been shut down as a result of the partition of India. Notable migrations of the artists took place at that time. The film industry was well established then at the three centers, Bombay (Western India), Calcutta (Bengal) and Lahore (Punjab) but the partition of India took its toll on the film studios located in Calcutta as well as Lahore. These industries became unstable whereas the Bombay film industry was quite stable and felt only minor tremors of partition. Many talented artists and film-makers from Lahore migrated to Bombay and made their names in the years to come. A similar thing happened in the film industry located in Calcutta also and many talented artists and film-makers migrated to Bombay from this area also. Bimal Roy was one such person who took the decision to migrate to Bombay albeit

³ Quoted by Bose, Amit. in Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy. (ed.). 2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Penguin India, p. 29.

hesitatingly⁴. Ashok Kumar, the famous artist working at that time with Bombay Studios, a prominent production house was instrumental in bringing Bimal Roy to Bombay. Under the trying circumstances, Bimal Roy migrated to Bombay along with his assistants⁵. Bimal Roy had faced his first exile in Bengal only which had transformed his personality as a creative person and his humanistic films are perhaps took birth from that exile and the migration from Calcutta to Bombay in 1950 was another jolt to him which solidified his humanistic ideas instead of breaking him and he was able to carve out some of the very strongest characters in his films. According to Bimal Roy's daughter Rinki Roy Bhattacharya, rootlessness, and dispossession had returned again and again in the films of Bimal Roy as a result of his exile and migration⁶. His career in Bombay started with the making of Hindi feature film, *Maa* with Bombay Talkies but the film received a lukewarm response only. It was Ashok Kumar once again who produced Hindi feature film, *Parineeta* with Bimal Roy as the director of this film. The success of this film and the first international film festival held in Bombay changed the destiny of Bimal Roy, according to Rinki Roy Bhattacharya. Bimal Roy was perhaps enchanted and overwhelmed by the international Cinema which was being shown at the international festival especially neo-realistic cinema from Italy and Japanese Cinema. Bimal Roy was not the only one who was overwhelmed by this kind of Cinema. Raj Kapoor, Chetan Anand, Ritwik Ghatak and Satyajit Ray were also inspired by this kind of cinema. Bimal Roy successfully took some of the elements of neo-realism thought in world cinema and made films in his own way, not deviating from the style that had become peculiar of Bombay film industry, which was inter mixing the social concern with other commercial elements like songs, dances, and melodrama. He wanted to become an independent producer to create his kind of Cinema and thus took the birth of Bimal Roy Productions. How the production house got its birth is an interesting story in the words of Hrishikesh Mukerji: "After watching the film *Rashomon* at Eros Cinema, some of us along with Bimal Da were returning home to Malad in a double-decker

⁴ Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy (ed.) 2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Penguin India.

⁵ Hrishikesh Mukerji and Asit Sen were formidable companions of Bimal Roy who made a prominent name in the field of film-making in the days to come.

⁶ Ibid.

BEST bus. The film had left a tremendous impact on us. We were all silent...and I remember thinking, ‘Why can’t we make films like this?’ I could not help asking Bimal Da. He was quiet at first but suddenly exclaimed, ‘Who will write the film?’ I promptly offered to write. We decided that all the unit members will have a share in the production company. This is how Bimal Roy Productions was born inside a double-decker BEST bus⁷.” As Cinema is basically a visual medium, to make a deep lasting impact, a director has to be well versed in the nitty-gritty of cinematography. As Bimal Roy had started his career as a cinematographer, he could visualize things in a better way than many of his contemporaries. Due to his this ability only, he was able to convert simple ideas of his films into a visual treat. According to A.K.Bir, ace cinematographer, Bimal Roy was true to the cinematic medium and selected only those social issues and ideas which could be presented on celluloid aesthetically⁸.

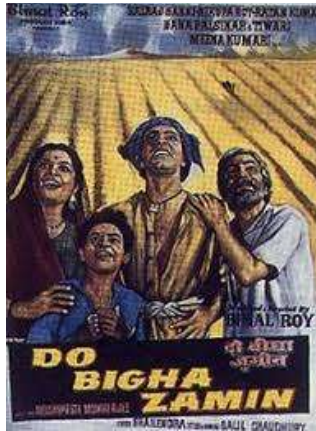
6.2 Table of the Hindi films made under the banner, ‘Bimal Roy Productions’ representing various social issues

S.No	Year	Name of The Film	Production House	Director	Social Issue Taken
1.	1953	<i>DO BIGHA ZAMIN</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Poverty, Peasantry, Urban related Issues
2.	1958	<i>MADHUMATI</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Class Division, Exploitation of Poor
3.	1959	<i>SUJATA</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Caste-related issues
4.	1960	<i>PARAKH</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Corruption and Moral Decay in Society
5.	1963	<i>BANDINI</i>	Bimal Roy Productions	Bimal Roy	Women related Issues

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

6.3 DO BIGHA ZAMIN (1953)⁹



Release Year: 1957

Produced by: Bimal Roy

Directed by: Bimal Roy

Starring: Balraj Sahni, Nirupa Roy, and others

Do Bigha Zamin (1953) is a masterpiece directed by Bimal Roy which won critical acclaim as well as international awards. The film is the first one from the film industry to win the prestigious award at Karlovy Vary international film festival. The film is a visual document having socialistic overtone inspired by Italian neo-realistic cinema.

Social issues raised in the film

1. Rural Poverty and Peasantry
2. Land Reforms
3. Process of Migration
4. Problems associated with Urbanization

⁹ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Do Bigha Zameen \(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do_Bigha_Zameen_(film))

6.3.1 Plot

It is the story of *Shambhu Mahato* (Balraj Sahni) who lives in a small village which had been shown as hit by famine but after many years rain finally comes in the area. He only owns two Bighas of land for his livelihood. *Thakur Harnam Singh* (Murad) has got some plans to build an industry in the village on his land but one hurdle is that *Shambhu's* land also comes under the area where he plans to build this industry. *Thakur* is sure that *Shambhu* shall sell his land to him but it does not materialize. Then *Thakur Harnam Singh* orders *Shambhu* to clear his debt which he had taken so many times in the past or be ready for the auctioning of his land. Only one day is given to *Shambhu* for this deal. *Shambhu* along with his son *Kanhaiya* (Rattan Kumar) finds out that debt amounts up to 65 Rupees and next day they arrange the money by selling of jewellery of *Parvati* (Nirupa Roy) and other household items to clear the debt but when they go to *Thakur's* house they find that due to forgery, the amount has been escalated up to 235 Rupees. *Shambhu* is helpless in these circumstances and pleads in front of *Thakur Harnam Singh* to be judicious. The case now becomes subjudice but *Shambhu* loses the case. The court orders him to pay this amount within three months. *Shambhu* has got no other means to raise this amount. One of his friends tells him to go to Calcutta where there shall be many opportunities to earn the amount. He is reluctant initially but agrees, seeing his condition. His wife *Parvati* does not want *Shambhu* to go to the big city as she fears that he would not be able to earn much and city life would be harsh but agrees finally. *Shambhu's* son *Kanhaiya* also goes with him to Calcutta to help his father. The city life is too harsh for the father-son duo where *Shambhu* initially works as a coolie and then become a rickshaw-puller with the help of an old rickshaw-puller (Nazir Hussain). *Kanhaiya* works as a shoe-shine boy and befriends *LaluUstad* (Jagdeep). Despite the hard work being done by the father-son duo in the city, misery falls upon them in the form of the accident of *Shambhu* and he is unable to ply his Rickshaw after this accident. *Kanhaiya* resorts to pick-pocketing in order to earn quick money. *Shambhu* comes to know about this and disapproves of the act of *Kanhaiya*. Meanwhile, in the village, *Parvati and Shambhu's* father is living a miserable life. *Parvati* works at a construction site where she comes to know about *Shambhu's* accident. She also comes to Calcutta where a man tries to molest her. She runs away from there. Fate helps in

the family reunion but all the savings of *Shambhu* and *Kanhaiya* are now spent on saving *Parvati* who had met with an accident while fleeing from his tormentor.

Back in the village, the land is auctioned now and the process has begun to construct a factory there. *Shambhu* is not able to save his land. He along with his family comes back to his village only to see his land being sold out. The film ends with *Shambhu* and his family moving away from his land.

6.3.2 Representing contemporary issue

Do Bigha Zamin portrays a life-sketch of a poor farmer in a village in India in the 1950's. The film has got a rural background and depicts the trials and tribulations of poor people of a typical marginal peasant household as represented by the family of *Shambhu*. The conditions are bad for the farmers. Agriculture depends upon rain mainly as other means of irrigation have not penetrated the rural area. The situation is almost similar for the poor peasantry even now. (The Farmer suicides in various regions of India vouch for the deplorable conditions of the marginal farmers). The issue of plight of farmers even in modern India makes the theme, a contemporary one. Apart from the poverty of a marginalized farmer, the issues of rural-urban migration and industrialization are visible in this film clearly. Bimal Roy as a director has tried to showcase the black face of urbanization and how the mass migration to the urban centers damages the social structure in a village has been tackled in the film through the trials and tribulations of the main lead character, *Shambhu*. The issue of commodification of land is also there in the film that how land becomes a commodity in the advent of industrialization. The commodification of land and how it affects landlord-peasant relation is a major issue tackled by the film-maker in the film. The advent of industrialization was responsible for the changing dynamics of land. The sensitive and emotional attachment of a peasant with his land slowly evaporated away in the wake of industrialization. Urbanization as per se is not a bad phenomenon as the process leads to an increase in the standard of living and puts a sense of economic security into the persons who migrate in search of greener pastures but mass migration of rural population to urban areas or the persons from the semi-urban area to big urban centres give birth to a plethora of problems also. *Do Bigha Zamin's* basic theme is similar to that of *Mother India* (a poor family of farmer trapped under a debt

and the issue of marginal land-holding) but the scenario of migration to the big city of Calcutta brings on the foreground, the issues associated with the urbanization. Mother India was made on a very large scale as the director Mehboob wanted to make a spectacular film on the lines of Hollywood movies whereas one can see a neo-realistic effect on *Do Bigha Zamin*.

6.3.3 The factor of Realism

Realism factor in *Do Bigha Zamin* is represented by the inhuman conditions as created by the industrialization. In the wake of industrialization, the farmer can lose the autonomy is one of the premises on which the movie is based. *Do Bigha Zamin* is a very good example of the category of the film which presents a dual between the starting era of the modern era (industrialization) and an emotional attachment of a peasant with his land.

The factor of realism in *Do Bigha Zamin* is also represented by its end. Despite facing many adversities in the big city to earn money in order to save his land, *Shambhu* is not successful in his pursuit. Bimal Roy does not resort to any melodrama or heroic act in order to end his film on a happy note. The ending of the film is the ground reality especially in the third world countries where the landed sharks fully suck the blood of poor peasants. By resorting to such an ending Bimal Roy deviates from the usual path of ending a film on happy note as was the case with the majority of filmmakers of that time.

Shyam Benegal while commenting on *Do Bigha Zamin* holds the viewpoint that realism in Hindi Cinema really came after this film. *Do Bigha Zamin* was vastly inspired by the neo-realist Cinema of Italy. *Do Bigha Zamin* had also had the impression of Russian film-making style and while filming. Bimal Roy remained true to the main features of neo-realistic movement. Benegal also links Cinema of Roy especially *Do Bigha Zamin* with a Bengali sensibility. Though Roy adventure out to make films in Hindi, a language with which he was not very much familiar, Bengali culture and ambiance got duly represented in Roy's Cinema. The Bengali culture is a character in most of Roy's films. Calcutta and country life of 1950's Bengal is represented as a character in *Do Bigha Zamin*. The audience cannot separate the non-

living entities from the living entities in the film. While making the films, Bimal Roy has always represented the tradition of New Theatres, Calcutta where he had honed his skill, firstly as a photographer and then as a director

It also matters how a director resorts to show the social issues within the framework of Cinema. Bimal Roy resorted to utter realism in showing the social issues in the film. A film is a creative work of many artists collaborating together despite the director remaining the auteur. The costumes of *Shambhu Mahato*, *Shambhu's* father and *Parvati* in the film have got an authentic appeal. Bimal Roy's sense of authentic costumes lent a genuine appeal to the filming of *Do Bigha Zamin*.

6.3.4 A potent relation between farmers and rain

How Monsoons are a very important part of the life of rural people in the decade of 1950's has been set up by the starting scene only where the desperate poor farmers are waiting for the rains so that they can have a good harvest. Even today despite many irrigation facilities, a majority of farmers depend upon the advent of monsoon only to have a good harvest.



Fig. 4.1 Advent of Monsoon rains bringing happiness to the farmer's households. : Still from *Do Bigha Zamin* (Bimal Roy Productions)

They have got small land-holdings as shown by their get up and expressions. They have got primitive means of doing agriculture. Rains being the main and only source of irrigation, the yield of the crops seem to be very low thus pushing the farmers

under debt continuously and a vicious circle starts of farmers taking loans from the unorganized sector of the money-lenders who exploit them to the hilt.

6.3.5 Various issues associated with the farmers

The issue of subsistence agriculture has been shown in the film where the farming is done basically to consume other than to sell the yield. Such a pattern of farming is instrumental in the economically poor conditions of a farmer and such a scenario has been shown in the film. The extreme poverty of rural India in 1953 has been shown in the film where the farmers have very fewer clothes to wear and their households have nothing to show per se which could reflect upon a decent life of a farmer. Illiteracy of a farmer augments the problem as the moneylender exploits the problem to his advantage. *Shambhu's* wish to be free of debt of the Zamindar is never fulfilled in the film. This simply portrays the fact that once a farmer is in debt, the debt increases and he is never able to come out of it. The contemporary times also reflect this kind of situation. The situation seems familiar in today's times also with a lot of farmer suicides in almost every region of India and endless dharnas of the farmers to get their rights. A farmer who tills the land has got only a single source of income which is the piece of land only whereas, for a landlord especially in case of absentee landlords, a phenomenon quite familiar in those days, a piece of land is a source of revenue only with other avenues of income for him available. This is an issue which is shown effectively by the director. This issue also helps us in differentiating the context in which the piece of land has been used. For the Zamindar, the land is only a commodity whereas, for a farmer, the land is his mother. The scenario is that of a pre-industrialization phase of the economy in India. The emotional attachment that a farmer feels for his land can never be in the case of a landlord. A statement in this context by Robert Redfield, a renowned social anthropologist is very apt here. He writes: ... a peasant is a man who is in effective control of a piece of land to which he has long been attached by ties of tradition and sentiment. The land and he are parts of one thing, one old established body of relationships¹⁰ (1965:19). The bonding between the peasant and the land has been shown as perennial in the film.

¹⁰ Shivam, *Portrayal of Rural culture in Hindi Cinema (1950-2010): A sociological study*, A Doctoral thesis.

When asked by the *Thakur* to vacate his land, *Shambhu* in the strong words resists the offer of *Thakur Harnam Singh*.



Fig. 4.2 Shambhu not agreeing to sell his land: Still from *Do Bigha Zamin* (Bimal Roy Productions)

'Zameen chale jaane se hi to Kisan ka satyanash ho jaata hai Huzoor....Zameen to main Na bechunga...'

The question of land and the subsequent question of land reforms has been one of the important themes of the film. The film rightly portrays the prediction of the abolition of Zamindari in the times to come and the outcomes of this abolition. In the premonition of the Government of India passing such a law, the Zamindars were looking for other avenues to invest and one of the avenues was to invest in the upcoming industries.

The lure of industrialization is shown from the starting only in the film.

