CASTE SYSTEM AND REFORMIST ROLE OF HINDI CINEMA (1913-2013): HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

A Thesis
SUBMITTED TO THE
TILAK MAHARASHTRA VIDYAPEETH PUNE
For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In Subject HISTORY

Under the Board of Moral and Social Sciences Studies

By

RASHMI CONDRA
(Registration No. 02113007731)

Under the Guidance of

Prof. Dr. S.M. alias Raja Dixit
Department of History
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune

May - 2019

Annexure IV

CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR

It is certified that work entitled **Caste System and Reformist Role of Hindi Cinema (1913-2013): Historical Analysis** is an original research work done by **Ms. Rashmi Condra.** Under my supervision for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in **History.** to be awarded by Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. To best of my knowledge this thesis .

- embodies the work of candidate himeself/herself.
- has duly been completed
- fulfils the requirement of the ordinance related to Ph.D. degree of the TMV.
- up to the standard in respect of both content and language for being referred to the examiner.

Signature of the Supervisor

(Prof. S. M. alias Raja Dixit)

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I Ms. Rashmi A Condra has myself written and completed this Ph. D. thesis. I have as far acknowledged sources and given applicable notes and references.

I hereby declare that present work is an original research and duly written and completed by me. The information given above is all correct.

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work.

In the process I have followed rules a regulations sanctioned by Ph. D. section, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth.

Rashmi Condra
Research Scholar
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth
P.N.R. 02113007731

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present work of research is a humble effort to understand caste system in India through cinematic perspective and reformist role played by this most popular and powerful medium.

It is my great pleasure to submit this thesis to Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth after years of rigorous research. I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the persons and institutions, those I had the privilege to get associated with during the course of my research work. Present research work owes much to their generous help and munificence. I thank and am indebted to Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur Vidyapeeth for their support.

First and foremost is my Research Supervisor, Professor Dr. S. M. alias Raja Dixit, former faculty Savitribai Phule Pune University, whose expertise evolve new research skills in me, and diligence and continuous support and guidance, made this thesis possible. The minutest corrections, deeper understanding of the subject, co-ordination and human touch are the virtues I learnt and acclimatize from Sir. This not only makes me a good research scholar but also a good human being. My supervisor bestows upon me 'values' to be carried forward and those are beneficial for academic and social well being of the society.

I would like to extend my deepest, heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Dr. Purabi Ghosh Roy, who first introduced me to the world of cinema and history studies. Dr. Ghosh Roy has been a mentor and illuminant guide behind my selection of this study and her able advice contributed a lot to my understanding of how to watch films, academics of films and sources for research on Cinema.

I am indebted to respected Dean Sir Dr. B. D. Kulkarni for all his extended help and timely support. I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Nalini Waghmare, Head, Department of History, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth for her genuine and sincere kindness and all extended help and support. I thank all the staff of Ph.D. Section for their kind cooperation and guidance.

I thank Dr. Shradhha Kumbojkar and Dr. Sandhya Pandit for their help and guidance.

I thank Dr. S. I . Koreti, Associate Professor , R.T.M. Nagpur University for his continuous support, valuable input, patience and all local help.

I thank my student Ms. Dimple Kariya, for helping with typing and editing at the time of my failing health. I thank Mrs. Harsha Suramwar and Mr. Jaykumar Suramwar for their local guardianship and medical care.

During the course of my research, I visited and undertook courses at National Film Archives of India, Film and Television Institute of India and IIT – Madras and thank the faculty and non- teaching staff for all their co-operation and support.

I thank my daughter Siddhi, for being on 'co-operation mode' during all this time and my Parents Shri. Arvind Condra and Smt. Padma Condra for taking care of my daughter and providing moral, financial and parental support. I thank my brother and sister – in- law Chaitanya Condra and Prabhjyot Walia Condra and nephew Agastya Condra for their strong support.

I thank Dr Sangeeta Meshram , Head, Department of History, R.T.M. Nagpur University for her continuous support.

I reserve my deepest gratitude for Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth for providing Ph. D. research place and giving all possible help for making this research achievable.

- Ms. Rashmi Condra

CONTENT

Chapter		Page No.
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1-9
CHAPTER 2	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	10-15
CHAPTER 3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	16-31
CHAPTER 4	ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	32-344
4.1	CASTE SYSTEM AND ART FORMS IN INDIA	
4.2	REFORMIST ROLE OF HINDI CINEMA: AN ANALYSIS INTO POLITICAL, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS DISPOSITION	
4. 3	CASTE SYSTEM AND HINDI FILMS IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD IN INDIA (1913-1947)	
4. 4	CASTE SYSTEM AND HINDI FILMS IN POST INDEPENDENT INDIA (1947-2013)	
4.5	HINDI FILMS BASED ON CASTE SYSTEM AND RETORTS	
CHAPTER 5	CONCLUSION	345-358
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	359-369
	ANNEXURES	370-378

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

History functions as a promoter and a profounder for understanding of both past and present through the interrelation between them.

- E. H. Carr. *What is History*.[1]

Introduction

This thesis entitled, 'Caste System and Reformist Role of Hindi Cinema (1913-2013) : Historical Analysis' traces the historical evolution of Indian cinema through ten decades. The chosen films are analyzed in detail within a wider historical, social, political, and ideological context. The researcher along with complete analysis of films has considered analytical work of selected sequences in the films through the conceptual framework common to history and cinema studies. This primarily includes consideration of genre, narratives, representation, audience response and mis-en-scène.

The present research is innovatively new in domain of researches in History. Considering the topic of research and its scope conventional methodology will not be adequate and therefore an inter-disciplinary approach is been adapted. Some methods pertaining to cinema studies, film historiography, sociology and caste studies have been incorporated in-order to understand and elucidate the intricacies of topic under consideration.

Rationale and significance of the study :

From the advent of moving images more than hundred years ago to the multiple genres and mega ventures of today, Indian Cinema has really come long way. It not only reaches billions of Indian people but is also a gateway for innumerable international audiences popularly termed as 'seventh market paradiso'. Cinema is considered, the reflection or mirror of the contemporary society and so can be an extremely important and vital source to understand society and its

nomenclatures in given period of time. Cinema reveals 'thought process' of the society particularly its progressive or regressive attitudes, its mind-set, aspirations and romanticism. Therefore, it is important to comprehend, that Cinema is not only about entrainment but a significant device to scrutinize the affirmations of the society and its value system. Cinematic characters are usually a representation of caste, class, gender or political, social and economic issue/s personified. A film script is usually conflict based. The conflict is mostly connected with some social issue and intensely revolves intensely around it.

There have been several views on film and film making. Justin Smith asserts that film never reflects social reality, it always refracts and mediates it and may to some extent be considered the repository of currents of feeling in any age. If film can reveal the dreams and aspirations of the denizens of the past, in the post-modern era it is also the museum of nostalgia. More than any other popular medium, film is expression of both desire and loss. Thus, film can be considered to lay bare the cultural unconscious.[2]

J. A. S Grenville observes that the 'reality' which films present is rearranged to suit the filmmaker's artistic, social or political intentions and that filmmaker can banish temporal and spatial limitations through a variety of different techniques.[3] Sorlin suggests that while newsreel, documentaries after filmed and selected views of the past, feature films possess much more inherent value as they are which are produced by an industry and consumed by audiences.[4]

In India, initially film was conceived as a technical gimmick, an experimental medium and a source of cheap entertainment best suited to travelling fairgrounds. Dadasaheb Phalke's first film was a pioneering effort that marked the beginning of Indian film making industry. These early films were not conceived as cinematic art, but rather as cheap commercial entertainment. In early days of film making in India the dominant roles were those of the producer, distributors and camera operators. Actors were usually under paid and the concept of stardom or auteur director did not exist. This emerged only after the growth of studio system in the industry where stars were hired and their remuneration upsurge with film's box office collection. The film began to succeed on the names of the actors and this began the age of star system in Indian cinema. There developed distinct styles of film making as the industry began to make profits and there was the emergence of fixed exhibition space for cinema, the movie theatre.

Making of films experiments various themes from mythology to modern life. However, a pragmatic representation of social issues in pre and post-independence period cinema remained widely connected to both political and social milieu. From the pre-independence period to present times, cinema echoed different political and social ideas. These ideas are variedly of a person, a group, party or an institution as a whole. Evidently, these fundamental tools of social wellbeing, mainly including national integration, social justice, humanism and 'good win over evil' became core subjects of Indian cinema. Subsequently, in both, pre and post-independence period, ideology of many national leaders was propagated through Indian films, that influenced public opinion.

During the initial stages of struggle under the guidon of Indian National Congress Party social and economic issues was given more importance. Portuguese missionaries brought mechanical printing into India in around sixteenth century. Reception of this new phase of reformation can be seen as transitional period towards modernism. The conservative section of the society resisted change. However, the Company significantly altered Indian economic, social and administrative structure. They banned the practice of going *Sati*, the prevalent among certain communities where a wife immolate herself on the pyre of her dead husband. However, they did not immediately legislate a ban on Untouchability but rendered it somewhat inoperative by educating a large body of converts to Christianity and employing them in Health and Railways department that involved greater mass contact than any other branches of public services. The English Indian Company officers instituted western education system that was secular and open for all. The language was mainly English and it opened western world to so called orientals.[i]

This new form of information and knowledge brought in modern forms of art forms and mass media such as electronic journalism and cinema. Films among all were considered more powerful due to its audio-visual effects and basic feature of entertainment. This medium was later developed to arouse social consciousness. This medium did not have literacy constraint and could disseminate among masses. Initially, the social issues dealt in films were removal of gender discrimination, education for women, anti- alcoholism, denouncing untouchability and so on. Kolhapur, Pune and Mumbai emerged as prime centers of cinema industry in western Maharashtra.[ii] In early twentieth century, several leaders of the Congress party were

active in advocating social reform, where foremost being B G Tilak[7].

The Drama theatres and Cinema undertook task of broadcasting these messages into masses. The major attainment of Swadeshi movement initiated by Indian leadership was emergence and popularity of regional films which never seem to have happened in any other English colony. The films mainly dealt with social issues and faced no censor problem, as English had adopted the policy of 'emancipation of the natives' in order to impress upon western is modern and progressive. Infact, films in colonial India can be considered as a tool to bring social change.[8]

One of the major social evils, Indian films initiated their crusade against were untouchability and caste discrimination. The pioneer of Indian talkies, Ardeshir Irani instigated caste discrimination concern, in his re-released film *Khuda Ki Shaan* in the same year that of *Alam Ara* . The film dwelt on the bigoted society and the caste system. The woman from lower caste is shown to have been rescued and cared by *Baba Garibdas*, who hold that 'caste and religion are manmade divisions invented by the unscrupulous'. The actor who portrayed *Garibdas* bore an uncanny resemblance to Mahatma Gandhi. Similarly, film *Sant Tukaram* using the saga of a medieval saint of Maharashtra made powerful impact both in India and abroad. A film made by V. Shantaram, *Dharmatma* based on life of Sant Eknath, contained strong statements against practice of untouchability, which was one of the main planks of the national movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Later, movies like *Achchut Kanya*[9] , *Mahatma Phule , Oonch Neech , Bhakt Chetan* became very popular and were well received.

Social reform based cinemas were applauded by one and all and even earned high profits for their financers. Very less agitation greeted these films, because the message was conveyed through a total frame, not in isolation, and was enacted persuasively not defiantly. The resistance sometimes usurped about representation of caste inequality and women's sexuality. In coming times the barriers were however seen to be vanishing giving this most effective mass media, power to change the social perspective for betterment of all.

However, in the due course of time Indian Cinema experienced a renaissance within. The New Wave in Indian Cinema reintroduced rather recalled rural variance with the help of mythology where characters though contemporary reflected their roots in history. Films like *Ankur, Nishant, Manthan, Kondura* used mythological themes to meet tyranny on its own terms so that the social enemy can be fought with

its own set of moral beliefs. The formula was nostalgia alternating with irritation, but the nostalgia was not strictly décor but more organic and structured. Among all the social issues casteism was at the main core. Films like *Sadgati*[10], *Aakrosh, Bhavani Bhavai, Ghat Shradha, Sati, Paar* featured the issue in most sensitive and neo-realistic manner.

Today, mainstream Cinema happens to have undertones of caste related issues. Nevertheless, contemporary movies seem to be between thin lines of realism and commercialization, like *Bandit Queen*[11], *Aarakshan* and *Lajja*. Relatively, *Eklavya : The Royal Gaurd* may be considered as one of the first Hindi movies that has protagonist coming from backward caste. Oscar nominated *Lagaan*, had an untouchable character named *Kachra* meaning waste who lives outside the village. The film also has a character *Arjan* who is a blacksmith and is subject to abuse by the British officer because of his low status. Another mainstream film which touched on caste system closely is *Swadesh*. Mohan Bhargav, the lead character's search takes him to a village where the caste divide shocks him. At one point in the film a farmer throw light on plight and modern face of casteism in the country.

Thus, the most important cultural effect generated is that now it is possible to see the distinction between film as a popular entertainment film and the film made as a serious artistic personal expression in the language of cinema on some aspects of the human condition. Hindi cinema invariably represents Indianness, speaks of 'being human', speaks beyond caste considerations and transcendence. There are discussions and debates on rake themes which are otherwise taboo. The Cinema proposes to become the instrument of change and not resistance. It takes one through vicariously experiencing the world around.

Aims and Objectives of the study :

(i) Caste system as shown in Hindi Cinema has been studied in fraction and is a subject of colossal importance. The study has great interdisciplinary relevance as it covers sociological aspects, an insight into contemporary history and caste system in India vis-à-vis media studies. There are theories related to casteism and a concrete visualization of the same can be seen in Hindi Films. The research looks into this aspect.