6.3.6 The issue of migration

Migration is not a new social phenomenon. The issue of migration has been represented in many forms of artistic expression. The phenomenon of migration has been tackled in many Hindi films and the outcomes of this process have been dealt as the main theme in films like *Gaman*¹¹ and *Rihaee*¹². Migration is not a major theme

¹¹ *Gaman*, made by Muzaffar Ali and released in 1978 was a pioneer film made on the issue of the rural-urban migration in search of work. The film had Smita Patil and Farooq Sheikh in the lead roles.

in *Do Bigha Zamin* but as a sub-plot somewhere, the issue of migration affects the protagonists as well as the audience. The sociologists have stated about both push and pull factors for the migration of Human beings. The prospect of staying forever in poverty in an indebted condition is a major push factor for *Shambhu* to go to the big city, Calcutta. The dream to find some dignified work in the city so as he is able to clear the debt of the landlord is the pull factor for *Shambhu* to migrate leaving behind his wife in the village. Migration induced by the factor of poverty often fails to bring about desired results of the change in the life of the man who had migrated. A vast difference in the lifestyle of rural people and urban people, a lack of skill in the hands of the migrated person so as to find a suitable work, the cut-throat competition in the wake of lesser work in comparison to the demand gives birth to deplorable conditions of living thus compounding the problems already being faced by the man in his native place. The migration has brought many worries and problems for *Shambhu* and his son who are unable to come to terms with the chaos and insensitivity of urban milieu in the initial stage. When they reach Calcutta, they are shown running here and there and are bamboozled by the pace of the big city. Searching for work, here and there, *Shambhu* gets no positive reply. His monologue '*Yahan kaam milega Babu*', again and again, is similar to a scene of Raj Kapoor's *Shri 420* where the innocent *Raj* has reached Bombay in search of work but is unable to find any work. The problem of unemployment has thus been tackled by Bimal Roy. The scene points out to the massive problem of unemployment especially for unskilled people even in the decade of the 1950's. The city of Calcutta has been shown to be harsh for the migrant people.

¹² *Rihaee*, a film made by Aruna Raje also explores the theme of rural-urban migration and as a sub plot, it explores the assertiveness of women left behind in the villages regarding sexuality.



Fig. 4.3 The pace of life in Calcutta: Still from *Do Bigha Zamin* (Bimal Roy Productions)

Not only the film seems to be inspired by the Neo-Italian wave of Cinema, the influence of Soviet Cinema is also clearly visible in the scenes where the peasants have been shown as ploughing their fields. One can see the image of peasants of erstwhile Soviet Union in the song:

*'Dharti Kahe Pukar Ke,
Beej bichha le Pyaar Ke
Mausam beeta Jaye, Mausam beeta Jaye*

The phenomenon of migration changes the dynamics of life of the wives and other family members of the migrated persons. In the film, *Parvati*, wife of *Shambhu* starts working as a laborer, sells cosmetics to her neighbor, gains the confidence to lead a life in solitude and also moves to the city in search of her husband and son.

6.3.7 The Problem of Urbanization

The process of urbanization is a finite process with deep implications in the society. The process is a complex one and is an index of transforming the traditional rural society into a modern urbanized one. 1941-1951 was the decade of the emergence of many new urban centers in India. A general picture of urbanization in the mind of a common man is that of a prosperous city full of dreams where there would be something for everyone but the picture is not as rosy as it seems to be. *Do Bigha Zamin* shows the scenes of Calcutta where animals and people co-exist together on footpaths, a man is jostling for the space in the crowded roads and streets and the

prospect of unemployment looks into the eyes of a vast sea of mankind. The process of urbanization results in the birth of unhygienic and deplorable conditions. The phenomenon of birth of slums is attributed to the process of urbanization and industrialization. *Do Bigha Zamin* shows the ugly face of urbanization and industrialization. Megacities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, and Bangalore have attracted the rural migrants since the independence of India. As these cities had become the places where the dreams of the rural people could be materialized, the migration has been taking place. But such a mass scale migration has resulted in poor housing facilities, poor sanitation, virtually no water for these people and poor condition of health. *Do Bigha Zamin*, through its storyline, has thrown light on these issues. *Shambhu* resorting to ply a hand driven rickshaw is an example of an inhuman form of labor in the adverse circumstances. Plying Rickshaw on the streets has been symbolized as an inhuman condition in which *Shambhu* is working. The problem of inhuman conditions in which there remains no difference between human beings and animals have been rightly shown through some of the scenes of *Shambhu Mahato*.

The scene in the film where *Shambhu* gets embroiled in a situation where he wants to race ahead of another rickshaw is a very poignant scene in which *Shambhu Mahato* is treated like an animal.

A lady hires the rickshaw standing adjacent to the rickshaw of *Shambhu Mahato*. His lover comes and hires the rickshaw of *Shambhu Mahato* and orders him to run fast in order to catch up with the rickshaw in which the girl is sitting. A Tonga is shown in the scene and horse is galloping ahead of the Rickshaw. Here the director resorts to the hunter, the tool used to make a horse run fast as a symbol of power. The man who has hired the rickshaw of *Shambhu Mahato* uses the money to lure *Shambhu* to gain speed. The money here becomes the tool akin to the hunter. The voice of the man increasing money with the speed gained by *Shambhu Mahato* acts as a powerful tool in the hands of a person representing capitalism in the worst form. The scene represents the exploitation of a poor man in the worst form. The scene is written in such a way that it becomes a slap on the face of the society which is always on the forefront to exploit the poor people. The sequence itself becomes a hunter in the hands of the director which brings out the inhuman and insensitive face of society.



Fig. 4.4 Shambhu racing to earn more money: Still from *Do Bigha Zamin* (Bimal Roy Productions)

In the grim scenario of the insensitivity of urban people, a ray of hope has also been shown by the director in the film in form of *Lala Bhau ki Basti*. The slum area named as *Lala Bhau ki Basti* presents a chaotic picture of life as well as bonding between the characters of similar status. The representation of *Lala Bhau ki Basti* is typical that of any slum in a metropolitan city in India where there is a scarcity of space and water. The natives of the *Basti* fight amongst themselves to fulfill these basic needs. By showing the *Basti* in this way, Bimal Roy has tried to present a grim picture of migrated people who do not get a proper place in the urban setup. Despite the scarcity of these basic needs, a bonding is to be found amongst the people residing in the *Basti*. A bonding between the lady who is the owner of the rooms in the slum and *Shambhu* is formed on the pretext of *Kanhaiya's* illness and seeing the miserable and deplorable condition of *Shambhu*. The lady provides shelter to *Shambhu* and *Kanhaiya* and helps them in the manner and way that she can. Here, the director resorts to the theory of Marxism and socialism that the labor class and the Peasant class are all brothers and are united by a common thread of bonding based upon the exploitation of these people in the hands of the capitalist class. The song '*Ajab Teri Duniya, ho mere Rama, Ghazab Teri Duniya...*' rightly indicates towards the dichotomy that exists between the two classes which are categorized as 'Have's' and

'Have Not's'. The words of the song point out the differences between the rich class and the poor class. The social problem and the issue of the labor class and the peasant class not getting their dues properly is the crux point of the song. The song has got a similarity with the song '*Dil Ka Haal Sune dilwala*', presented in the film Shri 420 of Raj Kapoor in the manner of the content of the lyrics and picturization. The song '*Ajab Teri Duniya....*' is a battle cry for the rights of the labor class.



Fig. 4.5 The song '*Ajab Teri Duniya*': *Still from Do Bigha Zamin (Bimal Roy Productions)*

6.3.8 Dignity of Labor

Another social issue that has been taken by Bimal Roy in the film is that of the dignity of labor as *Kanhaiya*, *Shambhu's* son has been shown taking Boot Polish as his vocation to help his father in raising the amount needed to save their land in the village. He is not shy in doing the work at his age and considers himself a proud son of *Shambhu* when he earns his first amount as a shoeshine boy. Here, also a similarity is there to Raj Kapoor's film, *Boot Polish*.

6.3.9 Urbanization

There are a few scenes in the film showing the pick pocketing, juvenile delinquency, immorality and stealing which is common in the urban space and not in the rural areas. Through the scenes between *Kanhaiya*, son of *Shambhu* and *Ustad*, an urban lad, Roy has tried to show the different moral values and ethics. Ethics in the rural

area has been shown as much stronger than the urban counterparts. The urban counterparts have been shown as possessing low moral values than the rural counterparts. The dialogues between *Kanhaiya* and *Ustad* points out towards a situation which shows this dichotomy. The perils of living in an urban area are brought about in all its negativity by Roy. The tribulations of *Shambhu* and his son points out towards the heartlessness and sadness in the city. The city is ruthless in its attitude towards *Shambhu* and his son. *Shambhu* is not able to earn much in the city to save his land. The city does not care about the dreams of *Shambhu*. The city is heartless also for *Parvati* when she comes to search *Shambhu* and her son in the city. Most of these cities do not have any system or technology to give ample employment to rural people and thus rural poverty gets transferred to urban poverty. This burden is increased on the cities which already seem with many problems. The problem of urbanization and migration is not time period specific. The cotemporary times are also witnessing this problem.

The film also reflects a society where illiterate semi-skilled or unskilled migrants are absorbed in an unorganized informal sector of jobs in the cities. They are paid very low wages for this work. The film explores a situation of undignified life in the city.

6.3.10 The dichotomy between Rural and Urban counterparts

Shambhu Mahato represents the face of the peasantry which was associated with the land in totality and had an emotional bonding with the land. He is the peasant of Nehruvian India who is very honest and full of moral values. He represents that rural India which was vibrant under the newly found freedom. This rural India was given the job of feeding whole of India and becoming self-reliant in producing food. There was a sense of pride in the occupation of farming. Through *Shambhu Mahato*, Bimal Roy has tried to show not only the life of a peasant but a man who despite his adversities has not severed his links with the honest values, a sense of fair play, and moral values. The pride becomes evident in certain scenes of the film. The director has tried to bring this feature of his character through some of the dialogues in the film.

There is a scene in the film where *Shambhu Mahato* gets injured and is not able to work. He also does not want to take medicines as to save money for his land. In such a situation, *Kanhaiya*, son of *Shambhu Mahato* becomes weak and in this weak moment, he helps his friend who is a pickpocket in the wrongdoing and earns Rupees fifty as a reward. *Kanhaiya* brings some eatables and money for his father. *Shambhu* realizes that his son might have done some immoral and illegal task to earn this hefty amount. On learning that the amount has been earned by *Kanhaiya* resorting to pick-pocketing, he becomes very angry.



**4.6 Shambu scolding Kanhaiya after hearing about the pick pocketing incident:
Still from *Do Bigha Zamin* (Bimal Roy Productions)**

'Pocketmar...Pocketmar...Chori ka maal laya hai Tu Mere Samne, Chori ka maal...Kisan ka beta ho kar tune Chori ki? Chori...Be-Imaan...Kisaan ka beta...Bachua, Teri Maan sunegi to Sharm ke mare Jaan de degi, mar jayegi'

The dialogue stresses the life to be lived by moral values as well as the integrity in the profession of farming. Bimal Roy through the character of *Shambhu Mahato* has tried to lay stress, not on the market value of a farmer albeit he holds a farmer to be the upholder of moral values. It seems that the director wants to convey that if a farmer becomes corrupt and immoral then it will impact the whole society. A farmer is the innocent face of the society. The land is the most important asset for *Shambhu*

Mahato and he needs the money badly still in the face of this adversity also, *Shambhu* lays stress on earning money in the right moral ways.

The first scene of the film itself has sown the distrust amongst the urban people and villagers when some of the persons arrived from the city along with *Thakur Harnam Singh*, the village landlord in order to inspect the land and on which the factory is to be built. The friends of *Thakur Harnam Singh* who have come from the city are being shown as wily businessmen for whom the business interests are supreme. They are not shy in their plan to snatch the land of the peasants. A dichotomy is visible here between the lives of rural people and those of people living in urban areas. The expressions of the villagers set the tone of the film when they see that something fishy is going on between *Thakur* and the city people. This distrust has been maintained throughout the film by the director. The dichotomy between the urban people and the rural people is visible throughout the film. The landlord is lured to establish the industry in the village on the pretext that the government would ban the zamindar system in the near future

‘*Sarkar, ab Zamindari to rhne nahin degi....mill lagne se gaon, gaon nahin, shahr ban jayega...*’

6.3.11 The issue of illiteracy

The issue of illiteracy has also been raised in the film though the impact of this issue is felt indirectly unlike the issues concerning migration of poor people from villages to urban centers and the peasant problems. *Shambhu* is an illiterate man and depends upon his son, *Kanhaiya* for the dealings with the *Thakur*. *Thakur* is able to take advantage of *Shambhu* due to his handicap in the respect of literacy only. The illiteracy of farmers is a very contemporary issue as many small gullible peasants fall into the trap of Landlords just like *Shambhu*.

6.3.12 Review

A review of the film in **New Chronicle** dated August 17, 1956, hails *Do Bigha Zamin* as a beautiful movie made in a most sensitive way. After *Umberto D*, this movie was the most sensitive movie to move hearts about the old aged people.

The Times and **The Financial Times** dated August 20, 1956, consider *Do Bigha Zamin* a beautiful movie about rural poverty which is inspired by *Shoeshine* and *Bicycle Thieves*. The two films *Shoeshine* and *Bicycle Thieves* are prominent examples of the films made under the influence of Italian neo-realism.

A review of the film, *Do Bigha Zamin* in the British paper, **Daily Worker** observed that Bimal Roy, the director, sometimes showed a Dickensian touch in the film, using pathos directly and unaffectedly, finding humour and kindness amongst pickpockets and street urchins and mocking the pomposity and thoughtlessness of the wealthy. Dickens is perceived to be the author whose works have exposed poverty and injustice in the Victorian age. Struggles of the have nots occur clearly in the works of Charles Dickens. Many movies worldwide have been based upon the concept of social realism which is found in abundance in the literature of Dickens, *Do Bigha Zamin* being one of these movies.

6.3.13 Social message through the songs

Sometimes, songs in a film also represent the theme and the mood of that film quite successfully. The film-makers who were instrumental in making the movies under the genre of social issues often tried to have certain songs in their movies which also reflected those issues. Raj Kapoor led the way amongst the film-makers of his times in this respect. Songs of *Boot Polish* and *Shri 420* are astute examples of this. Bimal Roy was no exception to this style of retaining the meaningful lyrics in his films representing the social values. The song, '*Apni nishani chhod Ja*' from *Do Bigha Zamin* was perhaps the first song in the film industry with a socialist theme. According to Praseon Joshi, Salil Choudhary, the music composer of the film on whose story (Rickshawalla), *Do Bigha Zamin* was based, perhaps consciously borrowed from the communist movement of Russia and used one of its effective marches into the basic tune of this song.

An interesting aspect of *Do Bigha Zamin* is that the issues which have been raised in the decade of the 1950's are still alive. Peasant issues dominate our media. Landholdings are going down and the farming has ceased to be a profitable occupation especially for the small farmers. Nayantara Sehgal contests that there still

is agricultural indebtedness and despair leading to farmers' suicides. In this manner, *Do Bigha Zamin* is the most contemporary film made by Bimal Roy. The population of homeless people have increased in the sub-continent. There is a wide gap between the haves and the have-nots. The land is still being grabbed in the name of industrialization. Sometimes, the compensation is given to the farmer which is a pittance and sometimes they do not get money at all. Rural-urban migration is still a major issue. People migrate from rural areas to urban areas in order to look out for jobs and settlement. A gloomy picture of India was shown in *Do Bigha Zamin* despite the optimism that everything would get right after the independence but perhaps the decade of 1950's had started bringing a picture of shattering of dreams in some aspects. The gloominess that was picturized in the film is still visible in some of the quarters of various fields in India. Nayantara Sehgal finds it disturbing that *Do Bigha Zamin* showed parallels to the conditions of today's time. The bleakness and gloomy picture today indicate that our country has failed to deliver in many aspects.¹³

6.3.14 The issue of Women and Feminist viewpoint

Though the Hindi feature film, *Do Bigha Zamin* is the story of trials and tribulations of a poor farmer, *Shambhu* who goes through many adversities to save his land, this film also portrays many other issues like the nature of agriculture, subsistence form of farming, rural-urban migration, land reforms and democracy. One should not forget that without *Parvati's* character, *Shambhu's* character just become helpless. Bimal Roy has not treated the character of *Parvati* just as a prop, sitting idle or doing her household chores only. Patriarchal society has been shown in the film but not a rigid one. *Parvati*, the main central female character in this film is a partner in the decision making process of the family as shown in the film at various intervals. Nowhere Bimal Roy has tried to show the character of *Parvati* as a subdued one. She has been personified in the film as **Shakti**, the power, and inspiration behind *Shambhu*. Though in Hindi films, the character of the mother has been synonymous with the

¹³ Quoted by Sehgal, Nayantara. in Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy. 2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi; Penguin India.