(ii) Consequently, every cinema has specific type of representation of caste given social order. Many times cinemas are used as a medium that forms standard social opinion, questions age old traditions and speaks for repressed, silent and deprived community. No elaborate study had been undertaken on this aspect. This research tries to discuss above stated point of view.

(iii) The films based on caste issue are generally yearning for social justice. They transgress against deeply entrenched discourses, habits and practices that have become commonsensical, taken for granted as 'natural' within the belief systems of the dominant culture. These belief systems are supported through the images and languages that are lodged within the public consciousness and accepted therein as fundamentally true and rarely questioned or challenged. The words and images live in a mutually supportive relationship within an overarching storyline that is legitimated as part of what we refer to as a master narrative. Cinema thus at times creates a public opinion and challenge the social order which otherwise is a difficult task. Present research observes and identifies this credence in Hindi cinema.

Research Design :

The research aims to entice readers and viewer of films into taking another look at dimensions of the social world, historically that has come to be taken for granted and leads them into a conversation about the alternative ways of interpreting and understanding social events and issues, for example, role of imagination in social resistance.

This research looks in to, if films were able to transport, at least momentarily, in to an 'aesthetic remove', and if the viewer could be coaxed into viewing his/her own mundane realities from an unfamiliar and perhaps disturbing angle. The research tends to possess the potential for achieving the ultimate research goal, that is capacity for inviting members of the audience into experiencing aspects of the world that may have been otherwise outside their range of sight and to thereby cause them to question usual, commonplace, orthodox perspectives on social phenomenon.

The study investigates related contentious issues and their representation in Hindi Cinemas while exploring its related facets.

The following rudiments are taken into consideration -

(a) Woman and Caste - A symbolic representation of values and related issues. Humiliations, victimization and derivation are characterized with woman belonging to that particular caste.

(b) Study of caste system represented in mainstream and parallel Hindi Cinema.

(c) A theoretical approach to cinema studies with reference to caste system in India. This particularly includes,

(i) Caste identity,

(ii) Crisis and conflict management,

(iii) Political system, Censorship, caste system and Hindi films,

(iv) Utilitarian factor and public reaction,

The research tries to draw an inference from extensive critical analysis, considering almost all dimensions to understand, what evolves a 'virtual backward caste individual' of India. The research investigates into whether a truthful and authentic depiction is made on screen or is it a distorted and made-up justifiable

patriarchal version. Based on this, a deduction is made on the present status of depressed caste and issues relating to equality, integrity and justice in contemporary times. Moreover, emphasis is laid on, if justice is done or denied to 'reel and real depressed caste citizen' and its effects on psyche of filmgoer in India. Also, an analysis has been made of stories inspired from real life incidences.

Research Questions :

The research examines whether research on Hindi film history is substantial enough to sustain any meaning historical study in the present? Is interest in the subject too 'presentis' to the detriment of historical studies? Is academic rigour getting diluted by 'media attitude' towards research and writing? Are the critical issues rose in the past still crucial and are they sidelined by the latest surge of critical interest that focuses on something else altogether?

An enquiry has been made into if, Cinema can be considered as an essential part of popular culture and can it be a significant tool to spread and inculcate the Constitutional ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity in Indian masses. Further, if there could be an empowerment of deprived class and complete acceptance of deprived community, by exhibiting them in leading roles in Hindi Cinema. Can more positive and strong depictions and proliferate heroism bring about a grand change in general outlook. And can an attitudinal change be brought by showing certain character like Doctors, Public officers, teachers coming from deprived community.

Hypothesis :

i) Cinema is a democratic and secular medium, if used properly for bringing a substantial social change and to form a public opinion.

ii) Social events influence Cinema.

iii) Hindi Cinema promotes and establishes secular ideas in society.

iv) Caste system is effectively and justifiably represented in Hindi Cinema.

These hypotheses are critically evaluated and discussed.

Thus this research aims to historically analyze caste system in India from cinematic perspective.

Notes and References :

[1] E.H. Carr, *What is History*, New York : Vintage Books, 1961, p. 86.

[2] Justin Smith, 'Film history', *Making History: The Changing face of the profession in Britain* (online), https://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/film_history.html. Accessed: 12 June 2018.

[3] J. A. S. Grenville, *Film as History*, Birmingham : University of Birmingham Press, 1971, p. 17.

[4] Peirre Sorlin, *The Film in History: Restaging the Past*, Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1980, p. 15.

[5] Rashmi Condra,' Sensitizing Gender Parity in Urban India : A Cinematic Revolution', International Journal of Advancement in Research and Technology', vol. 3, Issue 6, June – 2014, p. 92 ; http://www.ijoart.org/docs/Sensitizing-Gender-Parity-in-Urban-India-A-Cinematic-Revolution.pdf. Accessed : 8 April 2016.

[6] Ibid.

[7] B. G. Tilak initiated public platform for bringing social and political awareness and appealed to the masses to celebrate Sarvajanil or Public Ganesh Utsav and Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti.

[8] Rashmi Condra, op. cit., p. 93.

[9] Himanshu Rai's film *Achut Kanya* shot in 1937, had an outspoken attack on the caste system. This film was screened at Goebblel's *Ministry for Propoganda* in Berlin and was reported to have been well received by the Nazi leaders.

[10] Oscar winner Director Satyajit Ray's *Sadgati* look into the caste system in India. After watching film, for most of the viewers, there could be no more eloquent an indictment against the caste system.

[11] Arundhati Roy vilified the makers of *Bandit Queen*, as the most realistic and politically challenging film ever made.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The academic literature on Indian cinema is very limited. The available material lack depth and rigour and the critical discourse usually tend to focus on populist facet of Indian cinema that is particularly palatable in the west. In reference to global academic erudition a great deal of Indian cinema has been ignored, unobserved and under discussed. Considerable aspect of Indian film discourse has been the study of the relationship between ideologies and in wider context the society. Indian cinema history is usually studied as a sociological phenomenon. There have been more studies on the post independent cinema and globalization.

There has been general academic writing on Indian cinema that discusses cinema as a popular culture or more peculiarly historical cinemas as a source of history. Critical writings on Indian cinema mainly includes the writings of **Jyotika Virdi**, *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as social history*[1], **Vijay Mishra**'s *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*[2], **Ravi Vasudevan**'s *Making Meaning of Indian Cinema*[3], **M. Madhav Prasad**'s *Ideology of Hindi films: A Historical construction*[4] and **Sumita S Chakravarty**'s *National identity in Indian popular Cinema, 1947-1987*[5]. Elucidating work by **P.K. Nair**, *Yesterday's films for tomorrow*[6] gives an insight into film world and is divided into five segments namely, movie goers, archivists, film historians, film critics and columnists. There is avid discussion on Indian film themes, subjects and a brief comparison with the western style in film maestro **Satyajit Ray**'s *Our Films Their Film*[7]. Similarly, **Chidanand Das Gupta**'s[8] book *Seeing is Believing – Selected writing on cinema*[9] addresses diverse themes such as origin and history of parallel cinema in India, the unique interface between politics and films in India, the portrayal of women in Indian cinema, sex and violence in Indian cinema and noticeably quintessential Indian contribution to movies – *The Song*. **B D Garga**'s *Silent Cinema in India : A Pictorial Journey*[10] gives an explicit overview of the period.

Cinema literature is diverse. Work that explores sociological aspect of Indian cinema is by **Rajinder Kumar Dudrah**[11], whereas **K. Moti Gokulsing** and **Wimal Dissanayake**[12] that offers an informed and engaged overview of key themes, directors

and genres in Indian cinema. Auteur led studies includes writings on *Dadasaheb Phalke*[13] by **Bapu Watve**, *Satyajit Ray a Film*[14] by **Shyam Benegal**, *Satyajit Ray : The Inner Eye*[15] by **Andrew Robinson**, *Shyam Benegal*[16] by **Sangeeta Dutt**, *Mirnal Sen – 60 Years in search of Cinema*[17] by **Dipankar Mukhopodhyaya**, *Yash Chopra*[18] by **Rachel Dwyer** and so on. Similarly biographies and autobiographies of the film personalities such as *I am Not an Island*[19] by **K A Abbas**, *Smita Patil – A brief incandescence*[20] by **Maithili Rao**, **Naseerudin Shah**'s *And Then One Day: A Memoir*[21] , *Kanan Devi: The first Superstar of Indian Cinema*[22] by **Mekhala Sengupta**, *Helen*[23] by **Jerry Pinto**, and so on gives film director's and actor's perspectives of films and Indian film industry.

Books written on individual films are steadily increasing and usually comprise of elaborate analysis of the same. Publisher like **Harper Collin**, **Penguin** have launched series of books particularly on films, namely *Jaane bhi Do Yaro*, *Disco Dancer*, *Sholay*, *Awara*, *Mera Naam Joker* and so on. **National Film Archive of India (NFAI)** has published monographs and concise books on film directors, film studios and film production houses that constitute as a relevant referential source in studies of Indian cinema.[24] British Film Institute published monographs of Indian cinema such as **Lilitha Gopolan**'s *Bombay*, **Philip Kemp**'s *The Apu Trilogy* and so on. They however are topical concepts and study of a particular film or film personality.

There too has been elaborate study on mythological aspect in Indian cinema. **Racheal Dawyer**'s *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*[25] examines the role and depiction of religion in Indian cinema, showing that the relationship between the modern and the traditional in contemporary India is not exotic, but part of everyday life. Rachel Dwyer's lively discussion encompasses the mythological genre which continues India's long tradition of retelling Hindu myths and legends, drawing on sources such as the national epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana; the devotional genre, which flourished at the height of the nationalist movement in the 1930s and 40s; and the films made in Bombay that depict India's Islamic culture, including the historical, the courtesan film and the 'Muslim social' genre. *Filming the Gods* also examines the presence of the religious across other genres and how cinema represents religious communities and their beliefs and practices. It draws on

interviews with film stars, directors and producers as well as popular fiction, fan magazines and the films themselves. As a result, *Filming the Gods* is a both a guide to the study of film in religious culture as well as a historical overview of Indian religious film.[26] Likewise, **Raminder Kaur** and **Ajay Singh**'s edited work *Bollywood: Popular Indian Cinema Through A Transnational Lens*[27] is a critique on mythology in Indian films and deals with depiction of Ram-Sita, Nala- Damayanti and so on silver screen. However, these studies take a holistic view of religion and Indian films and have no direct reference to caste and film perspective.

There is considerable writing on women and Indian cinema. National Film Archives published *Reflections: Images of Women in Hindi Films*[28] by **Usha K R**, which gives a brief overview of portrayal of women on Hindi cinema screen. *Wanted Cultured Ladies Only*[29] by **Neepa Mujumdar** is a comprehensive study on female star cast in early cinema, their rise to stardom and challenges they faced to survive in the industry. **Nasreen Munni Kabir** in her work *Women in Indian Films*[30], reflects changing face of women in Indian cinema from 1950 onwards. **Bhawana Somaaya, Jigna Kothari and Supriya Madangarli** in their book *Mother Maiden Mistress*[31], reviews the woman in Hindi cinema in mythical, stereotyped, rebel, avant-garde and contemporary framework. **Jasbir Jain** and **Sudha Rai** edited *Films and Feminism: Essays in Indian Cinema*[32] seek to explore meaningful and gendered space in cinema, highlighting both politics of projection of Women in the Indian cinematic traditions. Thus, there has been study on diverse projection of women character on Indian screen. However, there is no researched source material available on hundred years of cinema on caste system in India and Hindi films in particular.

The literature particularly discussing film in social, cultural and political context include **Erik Barnouw** and **S. Krishnaswamy**'s[33] *Indian Films*, discusses the history of motion pictures in India and examine how they reflect schism in society, artistic traditions and the influence of an ancient culture. **Mihir Bose**'s book *Bollywood: A History*[34] is considered the first comprehensive and major work on film as a social and cultural phenomenon in post-independence period. **Vamsee Juluri**'s work *Bollywood Nations- India through its Cinema*[35] charts the evolution of Indian cinema from its mythological films to its world class gangster and terrorist melodramas of current times. The book investigates how and why Indian films have become deeply embedded in the nation's popular imagination and posits cinema as

the voice of the nation. Juluri examines how cinema has shaped Indian psyche and how it has determined place of Indians in the world. **Vinay Lal** and **Ashis Nandy** in *Fingerprinting Popular Culture*[36], maintain that popular cinema in contemporary times has become an ideological phalanx and a vehicle of self-expressions in for middle class. The medium has become a new and more powerful language of public discourse. Their work uses popular cinema to re-examine the relationship between society, politics and culture in post-modern times. **Priya Kumar**'s book *Limiting secularism : The ethics of Coexistence in Indian Literature and Film*[37] reveals implication of the Nehruvian doctrine of tolerance - with all its resonances of condescension and inequality - and asks whether more ethical cohabitation can replace the 'arrogant compulsive tolerance' of the state and the majority. Further she discusses emergence of an 'ethics of coexistence' in Indian fiction and films.

There is extensive literature on regional films; however this research work limits its references to Hindi cinema.

Thus, the varied literature on Indian cinema however has not taken an elaborate and comprehensive study of caste system in Hindi films. Though this literature gives a brief idea on society, culture and its ethnicities in relation to films, there seem to be a lack of detailed study on how caste system is projected in Hindi films, its relevance in different time period and their reformist role if any. The present study is an attempt to understand unexplored facets of Hindi cinema through caste perspective and exploration of the films in given social structure and a treatise on film goers in reception of the films.

Notes and References :

[1] Jyotika Virdi, *The Cinematic ImagiNation : Indian popular Films as Social History*, New Jersey : Rutgers University Press, 2003.

[2] Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*, London : Routledge, 2002.

[3] Ravi Vasudevan (ed.), *Making meaning in Indian Cinema*, London : Oxford publication, 2001.

[4] M. Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical construction*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1998.