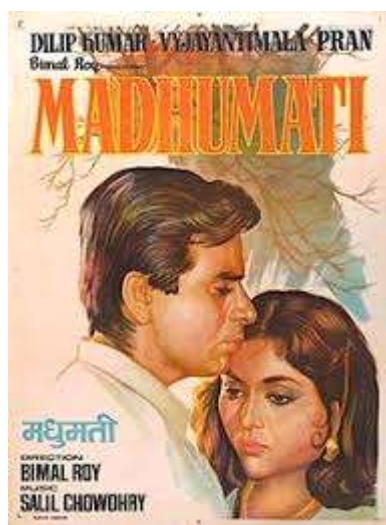
personification of **Shakti** and the character of the wife is done as '**Sati-Savitri**' but as the role of mother is absent in this film, *Parvati* has been shown as both '**Shakti**' and '**Sati-Savitri**'. This is one of the rare instances in Hindi film industry to build the women characters like this. Realism is the style and thought working behind making this film and *Parvati's* character has been built in that mold only. The coy **Sati-Savitri** image of *Parvati* gets transformed into the strong **Shakti** avatar seeing the tribulations of his husband.

In theory, in Hindu society, the wife is taken to be as '**Ardhangini**', an equal partner but practically the condition of women takes another route of subjugation in the society and most of the film-makers also have turned the women characters into the objects of desire. Bimal Roy has established the strength and equality of character of *Parvati* in the early scenes of the film only where she is equally worried about the rain as the survival of her family depends upon the rain. She is the equal partner in the agricultural pursuits of her husband as well as running her household efficiently. Her character is not uni-dimensional. The modern feministic viewpoint may be associated with the character of *Parvati*. It is multi-dimensional and every aspect of being a woman has been highlighted by Bimal Roy in this film be it the caring mother to *Kanhaiya*, devoted wife to *Shambhu*, dutiful daughter-in-law to *Gangu*, or as an equal partner in the agricultural pursuits. The aspect of feminism as shown by Bimal Roy in this film is not a loud one but a subdued one which is trying to help her family making both ends meet.

Often, the concept of migration is associated with the male members of the family only who migrate to urban areas in search of a livelihood. A few Hindi films have been made taking the migration issue as the basic premise. *Gaman* and *Rihaee* are notable among them. In *Rihaee* women characters have been shown asserting their desires in the absence of menfolk but that is the desire emanating more from bodily needs. *Gaman* has also focussed on the trial and tribulations of the migrated men folk working in Bombay as Taxi-Drivers. But in such a scenario, one tends to forget that real sacrifice is done in the case of migration by the womenfolk. In *Do Bigha Zamin* also, *Shambhu* travels to Calcutta only as he knows and believes in the strength of *Parvati* who has stayed behind in the village. She has been shown as pregnant but

despite her situation she shows a strong character in participating and sharing the turbulence of *Shambhu* as she has been shown as a participating character, not as a submissive character. The character of *Parvati* is slowly built up by Bimal Roy. Early coyness of *Parvati* is transformed into the strength gradually as the story unfolds. *Do Bigha Zamin* is a realistic film made under the constraint of commercial aspects. It is neither a sad film nor a film made under parallel cinema movement, according to Lord Meghnad Desai. The film was made to be seen by the masses and the intellectuals alone. The perfectionist in Bimal Roy motivated him to cast Balraj Sahni and Nirupa Roy in the roles of main protagonists. Balraj Sahni was told to pull rickshaw in real on the roads of Calcutta for a few months before the filming of the scenes and similarly to give a realistic touch to the role of Nirupa Roy, she was told to wear used clothes and these clothes were not allowed to be washed so as to give a real touch.

6.4 MADHUMATI (1958)¹⁴



Release Year: 1958

Produced by: Bimal Roy

Directed by: Bimal Roy

Starring: Dilip Kumar, Vyjayanthi Mala, Pran and others

¹⁴ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhumati_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhumati_(film))

The film, *Madhumati* is based upon the theme of a paranormal romance and a revenge drama. The film is considered as the most successful film of Bimal Roy, commercially. The story was by Ritwik Ghatak, a stalwart of Bengali Cinema.

Social issues raised in the film

1. Exploitation of rural folks
2. Class Difference and division (A Rigid Social Hierarchy)
3. The perils of a feudal system

6.4.1 Plot

Madhumati does not bear the unique stamp of Bimal Roy of social realism as the visible theme in his other films like *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Sujata*, and *Parakh* but interwoven in the main plot of re-incarnation, romance and revenge are certain social issues like exploitation of the poor and tribal people, class distinctions and exploitation of women.

On a stormy night, the way of the car is blocked by a fallen tree. *Devendra* (Dilip Kumar) and his friend, a doctor (Tarun Bose) are traveling by that car. They are forced by the inclement weather to take shelter in a mansion (haveli). A watchman is there in the mansion and *Devendra* suddenly gets the images of what seems to be himself as the person who, in his previous life was *Anand* and resided in that village. A flashback ensures the audience of the story of the film and the audience comes to know that *Anand* had come to the area to work as a manager in the timber estate belonging to *Ugranarayan Singh* (Pran). He gets acquainted with all the local customs and rituals of the area. *Ugranarayan* is a ruthless man always exploiting his employees. *Anand*, while roaming about in the hills falls for a local girl, *Madhumati* (Vaijyanti Mala). *Anand* does not bend to the unjust orders of his boss, *Ugranarayan Singh*. He is sent to the city for some errand. *Charandas* (Johnny Walker) is sent to fetch *Madhu* to *Ugranarayan's* mansion by telling her that *Anand* had met with an accident and was lying unconscious at *Ugranarayan's* place. After his return to the village, *Anand* finds out that *Madhu* had been missing and taken to *Ugranarayan's* place. He confronts *Ugranarayan* but is beaten badly. *Charandas* saves the life of *Anand* by taking him to the hospital. *Anand* is now a depressed man. *Madhu's* ghost

troubles him by saying that *Ugranarayan* was responsible for her death. *Anand* meets a woman, *Madhavi* (Vaijyanti Mala) having a canny resemblance to *Madhumati*. *Anand* tells her the incident of missing *Madhumati* and pleads with her to co-operate with him in taking the revenge from *Ugranarayan*. They hatch a plan to take the revenge.

Anand shall go to the place of *Ugranarayan* to paint his portrait. There, *Madhavi* shall come in the dress of *Madhumati* and confronts *Ugranarayan Singh*. The plan is executed properly and *Ugranarayan* confesses to his crime. But it is *Madhumati*'s ghost who is involved in the confession and not *Madhavi* as she was a bit late as her car had broken down. *Anand* runs after the ghost of *Madhu* and falls down from the same terrace from where *Madhumati* had fallen while saving herself from the clutches of *Ugranarayan Singh*. After telling his story, *Devendra* receives the news that the train in which his wife *Radha* was traveling had met with an accident but *Radha* (Vaijyanti Mala) is unhurt.

Madhumati was the highest grossing film in the year 1958. The music of the film was a major factor in the success of this film. The movie earned Rs. 2 Crore at its release and was hailed as a blockbuster.

Madhumati is basically a love story which affirms the power of love over death; the film evokes the feeling of subliminal associations of faith and belief. It was perhaps first Hindi film to based on the theme of re-incarnation which inspired a lot of Hindi films in the near future on the similar theme. Despite a lot of films based upon the theme of reincarnation, *Madhumati* remains a classic. K.K.Jaiswal thinks that the film is a masterpiece especially in the field domain of cinematography. What really contributed to the huge success of *Madhumati* is a question that critics and masses have pondered about a lot.

Typically, filmed under the pattern of commercial film-making, *Madhumati* had its moments of excellence. Within typical film-making parameter, this film had certain social issues embedded as sub-plot in the main plot. *Madhumati* is hailed as the finest film in its genre.

Social issues raised in the film

4. Exploitation of rural folks
5. Class Difference and division (A Rigid Social Hierarchy)
6. The perils of a feudal system

Madhumati being somewhat different from the social realistic Cinema of Bimal Roy, it becomes difficult to find those elements of Bimal Roy's Cinema which had classified Bimal Roy as a film-maker with a social conscience but when we see *Madhumati* in the context of Cinema for which Bimal Roy is famous, we find that Roy has not felt shy of taking the social issues in this film also. Roy's genuine concern for the marginalized elements of society is visible in the film. The marginalized elements in the film are many as the film is set up in a village. The struggle between the exploited class and the exploiter is very clear in the film. *Ugranarayan* is a picture of an exploiter in the film. *Madhumati*, *Paan Raja* and many such characters represent the exploited people in the hands of *Ugranarayan Singh* who represents an ugly phase of capitalism and power.

6.4.2 Class Conflict

The film represents the genuine concerns of Roy for the marginalized elements of the society. The vulnerability of these elements of society and the damnation of social justice is vividly captured by the director in *Madhumati*. A rigid social hierarchy is shown in its ugly form. The film raises a pertinent question in the form of employer and employee relation also. *Ugranarayan* runs a timber estate efficiently but on rigid principles where the subordinates have got no rights. Sonia Majumdar contends that the persons positioned at the upper level of this hierarchy treat the subordinates with a vile contempt. People having a superior social standing keep on abusing their powers to ridicule the subordinates. *Ugranarayan* has been shown in the film as a character that is above law. He has been shown as a businessman with a feudalistic mindset for whom the profits are supreme. Timber estate is represented as a mainstream society and in relation with the tribal world also, the question of exploitation exists. A forest might just be a commodity for the persons from the timber estate but the tribal people consider forest as their mother and home. There is a conflict of interest between the two parties represented by *Ugranarayan*, on the one hand, and the clan of *Madhumati*

representing the tribal people. Thus the film raises an important question in the context of environmental issues also. It raises the question of sustainable development and living in harmony with nature. In the modern world, it is seen widely that the tribal and native people have got more affinity with nature than the civilized mainstream society.

Bimal Roy's films have shown the female characters as strong protagonists. The character of *Bandini* stands apart while showing the strength of a female character but *Madhumati* is no exception. *Madhumati* is a tribal girl shown as living in the hilly forest area. She is innocent, pure, vulnerable, and playful but is no demure. Sonia Majumdar while analyzing the character of Madhumati writes that she roams fearlessly in the forests and is not wary of the steep hills. She can take care of herself and the dangerous situations. She is shown to possess a remarkable piece of self-assurance and determination when *Ugranarayan* chases her. It is she who is proactive in her relation with *Anand Madhu* defends him in front of his father. Through the character of *Madhumati*, Roy has tried to put behind the vulnerable aspect of a female body.

6.5 SUJATA (1959)¹⁵



Release Year: 1959

Produced by: Bimal Roy

Directed by: Bimal Roy

Starring: Nutan, Sunil Dutt, Lalita Pawar and others.

Released in 1959, *Sujata* is based upon a Bengali short story of the same name by Subodh Ghosh. The film is a social realistic film based upon the issue of casteism. The film was the official entry to the international Cannes film festival in 1960.

Social issues raised

1. Issue of untouchability
2. The challenge to the existing Brahmanical order
3. Hypocrisy in Indian society

6.5.1 Plot

The story of the film begins when *Upendra Nath Choudhary* (Tarun Bose) and his wife, *Charu* (Sulochana) are preparing to celebrate the first birthday of their daughter, *Rama*. Three men come to the house carrying a baby with them. They request

¹⁵ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sujata_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sujata_(film))

Upendra Nath to take the baby into his custody as her parents had died in an epidemic. *Upendra Nath* tells them to hand over the baby to someone from the village only but the men said that it could not be done as the female infant belonged to an untouchable family. They request the elderly *Choudhary* to take care of the infant till the time her foster parents are found. Eventually, the baby finds shelter in the *Choudhary* household. They hand over the baby to *Ayah* and she is taken well care of in a room adjoining to *Choudhary* household. Gradually *Choudharys* get attached to the little baby and also gets a name from *Upendra Nath*, *Sujata* (of good caste). *Bua Ji* (*Lalita Pawar*) comes to stay with the *Choudharys* and in a case of mistaken identity, takes *Sujata* as *Rama* but finding out the truth that an untouchable girl is staying with the household, she scolds *Upendranath* but without success. A *Pandit* (*Asit Sen*) is also accompanying *Bua Ji* and he also admonishes *Charu* and *Upendra Nath*. *Charu's* mind is slowly poisoned against *Sujata* as the scenario builds up. Meanwhile, the villagers have found a foster father for *Sujata* but seeing him as a drunken man who wanted to take *Sujata* for money only, *Upendra Nath* shoos him away. Meanwhile, *Sujata* grows in the household while *Upendra* gets transferred often. *Sujata* and *Rama* (*Shashikala*) have become the fastest of friends and share a very good bonding. *Sujata* considers herself as the daughter of *Choudharys* household. *Upendra* slowly breaks all the norms of a Brahmin household and mixes up well with *Sujata* despite her being untouchable. Gradually *Charu* is drifting away from *Sujata*. One day *Sujata* comes to know that she was the daughter of neither *Choudhary* household nor any close relative. She isn't even of their caste, but an untouchable. The truth hits hard *Sujata* and she wanders off to riverside ghat to commit suicide. This is the place which *Upendra Nath* likes very much. Here the plaque on the statue of Mahatma Gandhi that suicide was a crime desists *Sujata* from this path. Meanwhile *Bua Ji's* grandson, *Adhir* (*Sunil Dutt*) has fallen for *Sujata*. He is in deep love with *Sujata* whereas *Bua Ji* and *Charu* want to materialize marriage of *Adhir* and *Rama*. *Adhir* is adamant on marrying *Sujata* and is thrown out of the house of *Bua Ji*. In the coming scenes, *Charu* is shown as the ill that needs a blood transfusion and *Sujata* donates blood to *Charu* to save her life (only melodramatic event). This strengthens the bond between *Charu* and *Sujata* and she relents to the demand of marrying *Sujata* with *Adhir*.

Sujata in the eyes of famous film-maker from Assam, Jahnu Barua, is the most interesting film of Bimal Roy's career. He finds the subject very true and near to the lifelong mission of Mahatma Gandhi to remove untouchability. The film is a passionate statement made by Bimal Roy on celluloid condemning 'untouchability as a crime against humanity'¹⁶. Untouchability as a theme had not been exploited in a large number of Indian films. *Achhut Kanya*, made under the banner of Bombay Talkies is perhaps a prominent film on this issue. Bimal Roy through *Sujata* has tried to challenge the Brahmanical order. The theme of untouchability and caste issues, with the lapse of time, has not become defunct albeit the perils of the caste system still exists and in a more rigid form in some of the areas of our country. Out of all the social issues which Roy raised through his films, the issue of untouchability and casteism remains the most relevant in the contemporary times also.

The only notable film based upon the issue of untouchability before *Sujata* was *Achhut Kanya* made in 1936. The film starring Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani as a lead pair was a big hit. It was produced under the banner, Bombay Talkies, directed by Franz Osten. Making a film on the issue of untouchability in 1936 was quite unconventional. Nitin Bose's *Chandidas*, released in 1934 and V. Shantaram's *Dharmatma* had also raised the issue of untouchability. *Sujata* is an attempt by Bimal Roy to tackle this all-important issue of untouchability.

Sujata, as a film works at many levels simultaneously. The issue of untouchability had been there in Indian society for long. This film of Bimal Roy is under-analyzed and under-discussed though the issue, the film raises is a very important one.

Bimal Roy's style of filming is not to create a make-believe world but a realistic world to be believed where the characters are not larger than life and are just as humane as the human beings present in the real world. Bimal Roy never creates enough drama through heavy dialogues mouthed in a particular style by a particular

¹⁶ Quoted by Barua, Jahnu. In Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy (ed.) 2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Penguin India, p. 69.

actor. A narrative in the films of Bimal Roy comes alive through conversational style using a more common day language.

6.5.2 Issue of Untouchability

The issue of untouchability has been raised in a manner as it looks real. Roy has not avoided the sermons which could reform the persons belonging to Brahmanical household immediately. The issue of untouchability in the film has been presented by Bimal Roy in its historical perspective where *Sujata* is seen, most of the times in isolation. She remains the outsider in the Brahmanical household despite getting love and compassion from the members of this household. Throughout the film, to maintain a certain balance in the social hierarchy, *Sujata* has been shown, maintaining a physical distance from the other main characters of the film to symbolize the concept of purity and impurity. Even in contemporary times, the untouchables remain on the margins of the mainstream society.