[5] Sumit S Chakravarty, *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema (1947-1987)*, Texas : University of Texas Press, 1992.

[6] P K Nair, Rajesh Devraj (ed.), *Yesterday's films for Tomorrow*, Mumbai : Film Heritage Foundation,

2017.

[7] Satyajit Ray, *Our Films Their Films*, Hyderabad : Orient Blackswan, 2001.

[8] Chidanand Das Gupta is one of the founder members of Film Society Movement in India and is a distinguished a film critic and Film historian. His other works *Satyajit Ray*, *Sati, The Painted Faces : Studies in Indian Popular Cinema* are significant sources in study of films.

[9] Chidanand Das Gupta, *Seeing is Believing*, New Delhi : Penguin, 2008.

[10] B.D. Garga, *Silent Cinema in India: A Pictorial Journey*, New York : Collin Harper publishers, 2012.This book received National Film Award for 'Best Book on Cinema' in 2012.

[11] Rajendra Kumar Dudrah, *Bollywood : Sociology goes to the movies*, Delhi : Sage, 2006.

[12] K. Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake, *Indian Popular Cinema : A narrative of Cultural Change*, London: Trentham Books, 2004.

[13] Bapu Watve, S. A. Virkar (trans.), *Dadasaheb Phalke: The Father of Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : National Book Trust, India, 2012.

[14] Shyam Benegal, *Satyajit Ray a Film*, Culcutta : Seagull Books, 1988.

[15] Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray : The Inner Eye*, London : I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2004.

[16] Sangeeta Dutt, *Shyam Benegal*, Bangalore : Lotus publications, 2005.

[17] Dipankar Mukhopadhyay, *Mrinal Sen- 60 Years in search of Cinema*, Noida : Harper Collins, 2009.

[18] Rachel Dawyer, *Yash Chopra*, London : British Film Institute, 2002.

[19] Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, *I am not a Island – An experiment in Autobiography*, Mumbai: Vikas publishing house, 1977.

[20] Maithili Rao, *Smita Patil: A Brief Incandescence*, Noida : Harper Collin, 2015.

[21] Naseeruddin Shah, *And Then One day*, London : Hamish Hamilton Press, 2014.

[22] Mekhala Sengupta, *Kana Devi : The first Superstar of Indian Cinema*, Noida : Harper Collins, 2015.

[23] Jerry Pinto, Helen, Mumbai : Penguin, 2006.

[24] Books such as *Bombay Talkies, Bimal Roy, Raja Paranjpe, Hiralal Sen* and so on.

[25] Racheal Dawyer, *Filming the Gods : Religion and Indian Cinema*, London : Routledge, 2006.

[26] https://www.amazon.in/Filming-Gods-Religion-Indian-Cinema/dp/0415314240/ref=sr_1_4?s= books&ie=UTF8&qid=1536153654&sr=1-4&refinements=p_27%3ARachel+Dwyer, Accessed: 12 January 2017.

[27] Raminder Kaur and Ajay J Sinha, *Bollywood : Popular Indian Cinema Through a Transnational Lens*, London : Sage, 2005.

[28] Usha K R, *National Film Archive of India*, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India publication, 2010.

[29] Neepa Mujumdar, *Wanted cultured Ladies only : Female stardom and cinema in India (1930s-1950s)*, Illinois : University of Illinois Press, 2009.

[30] Naseer Munni Kabir, *Women in Indian Films*, New Delhi : Zubaan publication, 2008.

[31] Bhawana Somaaya, Jigna Kothari & Supriya Madangarli, *Mother, Maiden and Mistress : Women in Hindi Cinema (1950-2010)*, Noida : Harper Collins, 2012.

[32] Jasbir Jain and Sudha Rai (eds.), *Films & Feminism : Essay in Indian Cinema*, Jaipur : Rawat publication, 2015.

[33] Erik Barnouw, S Krishnaswami, *Indian Film*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1980.

[34] Mihir Bose, *Bollywood : A History*, Gloucestershire : History Press Limited, 2006.

[35] Vamsee Juluri, *Bollywood Nation- India through its Cinema*, New Delhi : Penguin, 2013.

[36] Vinay Lal and Ashis Nandy, *Finger Printing Culture- The Myths and the Iconic in Indian Cinema*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2007.

[37] Priya Kumar, *Limiting Secularism : The Ethics of Coexistence in Indian Literature & Film*, Mankato : University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Chapter Three
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a historical analysis of caste system prevailing in India through study of Hindi films in the period of hundred years. The present research is new and adapts supplementary approaches in the regular domain of history research writing. Though this research makes use of established historical research methodology, considering the topic and its varied dimensions only application of conventional methodology is not found adequate and suffice. Thus, this research having inter-disciplinary facets, incorporated research methods applied to Cinema studies, particularly film historiography.

Films are eminently equipped to portray many emotions and experiences which actually have no written histories. They have power to illustrate concepts and hence compliment and enrich written texts.[1] Studies have been developed that incorporate the new concern with Film studies as a part of aesthetics, including the new insertion of film in the field of art history. Other works incorporate the new methodological discussions in film history and the recent studies on the representation of history in films.[2]

In the beginning the relationship with cinema was marked by uneasiness if not outright hostility. There is enough reason to believe that historians generally viewed early historical as a trespasser. Only few historians of the period were willing to experiment with their vocation. Marxist historians ventured more into labour history particularly assigning secondary status to culture. Marxist theorization almost seem to have discouraged the serious examinations of cinema, especially as a cultural object. A fruitful examination was never made on, why a certain type of cinema was produced during a particular period or why its popularity posed such a formidable threat to their documents.[3]

Till 1955, professional historians had shown small interest in the utilization of films, either in research or in teaching. W. K. L. Dickson, Pole Matuszewski called attention to its potential historical importance, there had none the less been considerable discussion on the two World Wars within the International Congress of Historical Sciences. The Cambridge historian George Kitson Clark had been among

those who in 1948 founded British Universities Film Council to promote the use of film in higher education. In 1949 under the aegis of Professors like Walther Hubatsch Percy, Ernst Schramm and Walhelm Treue there began production or edited film documents of contemporary German history for research and teaching purposes.[4] History began to catch up with the moving pictures. In 1960s the use of film as a source was put in greater use. The status of film as evidence was becoming accepted. In 1961 the French historian Charles Samaran felt it appropriate to include in his massive manual, *L'Histoire et ses me'thodes* importance sections on film sources from the pen of George Sadoul. Increasingly film was coming to be used in teaching, though often only in an elementary way, as incidental illustration.[5]

In 1968 an important step was taken in study of history cinema, when Thorold Dickenson from Slade Department of Films in London University in conjunction with British Universities Film Council held a conference on 'Film and the Historian'. The Slade Film Department went on to secure support from the Social Science Research Council to compile a register of film material in Britain for the use of history and social science. In 1970s initiating research film and history Historian's Film Committee began to maintain a periodical 'Film and History' in United States. By the end of 1980 the theories linked to modernism formed the hegemonic paradigm-linking academic work to the defense of a particular cinema (avant-garde and modern cinema).[6] Other shift in film theory took place throughout the 80's with a more keen focus on film as a cultural issue. Film studies got connected to cultural studies and theories based on cinema and cultural developed.

Historians of the twenty first century recognized that film and television can project enormously influential visions of the past. Accordingly, they understood the value of incorporating a study of the moving image in their classroom instruction.[7] Films now became fully assimilated into the accepted corpus of historical source materials and an effective mean of instruction.

Justin Smith in his article *Film History* discusses how the development of study of film is based on three kinds of enquiries. Justin Smith refers to work of Douglas Gomery and Robert Allen who delineated these approaches in their pioneering work, Film History: Theory and Practice.[8] Justin analyzes that first enquiry paid attention to the theories elaborating on nature of the medium itself and

its power to communicate was mainly derived from Marxism, Feminism, Structuralism, Post Structuralism and Psychoanalysis. Its essentialist ambition meant that it purchase upon film culture became increasingly tenuous the more rarefied and internecine its postulations grew. The second avenue of enquiry drew upon literary and cultural studies approaches, focusing on ways of reading and classifying film texts. Thus, film might be categories by the work of particular director (auteurs), or in term of genres. However, theories of both genre and auteurs came to be considered limited and problematic when they happened to venture beyond an approved critical canon, such as film criticism's interpretative strategies that lacked contextual grounding. Third kind of enquiry was where film history itself became the branch of investigation. Paul Rotha and Frances Consitt established the fundamental dualism of discipline, histories of cinema and film as a historical source.[9]

Further, evaluating origins of academic film history in 1960s and 70s, Smith takes into consideration four key initiative, namely the first conference held at University College London (April 1968) where papers were published as Film and Historian; Raymond Durgnant's publication *Á mirror for England: British Movies from Austerity to Influence*; John Grenvilles's inaugural lecture on *Film as History: the Nature of Film Evidence* at Birmingham University and Jeffery Richard's publication Visions of Yesterday. Justin argues that the aim of the film history is recover evidence about the past through an examination of film texts assuming that any film text will always have something to reveal about the time, place and circumstances in which it was made. However, it is important to remember that film particularly feature films occupy an uneasy twilight zone as both primary and secondary sources.[10] This is well reflected in this thesis, where actual films and related text provided significant information on caste based Hindi cinema, their cinematic treatment for larger audience within the censorship constraints.

Adapting the methodology for interrelating films and history studies, Justin derives that with emphasis on the importance of contextual enquiry, film history methods have primarily been empiricist, relying upon the availability and interpretation of archival evidence from a range of public and private sources. To this extent film history has been as concerned with the regimes of productions such as film studio, financers, and film personnel and so on and constraints such as government legislation, censorship and so on, as it is with the film text itself.[11]

Thus it is considered that Film theory is a set of scholarly approaches within the academic discipline of cinema studies that questions the essentialism of cinema and provides conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship to reality, the other arts, individual viewers and society at large.[12]

Cinema studies also take into consideration the use of Quantitative method for analysing history of cinema. Paul D Allison suggests the use of regression analysis[13] because he explicitly refers to the use of quantitative methods in understanding history and cinema. Nevertheless, Nick Redferm argues that film studies as a subject or discipline should be abandoned and focus on the study of film as a complex object of inquiry that demands an ecumenical methodological perspective.[14]

Subsequently, a new concept is developed by Hyden White in research methodology on films called as Historiophoty[15]. White opines that modern world has reference to visual representations and undoubtedly there are zones from which plots and films, as eloquent factual testimonies, emerge but documents do not for obvious reasons. The combination of photographs and text presented to society by media became a powerful tool for influencing opinion and thereby both history and historiography. Thus historiophoty is interpreted as the representation of history and our thoughts about it in visual images and filmic discourse. It is assumed that cinema are better suited than written discourse to the actual representation of certain kind of historical phenomena such as landscape, scene, atmosphere, complex events such as wars, battles, crowds and emotions. Roland Barthes maintains that cinema could predict through sequences of shots and the use of montage or close-ups as effectively as phrases, sentences or sequences of sentences in spoken or written form. Moreover, sound film has the means by which it complement visual imagery with a distinctive verbal content that need not sacrifice analysis to the exigencies of dramatic effects.[16] This thesis has made an elaborate use of screen grabs to illustrate caste discrepancies and its cinematic representations. Similarly, pictures of people's reactions in newspapers, photographs, magazines to some caste based films are also enlisted, that speak louder than the written reporting.

As Jeffred Richards clarifies, 'What the historian seeks in feature films is evidence of values and attitudes from the time the film was made, the explication in story form of the contemporary ideas about the social and sexual roles of men and

women the concepts of work and leisure, class and race, peace and war'[17]. This research work tends to analyze feature film as a part of cultural history that helps to understand the period in which it was made, reviewed and received.

Pierre Sorlin asserts that feature film could be considered a more important source of history than documentaries. This is because when the camera records history unintentionally we get to see geographical or social realities despite careful editing.[18] For example, a song in *Aao Pyaar Karein* (1964) gives a distinct view of Mumbai city in 1964 from trams, five star hotels, old Air India building and so on. Outdoor shooting is important here and despite careful editing a film might display significant historical details pertinent to various aspects of social, urban or rural history.

In the context of Indian film and its industry, Suraj Yengde opines that study of films has been undertaken through various perspectives. Some critiques focused on the context of its production, some debated interrelations between consumption and modernity, feminist critiques argued on critical reflection of female subjectivity in Indian cinema, some researchers look into Indian film industry's spatial and linguistic extension, some observed cinema as the neo-liberal project of the western gaze or as the intersection of media enterprise with other forms of cultural expression, and recently Indian film industry is studied as an medium of international outreach programme that influence cross-border post colonial thinking and a prospective commodity for seventh market.[19]

This research integrates various approaches and theories for analyzing films based on caste system in India and their reformist role. This study of films does not foreground a single methodological approach. The research exerts different theoretical approaches applicable to different films under study in different time frames. This research based its study mainly on feature films which has now gained importance in the study of social history.

Some films are analyzed by the application of auteur theory that positions the director at the heart of the film and suggest that the work itself is the result of the director's own artistic and creative vision. Some of the directors and their film under consideration are Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal, Gautaum Ghosh, Shekhar Kapoor, Prakash Jha and so on. Their selection of 'caste system' as subject for their film is analyzed.

Christopher P Jacobs in his article on *Film theory and Approaches to Criticism*, gives details on different approaches for interpreting films. This research adapts two approaches suggested by him, namely realist and contextual. The realist approach examines how a film represents 'reality'. Some films attempt to make techniques 'invisible' to viewers so the characters and situations are always the primary focus.[20] Some of the off-beat movies used in the thesis represents this enquiry. Similarly, applicability of socialist realist[21] film theory proposed by is Raymond William and Samantha Lay is also applied which studies film as a representation and exploration of political and social issues. Some of the films under study do fall under the realm of social realist film that represents true-to-life characters and locations and are a dialogue on themes of social realism, social injustice, racial and caste injustice and so on. Another approach considered is contextual approach where analysis is based on considering a film as part of some broader context. This can be society at large, the particular culture, time, and place that created it, the director's personal life and previous body of work or various psychological and/or ideological contexts.[22]

The subject choices made for a film usually explain the trends and by examining choices made by the film makers allow us to make a tentative inferences about popular taste and about cinema going in specific period. This research adapts reflectionist approach professed by Siegfried Kracauer, who argues that a study of films could be seen to reflect and respond the mood of people in a particular time and amidst particular political ideology. The research therefore takes a brief overview of political thinking in pre and post-independence period and how it reflect in making Caste system as a subject of the movies to bring social reformation. For example, *Achchut* in Gandhian period, *Char Dil Char Rahein* in Nehruvian period and so on. As caste discrimination is a national issue, exploring these films in national context does shed light on how they propagate national myths and situate discussions related to national identity at different times.

Similarly, present research refers to new queer theory[23] for the study of film *Fire*, carnivalesque model[24] in the study of film *Bhavani Bhavai*, semiotic approach to understand the way in which subaltern characters are formally 'coded' on screen vis-à-vis behavioral patterns of dominance of certain socio-cultural groups in films,

and revisionist approach[25] for analyzing funding provided by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in producing films based on the issue related to caste system.

This research takes an overview of caste system in India through the study of literary sources. Further, an interpretative study is undertaken to establish relations between different art forms in India and caste system. This nexus is than determined in films and an analysis is made on caste idiosyncrasy.

The research considers film as a historical object, an evidence for a social issue that exists through ages and a representative of Indian culture of which caste system is an integral part. The research tends to undertake an ardent study of representation of real and filmic issues related to caste and their elaborate analysis. The research explores film using textual analysis, particularly thematic preoccupations, the caste system in India and its cinematic representation. Feature films here denotes, the one those had theatrical release, online publication and Government funded films for national channel such as Doordarshan.

The research looks into a range of Hindi films based on caste system in India particularly from the release of first feature film *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913 CE till centenary year of Indian cinema in 2013 CE. The research tends to cover projection of caste system in Hindi cinema over the period of hundred years. The research considers only those films that represent caste system in India and the ones with strong undercurrent of the same. Films those are considered for research and review are accessed through the Youtube[26] website and few those are not available for viewings are analyzed through the information available in then contemporary literature.

While using films as historical sources, some standard historical questions are put forth which helped evaluate the usefulness of the film and recognize its unique qualities and characteristics. Both production and reception is taken under consideration and enquiries are made into when the film was made?, who made?, who were its target audiences?, what was its success at the box office if available?, and the response it received.

The present research methodology tries to relate both text and audio- visual sources and acknowledge the importance of film as a visual text as well as a cultural historical product. The approach is primarily deductive.

Sources :

Researches in film history use a range of different categories of films. This include dramatic reconstruction, government information films, animation, documentary, news, newsreel, feature films, amateur films and actuality films.[27] Cinema spawn its written archives in the form of film scripts, magazines, reviews, newspaper, supplements, film festival souvenirs, supplements, books, advertisement, biographies and autobiographies of cinema personalities. These sources however like other sources have to be accepted and incorporated along with their limitations. As William Huges points out, with films as with other sources we must be concerned with the familiar problem of dating, authorship, point of view, authentication and verification. The present research takes this in consideration.

This research includes primary, secondary, archival sources together with web archives, database, blogs and cinema-scopic websites.

The primary sources used in this research work are eclectic and varied. They comprise of films themselves, literary material from the then contemporary period, film scripts and structured documentaries to further support the argument. Most of the films are accessed through Youtube and Video libraries. Narrowing down on Indian cinema particularly based on issue of caste system and then limiting it into a framed compilation was a difficult task. Selection of films for study was made by considering (a) Direct representation of the subject (b) nature of cinema (parallel, mainstream), (c) Director (d) New trend in style, techniques and content (e) Year of Production.

Data was collected from the library of National Film Archives of India (Pune). This includes digitalized film magazines such as *Filmindia*, *Filmland*, *Motherland*, *Screen* and so on. Likewise, year wise film catalogues with information on year of release of the particular film, some with brief synopsis, special film festival editions, commemorative volumes, special publications of National Film Archives of India, Cinematographic Acts from pre and post-independence period in India were thoroughly consulted. Correspondingly, digital Internet Archives, physically based in San Francisco Avenue, C.A (United States of America), was consulted for relevant resources available on them for the study of sources pertaining to pre-independence period. For better understanding of the subject other cinematic digital archives, such as *Museum of the Moving Images* enlisting large number of journals on American, European and Asian cinema, and Cineaste enlisting journals, articles and web links

on popular and critical publications in the field of film and cinema studies is consulted. Access to some journals in digitalized form was accessed through JSTOR and Project Muse, subscribed by University library[28].

The secondary sources consist of books, journals, magazines and internet resources. Books on topic related film directors, film actors, film historiography, research methodology, film scripts and film themselves are consulted. As this study is prominently based on caste system in India and reformist role of cinema, publications outside the field of film studies such as on Caste system in India, literary exemplars of real life caste based incidences, historical narratives and treatise on historical personalities related to the subject are referred.

The academic journals consulted are both in print and online, such as *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *OAH Journal of Film and History*, *The American Historical Review* and so on.

Articles in magazines such as in *Filmindia*, *Marg* magazine, *Deep Focus*, *Filmfare*, *Screen*, *Cineblitz*, *India & You*, *Stardust*, *Time*s and *Frontline* are referred for film review, news articles and interviews. This source material helped to analyze implicit and explicit discourses about popular taste and gives an idea about audiences, their taste and film reception. The letters to editor also furnish a useful data in understanding public opinion in the given time. This feature is used in the thesis.

This research work make use of newspaper articles to trace debates about the screen violence, box-office reception of the film, exclusive interviews of film Directors, Producers, Actors and conspicuously public reaction to a particular movie that made buzz due to some dissension. Newspaper *Times of India* is particularly referred.

In addition to above mentioned sources digital resources are accessed. Film pages of IMDb[29] for film plots are accessed. The researcher personally viewed the film and partially used Wikipedia for scribing film plots. Websites of key film industry organization such as BBC archives, concerned Film Director's and actor's websites such as Satyajit Ray Foundation, Shekhar Kapoor, Dipti Naval and so on are accessed. Blogs of film personalities related to research topic are also referred that shed light on personal experience of them about caste system in India.

The research ponders to experiment with various ways to move the work in the public domain, generating trenchant questions about prevailing societal conditions

that might otherwise largely unasked outside of the walls of the academy. The research analyzes the films to understand the manner in which powerful and privileged are distributed within specific cultural settings and address politics of perspective. The study further search into the thinking process of the filmmakers throughout the century and their quest into artfully critiqued social practices and cultural conditions that operate within the interests of the powerful over those of the much less powerful - the marginalized, excluded, neglected and disposed.

Contribution of Research work, Scope and Limitations :

The circulation of Hindi cinema across the world at remarkable speed, the blurring of content and capital in India between international media interest and local business enterprise and the dialogical nature of Indian film studies between nations as well of the finances that sustain such studies are triple phenomena that have proceeded hand in hand under the aegis of the global moment.[30]

Film history like any other historical enquiry is dependent upon and limited by the nature and scope of its sources. As per earlier conception history is written on the basis of the evidence which has survived and been privileged. Film history with no exception like any historical enquiry is dependent upon and limited by the nature of its sources.[31] Evidently information and knowledge of the first few decades of Indian cinema is comparatively limited because fewer films have been preserved and then contemporary text un-archived. Studies in the discipline of film history are impeded by the tendency towards the natural selection created by canon formation. There has been limited study on Indian films and history. This research aims to interpret the past by making prominent use of a century old audio-visual sources. The study of Indian cinema is undertaken in the context of caste system in India, which comprise of basic structure of Indian society. The study therefore analyzes societal acknowledgment of the caste issues in India through Hindi films. The thesis though briefly takes an overview of Indian cinema, it particularly considers feature films only in Hindi language. The period of study begins from the release of first feature film that is 1913 till the year 2013 that marks the centennial Indian cinema.

This research work tries to overcome this limitation by making thematic selection of films. The researcher has incorporated maximal Hindi films that directly refer to caste issues in Indian society along with films with strong reference to the same. As for the holistic understanding of the concept, Indian cinema is discussed in

general in the first three chapters. Whereas at some places study is limited to only Hindi films, keeping in view extremely large canvas of Indian cinema.

The researcher has possibly consulted all the available literature, documents, films, documentaries, blogs and secondary sources available in the proposed research work. The study is based on both textual and digital sources that were available and possible to access. The conclusion drawn is based on the available references after minute scrutiny of its authenticity and applicability to the subject.

The study on caste system in Hindi films is carried but in small fragments. The following research tries to work from different perspective, giving an overall view by critical analysis of the issue. Evidently, there is no thorough and systematic study conducted on the topic. This research is an attempt to understand formation of mass opinion through effective audio-visual medium, the film. This research is an inter-disciplinary study that aims to cover historical, social, political and mass media approaches and perspective. The study is useful for the students and thinkers in subject History (Paper- History of Mass Media, History of Indian Cinema), Bachelor of Mass Media (Paper- Understanding Cinema), and Post Graduate studies in Mass Media (Film and Television Institute of India, University of Mumbai, MET, Symbiosis Mass Media Academy).

Chapter Scheme:

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Review of Literature

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Chapter 4 Analysis and Interpretation

- 4.1 Caste System and Art forms in India
- 4.2 Reformist role of Hindi Cinema: An analysis into political, social, educational and religious dispositions
- 4.3 Caste System and Hindi films in pre independence period in India (1913 – 1947)
- 4.4 Caste System and Hindi films in post-independent India (1947 – 2013)
- 4.5 Hindi films based on Caste system and Retorts

Epilogue / Conclusion

As above, **Prologue** or Introduction, includes, rationale of studies, Aims and objectives, Research Design, Research questions, Hypothesis, Sources, scope and limitations and chapter scheme. Research methodology discusses various approaches to the study of film history and the ones implied in this thesis.

Chapter Two consist of Review of Literature. There has been general academic writing on Indian cinema that discusses cinema as a popular culture or more peculiarly historical cinemas as a source of history. The review is taken through various perspective and considering varied writings on films and Indian cinema. A gender perspective, writing on Directors, actors, film itself is taken into consideration. Similarly, magazines such as Filmindia, filmland, Screen, Marg are reviewed. Other than this, available literature on history of films, films historiography, catalogues, festival releases, newspapers are reviewed. There is no direct reference found of caste system and reformist role of Hindi cinema and as this being an inter-disciplinary study few references from history, sociology, cultural studies have been analyzed. The present study is an attempt to understand unexplored facets of Hindi cinema through caste perspective and exploration of the films in given social structure and a treatise on film goers in reception of the films.

Chapter Three elaborates on Research Methodology. This research is a historical analysis of caste system prevailing in India through study of Hindi films in the period of hundred years. The present research is new and adapts supplementary approaches in the regular domain of history research writing. Though this research makes use of established historical research methodology, considering the topic and its varied dimensions only application of conventional methodology is not found adequate and suffice. Thus, this research having inter-disciplinary facets, incorporated research methods applied to Cinema studies, particularly film historiography. This research integrates various approaches and theories for analyzing films based on caste system in India and their reformist role. This study of films does not foreground a single methodological approach. The research exerts different theoretical approaches applicable to different films under study in different time frames. This research based its study mainly on feature films which has now gained importance in the study of social history.

Chapter Four integrates five parts, namely Caste system and Art forms in India, Reformist role of Hindi Cinema: An analysis into political, social, educational and religious dispositions, Caste System and Hindi films in pre independence period

in India (1913 – 1947), Caste System and Hindi films in post-independence period in India (1947 – 2013) and Hindi films based on Caste system and Retorts.

Caste system and Art forms in India, is dealt in two sections namely, (i) Caste system in India and (ii) Caste system and Art forms in India. The first section gives an overview of caste system in India and present views of different thinker and historians. Second section discusses relationship between caste and art forms in India and their projection in Indian films. An analysis is made on caste vis-à-vis classical and folk art forms and the caste discrepancy. A review of ancient text of *Natyashastra* on Drama and Theatre is analyzed from caste perspective. This is followed by an elaborate discussion on communities professionally performing a particular art form which in-turn has become their caste identity. Art forms selected in this chapter are particularly the ones those are adapted in Indian cinema.

Reformist role of Hindi Cinema: An analysis into political, social, educational and religious dispositions, is in three sections, (i) Indian cinema and its reformist role, Hindu religion and Indian cinema and (iii) Caste system and Indian cinema. The chapter discusses concepts of nationalism and cinema, social reform movement and cinema and educational role of cinema. A discourse is presented on the Hindu religion and Hindi films where influence of Hindu religion on making of Hindi cinema in last hundred year is discussed. A review of perennial presence of two epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata in movies since the time of its inception is presented. Further, a connection is established between Indian political leadership, their views on film making in India and its futuristic role, adaptation of social themes in Hindi films and governmental initiations. The views and opinions of pioneering policy makers are considered who conceptualized the reformist role of Indian cinema.