The concept of aloofness in the caste system becomes evident from the first scene only when the workers who bring *Sujata* as an infant to the household of *Upendranath* are shown to be standing at a distance from *Upendranath*. These workers are conscious of class and caste difference and do not want to break that barrier despite knowing the benevolent nature of Upendra Babu. The contrast between the outside and inside is continuous almost in the entire film. *Sujata's* introduction as an adult is when she is drying the clothes outside and *Rama*, her foster sister is shown playing the piano in the hall. *Sujata's* happiest moments seem to be those spent outside the walls of her home. She is happy on the terrace, she is happy in the garden.



Fig. 4.7 Sujata's introductory scene as an adult: *Still taken from Sujata (Bimal Roy Productions)*

By showing this difference and symbolization in form of outside and inside, the director has clearly pointed towards the dichotomy that exists between *Sujata* and *Rama*. *Sujata* has been accepted in the household of *Upendranath* but this acceptance is somewhat midway. Her acceptance is not fully embedded in the household as *Upendranath* and his wife are aware of her caste.

6.5.3 Outsider-Insider Conflict

Throughout the film, this conflict between the external forces from outside and inside the home goes on. A very poignant scene showing the isolation and physical distance of *Sujata* from the household, comes in the initial stages of the film only when *Charu* is singing a lullaby to *Rama* in close proximity and her heart longs to sing lullaby to *Sujata* also and we see that she goes up to the window through which she observes *Sujata* lying in another room on the cot and continues her lullaby. Here, the inner conflict is shown between the traditionalist idea and the modernist progressive idea. *Sujata* remains an outsider even after the acceptance by the household of *Upendranath* has been pointed out by certain questions which remain unanswered. *Upendranath* is a progressive man who has adopted *Sujata*. *Rama*, his daughter receives a good education but *Sujata* is not able to complete her education. The

progressive element of the household of *Upendranath* has been shown by adopting *Sujata* but somewhere it seems that this equality syndrome becomes a facade as *Sujata's* role seems to be that of a convenient handmaid who helps *Charu* in the household work.

Another unique point of Bimal Roy's Cinema is the use of silence as speech. As vouched by many persons in the film industry, Bimal Roy himself was a man of very few words and his personal nature reflected in the films that he directed. In the absence of heavy-mouthed dialogues spoken in the Parsee style that was the forte of the day, Bimal Roy wanted his actors to express themselves more through their eyes and hand-feet movement. *Sujata* has got many such moments where such a ploy has been used by Bimal Roy. The character of *Sujata* is highly diminutive and subtle by nature. This character is build up slowly in the film by Bimal Roy using the technique of silence. Going overboard and making loud films was not the forte of Bimal Roy. Nutan, who essayed the role of *Sujata*, herself vouches for the fact that Bimal Roy believed in the spontaneity of the performance and she was also made to act in a similar way. He believed that too many rehearsals mar the performance of an actor and somewhere while portraying a sensitive character, plasticity comes in the performance of an actor (interview of Nutan). According to Nutan, the brilliant cinematography in the absence of heavy dialogues helped the character build up in the films of Bimal Roy. Naseeruddin Shah, while commenting on *Sujata* takes it as a searing indictment of upper-class hypocrisy and Nutan while portraying the character of *Sujata* appears to him as a real person, devastatingly desirable and attainable. According to him, the character of *Sujata* was drawn with accuracy and depth rare in our scripts today and her perfect poise and earthiness completed the picture; it was only perhaps repeated viewing of the film that made her technique apparent. Similarly, Nabendu Ghosh, in a write up on Bimal Roy states that Once, driver of a famous film producer-director, who had already seen the film twice demanded passes of film *Sujata* running to silver jubilee house at Opera House in Bombay. When asked for, "Why he wanted to watch the film for the third time"? The driver answered,

“Saab, *Sujata dekhne se dil ko thandak pahunchta hai*”. This word ‘*Thandak*’ sums up the style of Bimal Roy School of film-making¹⁷.

6.5.4 Social issues through political icons

There is a certain political dimension to the character, named *Sujata* also in the way Mahatma Gandhi and other historical figures have been shown in giving inspiration and motivation to the main character. The historical figures have been used as metaphors in the film. The issue of untouchability and other women issues had always been part of Mahatma Gandhi's idea of the freedom movement. To make the issue of untouchability more appealing to the audience, the nationalistic icons appear a few times in the film. Roy's films always have been carrying political overtones, sometimes heavy and sometimes as understated. In *Sujata* also, the director seems to be appealing against the untouchability through nationalistic icons Mahatma Gandhi and to a lesser extent, Rabindra Nath Tagore. By staging a play by Tagore in the film itself, a case is made against untouchability and this point is shared by *Adhir* with *Sujata* during one poignant moment in the film. He also tells a story about Gandhi Ji adopting an untouchable girl. When *Sujata* learns that she is untouchable, she leaves the *Choudhary* household and goes beside a mural of Mahatma Gandhi. Thus an attempt has been made here to associate and join the main female character of the film with the national icons so as to provide her vulnerability, a moral strength that could have come only through the figure of Mahatma Gandhi as a modern-day saint who had worked a lot in the direction of women emancipation.

Many shots have been shot at the Barrack pore's Gandhi Ghat. The icon of Gandhi has been used again and again perhaps as, during the nationalistic struggle days, Mahatma Gandhi's voice against this inhuman practice of untouchability was the loudest and he considered emancipation of Harijans as important as getting independence from the hands of British.

¹⁷ Quoted by Ghosh, Nabendu in Bhattacharya, Rinki Roy (ed.).2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Penguin India.

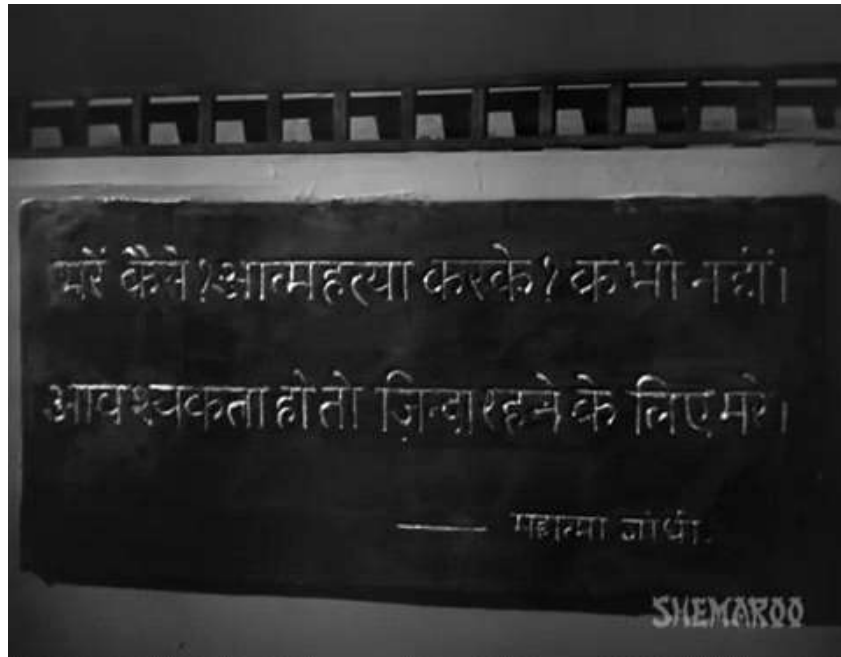


Fig. 4.8 Gandhism as shown in a scene: Still taken from *Sujata* (Bimal Roy Productions)

Chakraborty contends that *Sujata* is ideological in the sense that it presents the possibility of the ideal society and now under the spirit of Gandhi, who is a patron saint to *Sujata*, saving her once from suicide and unflinching offering comfort, strength, and hope in her darkest moments. In fact, the very idea of the narrative situation, that of an untouchable being adopted by an upper-caste family is taken from the teachings of Gandhi.

Sujata is quite aware of her caste and tries her level best to be accepted fully in the household of *Upendranath*. *Sujata's* character is weak in the sense that being an untouchable she lacks somewhere a self-confidence to face the world alone. She is desperate to prove herself to be of the same caste as other members of the household. Chakravarty critiques the blood transfusion scene of the film where *Sujata* saves the life of *Charu* by donating her blood as this blood transfusing becomes a test for *Sujata* to prove her identity. This transfusion proves that now *Sujata* was ready to be considered as one belonging to the family and her caste has dissolved somewhere in the process.

Though the main focus of the film is on caste difference and cause of untouchability, Bimal Roy has also commented on the question of dowry and hypocrisy of society while dealing with the question of dowry is one of the important scenes of the film.

6.5.5 Elements of Hypocrisy

Upen Babu gives a matrimonial advertisement in the newspaper for finding a perspective groom for *Sujata* as *Bua Ji* and *Charu* wants *Sujata* to be married before *Adhir* marries *Rama*. A man, *Haricharan* comes to the household of *Upen Babu* in response to the advertisement and when asked about his expectation for the proposal of his son, *Haricharan* goes all against the dowry system and gives a lecture on culture and integrity. When enquired about what his son was doing, *Haricharan* replies that his son was a graduate but not interested in any job. He wanted to do some business but the business required some funds in that age of competition. *Upen Babu* takes the cue and promises all the monetary help. But when *Haricharan* comes to know that the advertisement was placed for *Sujata* in mind and not *Rama*, he forgets the monetary offer also and leaves the scene in a huff. *Chatterji* considers the scene to be a telling comment on the hypocrisy that defines the genteel intellectual class of upwardly mobile Brahmins¹⁸



Fig. 4.9 The scene where Upen Babu discusses marriage proposal for Sujata: Still taken from *Sujata* (Bimal Roy Productions)

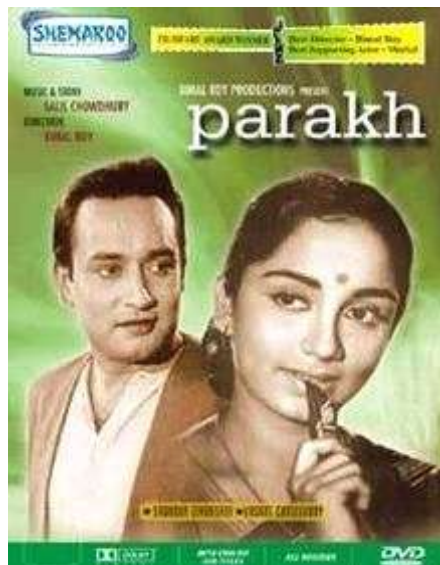
Sujata remains a visual treat for the cine-goers and a telling social comment picturized on celluloid. The film won four Filmfare awards at the time when these

¹⁸ Chatterji, Shoma. 2017. *The Cinema of Bimal Roy-An outsider within*, New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, p. 144

awards were still valued highly especially the Filmfare awards. In the atmosphere of this adulation, it is worth mentioning the review of the film published in popular film magazine FilmIndia (August 1959). The reviewer finds the film as a work of significance, and an exercise in public enlightenment but a confused and clumsy affair which lacks clarity of purpose. The reviewer has found no educative purpose of the film. According to the reviewer, the failure of the film lies in the inability to pinpoint the fact of the female protagonist's untouchability as the cause of the thematic conflict.

Chatterji states that *Sujata* remains one of the most beautiful celluloid representations of romanticism that evolved into a strong social statement against untouchability which also spread the message of the universality of love.

6.6 PARAKH (1960)¹⁹



Release Year: 1960

Produced by: Bimal Roy

Directed by: Bimal Roy

Starring: Moti Lal, Sadhna, Nazeer Hussain and others

¹⁹ Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Parakh \(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parakh_(film))

Parakh, released in 1960, is a Bimal Roy film which can be placed under the genre of Black comedy and satire. Bimal Roy has successfully peeled the shreds of goodness from the faces of the village men considered to be role models in the village but they turned messages, it conveys.

Social issues raised

1. Democracy
2. Untouchability
3. Community health issue
4. The issue of religion and gender

6.6.1 Plot

The story is based in a village named Radhanagar and we meet the main characters of the film in the early scenes itself. There is the village Postmaster, *Nivaran Babu* (Nazeer Hussain), his daughter *Seema* (Sadhna), the postman *Haridhan* (Moti Lal), the village doctor (Rashid Khan), the village landlord, *Tandav* (Jayant), the school teacher *Rajat* (Vasant Choudhary) and a rich money lender *Haribhanj* (Asit Sen). The viewers also get a glimpse of the pure and innocent life of the village. Everything is shown as going fine until the postmaster *Nivaran* receives a letter from *Sir J.C.Roy* (a rich man from city) who had sent a cheque of Rs. 5, 00,000, a princely sum in those days with a clear instruction that the amount had to be given to the best man in the village only. The postmaster *Nivaran Babu* faces a confusing situation of finding the best man in the village. On which yardstick, one can weigh the goodness of a man was the question faced by the Postmaster *Nivaran Babu*. *Rajat*, the school teacher suggests holding an election to find the best man to receive the cheque. The announcement of the election process changes the situation and the prominent persons of the village are keen to put forward their best faces in order to win the election. The village priest who is deadly against the entry of persons belonging to the lower class in the temple allows those people to worship the god in the temple. The village landlord forgoes the taxes of the villagers. The greedy doctor starts treating the patients for free. In this situation, only *Rajat* remains innocent and true to him and continues doing the community work in the villages as usual. Slowly when it becomes clear that *Rajat* would win the election then various permutations and combinations

are made to win the elections. Alliances are put forward and various characters are assassinated in the process. In the decade of 1960's only, Bimal Roy had put the games played under the name of democracy successfully on celluloid. *Parakh* remains a classic in the sense that it was one of the first satirical movies to be made in the Hindi language in India. The film was not successful commercially but perhaps had the most profound social messages put forward by Bimal Roy on the screen. The film was a slap on the hypocrisy of the society. The music of the film scored by Salil Choudhary has become immortal through two songs '*O Sajna Barkha Bahar Aayi...*' and '*Mila hai Kisi ka jhumka.*' both the songs are sung by Lata Mangeshkar. The movie uses the format of black comedy genre to bring forward the perils of democracy. *Parakh* is the strongest Hindi film of Bimal Roy in the sense of social messages, it conveys.

6.6.2 The issue of Democracy

The moot point that the film raises is the democratic set up to choose the best man in the village to get the cheque for Rs. 5,00,000. The film believes in the democracy to select the most suitable man. The title '*Parakh*' itself gets its name from the process of selecting such a man. But the democratic process brings about the ills associated with this system also and this has been shown by Bimal Roy, threadbare. The film is a lesson in the treatise, how elections are won in a democratic setup. Democracy has been present in India but mainly in theory. Practically, an awakening is needed to bring about real fruits of democracy and this awakening is based upon certain factors like literacy, the power of conscience, moral values, logic etc. But it is a tragedy that most of the elections are not fought taking in mind these issues. It is very easy to lure illiterate masses in favor of a specific candidate in lieu of certain rewards, in cash or kind. Four main contestants in the election fray shown in the village lure the villagers by adopting different ways:

- The priest is able to sway women voters in his support by asserting his religious supremacy. Religious rituals and customs are more tied to women than men folk so the priest is able to take advantage of this fact. The untouchability factor hampers the entry of the persons belonging to lowest caste in the temples and the priest suddenly changes his policy in this regard so as to win untouchable votes.

- The rich man has been shown digging the tube wells for the villagers but only after the announcement of the election process.
- The landlord waves off the taxes to be collected from the peasants. He also resorts to the muscle power and goondaism to win the elections. He uses his sister in law to lure the villagers. He presents a dance item of his sister in law.
- The village doctor starts treating the villagers for free. He uses his skill and expertise in this regard to lure the villagers.



Fig. 4.10 Village Doctor treating the patients for free: *Still taken from Parakh (Bimal Roy Productions)*



Fig. 4.11 Village Landlord giving order to forego the revenue: *Still taken from Parakh (Bimal Roy Productions)*



Fig. 4.12 The rich man giving order to dig tube wells: *Still taken from Parakh (Bimal Roy Productions)*

In this sense, each influential person uses his authority in one or other sense to win the election which could get them old over Rs. Five Lakh.

Max Weber has explained certain types of authorities which play a certain role in the democratic process to win over the people. In the election process, as shown in the village, the priest and the landlord uses the traditional religious and traditional feudalistic authority to influence the villagers respectively. The Doctor uses the rational-legal authority in order to lure the villagers. He uses his skill to get a promise from the villagers that they would vote for him. Such an authority is often legal in the bureaucratic systems.

How the newly found democratic system in India had got infected by the ills associated with such a system has been shown quite clearly in the film. Bimal Roy is successful in showing us the face of democracy to come in the near future.

6.6.3 Issue of Untouchability

The issue of untouchability has been taken clearly in the film. The caste system in India is very rigid and it is just impossible to penetrate this system and hit at the roots of this system. The Brahmanical order is supreme in such a system. The untouchables are at the lowest rung of the ladder in such a society. The priest as

shown in the film rightly takes the advantage of this gullible position of the untouchables to win over them as he allows their entry to the temple.

The notion of purity and pollution is behind the caste system in India. If an untouchable touches someone from the higher caste, he gets polluted. The rural settlements were and are established in such a manner that the untouchables live in the separate area in the village from that of the living area of the persons belonging to higher castes. A sort of ghetto formation is there even now, especially in the rural areas. In the colonial period, the untouchables were rechristened as depressed classes or scheduled castes. Bimal Roy has touched the issue of untouchability in an indirect way in this film whereas in the film *Sujata*, this issue of untouchability was the main theme of the film.

6.6.4 Community Health Issue

Community health is broadly defined as the efforts of a community to prevent the whole village from certain diseases. Basically, the efforts of the villagers done in this direction can be said to be just an extension of specific policies of Government of India in raising such issues from time to time. *Rajat*, the schoolmaster along with certain aware individuals of the village and the students of his school has been shown involved in Malaria eradication programme and is seen along with others involved in clearing the areas in the village which could help in the breeding of mosquitoes. In 1953, Government of India had launched a national programme for the eradication of malaria and the director has taken a leaf from the Government's book and has played a role in showing this initiative through this film.



Fig. 4.13 Cleaning the pond and surrounding area: *Still taken from Parakh (Bimal Roy Productions)*

6.6.5 The issue of religion and gender

The issue of religion is a very sensitive one, especially in India. The issue of religion has the power to influence anyone especially the rural folks. A gender bias also comes in the question of religion and women are tending to be more religious than menfolk, in general. Firth observes that "Observations of Hindus suggest that on the whole women are more religiously active than are men: Puja is often carried out at shrines in the home by women"

The priest in the film *Parakh* takes advantage of the gullibility of rural women in the context of religion to influence them to vote for him. Goddess Lakshmi becomes the metaphor for the priest and he lures the women into believing that the Goddess would appear from the earth. The priest tries to influence the women by saying that he would construct a temple from the amount he would get. The temple and Goddess Lakshmi become the emotional point around which the priest wants to win the votes. Using religion to gather votes in a democratic set up is quite prevalent in the contemporary society also. Bimal Roy had perhaps realized this evil in the decade of the 1960's.

6.7 BANDINI (1963)²⁰



Release Year: 1963

Produced by: Bimal Roy

Directed by: Bimal Roy

Starring: Nutan, Ashok Kumar, Dharmendra, Tarun Bose and others.

Bandini, based on a Bengali novel, *Tamasi* by Jarasandha, is a classic Hindi feature film by Bimal Roy telling the story of a woman prisoner, *Kalyani*. Starring Nutan, Ashok Kumar, and Dharmendra in the stellar roles, the film was declared as a semi-hit in 1963.

Social issue raised

The issue of guilt

6.7.1 Plot

Hindi feature film, *Bandini* is set in a prison in around 1934 in pre-independence India. The female protagonist, *Kalyani* (Nutan) is serving the jail sentence (life imprisonment) for murdering her lover's wife. The motive behind the crime of

²⁰Film Poster and film's crew details: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandini_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandini_(film))

Kalyani we come to know in the flashback. *Kalyani* falls in love with *Bikash* (Ashok Kumar) in his village. *Bikash* is a freedom fighter who one day leaves her village, never to come back. *Kalyani* and her father are treated by the village society harshly. *Kalyani* decides to leave the village. She reaches the city and decides to work as a caretaker of a mentally unstable woman who turns out to be the wife of *Bikash*. *Kalyani* poisons her considering herself as the tormentor of her life and the cause of her miseries. She confesses to her crime and is awarded the life sentence. In the jail premises, *Deven* (Dharmendra), the jail doctor falls in love with her. His gestures and small considerations for *Kalyani* hints at his love for her. *Kalyani* does not reciprocate this love and thus *Deven* also starts staying away from *Kalyani*. At the end of the film, *Kalyani* sees *Bikash* at a ship harbor and her heart again longs for her lost love. *Bikash* is not well and *Kalyani* decides to take care of ill *Bikash* instead of reciprocating love of *Deven*, thus justifying the title of the film, *Bandini*.

Bandini is that rare female-oriented Hindi feature film which is regarded as the crowning glory of Bimal Roy. The film is the last directorial venture of Bimal Roy and some critics have called this film as the most complete film of Bimal Roy. The film is a very good example of narrative overpowering the melodrama aspect of Indian style of film-making. Like all other films, even this film is not made out of a set pattern of film-making which had become staple in Hindi film industry but the challenge would lie with the film-makers to do something new and unconventional using the conventional way of film-making. It is in this aspect that Bimal Roy has always scored over others. 1963 was the year when the escapist formula of film-making to connect the cine-goers with the dreamy state of mind and breezy romantic musicals had started playing in the minds of the cine-goers. In such a scenario, *Bandini* did not do bad and was at number ten in the list of highest grossing Hindi films of that year but it was rave reviews and critical acclaim, National award, and Filmfare awards that saved the day for the film.

Bandini is such a strong character created by Bimal Roy which can frighten a man as the strength of this character has come out from the depths and the inner core of *Kalyani's* heart. Without being verbose and loud, the silence of *Kalyani* and an imposed exile on herself in the jail has given an iron will to the character. Nutan, in an

interview, has mentioned the character of *Kalyani* as her best role ever. There are certain traits of this character *Kalyani* which have made this character as a memorable one.

6.7.2 The Emotion of Guilt

‘Guilt’ is one emotion with which, one can identify *Kalyani*. This is that one rare Hindi film where ‘Guilt’ has found expression through a female protagonist. ‘Guilt’ is that wonderful trait of a human being which can come out on the foreground only if a human being is pure to the core. *Kalyani* is not remorseful in killing the wife of *Bikash* but the purity of her heart has pushed her to bear guilt as the main emotion in the film. In the coming years, a certain sense of ‘Guilt’ found its powerful expression in the character of ‘*Vijay*’ in *Kala Patthar*. The role was essayed by Amitabh Bachchan and his brooding image and to help the persons in distress in the area of coal mines was not something to have come out of the sense of selflessness, it was a by-product of ‘Guilt’ syndrome. Similarly, *Kalyani* is seeing always helping her fellow inmates in the jail but is reclusive when she is not in helping mode. She has volunteered to take care of a fellow inmate suffering from Tuberculosis. Somewhere, her soul is not able to bear the sense of guilt and this ‘guilt’ is responsible to push *Kalyani* to a self-destructive mode. According to Maithili Rao, *Kalyani* suffers from a double guilt syndrome. Firstly, she is haunted by the guilt of disgracing her upright father. Her guilt arises out of the way she has defied the society’s norms. Her second bout of guilt comes out after murdering the wife of *Bikash*. This incident just adds to the already present guilt in *Kalyani*’s heart. After *Sujata*, oceangoing, Bimal Roy has molded his female protagonist in ‘*Bandini*’ as an outsider, her silence once again overpowering the spoken words. Roy’s female characters come true to the couplet, ‘*Bazaar se Guzra hun Kharidar Nahin Hun*’.

Devotion, unending and selfless devotion is another trait of *Kalyani*. *Kalyani*’s love for *Bikash* is utterly devotional. For her, *Bikash* is her lord and her love for him is more of spiritual and platonic, it seems. Blind faith and love characterize *Kalyani*’s devotional traits towards *Bikash*. Lyrics of the song, ‘*Jogi, jab se Tu Aaya mere dware*’ indicates towards the feeling of *Kalyani* towards *Bikash* where she is clearly referring *Bikash* as a Jogi, the saint. Even during the scene where *Bikash* is taken by

the Police, *Kalyani* touches his feet showing the trait of unending devotion towards him. Bimal Roy, resorting to *Kalyani* going back to *Bikash* instead of *Deven* again shows her unflinching faith and devotion towards *Bikash*. Seeing through the eyes of modern feminist filmmakers, the moves of *Kalyani* seem to be regressive and weak. But perhaps *Kalyani* knows that her love for *Bikash* falls short of his love for the nation and here, knowing this well she turns herself into a sacrificial mold. She has got a well-etched motive to do this. Bhawna Somayya considers this film of Bimal Roy as the darkest one full of gloom. According to her, she has failed to understand why *Kalyani* has chosen *Bikash* over *Deven*, illness over health, an old man over a young suitor. Perhaps, the answer lays in the fact that Bimal Roy, except for Hindi feature film *Madhumati* has never played to the gallery and has remained true to his conviction in his every directorial venture. The way, the character of ‘*Kalyani*’ has been built up in the film; her emotional strength has been shown to come out of her sense of guilt as well as her unending love for *Bikash*. If Roy had taken the other way out of happy ending with *Deven* and *Kalyani* together, then the purpose of platonic bonding between ‘*Kalyani*’ and ‘*Bikash*’ would not have materialized. The title ‘*Bandini*’ would have lost its justification. ‘*Bandini*’ is not only the prisoner in the worldly sense albeit she is the prisoner of her mind also. In ‘*Kalyani*’, Bimal Roy has carved a highly complex female character in Hindi film industry.

6.8 Interviews Taken

A.Rai considers Bimal Roy to be pioneer of socially relevant Cinema. For Rai, *Do Bigha Zamin* is the film which is to be considered as the turning point for Indian Cinema (telephonic interview, April 8, 2019)

A.Tyagi, while discussing the Cinema of Bimal Roy with the researcher considers the Cinema of Bimal Roy as a realistic one. According to him, Roy’s leftist understanding was very subtle and his team was best amongst his contemporaries (personal interview, January 2, 2017)

B.Singh considers Bimal Roy to be a realistic film-maker in a true sense. For him, *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Sujata*, and *Humrahi* are the best examples of socially relevant Cinema (telephonic interview, November 5, 2019)

Women characters in Bimal Roy's cinema have been presented in a manner which is sublime to the core and romanticism is at the core of presentation of these characters. Romanticism, yes, but not eroticism has been the main feature of how women have been presented in the Cinema of Bimal Roy. Romance can be male-centric which tends to present the women as beloved seen through the male eyes only and thus women tend to become a commodity sometimes and an object of voyeurism as has happened in Hindi Cinema most of the times. But when observed minutely, Roy's depiction of romance is not male-centric and places the women always in the heart of the narrative of the film whether it is *Sujata*, *Bandini*, *Madhumati* or *Devdas*²¹. Often, the women characters in the cinema of Bimal Roy are strong and share a platonic bonding with the male characters. The women in Bimal Roy's films had an identity of their own. Their statures were impeccable and were emotionally independent. The women in the films of Bimal Roy had created an aura of their own and were instrumental in bringing life to the cinema of Bimal Roy.

While talking about women characters in the Cinema of Bimal Roy, Suparna Sharma holds the viewpoint that women characters were always very strong in the Cinema of Bimal Roy. The title of the films *Bandini* and *Sujata* itself indicates how Bimal Roy wanted to represent women in his films. Harjit Singh also holds the similar viewpoint when asked about depiction of women characters in the Cinema of Bimal Roy.

Hari Dutt also considers the characters of *Bandini* and *Sujata* to be very strong ones (telephonic interview, April 4, 2019)

6.9 The style of film-making of Bimal Roy

6.9.1 Harbinger of middle class Cinema

Bimal Roy can be taken as the film-maker who pioneered middle-class cinema in India. He is the producer-director who brought about a refreshing change in the way films were being made in the decade of the 50's and 60's. He pioneered a style which in the later stages would be remembered as middle-class Cinema. Famous film-

²¹Quoted by Rao, Maithili. in Bhattacharya, Rinki.(ed.) 2009. *The man who spoke in pictures*, New Delhi: Penguin India.

makers Basu Bhattacharya, Basu Chatterji, Hrishikesh Mukerji and Gulzar, later on, carried the legacy of Bimal Roy following his way of film-making to some extent. Bimal Roy combined the elements of pure commercial cinema full of entertainment and realistic Cinema to create masterpieces in Indian Cinema. Inspired by a Soviet pattern of film-making as well as Italian Neo-realist Cinema, Bimal Roy thoroughly Indianized these elements of film-making and narrated his stories on celluloid full of emotions but devoid of melodrama more or less. His characters in the films are not super humans or the characters larger than life. They are characterized as human beings who have fears and emotions just like any normal human being. The way, the characters speak are not in the style of a theatrical form of dialogues which were prevalent at that time. Bimal Roy believed in the conversational style of dialogues. Neither Bimal Roy deviated from the path of meaningful Cinema in which he believed nor did he rejected the pattern of film-making which was prevalent in Indian Cinema at that time which included songs and dances and an emotional connect with the audiences. His approach was a balanced approach towards film-making where he did not go overboard to tell his stories. His films have got a linear approach basically in which one feels that his characters come and go after telling their stories in a humane way. His films have got a certain lyrical quality. His Cinema is that of a Cinema about the common people. His balanced approach won Bimal Roy critical acclaim as well as a moderate commercial success also, *Madhumati* being his most successful venture commercially. Bimal Roy did not have the global charm of Raj Kapoor who had wooed the international audience regularly. He also lacked the sense of melodrama that Guru Dutt reflected in his Cinema. He also did not make the movies in the epic style of Mehboob Khan still he had got an uncanny sense of storytelling which would connect with the masses. Bimal Roy's Cinema had all the features of mainstream Hindi Cinema but had a different appeal in the sense of that it belonged to middle class and a middle path had been created quite successfully by Bimal Roy.

6.9.2 Bengali culture and influence in Bimal Roy's Cinema

Some film-makers have a deep connection with the place to which they belong. They have deep roots in that place and when they create Cinema, the influence of that

specific area and place is reflected in their Cinema to the extent of that place becoming a character itself. Bimal Roy got his early education in the film-making at New Theatres Calcutta, Bengal. Here, all of his team members were Bengali. When Bimal Roy migrated to Bombay, Hrishikesh Mukerji and Asit Sen migrated with him along with Salil Choudhary. It can be assumed quite clearly that all of these persons were richly influenced by Bangla folk culture and milieu. Bimal Roy formed a team to create his type of Cinema in which Bengal played the main role apart from the characters of his films. From the first film that he produced under his banner, *Do Bigha Zamin* up to *Bandini*, Bengali influence can be found in Bimal Roy's films. Calcutta with all its dreams and fears become a character itself in *Do Bigha Zamin*. The big city in the film represented the face of Bengal which is to some extent ruthless and inhumane for the migrants. The hustle-bustle of Calcutta, chaos and the pace of the city in comparison to the village life in Bengal have been shown clearly in the film. The plight of Rickshaw-wallahs of Calcutta becomes a major point around which the story of the film has been woven around. Shambhu's misery has been represented in full force by the director by showing the inhuman treatment of Rickshaw wallahs in the city in the hands of the people who hire these rickshaws.

Bimal Roy's love for Bengali culture and literature becomes evident when he chose three works of Saratchandra Chatterji, the famous Bengali writer, to make his films. *Parineeta* (1953), *Biraj Bahu* (1954) and *Devdas* (1955) are the works of Sarat Chandra which got translated into the celluloid. *Kabuliwalla* (1961), another major cinematic work produced by Bimal Roy and directed by Hemen Gupta is based upon Rabindra Nath Tagore's literary work. Bimal Roy's *Bandini* is based upon a story written by Jarasandha and is based upon Jarasandha's experiences as a jailor. Thus a very prominent connection between Bimal Roy and Bengal is visible in one form or another.