This is followed by a corpus prepared of Hindi films on caste system in pre-independence India from 1913 to 15th August 1947. This chapter identifies and enlists thirteen movies based on caste issues in India and analyzes its contextual social relevance. The films are analyzed by considering their year of release, director, producer along with the plots and critical reviews. The chapter includes illustrations with captions and acknowledgment for better explanation. This also includes screen grabs or screen shots taken from the direct film screen. There is a continuation of the corpus of Hindi films in post-independence India from 16th August 1947 till 2013. This chapter identifies and enlists sixty-four movies based on caste system in India

and analyzes its social relevance. As the list of movies is very extensive the chapter is divided into two parts specifically (i) from 16th August 1947 till 1990 and (ii) from 1991 till 2013. The researcher has separated the list from 1990, as post this period Hindi cinema underwent a profound change. The formula film narratives adopted new forms and production budgets enormously increased. The films were made on themes those better suited the audience's inclination in both India and abroad. The films are analyzed by considering years of release, director, producer, the plot, critical review and director's opinion on caste issues and films where obtainable. The chapter includes illustrations with captions and acknowledgment for better explanation. This also includes screen grabs or screen shots taken from the direct film screen.

Lastly, Hindi films based on Caste system and Retorts gives illustrative account of Hindi films based on caste issues and emanated public reactions. The chapter aimed to explore controversies that were created due to making of these films or the representation of caste issues on silver screen, public reaction, governmental action and media coverage. The chapter evaluate effect of films on society and responses it generated and film maker's intense attempt to bring awareness and awakening in masses about the caste issue. The mentioned sub topics in chapter four have their respective list of endnotes and acknowledgements.

The Epilogue or Conclusion gives a comprehensive analysis of role of Hindi cinema in bringing awareness among the Indian masses. A discussion is based on Hindi cinema and its reformist role, cinema an art for entertainment or education, movie theatres a place of recreation followed by remarks and suggestions.

Each chapter is accompanied by a set of endnotes that are referential acknowledgments or expansion of specific historical, cultural, linguistic, cinematic aspect of the film where required and enlisted pictorial illustrations and screen grabs or screen shots for better understanding.

This study is relevant as it proposes to analyze hundred years of Indian Cinema (1913-2013) in the context of projection of caste system in Hindi films.

Notes and References :

1 Anirudh Deshpande, 'Films as Historical Sources or Alternative History' in *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol. 39, No.40, October 2-8, 2004, pp. 4455 - 4459.

2 Venessa R Schwartz, 'Film and History' in James Donald and Michael Renov (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Film Studies*, London : Sage publication, 2008, pp. 199 - 200.

3 Anirudh Deshpande, op. cit., p. 4456.

4 Paul Smith, *The Historian and Film*, Cambridge : The Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 1.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 2.

7 Ibid., p. 3.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Sian Barber, Using film as Sources, Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2015, p. 52.

12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_theory. Accessed : 12 April 2018.

13 Paul D Allison focused on regression methods in social sciences in which the occurrence of events is dependent on one or more explanatory variables. He gives attention to the statistical models that form the basis of event history analysis.

14 Nick Redfern, 'Quantity methods and the study of films', in invited lecture at University of Glasgow, published on 14 May 2014, http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.697.8815&rep=rep1 &type=pdf. Accessed :

14 May 2017.

15 Author calls it 'as a thought experiment'.

16 Hayden White, 'Historiography & Historiophoty', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No.5, December 1988, pp. 1194 -1199.

17 Jeffery Richards, 'Rethinking British Cinema' in Justine Ashly and Andrew Higson (ed.), *British Cinema: Past and Present*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2000, p. 21.

18 Pierre Sorlin, op.cit., p. 20.

19 Suraj Yengde, 'Dalit Cinema', South Asia : Journal of South Asian Studies, Abington : Routledge, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2018.1471848. Accessed : 5 August 2018.

20 Christpher P Jacob, 'Film Theory and Approaches to Criticism, or, What did that movie mean?, http://www1.und.edu/faculty/christopher-jacobs/_files/docs/theory-and-analysis.pdf. Accessed : 21 April 2015.

21 British New Wave Film theory.

22 Raymond Williams, Samantha Ray, Social Realist (British New Wave) Film Theory, http://media-studies.mrshollyenglish.com/critical-perspectives/collective-identity/1-identity/british-national-identity/british-film-industry/social-realism. Accessed : 12 January 2017.

[23] New Queer Theory was first coined by Ruby Rich for defining film making as an inclusive way of describing lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender identity and experience. It defines a form of sexuality that is fluid and subversive of conventional or traditional understanding of sexuality. On these lines this research incorporated study of interrelation between religion, caste, women's sexuality, her preferences and social stigmatisation.

[24] Carnivalesque model of films subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humour and chaos. It is usually a political satire integrating social issues.

[25] Revisionist approach aims at advocating and supporting 'looking over again' with an intention of correcting, improving and reforming existing social structure. It encourages social change for betterment of society.

[26] For understanding the proper application of use of Youtube material reference has been made to the work of Jean Burgess and Joshua Green. Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *Youtube*, Digital Media and Society series, Cambridge : Polity Press, 2009.

[27] http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/eductaion/focuson/film/introduction/conclusion.htm. Accessed :

[30] June 2017.

[28] Researcher accessed above mentioned journals through JSTOR and Project Muse subscribed by R.T.M Nagpur University, Nagpur, Maharashtra. India.

[29] Internet Movie Database.

[30] Kaushik Bhaumik, 'The 100 Years of Bombay Cinema', *Marg special Issue*, Vol. 64, No.4, Mumbai: Marg publication, 2013, p. 17.

[31] Justin Smith, op., cit.

CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 CASTE SYSTEM AND ART FORMS IN INDIA

Caste system in India is an inseparable feature of Indian society over the centuries. Caste in India is not only related to social status of an individual but also define his or her economic role in the society. Thus caste system has a socio-economic influence on the society. There are restrains on social and economic mobility and structuring is primarily based on birth on which a human being has no control. This stringent characteristic of the system has helped it continue through the ages. The present chapter takes an overview of the different views on caste system in India, followed by how art forms in India are inter related to caste system and its representation in films.

4.1.1 Caste System an Overview:

Modern sociological work mainly since 1950s has established that caste is different from Varna, the term used for the fourfold division of Hindu society, namely, *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya,* and *Shudra,* in ancient Hindu texts. Castes are numerous, and words such as *jat, jati, dnyat, dnyati, and nata*, *nati* are used. It is often said that *jatis* emerged by divisions within each *varna* but this is, not a proven historical fact. Every caste is a community with a name. Its members are spread over a number of villages and towns in an area; hence sociologists call it a horizontal unit. The relations between various castes in the context of a village, town, or local area are hierarchical and therefore called vertical. These vertical relations dominate thinking on caste so much that the entire caste system is usually considered as the extreme form of inequality in the world. In social sciences also these inter-caste relations have received overwhelming attention while the horizontal unit has been relatively neglected. When the law courts in British India began to adjudicate on matters of caste in the early nineteenth century, they searched for certainty about the definition of caste. They consulted indigenous scholars called*, Pandits* and *Shastris* of ancient Hindu law and concluded that every caste is an entity rigidly defined by the practice of endogamy, that is, marriage within the boundaries of caste.[1]

Academic writing on caste is in a contradictory state, marked, on the other hand by its essentialization, fulfilling thereby the compelling need for a defining feature of Indian society and on the other by its marginalization testifying to an attempt to efface caste from an assured centrality. According to Yule and Burnell the term *casta* meaning caste was first applied to the Indian context by the Portuguese in the early decades of the sixteenth century and embraced several meaning such as 'family', 'stock', 'kind', 'strain', 'clan', 'tribe', or 'race' and interestingly also designated religious communities, besides Hindu ones, such as the 'caste of Moors' and the 'caste of Christians'.[2] According to Ronald Inden the implicit acknowledgment of a coeval relationship between India and Europe in the pre- and early colonial epoch constitutes a striking contrast to later nineteenth and early twentieth century western attitude when India had become conquered territory.[3] Dharampal - Frick and Gotzen opined that the initial recognition of empirical heterogeneity in the late eighteen century, caste came to conceptually circumscribe a scaled ordering of four *Varnas* namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra with Untouchables occupying an ambivalent place below or outside the Varna scheme.[4] *Varna* which is primarily a conceptual category was interpreted as constituting actual social strata[5] with the empirical entities or *jatis* representing subgroup of the fourfold *varna* division.[6] The Hindu scriptural tradition such as *Manusmritis* or The code of Manu, facilitated this codification of multivalent social relations into a single hierarchical register entailing a certain measure of collaboration with indigenous Brahmin scholars who laid emphasis on ritualistic hierarchical status which underscored their pre-eminence. Consequently the canonization of Brahmanical scriptural lore amenable as it was to colonial policies validated the thesis that *varna* hierarchy as the defining feature of the caste system, was based on the ritualistic and prescriptive *varnashramadharma* or socio-religious ranked order and constituted an all-pervasive feature determining social life polity and religion in India.[7] Thomas Munro and Colin Mackenzie from the data gained through regional surveys projected caste not only as hermeneutical multidimensionality but also as increasingly also as discriminatory and stultifying ritualized. This view was reinforced by evangelical missionaries and utilitarian minded administrator-scholars alike.[8] William Carey (1761-1834) observed that exasperated by the stubborn resistance to Christian conversion offered by cohesive *jati* communities, castigated caste as 'a prison which immures many innocent beings' and polemically declared it to be the 'most cursed

invention of the Devil that ever existed' which demanded a Christian crusade against the system. [9] In 1813, William Wiberforce in a parliamentary speech impelled the British government to approve full scale missionary activity on the subcontinent.[10] For the utilitarian James Mill freeing India from the slavery of caste system necessitated Britain's civilizing mission.[11]



Figure | 1 Company Painting showing caste system in India.
Courtesy: http://velivada.com/2018/02/05/unconscionable-caste-prejudice-india/. Accessed: 25 February 2017

The philological expertise interpreted *varna* as the one that denotes 'skin colour' or 'pigmentation' in-order to explain the fourfold conceptual hierarchy in line with racial categories. As Romila Thapar explains other Sanskrit terminology for descent groups and kinship relation were used such as *vamsa, kula, jati* and *gotra* and also gave it a racial connotation.[12] The endogamous *jatis* were perceived as ideal specimen to verify the anthropometrical and criminology theories of French anthropologists, such as Paul Broca[13] and Paul Topinard[14].

Herbert Hope Risley compounded this notorious social engineering and Aryan invasion theory to explain the genesis of caste system as engendered out of an inherent racial antagonism, whereby the upper caste were deduced to be the descendant of the aquiline nose with fair skin complexioned Aryans[15] constituted by the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, while the lower caste Shrudras were categorised as the conquered snub nose dark complexioned indigenous inhabitants comprising of the serving community[16]. Moreover caste ratified as a rigid Brahmanical system was held responsible by Risley for rendering Indians politically impotent, making them the pliable subject of conquerors.[17]

In nineteenth and early twentieth century a self-assertive resistance began in India led by low caste and non-Brahmin spokesman from various regions in India that proactively applied the racist theories inversely and emphasised more on economic

exploitation and political dominion. For instance Jotirao Phule (1827 – 1890) wrote extensively on economic exploitation vis-à-vis caste system in his books *Shetkarayncha Asud*[18] / The Whipcord of the Cultivators (1883), and *Asprushyanchi kaifiyat*[19] / The Tale of the Untouchable (1893), pointed put on emancipation of lower castes and exploitation by British government. In his work *Gulamgiri*[20] / Slavery, Mahatma Phule stated that, civilised British Government under the cloak of Brahmanism *(*1873) connected the Indian caste issue to that of racism in western world. While dedicating this literary work Jotirao Phule writes, 'This book is dedicated to the Good people of the United States, as a token of administration for their sublime disinterested and self-sacrificing devotion in the cause of Negro Slavery; and with an earnest desire, that my countrymen may take their noble example as their guide in the emancipation of their Shudra brethren from the trammels of Brahmin thraldom.'[21] Jotirao Phule depicted Brahmans as the descendants of Aryan invaders who had conquered the indigenous people of India. The Brahamans has usurped the inhabitants' rightful power and property, and had imposed their religion as an instrument of social control designed to perpetuate their rule. This formed the central polemical device in Phule's explanation of the sufferings of the lower castes. In the ballad *Priestcraft Exposed* (1869) Phule endowed the story of reasons for the suffering of depressed caste at the hands of Aryans. Here, Phule narrates a story of Parshurama, one of the ten incarnations of lord Vishnu - a Hindu God and his routing of *Maha-aris* meaning 'the great enemy'.[22]

A. L. Basham asserts that, Shudras were of two kinds, 'pure' or *anirvasita* (not excluded) and *nirvasita* (excluded). The latter were quite outside the pale of Hindu society and were virtually indistinguishable from the great body of people later known as untouchables.[23] R.S. Sharma observed that one of the reasons for the origin of untouchability was a cultural lag of the aboriginal tribes who were mainly hunters and fowlers, in context to the members of Brahminical society who possessed the knowledge of metals and agriculture and were developing urban life.[24]

Radha Kamal Mukherjee gave a scale of social distance which explicate on the degrees of social avoidance. This reflected in common practices such as sitting on the common floor, inter dining, admission in the kitchen, touching metal pots, touching earthen pots, mixing in social festivals, admittance in the interior of the house, circumvent from religious places especially temples and any kind of physical contact

even at some places shadow.[25] All this is seen reflecting in films in order to depict caste discrimination.