6.9.3 Cinema of an outsider identity

The cinema of Bimal Roy is basically that of the main character having an identity of the displaced outsider. The characters are not heroic in the sense of mainstream Cinema but their heroic is a manifestation of their need for survival in the adverse circumstances. The displacement of major characters in Bimal Roy's Cinema is quite

visible. The characters are lead characters; belong to mainstream still they are off stream in some sense. *Do Bigha Zamin* has got *Shambhu* as a lead character who is a farmer well entrenched to his roots but circumstances forces *Shambhu* to leave his roots and migrate to Calcutta in search of work in order to save his land from the landlord. He is totally outsider in the city, finds himself displaced from the roots amongst the unknown people. When he goes back to his village, then also he finds himself in a piquant situation as the land to which he was bonded has been used to construct a factory. The issue of migration or displacement has played an important role in the life of Bimal Roy. Bimal Roy himself had suffered the pangs of migration from the area which is now Bangladesh to Calcutta in the middle phase of his career life, from Calcutta to Bombay. This pain and feeling of rootlessness might have influenced Bimal Roy to mold the major characters in his films as such. In *Bandini*, *Kalyani* is a displaced character, a social outcast who becomes a murder accused. In *Sujata*, the female protagonist has been raised in the house which does not belong to her exactly. She is not homeless in a traditional way and definition but feels alienated in the house because of her caste as well as fact that she is an adopted daughter of the house. In *Madhumati*, the female protagonist is firmly rooted in her roots. She has been shown firmly belonging to hills and forests. Here, Anand, who has come from the city, plays the role of an outsider.

Merriam- Webster's dictionary defines the outsider as a person who does not belong to or is not accepted as part of a particular group. It further defines the term outsider as a person or an animal that is not expected to win a race or a competition. Bimal Roy's characters in the select films belong to the first category as defined in the dictionary. Ranjani Majumdar has written about the displaced characters in the films that are outsiders and are homeless but those outsiders mainly represented by the era of Amitabh Bachchan represent a rebel image of outsider. Bimal Roy's characters are not rebellious in nature.

CHAPTER- VII

CONCLUSION

7.1 Nation Building process and Cinema

Cinema is wonderful medium for entertainment as well as for history writing as it has affected society since its inception in one way or another. In this study, we have tried to show the representation of social issues in the Cinema of select production houses and in the process to have a look at the social history. The production houses, thus selected, are very popular and have made a name for them in Indian film industry. The researcher has tried to compare the style of the film-makers in representing various social issues in their films. The period of film-making, 1940's onwards advocated the depiction of social issues with great fervour. The coming forward of cultural organisations like Indian people theatre association (IPTA) and Progressive writers association (PWA) only helped in this cause. The birth of these organisations gave a humanitarian and leftist touch to Indian cinema.

The research is basically based upon premise that the decade of 1940's to early 1960's was important in the context of socially relevant cinema. It was the era when the social issues prevailing in the society got reflected on celluloid pre-dominantly. The vision of an ideal society with a strong focus on improving the existing society was the main purpose of story-telling on celluloid in these decades. A purpose of nation building can be seen clearly in the films of these film-makers. Newly gained independence from colonial rule had filled the youth of India with optimism and they saw the newly formed government as a panacea for all the ills but their dreams got shattered when they saw the caste system, class division, rural poverty and patriarchal set up still existed in the society. Indian cinema at that time started oscillating between optimism and pessimism, hope and despair, escapism and reality, village vs. Urban etc.

Before the decade of 1950's, Hindi cinema had explored the nationalistic genre and mythological genre to the hilt. Nationalistic theme could not be created by the film-makers directly and it was being produced in the garb of mythological genre. Political events of the decade of 1920's and 1930's had produced such a Cinema. Even the

stunt films being made in these decades had nationalistic overtone. Many film-makers during these decades were associated with the freedom movement, directly or indirectly. Film-maker Debaki Bose had been associated with Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggle for freedom. P.C.Barua was associated with Swaraj Party and later his films had nationalistic and social tones. Khwaja Ahmed Abbas who got later associated deeply with Raj Kapoor hated foreign rule in India. Some of his work and writings for Bombay Chronicle later got transformed into scripts. One of such script got made as *Dharti Ke Lal* (1946) and later his writings created classics like *Awara* (1951) and *Shri 420* (1955).

7.2 Rural society and Cinema

The sociologists and Anthropologists were studying the caste system and rural poverty in the decade of 1950's in detail and these issues got reflected in cinema. Issues of rural-urban migration, exploitative relationship between landlord and peasant, poverty and class division frequently got representation in the cinema of film-makers whose production houses we have taken for study. Apart from these issues, Mehboob Khan appears to be a film-maker who raised the issues concerning Muslim society in a powerful tone. Rural poverty and the issue of migration to cities for better opportunities still exist in the society but on celluloid, these issues have been not there to a large extent. Films like *Do Bigha Zamin* and *Shri 420* were instrumental in bringing the harsh city life alive on screen. The era of 1950's in the film-making can rightly be termed as nation building era as was happening in the society. If we talk about rural society, in that era the agriculture was primitive producing subsistence economy where farmers were poor, in general. Farming was done without using adequate machinery and technology and thus was not viable due to the presence of landlords who gave loans to the farmers on a high rate of interest. This scenario is best exemplified in *Mother India*. Farming even now in the modern times has become unviable for small farmers despite technology and machinery because of huge input cost and dwindling water table. Mehboob Khan and Bimal Roy were successful in bringing these issues alive and here lies their contribution towards society. These film-makers felt for the issues in rural society and tried to depict their situation through cinema.

Films, when used as a historical source tend to bring out the social history of a specific region or a country or a specific time-period very strongly. Creation of any work of art depends upon two factors mainly. Firstly, social atmosphere around the creator and the sensitivity with which he absorbs that social atmosphere and secondly, personal experiences of the creator and his associations. Social atmosphere is same for every creator but a few tends to absorb that atmosphere to produce sensitive works and that depends upon the team-work with which that creator has been associated. One of the findings of the study is that individual signatures of the film-makers in the study can be observed in the kinds of films which have been made by them but this signature style had its roots in the bonding and associations that these film-makers formed during their work. Abrar Alvi, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and Salil Choudhary were instrumental in building the image of production houses of Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy respectively to a large extent in the context of these production houses being hailed as the makers of socially relevant Cinema.

7.3 The issue of migration

Another important social issue which has been ever present in the society is the issue of migration. When we talk about the issue of migration, it still exists in the society. It is a universal phenomenon where a man migrates to search for greener pastures. *Shri 420* and *Do Bigha Zamin* raised these issues in cinema and herein lay the contribution of Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy towards society. Small towns and rural landscape offered very less opportunities to the youth and the youth had started looking towards big cities for survival. The issue was explored in many Hindi films. *Shri 420*, perhaps was more hard-hitting than *Awara* and socialistic ideas of K.A.Abbas had been transformed on screen beautifully by Raj Kapoor.

7.4 Presence of Italian Neo-realism

Italian neo-realism in cinema got its birth in the opposition to fascist forces and escapist cinema in Europe whereas socially relevant cinema in India got its birth due to general apathy of the newly formed Government of India to solve the problems like social inequality, economic depression, caste system and class division. Neo-realism style took birth in 1942 and it was over by 1951. The style in this genre was marked by the sets of slums or shooting in real locations and long shots.

7.5 Impact of Cinema

There is no doubt that Cinema has got an endearing effect on masses since its inception. The impact can be negative as well as positive but the audience somewhere connects with the Cinema while watching the films. The impact can be seen on some of the audience or all. Social change comes through films or not is a different topic of study but it can certainly be said that film-makers have tried again and again to represent the social issues in Hindi Cinema so that a message is imparted along with the entertainment factor. If seen in broader terms, “Victory of good over evil” is the common message which has been carried through almost in every film in form of Hero thrashing the villain. Apart from that as our study has shown, a lot of film-makers have tried to represent the various social issues prevailing in Indian society thematically. Various issues like unemployment, women oriented issues, feudalism in the society, education, poverty, class conflict etc. have been taken by the film-makers especially in decades of fifties and sixties. Film-makers like V.Shantaram, Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan, Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy have always strived to make Cinema of conscience within the parameters of typical formula of Hindi film making, deviating from their path only to present their Cinema with human values along with entertainment values. These film-makers had everything that could appeal to audience having commercial appeal but social message was an important ingredient of films of these film-makers. The impact of the Cinema can be peripheral or it can influence where personality of a man who gets affected by the Cinematic experience. If we consider Cinema as a rich medium of infotainment then this medium has always enthralled the cine-goers with its visual appeal.

7.6 Inference from the interviews

Amit Rai when interviewed by the researcher, stressed on the point that the impact of Cinema is certainly there but the intensity of the impact differs from person to person. He cited the example of *Dr. Kotnis ki Amar Kahani* made by V.Shantaram and how this humanistic saga inspired a lot of people. He, while gauging the impact of Cinema over audience, also cited the example of the film *Rang De Basanti* made by Rakeysh OmPrakash Mehra which inspired a lot of youngsters. Whenever we study the impact

of Cinema on the cine-goers, we are not able to know which seed germinates into which plant.

Amrik Gill also expressed similar sentiments while talking about the power of Cinema. According to him, Cinema is a powerful medium and we all, who are mesmerised by the Cinema, get influenced by this medium in one way or other.

The study required the observation of Cinema of select production houses (Mehboob Khan Productions Pvt Ltd., R.K.Films, Guru Dutt Films Pvt Ltd and Bimal Roy Productions) and to compare the style and pattern of film-making of these stalwarts in context of representation and depiction of social issues in the films made under the banner of these production houses.

7.7 Observation about Cinema of Mehboob Khan

During the study, the observation comes out that Mehboob Khan was the film-maker who was always interested in making the meaningful Cinema which could give some message to the masses. He started this trend from his lesser known movie, *Aurat* which had rural poverty and problem of farmers as its core theme. *Aurat* was later remade as *Mother India*, the iconic and cult movie which got international recognition for Mehboob Khan. The movie successfully depicted the issues of rural poverty and the trap of landlords. He comes out to be a film-maker who has experimented with various genres and milieus while making films but he never deviated from the path of presenting social issues. If *Aurat*, *Amar* and *Mother India* belong to rural genre, then *Andaz* makes a point in the urban setting. *Elan* and *Najma* are the films set within Muslim society. He is the film-maker who has raised the issue of education in Muslim society with great fervour in these movies. This was quite revolutionary for that time. Raj Kapoor is popularly famous as showman of India film industry but the original tag of showman should be reserved for Mehboob Khan whose movies depict the characters larger than life. He is clearly inspired by Cecil B DeMille. The idea of Nehruvian socialism and leftist ideology were quite dear to Mehboob Khan and *Mother India* is a fine example of representation of these ideas.

Amrik Gill hails Mehboob Khan as a cult figure on the basis of *Mother India*. Amit Rai, similarly, while talking about *Mother India* opines that this movie truly deserved

an Oscar award. Mehboob Khan has come out to be a film-maker who has told the stories of hinterland on the celluloid. A Pan-Indian appeal is visible in the Cinema of Mehboob Khan especially in case of *Andaz*, *Aan* and *Mother India*. Apart from *Amar*, all his movies have been commercially successful.

Technically, among all his contemporaries, Mehboob Khan appears to be very close to Hollywood style of film-making. He is the film-maker totally Indian in heart who had borrowed the style of film-making from Hollywood. Common people vs. Rich class have been a common motif throughout his films. Mehboob's name as a film-maker of the genre depicting social issue is commendable in the decade of 1940's as a majority of the film-makers were making films of Mythology and fantasy genre with a few exceptions here and there like V.Shantaram. But V.Shantaram's works, barring a few exceptions, had a stamp of Marathi sensibility over it and these films were more successful in and around the area of Nasik, Kolhapur, Bombay, and Pune whereas Mehboob's grandeur style and content of social issues had a Pan-Indian appeal to it.

7.8 Observation about Cinema of Raj Kapoor

Raj Kapoor can clearly be taken as a film-maker surrounded by controversies throughout his film-making career. He has been criticised by a few people for representation of nudity and vulgarity in his films. Some of the critics opine that he has always indulged in love for himself in the films. Despite criticism from certain quarters, Raj Kapoor remains an iconic figure of Indian Cinema whose production house was instrumental in producing the Cinema of conscience to a large extent. He comes out to be a film-maker whose Cinema can always be divided into Pre-Nargis phase and Post-Nargis phase or it can be demarcated as pre *Mera Naam Joker* phase and post *Mera Naam Joker* phase. His early cinema has clearly been inspired by the leftist ideology and idea of Nehruvian socialism. But Raj Kapoor himself has talked about his cinema in terms of humanism. In this aspect, he is close to Mehboob Khan. The social issues like unemployment, poverty, women issues, feudalism, difference between haves and have nots have clearly been featured in his Cinema. He is an entertainer who wants to connect himself emotionally with the masses. He has never presented himself as an educator but he is not shy from putting his point forward. He is a film-maker having a keen sense of music and lyrics and he is one of very few

film-makers in whose Cinema, the lyrics play an important role in putting the social message forward. *Awara*, *Shri 420*, *Jis Desh mein Ganga Behti hai* and *Jagte Raho* are prominent examples in this aspect. Influence of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and V.P.Sathe is clearly seen on Raj Kapoor's Cinema. These persons had been associated with R.K.Films since long and were leftist in political ideology. This ideology is reflected in Raj Kapoor's Cinema especially in the initial stage of his film-making but not in radicalised form.

Amit Rai considers *Jagte Raho* as a prominent example of realistic cinema. This is the Raj Kapoor film having a Bengali influence and very close to neo-realism style. This film could be taken as the film which paved the way for new wave Cinema in India. This movie is unlike Cinema of Raj Kapoor. He considers Raj Kapoor to be having a keen sense of aesthetic appeal among his contemporaries. His Cinema is always larger than life. Pavan Malhotra, while talking about Raj Kapoor, says that he was the film-maker who always knew the pulse of cine-goers and had a capacity to put forward his point to connect with the masses strongly. He cites the examples of character *Raj* in *Awara* and *Shri 420*. Both Mehboob Khan and Raj Kapoor have enthralled the audience with their Cinema but Raj Kapoor seems to be a film-maker having a better Cinematic appeal than Mehboob Khan. A distinct Chaplinesque trait is visible in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor which has not been seen in the Cinema of his contemporaries. The Chaplinesque trait is unique style of film-making which exclusively belongs to Raj Kapoor only. His early movies are full of pathos but Raj Kapoor never runs away from optimism. His movies are a mixture of optimism and pathos. A certain dilemma is always visible in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor. In *Awara*, we see this dilemma or paradox in Environment vs. Heredity, in *Shri 420*, it is visible in innocence vs. Knowledge and in *Prem Rog*, and this paradox is visible in tradition vs. modernity.

7.9 Observation regarding Cinema of Guru Dutt

The Cinema of Guru Dutt also comes with the social messages embedded within the films made under his banner. But the message which Guru Dutt imparts is very subtle one and is presented as an undertone. His Cinema comes out to be a very personal one. His films like *Pyaasa*, *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* are

significant because a personal anguish comes on the forefront in his Cinema. The personal anguish of the protagonists in these films talk about the social issues. This personal anguish has been filmed with a technical expertise seen very rare in the Cinema of his contemporaries. His Cinema is not loud and larger than life. The deep anguish against the unjust ways of society has been represented in his Cinema in a very subdued way. Silence and expression play an important role in his Cinema. Amit Rai has cited that initially Guru Dutt had made pure commercial Cinema but when he got associated with Abrar Alvi his style changed. Abrar Alvi, as a theatre man influenced his thought process and his style of film-making. In this way, his Cinematic journey is similar to that of Raj Kapoor who got influenced largely by K.A.Abbas. Thus a common point comes out between Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt about their early associates influencing them in search of meaningful Cinema. A very interesting observation has been made by Amit Rai that a Hollywood movie, Birdman, released in 2014 seems to be inspired by *Kaagaz Ke Phool*. In this way Amit Rai considers Guru Dutt to be ahead of times. V.K.Murthy's camerawork gives a unique identity to the Cinema of GuruDutt. Melodrama is an important aspect of Cinema of Guru Dutt. As stated in this chapter, his Cinema is the Cinema of anguish. Melancholy, anguish and despair are part and parcel of his Cinema. Platonic relationships also play a prominent role in the Cinema of Guru Dutt. During depiction of social issues and personal anguish in the films, Guru Dutt has avoided the path of glamour. Cinema of Guru Dutt comes out to be a dark and depressing one.

7.10 Observation about Bimal Roy's Cinema

Bimal Roy has also produced the movies which play an important role in imparting social messages. Social issues have been at forefront in the Cinema of Bimal Roy. Influence of Bengali culture can clearly be seen in his Cinema as he got initial grooming in film-making in the prominent production house situated in Calcutta, New Theatres Pvt Ltd. His style is also very subdued. Without being loud, he was successful in putting forward his point in a very smooth manner. Women have played a prominent role in his Cinema. He has come out with the Cinema with very strong women characters. *Bandini* and *Sujata* are prominent examples of such Cinema. Suparna Sharma, the film critic from the newspaper , The Asian Age considers Bimal

Roy to be the film-maker having a keen sense of representing women as strong characters citing the examples of *Bandini* and *Sujata* only. Amit Rai considers Bimal Rai to be pioneer in making socially relevant Cinema. He considers *Do Bigha Zamin* as a turning point in this genre. Bimal Roy has come out to be a film-maker who is responsible for middle of road Cinema followed by Hrishikesh Mukerji, Basu Bhattacharya, Basu Chatterji and Gulzar later on. His Cinema is basically the Cinema of common man. His Cinema is of characters and not actors. He was inspired by neo-realistic Cinema of Italy. He thoroughly Indianized these styles while presenting his Cinema. Another unique aspect of his Cinema is conversational style of speaking dialogues which is quite distinct from the theatrical style prevalent at that time. Raj Kapoor's popularity among the masses in India and abroad was much more than Bimal Roy but National awards kept coming to Bimal Roy indicating that his Cinema was considered to be more socially relevant in those times. Bimal Roy did not have the global charm of Raj Kapoor who had wooed the international audience regularly. He also lacked the sense of melodrama that Guru Dutt reflected in his Cinema. He also did not make the movies in the epic style of Mehboob Khan still he had got an uncanny sense of storytelling which would connect with the masses.

7.11 A General observation

To conclude, depiction of migration, poverty and Zamindar-peasant relations have been frequent themes of film-makers in the decades of 1950's and 1960's. Mehboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy have exploited these themes within the parameters of typical Hindi style of film-making. *Mother India*, *Shri 420* and *Do Bigha Zamin* remain prominent examples in this genre. City is often considered as a place of hope and the village as a place of despair. The migration from village to city, in fact represents migration from despair to hope and this theme has been exploited powerfully in *Shri 420* and *Do Bigha Zamin*. The decay of Bengali feudalism has been tackled in *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam* effectively. Whatever was the style of depicting social issues in the select production houses, the common thread running through these movies is idea of Nehruvian socialism. Nehru's idea of building dams is reflected in *Mother India*. Similarly the concept of eradication of Malaria, fair

elections and power of education has been tackled effectively in *Parakh* made by Bimal Roy.

An observation has been made during the research that depiction of social issues can clearly be seen in the cinema of Mehboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy but in the starting phase of their cinematic journey they walked on the tried and tested formula of making films and did not intend to give any social message during the earliest phase of film-making. It is only when their production houses got established that they produced socially relevant cinema but within the parameters of a set formula of film-making. Their work is not path breaking as such. All of them produced middle of road cinema for which commercial success also mattered. These film-makers wanted to give masses, a sugar coated pill and were successful to a large extent in this. The film-makers in question had a unique signature style of making the films.

Cinema is a make-believe world as well as reality which reflect the aspirations of the society on the screen. This reality cannot be ignored by the historians to deduct certain social-cultural inferences. Cinema reflects the various aspects of social reality and cultural scenario of an area. Political and economic aspects of a film can also be studied in order to advance the scope of film studies as a historical source.

7.12 Relevance of the study

Artists have a sense of responsibility towards society and cannot remain aloof from the ills prevailing in the society. The happenings in the world around them are bound to affect the artists. Every form of art depicts various situations from time to time whether it is architecture, sculpture, painting, literature or cinema. The world of cinema combining audio and visual is a very powerful world and it impacts the masses more than anything else. Our erstwhile prime-minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said in 1955 that as cinema had power to sway the masses, our film-makers must realize responsibility and make socially relevant cinema. The statement was made by Pandit Nehru in a seminar where the likes of Devika Rani and Prithviraj Kapoor were present. Making of socially relevant cinema was a result of combination of the recommendations of this seminar as well as organisation of the first international film festival of India held in Mumbai in 1952. The film-makers like

Mehboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy travelled on the path as envisaged by Pandit Nehru and became cultural ambassadors of our country. Their cinema was well embedded with the policies devised for the development of our country and herein lays the greatest contribution of these film-makers. True value of an artist lies in the point that any form of art which is created should bring forward the real issues of society and this happened in the sphere of cinema in the decade of 1950's and 1960's.

The relevance of the study socially is to observe the linkage between the social issues prevalent in the society and making of films. The era had produced such films which reflected the issues prevalent in the society in a strong manner. These issues got reflected in Cinema and again the manner in which these issues were represented on screen affected the audience. Sometimes issues are around us but these genuine issues get sidelined. A euphoria gets created where everything tends to be normal and an image of utopian world is created. In such a scenario, socially relevant Cinema tends to bring back the focus on genuine issues. Every creation of art tends to be political in one way or other. Cinema is no exception to this and every decade has produced the Cinema which has reflected the aspirations of that particular period. But after the decade of 1950's and 1960's especially after the death of erstwhile Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, apart from a few exceptions of socially relevant Cinema, the direction of Hindi film industry shifted towards escapism Cinema.

7.13 Scope of the study and suggestion

When we use cinema as a source of history, it does not reflect a total objective study as analysing cinema totally depends upon person's perception that is seeing the cinema. A suggestion is that new methods and implements of experimentation have to be explored in this area of study. A major handicap in studying Cinema is that this area of study has not got that importance in India as it has got abroad. Our study is just a small step in exploring the field of cinema and it can be widened by taking more production houses and also by exploring different aspects of cinema like cinematography, editing, direction etc. and establishing various film-makers as auteur. The research work on the Cinema of these film-makers and some other notable names of Indian film industry can be continued as the field offers much scope.

ANNEXURE

8.1 Interview of Mr. Amit Rai

Mr. Amit Rai has been associated with Hindi film industry in the capacity of producer-director. He is remembered mainly for his path breaking award winning film, *Road to Sangam*.

Questions for Interview

Q.1. Do you agree that Cinema affects the masses?

Cinema definitely affects the people but to what extent it affects the people depends upon person to person. One can take the example of the film, *Dr. Kotnis ki Amar Kahani* here whose humanitarian message inspired many people in those times. Similarly, in recent times, film *Rang De Basanti* has affected the masses in a positive way. You will never know which seed germinates into which plant, similar is the case with different kinds of Cinema.

Q.2. Who, in your viewpoint was the most influential film-maker in the decade of 1950's?

P.C.Barua of New Theatres, Calcutta influenced people to some extent. Salil Choudhary, as a writer has been very influential. *Do Bigha Zamin* written by him reflects this viewpoint. Bimal Roy is the pioneer of socially relevant films. The film, *Do Bigha Zamin* is to be considered as turning point in Hindi Cinema.

Q.3. How do you perceive Raj Kapoor as a film-maker?

Raj Kapoor is to be seen as a film-maker who was most interested in middle of the road Cinema. *Jaagte Raho*, produced by him and directed by Shombhu Mitra is the best example of realistic Cinema. The film is unlike the style of Raj Kapoor. One can take the example of the song "*Mud mud ke Na Dekh*" from *Awara* to highlight the dichotomy between materialistic life and a philosophical life. It clearly represents a confusion of a man whether to go towards *Maya* or *Vidya*. Music has played a great role in the success of Raj Kapoor as a film-maker. His aesthetic sense was best amongst his contemporaries. Films like *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* might be controversial but can be remembered for the aesthetic appeal.

Q.4. How do you look at the Cinema of Guru Dutt?

Guru Dutt, in his initial phase of film-making was known for making routine commercial films as exemplified by the likes of *Baaz* and *AarPar*. His association with Abrar Alvi changed the equation for him. His films like *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam* and *Pyaasa* were made as a result of his collaboration with Abrar Alvi. He was far ahead of his times. *Birdman*, a Hollywood movie, released in 2014 is clearly inspired by the film *Kaagaz Ke Phool*. Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa* has been a cult classic. Technically, Guru Dutt has always been strong. One can take the example of Guru Dutt sending his Cinematographer V.K.Murthy to Europe to search for a particular type of lens to enhance the appeal of cinematography in his films.

Q.4. What is the place of Mehboob Khan in Indian Cinema?

Often one work of a man puts himself on a high pedestal. In the case of Mehboob Khan, it is his work, *Mother India* remade from *Aurat* that gave international recognition to him. He is the film-maker who was proficient on telling the stories of hinterland. *Mother India* truly deserved the Oscars but unfortunately never got the award.

Q.5. Are the film-makers who are part of our study, to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

How one perceives a film-maker depends upon one's perception. Like *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* was a commercial hit film but very far away from reality. *Sholay* might be technically superb but its cinematic language was not that high. One can only distinguish the films as good Cinema or bad Cinema and similar is the case with the film-makers who can be good or bad.

Q.6. How Italian neo-realism affected these film-makers?

Many film-makers have been inspired by Vittorio De Sica. Majid Majidi, the film-maker from Iran has also inspired Indian film-makers. It all depends upon how you are using the tool. *Awara* and *Shri 420* were clearly inspired by Charlie Chaplin. If we talk specifically about Raj Kapoor, then he was clearly inspired by Charlie Chaplin more than Vittorio De Sica.

Q.7. How you perceive the representation of women in the works of these film-makers?

Mehboob Khan was illiterate but politically very aware. He was aware about the wrongdoings being done in the society like some of the other film-makers. His *Mother India* changed the way how women were represented in the Cinema. How Raj Kapoor has represented women in his films, no other film-maker has been successful in doing. Guru Dutt's *Pyasa* had a character Gulabo which was represented in a strong manner.

8.2 Interview of Amrik Gill

Amrik Gill is renowned dialogue writer and an alumnus of National School of Drama, New Delhi

Questions for interview

Q.1. Do you agree that Cinema affects the masses?

Cinema is a very powerful medium and we all get influenced by it in one way or other. If we talk about the Cinema of classic film-makers then the Cinema of Guru Dutt itself has been very enriching. We can take the example of *Kaagaz Ke Phool* in this respect. Raj Kapoor also, as a film-maker was class apart who believed in entertaining the masses.

Q.2. Are the film-makers who are part of our study, to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

The distinction is not right. There is nothing like offbeat film-maker or a commercial film-maker. It can only be a good cinema or bad cinema. For example, *Mera Naam Joker* was a flop movie commercially but is example of good cinema. *Bobby*, on the other hand proved to be a commercial hit. If we see the cinema of Raj Kapoor, social messages are to be found everywhere in the initial phase of his film-making. The impact of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas is very much seen on Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor was even influenced by V.P.Sathe, his publicist. Raj Kapoor was neither off beat neither film-maker nor a commercial one. He was popular in socialist Russia as well as in capitalist America. Writers have always dominated his cinema.

Q.3. Are the film-makers in question entertainers firstly or the film-makers with a conscience?

They are to be taken as socially relevant film-makers who entertained also.

Q.4. How you look at the Cinema of Guru Dutt?

Guru Dutt was a philosopher type man who excelled in the film-making. *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam* and *Kaagaz ke Phool* are class apart. He has clearly represented the issue of feudal decay in *Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam*. He was a legend.

Q.5. To what extent, these film-makers have been influenced by neo-realism?

Italian neo-realism started in India with Satyajit Ray. Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen and Kumar Shahani were more in this league than Mehboob or Raj Kapoor. Film-makers like Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy were entertainers firstly in whose cinema realism was present to some extent.

Q. 6. How women were represented in the cinema of the film-makers who are part of our study?

Women were always central figures in the cinema of these film-makers.

8.3 Interview of Mr. Pavan Malhotra

Pavan Malhotra is a renowned actor and theatre artist remembered mainly for his role in *Bagh Bahadur* and *Salim Langde pe Mat Ro*.

Q.1. Do you think that cinema helps in educating the masses?

Yes, but it is not necessary that cinema gives solution to every problem but it certainly raises question marks. Cinema makes you aware about certain things. There are always good people more in the world than bad people. Cinema does not change society drastically but some changes do happen. Socially relevant cinema was always there and is there. New wave cinema movement took birth from the cinema of 1950's only.

Q.2. Who, in your viewpoint, was the most influential film-maker in the decade of 1950's?

We cannot take any one name. Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan, all were present in those times. *Ganga Jamuna* is very important film of that decade. We can

take the name of B.R.Chopra also whose *Dharmaputra* is a very socially relevant film. So, as we see many film-makers had been important in that decade.

Q.3. How do you perceive Raj Kapoor as a film-maker?

He was a film-maker who was relevant socially to a large extent. One can always take the name of *Shri 420* and *Awara* in this context. Even the songs of these films depicted the social message. In *Shri 420*, there is a vulnerable man whom society is trying to use. He becomes a puppet in the hands of upper class. Issue of branded clothes has been raised in this film. The song '*Dil ka haal sune Dil wala*' is very socially relevant song.

Q.4. What is the place of Mehboob Khan in Indian Cinema?

Mehboob Khan was an illiterate man but very progressive. If we look at Mehboob Khan, we believe in the adage that achievers are not produced in the elite schools; they are produced in the school of life. His *Mother India* is the best example of that. The values have changed since but the core values remain intact even now. The village and issues of *Mother India* are still relevant.

Q.5. Are the film-makers in question entertainers firstly or the film-makers with a conscience?

Before answering this question we can take an example of a teacher who just writes on black board and another teacher teaches in a storytelling format. You can't be a bore in any profession. The scope of entertainment has to be there. Raj Kapoor was master of this art. Talking about *Pyaasa*, *Shri 420*, *Mother India* and *Sujata* it is very important that these films reach new generation. The likes of Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt and Raj Kapoor were passionate film-makers.

Q.6. How women were represented in the cinema of the film-makers who are part of our study?

These film-makers had represented women in a very strong way. *Vidya* as played by Nargis in *Shri 420* is the central power behind reforming *Raj* played by Raj Kapoor. Who can forget *Radha* of *Mother India*? In *Pyaasa*, *Gulabo* is the fulcrum around which life of the poet *Vijay* revolves around. They share a platonic relationship seen very rare now in Cinema.

Q.7. To what extent, these film-makers have been influenced by neo-realism?

Movies of Shyam Benegal were more real. Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt were representatives of middle of road cinema. They followed a routine pattern of film-making and incorporated songs and dances in their films. Films made by these persons entertained also as well as gave messages. Content was king in their films.

8.4 Interview of Ms. Suparna Sharma

Suparna Sharma is a film critic of the newspaper ‘The Asian Age’

Q. 1. Do you think that cinema helps in educating the masses?

Yes, certainly. There is no other media which has got such a mass appeal. The appeal of Cinema not only helps the society, it educates also. In cinema, the communication of the medium with the audience is immediate. An emotional dialogue is going on always. Firstly, there is emotional connect then message is delivered. The idea of Nehruvian socialism dominated the scene once. People had feelings for the nation. Raj Kapoor’s movies helped in bringing the issues of urban-dwellers. It just goes on.

Q.2. Are the film-makers who are part of our study, to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

These film-makers were hardcore commercial film-makers who always wanted to top the box-office. A unique template had been formed. Raj Kapoor’s cinema is popular everywhere. A message is certainly there in his cinema but the entertainment quotient dominated his cinema. If there is not entertainment, people will get annoyed. The style of story-telling of Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt might be unique but commercial. The new wave movement was more personal in nature, not the cinema of these film-makers.

Q.3. How women were represented in the cinema of the film-makers who are part of our study?

Raj Kapoor had a powerful actor, Nargis for his banner. How she represented various characters was very unique. The representation of women characters in the cinema of these film-makers was always very powerful. The titles of films *Bandini* and *Sujata* itself indicates the importance of women characters in the cinema of Bimal Roy.

Q.4. How you look at the Cinema of Guru Dutt?