Similarly Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in the Tamil region laid claims to racial indigeneity or Dravidian origins in reassertion against Brahmanical or Aryan subjugation.[26] He started 'Self-respect Movement' where he emphasised on establishment of a casteless society based on complete equality, eradicating all social evils and freeing the society from the shackles of superstitions and blind faith, to strive for complete educational and employment opportunities to women in all spheres as in the case of men, to popularise the Self-Respect Marriages (conducted without any priests and religious rituals) and to propagate rationalism. He said that Self-respect life is free life and set the motto of the movement as "First we are men then only we are Indians".[27]

The national leader such as M. K. Gandhi in attempt to disapprove the colonialist verdict attempted to reform caste society and provided more integrative understanding of Indian social ordering.[28] During the same time Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emerged as a prominent leader of the Untouchables who was an one of the India's most fervent antagonists of the caste system, castigated in no uncertain terms the racist interpretation of its origins; in his meticulous exegesis of the Vedic scriptures, he convincingly shows that the implied hostility between different social groups are due to differing cultic practices and did not seem from racial animosity. Yet, the racist construction of caste had long lasting repercussions leading to seismic societal schism, the resonance of which continues to be felt in India today, both discursively and empirically.[29] Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considers definitions of intellects such as French scholar Senart, Nesfield, Sir. H. Risley and Dr. Kelkar. Senartt defines it as a hereditary institution within which an individual exists in larger group, Nesfield consider it as strict group segregation where connection and communication is almost terminated, Sir. H. Risley defines caste as homogeneous group with common past and ocuupation and Dr. Ketkar defines it with assigning two characteristics, namely membership by birth and marital restrictions.[30]

Dr. B R Ambedkar considers 'Caste is an Enclosed Class'.[31] Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar further comments on the practice of Untouchability and explains the discrepancy between touchables and untouchables. While doing so Dr. B R Ambedkar also takes into consideration governmental perspective.

Dr. Ambedkar writes that, Census Commissioner enumerated that caste was important and necessary. It is still the foundation of the Indian social fabric and the record of caste is still the best guide to the changes in the various social strata in the Indian society.Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar states that every Hindu is born into a caste and his caste determines his religion, social, economic and domestic life from the cradle to the grave.[32] Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar specified that government laid down ten tests to determine difference of Untouchables from Touchables.

The criterion were as follows :

1 denied the supremacy of the Brahmin;

2 did not receive the Mantras from Brahmana or then recognized Hindu Guru;

3 denied the authority of the Vedas;

4 did not worship the great Hindu Gods;

5 were not served by good Brahmin;

6 have no Brahmin priest at all;

7 has no access to the interior of the any Hindu temple;

8 cause pollution;

9 bury their dead;

10 eat beef and do not reverence the cow.[33]

Similarly, Dr. B R Ambedkar states, that the Indian villages are not a single social unit. It consists of castes. The population is divided into two section Touchables and Untouchables. Touchables form the major community and untouchables a minor community. The touchables live inside village and untouchables live outside village in spate quarters. Economically touchables form a strong and powerful community while untouchables are poor and dependent community. Socially, touchables form a strong and powerful community while the untouchables occupy the position of a subject race of hereditary bonds men. [34]

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar specifies and enlists what is considered as offensive by touchables. The ones mentioned below are reflected in films to represent atrocious caste distinction.

1 Rule of segregation, For example - *Sadgati, Achchyut Kanya, Ashirwad, Char Dil Char Rahein*. When higher caste fellows try to visit and mingle with lower caste ghettos, it is generally shown that their *basti* or place of abode is burnt down.

2 Rule of observing distance, pollution or shadow of pollution as the case may be, For example – *Shudra the Rising, Sadgati, Sujata, Bhavni Bhavai*. Untouchables are shown with hanging brooms on back where they sweep the road on which they walk and earthen pot hanging by the neck to spit and no pollution is caused for upper caste passersby.

3 No acquisition of wealth, land or cattle, For example – *Damul, Khap, Tarpan*. In *Damul* system of *Panha* which goes different issues such as caste conflict, atrocities on lower caste community, labour problem and migration and political pollution at the grass root level.

4 Should not wear clean dress, wear shoes, put watch or gold ornaments, For example – *Giddh*

5 Their name should indicate contempt, For example – 'Kachra' or garbage in *Lagan*, 'Kishtya' or in installment in *Ankur*, 'Dukhi' or Sad in *Sadgati*.

6 The Hindu must be saluted, For example - *Nishant*.

7 offensive to speak cultured language, For example - Koga in *Diksha* , Hari in *Jag Utha Insaan*.

8 Offensive to wear outward marks such as holy thread, religious mark on forehead of touchables and pass as touchable, For example – *Jag Utha Insaan*. [35]

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that psychologically caste and untouchability are one integral system based on one and the same principle. If the caste Hindus observe untouchability it is because they believe in caste. They are inseparable. Untouchability is an extension of caste system. To Hindus Caste is sacred and eternal and has religious sanction.[36]

According to William Wiser, by twentieth century less ideologically slanted anthropological studies defined caste primarily as a non-monetary, non-market, interdependent and self-sufficient exchange system among traditional landholding and

occupational castes of village communities.[37] Thus the caste system was viewed from a socio-economic perspective. This communitarian interpretation was soon superseded by influential works highlighting caste system as a religious mode of social organisation with economic implication. The Shyam Benegal's earlier films echoed this perception.

M.N. Srinivas asserted to foreground a 'field view' as against the hitherto hegemonic 'book view' of Indian society. He claims that caste hierarchies were never fixed, nor were they unambiguous with regard to the relative positions of local caste groups. The illusion of fixity and clarity stemmed from an ideological model that classified castes by *varna* as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. M.N. Srinivas's model was employed in the rhetoric of caste conflicts, and for this and other reasons it became increasingly popular during the British rule. For example, newly organized caste associations responded to the issue of recording castes in the early censuses by making conflicting claims to higher rank, classifying themselves at different times as members of different *varna.* The models that an upwardly mobile caste might emulate varied according to the styles of the dominant caste or castes in its locality. This break in 'functional' structure was suggested to puncture the stringent caste system.[38] This acuity could be observed in movies of Prakash Jha such as *Damul, Arakshan* where upper mobility of caste through political empowerment is recommended. On similar lines, B.S. Cohn observes that the upper castes maintain their economic position, their knowledge of the course and the intricacies of the law and better access to officials have thwarted attempts to change the position of the lower castes in the village society and economy.[39]

M.N. Srinivas and Andre Beteille[40] proposed that though caste as a stratification system was considered to have lost its moral cum social legitimacy it surprisingly attainted a new lease of life donning secular identity in democratic politics rather than dying out under the threshold onslaught of urbanization, secularization or modernisation.[41] The inter-caste competition for higher socioeconomic status received state support through the recommendations made by Mandal Commission which provided for mandatory job reservation for so called backward castes in central and state legislature as well as educational institutions in-order to attenuate inequality and reduce exploitation.

M.S.S. Pandian who wrote 'Caste always belongs to someone else; it is somewhere else; it is of another time[42] , wrote on increasing political and social

assertiveness attributed thereby an epistemic privileged to the experiences of being Shudra or Dalit. In reference to autobiographical writings of depressed class communities vis-à-vis upper caste community on the lower caste communities, Pandian states, 'we have here two competing sets of languages dealing with the issue of caste. One talks of caste by other means; and the other talks of caste on its 'own terms'.[43] Pandian reflectes this view while writing on M G Ramchandran rise to stardom, his reel to real popularity in his work *Culture and Subaltern Consciousness-An aspect of MGR phenomenon*. [44]



Figure | 2 Company Painting of Caste and Occupation in India.

Courtesy: https://indians4sc.org/2014/03/18/transformationtuesday-caste-system/#.W6037HszbIU. Accessed: 25 February 2017

There is a Marxist perspective for understanding caste system in India. Karl Marx distinguished the artisan maintained by the village and the artisans of the town and opines that this wholly dependent on the vagaries of the market. In one case the caste labour belonged to a natural economy, in the other to a commodity or monetized sector.[45] Outside the village the artisan appears as an individual selling his wares on the market. The hereditary occupation by caste was necessary to enable 'special skill' to be accumulated from generation to generation. Marx predicted that modern industry, resulting from the railways system will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labour upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and power. [46] D.D. Kosambi on similar lines offers a view that caste did not arise out of any internal division of the *varnas* in the original Vedic society, but from an external process altogether. The entire course of Indian history shows tribal elements being fused into a general society. This phenomenon … lies at the very foundation of the most striking Indian social feature, namely, caste.[47]

Irfan Habib while discussing Marxist perspective of Caste in Indian history states that, caste is a fairly well marked, separate community, whose individual

members are bound to each other thorough endogamy[48] and very often also by a common hereditary profession or duty, actual or supposed.[49] He further states that, being relatively rigid form of division of labour, the caste system formed part of the relations of production. But the caste system operated in two different worlds of labour, and these two must be distinguished in order to better understand both the caste system and social formation of which it was a part.[50] Habib opined that caste system remained an important pillar of the system of class exploitation and its chief beneficiaries could only be the ruling classes such as nobility, rural superior class, the *zamindars* who all by and large belonged to 'dominant castes' which maintained their position by force. Therefore there was an undoubted connection between caste and power.[51] Habib felt that endogamy continued to reinforce caste; and there has been a process of territorial enlargement of castes through mutual identification and absorption. Habib determine that as long as the conflict of interest between landless labour and landholding classes remains, there is an incentive for all castes to combine against the untouchables, who are euphemistically called the scheduled caste. Caste still remains the single most important divisive factor in India. If the Indian society aspires for material and spiritual liberations it is of utmost importance that there be a renewed effort to eradicate the sway that caste continues to hold over the minds of Indians. Caste as the decisive impediment to Indian progress should be discouraged and should be relegated to history, to which it properly belongs.[52]

Gail Omvedt argues that caste cannot be characterised as a super structural form associated with a particular mode of productions, it must be seen as the form as well as the content of the social relations of production in Indian history.[53]

Partha Chatterjee states that most have argued that caste is a feature of the superstructure of Indian society and ought to be understood in terms of its efficacy as an ideological system which reflects the basic structure of material or productive relations, the latter of course being characterised in terms of class relations. Others have suggested that caste is in fact the specifically Indian from of material relations at the base, with its own historical dynamic caste, in other words, is the form in which classes appear in Indian society.[54]

The recent studies on caste system in India are also based on the issue of reservation and endogamy. Indian films too cater to these issues and considered a popular subject. The caste issue is considered to be an unresolved issue present even today in so called progressive globalised world scenario and remorse is expressed on

unchanged mentality. The issue of hypergamy[55,] or endogamy marrying within or outside caste is prompted to bring out caste discrimination. Arvind M Shah writes, 'Traditionally, every caste has of course been trying to maintain its endogamous boundaries. But if it acquires the statutory status of a Schedule Caste or Other Backward Castes, and therefore entitlement to the benefits of reservation, maintenance of that entitlement requires it to maintain it even more rigorously. The size and nature of the casteless category is therefore dependent on the number of castes free from this nexus between caste endogamy and caste-based reservation. If we take into account the number of castes already enjoying the privileges of reservation and the number of castes now demanding reservation in the country as a whole, the total number of such castes would be huge, and so would be their total population. The space for a caste-less society is thus shrinking. A caste-less society is a mirage, and the mirage is moving further away.[56] The issue widely discussed in films like *Sujata, Chameli Ki Shaadi, Khaap* and so on.

Thus, it can be seen that caste continues to play an important role in the dynamic of social and political interactions within India. However, the correlation between caste and hereditary occupations has become less important now, and there are fewer restrictions on social interaction among castes, especially in urban areas. The present Indian society is moving from its closed systems towards a state of change and progression marked by the assertion of the human spirit irrespective of castes and creeds. Several movements challenging the injustices related with the caste system have encouraged individuals in India to be more civil towards other castes members. Many of the lower castes have gained a lot from the partial eradication of the caste system, and India should be commended for its constant effort to eliminate this system of stratification from its culture.[57] It is, however, imperative to look at the importance of how today caste status has affected the quality of life and social mobility in India considering and using different variables.

4.1.2 Caste and Art forms in India :

Art and caste system in India are frequently found related and constitute an interesting study. The generations of particular caste are known to have been performing specific art for centuries. Though today art is not been a prerogative of any particular religion, caste, creed or group, it however worked differently in the past. Cinema as art is considered to be a harmonious combination of the various art

forms particularly including theatre, dance, music, painting and so on. The various forms of fine arts and traditional folk arts are found to be incorporated in movies and helped realistically present a particular community or castes in given context. In India the immediate predecessor of films were theatres, the creative dramatics.

4.1.3 Natyashastra

The dramatic performance is primarily based on Bharata's *Natyasastra*. The title, *'Natya Shastra'*, is loosely translated as *A compendium of Theatres* or *A Manual of Dramatic Arts*. *Natya*, or *nataka* means dramatic arts. The *Natya Shastra,* a treatise on drama is the outcome of several centuries of theatrical practice by hereditary actors, who passed their tradition orally from generation to generation. This ancient text is in the form of a loose dialogue between Bharata and a number of munis or sages who approached him, asking about *natyaveda* (lit. *natya* meaning drama, performance; *veda* meaning knowledge). The answer to this question comprises the rest of the book. Bharata testifies that all this knowledge is due to Brahma and mentions that he has a hundred sons who will spread this knowledge. The scripture itself highlights *varna* system. The first chapter 'The Birth of Theatres' point out certain characteristics of Sanskrit drama such as, it is composed of sacred material, should be performed by members of the highest rank in the caste system, that is priests and that it serves dual purpose to educate as well as entertain. *Natyasastras* like Aristotle's Poetics also propagates theory that associated theatrical performances with religious activities.[58] It has been considered to be a fifth Veda written for other castes those who had no accession to earlier four sacred texts. Thus *natyaveda* is associated with an egalitarian myth about a fifth Veda*;* since the four Vedas, also created by Brahma, were not to be studied by women and lower castes, he created this fifth Veda, the art of drama, to be practiced by everyone.[59]

The caste system and practise of *Natyashastra* is elaborated in its last chapter entitled 'The Descent of Drama on the Earth'. This chapter gives a comprehensive account of art of Drama descending on to the Earth. It gives an elaborate story on *varna* system and art and its accessibility to other castes. The sages ask Bharata to tell them the story of drama coming down to the earth from heaven and why his descendants are been known as Shudras? Not to withholding anything from them Bharata replies, 'All those sons of mine (hundred in number) tired the entire people with the Prahansanas connected with laughter. In course of time they devised a play

which treated the indulgence in vulgar passion. And by them was produced in the assembly of the people a drama which was unacceptable, full of wicked deeds, inspirer of vulgarity, passion, cruel, unworthy of any praise and in which they caricatured the sages by means of buffoonery or *bhands*. On hearing this the sages became extremely angry and excited and exclaimed them " O, Brahmins, it is not proper that we should be thus caricatured. What is this insult (for) and what is your intention? As due to the pride in the knowledge (of the drama) you have restored to arrogance (avinaya) your entire knowledge will be destroyed. In the community of the sages and Brahmins or in meeting them you appear as being no followers of the Vedas and will attain the conduct of the Shudras. You will become Shudras and attain their functions and those to be born in your lines will be Shudras (too). Those actors (nartaks) who are already born in your line will be Shudras and so will be those together with their women, boys and young men, who associate with them". The Gods on learning this origin of curse on my sons became anxious and went to sages. Then the Gods with Indra alias Śakra as their leader said that afflicted with this misery the drama would perish. The sages said in reply that the drama would not perish, but the remaining portion only of their curse will take effect in its entirety.[60]

On hearing these words of the very spirited sages my sons became very sad and with desire to defend themselves they approached me in anger and said, "We have been ruined by you, for your fault of the drama we have endowed with the character of Shudras." For their consolation I said, do not be sorry for it, the rule that words of the sages will never prove untrue, has indeed been made by fate, so you should not turn to the destruction of art. Know this dramatic art has been described by Brahman and teach it to your disciples and others through its application. Do not destroy this drama which has been devised with great difficulty and which include great things, being great merits and has its origin in the *Angas* and *Upangas* of the Vedas. After holding the dramatic performance according to the rules which I heard from the Apsaras you all are to undergo a purification and penance ceremony (Prayaschitta).[61]

In course of time king named Nahusa attained the Kingdom of Heaven and felt the divine desire on seeing the musical performance of Apsaras at his abode. The Gods along with Brahaspati as their leader said to him that such meeting of divine damsels with the mortals is not prescribed and he must consult the Bharata the master of the dramatic art. I called my sons along with Gods in a spirit of conciliation and

said to them, "…You may go down with your associates to the earth to produce the drama there. The drama being properly produced there, I shall make an end of your curse and you will no longer be despised by Brahmins and Kings. So go down to the earth to produce drama there". Then they went down to the earth in the house of Nahusa and devised in due order the production of various plays with the help of the women.[62] Then they, my sons begot progeny in women of the earth and devised for them more dramas on various themes. After begetting sons and devising plays in due order they were permitted to return again to Heaven. This through a curse the dramatics performance has been bought down to the earth and the future generation of the dramatic artist came into being.' Bharata states that the value of dramatic is that when a man who properly attend the performance of music (gandhara) or drama will attain the happy and meritorious path in the company of the Brahmin sages. He concludes as final benediction that, 'Let there be peace to cows and to Brahmins and let the King give protection to this entire earth'.[63]

Historically then this reading of rasa discourse as elite Brahmanic pedagogy is complicated by the facts that the *Natyasastra* was the only one of the Vedas that was to be enjoyed by all castes; more over the text says that the son of Bharata ridiculed the sages and therefore cursed to be born giving Shudra, one meaning of this historically is that drama was the profession of the 'lower' caste or Dalits. The first play composed by the Brahma and performed is 'Samvakara' called *Amrit Manthan* (The Churning of Nectar) which is supposed to enlighten the audience about duty (dharma), prosperity (artha) and desire (kama). Graham Ley argues in a similar vein concerning discipline of the allocation of Sanskrit and Prakrit speech to characters. He suggested that, this discipline acknowledges the distinctions of caste and the demeaning circumstances that may qualify caste status, while the modes of address to be followed in drama and secure conformity with the established order. If the *Natyasastra* then could be thought of in our contemporary terms as the most 'democratic' of Vedas, one whose history bears the marks of caste struggle and the memory of Dalit resistance to Brahman hegemony, we would like to think of rasa not as an abstract theory of sensual pleasure but as a coded discipline symptomatic of a kind of contagion of the skin of media.[64] Thus the theatres are deeply and inseparably linked to religion vis-à-vis caste system in India.

Different theatrical traditions evolved out of this. Consequently, caste not only became increasingly and art became co-related but gradually particular caste only

could perform certain plays or dance forms. At many times access to performances being enacted or appreciated particularly in temple theatres were restricted only to upper caste people. Thus sacred art became confined inside temple walls and privilege of the upper caste. Thus art too received a caste. It was distinguished discriminated and under laid.

There are varied examples that reflect this caste discrepancies in the field of art especially with the performers or artists or the within the themes itself. They all were recognized, revived and even popularised by the movies. Some illustrations of art traditions those maybe considered to have nexus between caste and art are as follows[65] -

4.1.4 Bahurupis

The artist community called Bahurupis in Maharashtra have commercial relations with other castes such as Gond, Gowaris, Gowari, Teli, Kunbi etc. but do not take food with Mahars and Chambars, the lower caste. The younger community is more liberal and accept food and water from individuals of any community excepting the Matangs who are supposed to be lowest in the social hierarchy. While performing religious rituals the Brahmins take only *Siddha*[66] from the bahurupis and bahurupis takes *Kachcha*[67] food only with the *kunbis* the cultivator caste.[68] R.E. Enthoven describes the Bhorpis alias Bahurupis as a class of strolling dramatic players. In western Maharashtra they are called *Bahurupis*, in Marathawada *Rairing* and in Vidarbh-Bhandara *Bhinji*. In Wardha district of Maharashtra Bahurupis are mostly of Marathas caste and in erstwhile Berar they are made up from Mang, Maratha, Mahars and Muslim community. The Bahurupis have their separate well but other utilities are shared with other communities.[69] In Maratha period they served in royal camps and constituted an important part of Maratha espionage.

The Bahurupi means, a person who impersonate into different forms. Forms of impersonations and masquerade are of course integral to the symbolic repertoire of all people in the world. The masks seem to present a supernatural world and help people cope with what David Napier has called 'the metaphysical of ambivalence', divine power beneficent and malign at the same time.[70] In more secular and mundane settings, disguise and costumes communicate meaning through transforming wearing. The Bahurupis or person of many appearances are usually itinerant villagers belonging to the lower strata of society who impersonate as gods, demons, animals

and other natural forces through dress and makeup and received alms from people as they went from door to door or enacted little scenes in a village square. The art seems to run in families and is a way of earning a little money or grains in exchange for a bit of visual and/or dramatic entertainment. At times they evoke the in-between stage dividing day from night, the human from sub and superhuman realms, the socially marginal (the labour class and untouchables) from the well placed and well-to-dos. Through the poems and songs but more often by nods and facial expressions, the Bahurupis evoke new and exciting states of being breaking the monotony of daily life.[71] Actor Shreyas Talpade played the role of *bahurupi* in the film *Dor* that became very popular.



Figure | 3 Shreyas Talpade playing the role of Bahurupia taking different roles such as, Priest, Inspector, Camel driver, milk man and Lord Shiva. Screen grab: Film Dor.

4.1.5 Nautanki

Nautanki is now identified in India as a form of *loknatya* or folk theatre. Nonetheless, it doesn't fit neatly into the category of 'folk drama' as used by Western folklorist, especially where 'folk' designates village level social organization. Although many Nautanki actors are from low castes, the theatre includes a broad range within its personnel. The participating artist's caste appears to have been particularly important. Many artists come from *chhipis*, the caste or *jati* of cloth printers and dyers. Nautanki troupe members in the Banaras region in the late 1970s were also drawn from Muslim entertainer's caste Dafalis (Daf meaning a large drum), Bhats (musician genealogists) and chamars (cobbler).[72] This occupation of singing and dancing is not considered respectable. After women joined Nautanki troupe, the

stigma and sense of opprobrium increased. High caste families bitterly criticized middle and upper caste men who joined Nautanki. They castigated them for betraying caste values. However, there are exceptions of people like Shrikrishna Pehelwan who left their traditional occupation and became popular as nautanki artist.[73] Nautanki played an important role in the freedom movement of India, by incorporating themes of patriotism and nationalism to bring awareness and unity in people. However, later eroticism pitched into nautanki that easily cross line into vulgarity and crassness. For this reason Nautanki began to be considered as undignified for an educated, sophisticated patron to enjoy or even watch.[74]

The relations between nautanki an art form, its reformist role and caste system can be well understood from the case study of Reshma-Chuharmal Nautanki, a Dalit folk theatre in Bihar. A study of the Reshma- Chuharmal Nautanki, a Dalit folk theatre in Bihar was undertaken by Deshkal Society[75], with the financial support from India Foundation of Art, Bangalore. The project aimed to unravel the socio-cultural and political significance of this cultural tradition and its practice among the marginalized communities.[76]

In recent decades historically oppressed and untouchable communities of North India, especially in the state of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, created a new political space through their own cultural resources and traditions. This process of carving out a public space of their own against the persisting domination of Brahmanism led to development of conflicts, contradictions and renegotiations among upper castes, Other Backward Castess and the Dalits. It primarily emerged with the articulation of contestation, conflict and negotiation in the political sphere around the issue of honour or *Izzat*. Different oral forms of communication like community-based Nautanki became instrumental in facilitating this struggle. Nautanki not only instilled 'we-feeling' within the marginalised communities but also became a vehicle through which the multiple voices of the community can reach to the millions of people. Nautanki, a folk theatre, emerged as an immensely popular performing art among the Dalits of Bihar. One such Nautanki popular in the Bhojpur and Magadh regions of Bihar is 'Rani Reshma—Chuharmal ka Khela'. The love story of an upper caste aristocratic lady Reshma and a lower caste hero Chuharmal represents defiance and resistance from below to the caste-feudal domination. The lower caste people of Magahi and Bhojpuri regions of Bihar recite it as a folk ballad and perform it as a nautanki. For the lower castes particularly the Dusadhs, the lower caste it is a story of

their glorious past and the rich tradition of their community. But the Bhumihars the upper castes receive it as a conscious attempt by the lower castes to insult them.[77]

Different versions of the story have been reproduced over time, in which Chuharmal, the hero, is represented differently, as a romantic hero or as a social bandit, as a popular nationalist acting against the British or as a hero of the underclass who challenges upper-caste, landlord authority. This study undertaken sought to seek answers to the following key questions such as,

- Why and how the cultural tradition of Nautanki has been a source of inspiration for Dalit communities to fight against oppression and subjugation of Brahmanism and landlordism?
- How does conflict and negotiation among Dalits and non-Dalits operate in the public space, particularly in public fairs?
- What are the regional variations in Nautankis? In what ways these variations represent the internal contradictions within the Dalits?
- What makes the Dalit communities nourish such cultural traditions against all odds?[78]

The study reflected several thoughts namely the cultural performances of Reshma-Chuharmal-Nautanki and Chuharmal Mela are part of the emancipating endeavours of the Dusadh community against the oppression and subjugation of the dominant castes. These performances empower the community which is placed slightly higher in the caste hierarchy among Dalits and is known for its militant nature; enable the community to gain 'self-respect' and contribute to their assertion against the socio- cultural oppression of the dominant castes and communities. It also shows how the community asserts its identity through such performances by reinventing its culture and tradition.[79]

1. The performance of the Nautanki in the Chuharmal Mela for commemorating the saga of Reshma-Chuharmal has become an important phenomenon in recent decades. Its increasing representation of in the mainstream public space is a sign of collective assertion of the community against the dominant castes and communities, and has a direct impact on the social, cultural and political landscape of the state.[80]
2. The study also shows that the basis of the Reshma-Chuharmal myth/history is the community memory that has been preserved through oral transmission of the stories for generations. In recent decades, there have been several changes

in the narration of the myth/story of Reshma-Chuharmal within and across the regions. The various versions of the story are also available now in the form of printed booklets which are sold on footpaths and public places across small towns and districts in the state. The availability of the print versions has also led to an increase in the outreach of the cultural forms and expressions signified by the stories.

3. Cultural performance of Reshma-Chuharmal Nautanki is full of profound meanings. There are many signifiers of the cultural performance of the Nautanki, and the most important are those that represent the expression of the 'cultural identity' and the 'tension' that these communities have in their 'practice of identity politics and 'everyday relationship' vis-à-vis the dominant communities and their cultural and social practices. These signifiers are explicit and perceptible in this study in relation to the everyday culture of the Dusadh community and their Nautanki.
4. There has been a significant socio-economic differentiation within the Dusadh community in recent decades, and this has influenced the profile of community participation in the Nautanki of Reshma-Chuharmal. While the Reshma-Chuharmal Nautanki, respectability of the Nautanki has increased among the poor Dusadhs in rural areas. There is a direct impact of such differentiation on those who are performing the Nautankias they are not getting the required economic support for their performance from the affluent sections among the Dusadh community. Such a differential support appears to be creating a difficult situation for the sustainability of this cultural form. There is also no systematic state support to the artists involved for making their livelihoods sustainable. In this sense, there is an urgent need to protect the future of this special cultural practice and cultural practitioners and develop a cultural policy from the perspective of livelihoods.[81]

   Nautanki and the life of the artist was effectively shown in the movie *Teesri Kasam*[82] a most poetic and touching reflection.



Figure | 4 Waheeda Rehman played the role of Nautanki artist in the film Teesri Kasam. The life and agony of female Nautanki artist is very well projected in the movie. Many local characteristics are used to make film realistic. Screen grab: Film Teesri Kasam.