Guru Dutt's cinema is unique in many aspects. The cinematography in the films of Guru Dutt was best amongst the contemporaries. He was influenced by French noir cinema. He is master of light and darkness. The shadows play an important role in his films. I take the example of the song 'Waqt ne Kiya haseen sitam'. He was a master film-maker in the visual sense. How the scenes were structured gave a unique sense to his cinema. One can take the example of the song 'Jinhe naaz hai Hind par wo kahan hai' in this sense. Visually, Guru Dutt's style was very enriching and originality was seen in the structuring of the scenes. Silence was more important to him than the words. The camera angles which V.K.Murthy, his cameraman used was best. One thing that a person observes while seeing the cinema of Guru Dutt is that his cinema was depressing and a tragic one. His films were beautifully made. Expressions were very important in his cinema. Emotional content and emotional pull was very high in his cinema.

Q.5. What is the place of Mehboob Khan in Indian Cinema?

His Mother India is a cult classic. The representation of women characters is very powerful in his films. Apart from that I do not recall any major film of Mehboob Khan ji. But when the question of Mother India comes, there is no comparison to that film. The role of the landlord as played by Kanhaiya Lal had was brilliant. It is unforgettable role. The times were such that Indian banking system was coming up still the rural people flocked to the local landlords because of less formalities in getting the amount needed for the farming.

8.5 Interview of Sh. Harjit Singh

Harjit Singh is ex producer-director from Doordarshan Kendra Jalandhar

Q.1. Do you think that cinema helps in educating the masses?

Cinema sensitizes the people to some extent but we cannot say that it completely transforms the people. Impact of cinema is certainly seen on masses. But cinema should not be very preachy to make an impact.

Q.2. Who, in your viewpoint, was the most influential film-maker in the decade of 1950's?

In my opinion, Bimal Roy is the most influential film-maker in that decade as his cinematic language is stronger than others. His use of background music is very effective and the area of cinematography is also very strong. Technically, he is far superior than his contemporaries.

Q.3. Are the film-makers who are part of our study, to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

These film-makers were producing meaningful cinema. They tried to give social message through entertainment. We often give credit to one person for making influential cinema but the whole team is involved. One can't differentiate basically between offbeat cinema or commercial cinema. In the films of these film-makers realism was present along with entertainment.

Q.4. How women were represented in the cinema of the film-makers who are part of our study?

Women protagonists were very powerful in the films of these film-makers especially in Bimal Roy's and Raj Kapoor's cinema. Bimal Roy's *Bandini* is a fine example of strong woman character.

Q.5. How you look at the Cinema of Guru Dutt?

Guru Dutt's cinema was very personal. He was ahead of his times. The concept of *Kaagaz Ke Phool* was ahead of his times. The cinematic language of Guru Dutt's cinema was very high. His *Pyaasa* can be taken as sheer poetry and a strong comment on society.

Q.6. What is the place of Mehboob Khan in Indian Cinema?

Mehboob Khan is pioneer in making socially relevant cinema. *Mother India* is a cult classic and the character of *Radha* is iconic. His cinema is still relevant in contemporary times, issues like debtness of farmer and rural poverty.

Q.7. How do you perceive Raj Kapoor as a film-maker?

The canvass of cinema of Raj Kapoor is always very large. He had a knack of telling stories in his unique way. Raj Kapoor stamp is visible very much in his films. Female characters of his movies were always very strong as such in *Prem Rog* and also in *Awara*. There is no doubt that he had his share of controversies in depiction of women in certain movies like *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* but an aesthetic sense was always present in his films. The way he captured the female characters in his films as unique. Even routine scenes of Hindi cinema become Raj Kapoor scenes in his films made under his banner. Nothing new is found in his cinema but how Raj Kapoor handled the scenes gave a new ness to the routine scenes.

8.6 Interview of Mr. Haridutt

Associated with film industry since 1962 as assistant director (assisted the producer-director, Mr. Chetan Anand) and maker of Punjabi film *Udeekan*

Q. 1. Do you think that cinema helps in educating the masses?

Yes, certainly cinema helps in educating the masses. The impact of cinema is always there but now priorities have been misplaced. If I give my example then I was clearly influenced by the film *Jagriti* (1954). That film changed my life. I got transformed from a mischievous kid into a disciplined kid. The character Ajay played by Master Rattan influenced me in a positive way.

Q.2. Who, in your viewpoint, was the most influential film-maker in the decade of 1950's?

I joined film-making in 1962. What I observed was that even minute details were discussed during that time. Any one name cannot be taken while discussing the influential film-makers of that era. These all film-makers, Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Sahib Bimal Roy ji were all very impactful. Guru Dutt made his place when he made movies like *Pyaasa*. As Bimal Roy started his career as a cameraman, technical aspect of cinematography was very important to him. These things counted very much in that era. Mehboob Khan was an unlettered man still made his place in Indian film industry. All of them influenced in one way or other.

Q.3. What is the place of Mehboob Khan in Indian Cinema?

He was a very hard task master. Not only Mehboob Sahib, all his contemporaries were very tough task masters. These film-makers are like open books. Take the example of V.Shantaram, the pioneer of socially relevant cinema in India. His films *Padosi* and *Do Aankhen Barah Hath* are the films worth mentioning in this genre. If we talk about Mehboob Khan, nothing was finalized in one sitting, many sittings took place with the people belonging to different departments and then only the output was there.

Q.4. To what extent, these film-makers have been influenced by neo-realism?

We can say that a realistic touch was present but these film-makers were not following all the parameters of realism cinema of Europe. If we take the example of *Mother India*, then the role of landlord was played very realistically by Kanhaiya Lal. Raj Kapoor has represented model of unemployed urban youth realistically. The shoe is sworn out etc., the trousers are ill fitting and all such scenes. He was effective in representing the common man in cinema. The expression on the face of Guru Dutt was very real when he finds that the fifty paisa that he got as his labour was fake. Making cinema is a process and these film-makers thought much about that process.

Q.5. Are the film-makers who are part of our study, to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

See, the best answer lies in the point that no one wants to make a movie which the masses do not want to see. If we talk about the parallel cinema movement that was more of a personal cinema. Some of the film-makers were trying to prove that they were genius in the process of film-making. They were making the films for the festival circuit with the Government money. I am not impressed by the makers of parallel cinema On the other hand the likes of Raj Kapoor or Bimal Roy were totally connected with the masses and were commercially viable also. This is greatness. Take the example of the song '*Yaad kar tune kaha tha, Pyaar se sansar hai, Hum jo hare dil ki baazi, ye Teri hi haar hai*' from '*Jis Desh mein Ganga behti hai*' Now , this is screenplay where the female protagonist is trying to motivate the hero who has lost all the hope of reforming the bandits.

Q.6. How women were represented in the cinema of the film-makers who are part of our study?

Representation of women characters have been very strong in the films of these film-makers. Take the example of *Mother India* and *Aurat*, both are very strong characters. Mehboob Khan has placed the women characters on a high pedestal. Raj Kapoor's *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* is a fine example of the central character of a woman. Bimal Roy's *Sujata* and *Bandini* are fine examples of strong women characters.

8.7 Interview of Mr. Amit Tyagi,

Ex Director Film and Television Institute of India, Pune.

Q.1. Do you think that cinema helps in educating the masses?

Cinema certainly transfers message. Everything from costumes to story to direction becomes important in this process. And it is a worldwide phenomenon.

Q.2. Who, in your viewpoint, was the most influential film-maker in the decade of 1950's?

It is very difficult to pinpoint any one film-maker in this context. Different film-makers have got different images. The cinematic language of the film-makers is different. They cater to different kinds of audience. These four film-makers had their own field to work upon so no clear cut answer to this question.

Q.3. How do you perceive Raj Kapoor as a film-maker?

Raj Kapoor was a very fashionable poor man who was able to convey things through the story only. And his topics have always been very relevant. *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* is an important example of this where he has talked about pollution as well as exploitation of women. His style is distinctly Indian and never cared about European influence on his cinema.

Q.4. What is the place of Bimal Roy in Indian cinema?

His *Sujata* and *Bandini* are brilliant message-oriented films. *Do Bigha Zamin* is a classic example of realistic cinema. Bimal Roy's leftist understanding was very subtle. His team was best amongst the contemporaries.

Q.5. What is place of Guru Dutt in Indian cinema?

His control on the medium of cinema is all powerful. I do not find *Kaagaz ke Phool* and *Pyasa* depressing. These are examples of best cinema.

Q.6. Are the film-makers in question entertainers firstly or the film-makers with a conscience?

A film basically is a medium of entertainment as well as a medium to give some message. These film-makers basically entertainers having a social conscience.

Q.7. Are the film-makers who are part of our study, to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

Realism is a very dangerous term. The term realism has got no real definition. The impact of Italian neo-realism was not much seen and in fact Italian neo-realism itself ended quite early.

8.8 Interview of Mr. Deepak Dua (Film Critic)

Mr. Deepak Dua is a film critic associated with this field since 1993. He has been reviewing the films independently. Lately he has been associated with the website Cineyatra.com. He is a member of the Critics Guild.

Questions for the interview

Q.1. Do you agree that the Cinema affects the masses?

Certainly yes, Cinema affects the masses but to what extent is difficult to tell. Cinema is mirror of society. It gets its raw material from the society and gives a product back to the society. Both complement each other. Cinema might or might not have a permanent effect on the society but momentarily it helps in changing the thought process of a person. Meaningful Cinema does this work. All bad things in the society is not because of Cinema neither all good things are because of Cinema.

Q.2. Who in your opinion is the pioneer of socially relevant Cinema in India?

V.Shantaram, to be sure. He, in my opinion started the trend of making socially relevant Cinema in India. This trend was followed by the likes of Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy etc. His *Padosi* and *Duniya Na Maane* are revolutionary films in a real

sense. At that time making such Cinema needed some guts. What Shantaram did in 40's, some of the film-makers did in the decade of 50's and 60's.

Q.3. How do you take Raj Kapoor as a film-maker?

In my opinion, he is a complete film-maker. He is the one who mixed the masala of entertainment as well as social message in his Cinema. He is a complete film-maker. People waited for his films. His banner was the most appreciated one at that time. He remained a bit controversial in his life time still one cannot undermine his power as a film-maker. He always conveyed the message in his Cinema remaining within the formula of making Hindi movies and his aesthetic sense was very good. Since Aag, he has been in limelight.

Q.4. How you take Guru Dutt as a film-maker?

His Cinema is more of a personal one. No doubt, films like *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* had social issues in it but it was Guru Dutt's personal anguish which reflected more in his films. His life was in turmoil and this reflected in his Cinema. The depression which he was encountering in his life got reflected in his Cinema. Personal life always affects one's creativity.

Q.5 Are the film-makers in question to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

Certainly, they were not offbeat film-makers. They were regular film-makers who wanted to convey message to society in their own way. They were basically storytellers. The tag of offbeat film-makers is for the film-makers belonging to parallel Cinema movement only. The film-makers of parallel Cinema movement made films with the Government money. The entire Cinema made during that period was not good or meaningful. Some films like *Bhumika* and *Manthan* were quite good. Some of the films were just made for the festival circuit. A film is meant to be seen by the audience and here lies the importance of Cinema. Cinema of likes of Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy reached the audience.

Q.6. How Italian neo-realism affected these film-makers?

Italian neo-realism certainly affected the film-makers. Bimal Roy was directly inspired by the first International film festival of India held in 1952 and made Do

Bigha Zamin. Similarly, Raj Kapoor's Jaagte Raho had the features of neo-realism in it.

Q.7. How women have been represented in the Cinema of these film-makers?

Women formed central theme in the Cinema of many film-makers. Raj Kapoor always had women characters in mind while making his Cinema. His women characters were always strong. He got in controversy sometime due to depiction of women in the way as he did in *Bobby* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* but nevertheless his Cinema always had strong women characters.

8.9 Interview of Mr. Bobby Singh (Music Consultant and Columnist)

Mr. Bobby Singh is media consultant mainly associated with music industry having a keen interest in films. He has been associated as a freelance consultant with Punjabi music industry and has been writing columns since 25 years. He also runs a blog BobbytalksCinema.com.

Questions for the interview

Q.1. How Cinema affects the masses?

Cinema certainly affects the masses. When it takes its raw material from the society, it is bound to affect the society. It is a two way process. Cinema, just like literature, is a mirror of the society.

Q.2. Who, in your viewpoint, out of these film-makers was most influential in making socially relevant Cinema?

Out of these film-makers, Raj Kapoor was a pure entertainer whose sole purpose was to entertain the masses and earn money. Even Mehboob Khan had commercial box-office success in his mind while making his Cinema. Bimal Roy, yes, can be taken as a film-maker who was making socially relevant Cinema in a true sense. *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Sujata* or *Humrahi*, his first film in Hindi, all are examples of socially relevant Cinema. He never shied away from social issues. Guru Dutt's Cinema did not reflect social issues. It was a Cinema mainly of socially questioning. Personal anguish reflected in his Cinema. The Cinema of Guru Dutt was more dramatic. Melodrama

was there. Only Bimal Roy was putting social message in a real sense through his Cinema.

Q.3. How Italian neo-realism affected the Cinema of these film-makers?

Again, I shall take the name of Bimal Roy only. The impact of Italian neo-realism is quite visible in his Cinema. In case of Raj Kapoor, *Jaagte Raho* and *Ab Dilli Door Nahin* fall in this category.

Q.4. Are these film-makers to be taken as offbeat film-makers or commercial film-makers?

They were certainly not off-beat film-makers. This term can be assigned to the film-makers belonging to parallel Cinema movement. When music was an integral part of Cinema of Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt etc., they certainly do not fall in offbeat category. Music was an important part of their Cinema and a tool of story-telling. They are to be taken as regular filmmakers who wanted to make profit.

Q.5. What is position of Mehboob Khan as a film-maker in the industry?

Mehboob Khan is famous for the iconic film, *Mother India*, we all know. This, one film of Mehboob Khan has placed him on international scenario. Other than this movie, Mehboob also made totally fantasy Cinema like *Alibaba* also.

Q.6. How Nehruvian Socialism inspired the Cinema of these film-makers?

Nehru and Nehruvian thought was very much present in the Cinema of these film-makers. These film-makers were fans of Pandit Nehru, for sure. Mehboob Khan was a man who was inspired to a large extent by him. Socialism thought of Nehru is reflected in his Cinema. Nehru was the person at that time with whom the hopes of the nation lay. He was selling dreams to the Indians and had appealed to the film-makers to make meaningful Cinema. He had regular interactions with these film-makers. Even Nehru was to appear in the film *Ab Dilli Door Nahin* but somehow it did not materialize.

Q.7. How the representation of women had taken place in the Cinema of these film-makers?

Women were strong characters in the Cinema of Mehboob Khan and Bimal Roy. They were social figures in the Cinema of these film-makers but in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt, women were just presented as heroines. They were not central characters.

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CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION OF PAPERS FOR PH.D.

This is to certify that Mr. Rakesh Bawa pursuing Ph.D. (**Full Time/ Part Time**) programme in Department of History with Registration Number 41400744 under the Guidance of Dr. Manu Sharma has the following Publications / Letter of Acceptance in the Referred Journals / Conferences mentioned thereby fulfilling the minimum programme requirements as per the UGC.

SNO.	TITLE OF PAPER WITH AUTHOR NAMES	NAME OF JOURNAL / CONFERENCE	PUBLISHED DATE	ISSN NO/ VOL NO, ISSUE NO	RDP REMARKS
1.	Representation of social issues in Indian Cinema: A special reference to the cause of untouchability Rakesh Bawa	International Journal of Research. UGC approved. (44396) Indexed in Thomas Reuters	April 2018	ISSN No- 2348-6848. Vol 5, Issue 12 April 2018	
2.	Portrayal of Women in the Cinema of Raj Kapoor: A case study of Satyam Shivam Sundaram, Prem Rog and Ram Teri Ganga Maili. By Rakesh Bawa	International Journal of Research. UGC approved. (44396) Indexed in Thomas Reuters	April 2018	ISSN No- 2348-6848. Vol 5, Issue 12 April 2018	

3.	Portrayal of women in Bimal Roy's Cinema: A case study of Do Bigha Zamin, Sujata and Bandini Dr. Manu Sharma and Rakesh Bawa	Research Review (International journal of multidisciplinary). UGC approved (44945)	April 2019	ISSN No-2455-3085. Vol. 4 Issue 4	
4.	Nation building process and Hindi Cinema: A case study of Naya Daur (1957)	Our Heritage (Journal) Listed in UGC-CARE List	4 August 2019	ISSN 0474-9030	

Signature of Candidate with Date, Registration No, Email ID

Signature of Guide with Date & UID Signature of Co-Guide with Date & UID