4.1.6 Khyal

In India knowledge, erudition and art are always highly esteemed. Therefore overtime artists from different religions, cultures and caste are often integrated into Indian musical culture. If an artist plays sufficient skill and knowledge in performance, he or she is generally welcomed by other classical musician and by the general public. For example, Gangubai Hangal was a *Devdasi* from a lower caste, as a child denied accession to upper caste things became a celebrated invitee after recognised as 'great classical singer'.[83] Indian cinema recognised this art in film Khayal Gatha (*The Saga of Khayal*) is of 1989, an experimental film in Hindi written and directed by Kumar Shahani. The film is about the history of the Khayal genre of Indian classical singing and traces the relationship of genre of Khayal with Indian classical dance form. *Khayal Gatha* is Kumar Shahani's first film that also received international accolades. The movie is appreciated at the Rotterdam International Film Festival and screened in the main competition section. It is considered an important documentation of the tradition of Indian classical singing in the history of Indian cinema.[84]



Figure | 5 Left: A Scene from Hindi film *Khayal Gatha* (1989). Right: Pandit Birju Maharaj with Director Shahani and actor Rajat Kapoor during the shoot of Khayal Gatha. Courtesy: https://bombaymann2.blogspot.com/2016/11/film-khayal-gatha1989.html. Accessed: 25 February 2016.

4.1.7 Yakshgana

Yakshagana or Song of the Yakhas – divine beings in the service of Kubera, the Hindu God of wealth is a traditional rural form of operatic dance-drama to the late sixteenth century from Karnataka. The Yakshgana includes dialogue for two troupes performing *Vidyunmati Kalyana*. The story deals with the infatuation of Indra's son Jayanta for the daughter of *gandharva* the celestial Vidyunmati. When Jayanta expresses his desire to marry her, in her reply she mentions the difference between their two castes and said that it is not proper for one of a superior caste to marry one of the inferior caste. When approached Sulocana, Vidyumati's father too gives same reply. The story interweaves many instances of caste and status issues.[85] A unique art form and the pride of Karnataka, Yakshagana was seen in a different avatar in the film *Banna Bannada Baduku* (2016) directed by Ismail Mudashedde. The movie revolves around the life of a struggling Yakshagana artiste. Till now, commercial ventures only showcased Yakshagana in dance numbers, whereas this film portrays the real colour of struggling artistes who are trying to keep the art form relevant.[86] Vijay Tendulkar's Ghashiram Kotwal is also said to be inspired form the art of Yakshagan.

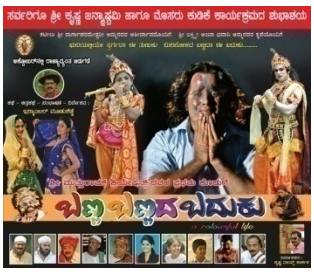


Figure | 6 Movie *Banna Bannada Baduku* is based on Yakshgana and the artists. Courtesy: http://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay.aspx?newsID=447820. Accessed: 26 February 2016.

4.1.8 Dashavatara

Dashavtaras (Dash meaning Ten; Avatara meaning Incarnation) popular form of rural theatre in Konkan and Goa on India's west coast based on ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Dashavatara is thought to have been introduced to area by a Brahmin 400 hundred years ago. Some claim that it is derived from Kuchipudi and other maintains that it owes its origin in Yakshagan. The actors who preserve Dashavatara worship a small image of a deity which is said to have been brought from Kerala. Most of the actors come from the lower strata of society, although a few Brahmins also perform but it's rare. The men troupe move from one village to another. Performances take place usually at night and begin with praise of Ganapati sung by the stage manager or *Sutradhara*. With two women symbolizing rivers enter Madhavi a comic Brahmin and comic dialogue ensues. After the entry of demon Shankhasura, comes god Brahma the Creator and theft of Veda is informed. In this act both Shankhasura and Sutradhar participate. The stage is usually around a temple in an open space or temporary platform setup in the village.[87] In Maharashtra especially Konkan area, tradition of Dasavtar Natak was first staged by a Brahmin Kirtankar Shyamji Naik Kale at Adivara village in 1788 imitating Yakshagana and from there it spread to other places.[88] He then taught Dasavatar to some *Tamasgirs, Lingayats* and *Guravs* from Adivara village. Thus in present day Maharashtra the inherent actors belong to the *Devali, Lingayat* or *Gurava* caste groups and are known as Dasavtara players.[89] Kamala Hasan re- popularised the theme of Dhashavtaram through his movie.



Figure | 7 Stills from Dashavtaram and Kamala Hasan's different incarnations. Courtesy: http://filmyduniyaa.blogspot.com/2008/06/dasavatharam-movie-review.html. Accessed: 20 April 2017.

4.1.9 Burrakatha

The story of Bobbili or Bobbilikathas were very famous in Andhra Pradesh. It was so ingrained into the minds of the folk that it played a significant part in helping shape the new folk narrative ache theatrical Burrakatha, the form that emerged from 1940s. It encouraged the *Vira* rasa or flavour of valour. A large number of traditional

performers of this story belong to the *budige jangam* group with the Jangam caste and so this folk art is also known as *Jangamkathalu*. The Jangam Caste is related to mainstream Shaivaism but the caste performing Burrakatha are known as Budiga Jangams due to the co-artist plays gummeta called as *dakki* or *budike* the earthen drums with two heads. Under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Modification) Order, 1956 Beda(Budga) Jangam community in Telangana region was enumerated as a Scheduled caste and included in the list of Scheduled castes. In the year 1976 the Scheduled Cashes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1976 was enacted. By virtue of the said Act the area restriction imposed under the earlier Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Modification) Order, 1956 in respect of Beda (Budga) Jangams was removed and the castes Beda Jangam and Budga Jangam were declared as Scheduled Castes throughout the State of Andhra Pradesh.[90] Thus the performers of this folk art got its recognition as Schedule caste.

The Jangamkathalu express oral narratives usually embedded in a religious or devotional background each of a complex but distinctive nature. Despite its heterogeneous modalities of artistic expression, burrakatha vis-i-vis Jangamkathalu are strong coherent aesthetic medium in which all the diverse modalities are reconciled. The kathas reflected the ideological message for which it was created and organised as a genre. They became the tool of cultural communication in modern times and passed on militant messages to the folk as large. It was the 'communists' who first organised it and in so doing eventually framed a new genre. This was implemented through Praja Natya Mandali, the Andhra Pradesh branch of the IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association). At the regional level, passing on the message to the masses meant the setting up of training camps that is *siksana sibirali*, where artistically prone militant groups learned how to compose and express new political and social messages in traditional forms, in which they were trained by the folk specialist belonging to low caste groups. The member changed the mode of election and the sociological distribution of the performer's personnel as part of their ideological and political message. This gave rise to a new artistic praxis mixing people from various groups belonging to different religion and lower caste. This mixing comprised *dalam* or militant troupes. This process also created new types of folk artists away from the traditional hereditary system where stories were transmitted within restricted caste and lineage network affiliations. This was a rupture with the

former hereditary trained traditional system in which oral specialists belonged to the same caste along lines of family grouping.[91]

This art was shown in a Telgu film called *Bala Nagamma* or *Balanagamma* (1942) directed by Chittajallu Pullayya and produced by S.S.Vasan. The film was a silver Jubilee. The Bala Nagamma story was one of the most popular Burrakathas. It was one of the early successful films made by popular Gemini Studios in Telugu. The box office success of the film in Telgu prompted Gemini Studios to remake the film in Hindi. Thus the Hindi adaptation starring Madhubala was called *Bahut Din Huwe* (1954).[92]



Figure | 8 Hindi movie Bahut Din Huwe based on Burra Katha. Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahut_Din_Huwe. Accessed: 22 April 2017.

4.1.10 Tamasha

Tamasha is a popular folk art of Maharashtra and frequently used in Marathi films. In Hindi movies it is included when Maharashtrian culture is to be shown. There are many other forms of this dance like Dashavatara, Powada and Gavlana. The Harijan community and Kolhati groups in Maharashtra are known to perform Tamasha.[93]

According to Namdev Vatkar, Tamasha was started somewhere between I659 and 1707 CE. During this period, Muslim soldiers entered into the land of Maharashtra and occupied several places. These soldiers who left their homes for long time felt lonely and bored and they needed some sort of entertainment. So they invited the local artists and arranged to give performances for the soldiers.[94] Later in 18th century this art acquired a distinctive form especially during the later Peshwa period of the Maratha empire. The popular Shahirs or poets of Tamasha during the period of Peshwas were Bhaginaji Bhad, Parasuram, Sagan Bhau, Anant Padi, and Ramjoshi.[95]

With the development of the textile industry in Bombay during the nineteenth century, a lot of people migrated to city from the rural areas in search of employment.

Accompanying them were the rural Tamsha groups who too sought their livelihood in cities. Soon a number of groups came into existence that enjoyed the patronage of the mill workers living in Girgaum area of Mumbai. These performers generally belonged to lower castes like Kolhati, Mang, Mahar and Bhatu. The religious reformers in late 19th century used Tamasha as a way to criticize the existing caste system.[96] The main item of Tamasha remained to be *Nayakin cha natch* or 'the dance of the heroine'.

4.1.10.1 Tamasha, Tamasgir[97] and women and caste oppression

Sharmila Rege's analysis of Lavani dancers in Maharashtra offers a framework to assess how caste system was, and continues to be, particularly relevant to dancing women, wherein, the hierarchical and sexually anointed relationship between lower caste female performer and upper caste male patron is sealed.[98] Anupama Rao asserts that caste hegemony is secured in two ways: by regulating caste respectability and by justifying flagrant transgression as a form of upper caste privilege. So the sexual economy of caste is doubled; the exchange of women within the caste through the formal closed circuit of respectability and marriage, and the informal circuit of sexual liaisons with women seen as amenable to sexual violation. This 'other' economy of sexual violation/pleasure equates caste privilege with the availability of lower caste women as upper caste property.[99]

One way of ensuring sexual entertainment by lower caste women is the creation and perpetuation of particular castes that would survive by dancing and entertaining the gentry and upper castes. For women of some lower castes and nomadic communities, dancing, singing, and entertaining sexually were hereditary occupations. Louise Brown states that many of India's entertainers – the singers, dancers, minstrels and bards – were from the lower-castes and often associated with prostitution. While born in these castes and destined to be entertainers, the women did not prostitute themselves indiscriminately. Their families were often retained by the aristocracy and sex was only part of the service they provided to their patrons.[100]

Samena Dalvai while acknowledging Sharmila Rege's work makes an analysis that the bodies of untouchable women were represented to be either arousing or satiating male desire in the erotic lavani performance in Maharashtra. The songs in lavani are mostly composed by Brahmin men and presented by the lower caste female performers. So it is a genre that articulates female desire in explicitly sexual terms, composed entirely by men, performed by women to an entirely male audience. While

they depict expressions of female sexuality, they endorsed the dichotomy of the *bateek* (whore) versus *soubhagyavati* (wife). The lavani that overtly express the insatiable desires of women are composed in the voice of the lower caste whore, while those that express the pain of separation (virah) are composed in the voice of the wife. The *bateek* shows her intense need for bodily fulfilment, she pleads with the man to visit her regularly and give her pleasure. The wife takes pride in her husband's manhood, virility and excessive desires described as such that only a whore could satisfy him. Her own desires are expressed only through the pain of separation, maybe on account of menstrual segregation, presence of elders of the family, or husband being away on business or war. The caste ideology which ordered the division of labour also ordered the division of sexual labour. The Kolhati women are located in the space of the erotic (albeit as in the male gaze) and are denied familial and material spaces. On the other hand, the upper caste women are constructed as *gharandaaz* (family women or noble women), or passive and moral. Their familial and domestic labour is appropriated within the familial space and they are denied the space of the erotic. Good and bad women are produced along the caste lines within this system.[101]

Caste seems to be an important facet in determining the occupation of dancing women in India. Devdasis rarely came from the upper castes. Similarly, the profession of courtesan community too belonged to particular caste groups. To site a few examples, Ain-e-Akbari gives an account of Nut, Nutwah, Kanjari[102] which at present are recognised as lower castes in India. The Sachar Report lists Mirasi caste of Muslim singers in Uttar Pradesh and the Census of India, 1901, mentions Bedia as a lowest caste amongst Muslims in Bihar and North Bengal.[103]



Figure | 9 Lavni dance performed in Hindi cinema. Courtesy: http://elite-irony.blogspot.com/2009/07/shyam-benegals-bhumika.html ; http://www.freekaraoke.in/station/sava-dollar-lavni-aiyyaa-free-karaoke/; https://www.google.com/search?biw=1366&bih=657&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=Y2y0W-iRNI-99QOTtruYCQ&q=vidya+balan+lavni&oq=vidya+balan+lavni&gs_l=img.3...42607.47851.0.48266.17.14.0.3.3.0.114.1391.7j7.14.0....0...1c.1.64.img..0.15.1230...0j0i67k1j0i24k1.0.XC8Kf0rzw4g#imgrc=_; https://www.india.com/lifestyle/maharashtra-day-2017-step-by-step-guide-to-wear-traditional-maharashtrian-nauvari-saree-2074373/. Accessed: 24 February 2017.

The performers of the art of Tamasha have professional success, fame and money, on the one hand, and personal tragedy with greedy family members and failed love stories, caste discrimination and exploitation on the other. For instance, Hansa Wadkar narrates her career in Marathi cinema and exploitation by her family. Kishore Shantabai Kale takes the name of his Kolhati mother as he does not know who his father is.[104] Cinema however established this art on national level. Many Hindi film heroines performed 'tamasha' in films were made on its theme. However, the art did not receive its dignified status as it deserved in real life and films too reflected how an upper caste male ruins his life for the love of this art or its lead female artist. Chitrapati V. Shantaram first screened the art of lavni in his film *Matwala Shayar Ram Joshi* in 1947, where he showed this art been practiced and recognised by upper caste Brahmin, Ram Joshi but he too dissolved the subject into sacred realm of Bhakti *rasa* upholding the upper caste tranquillity.



Figure 10 Lavni used in Marathi cinema such as Amar Bhopali, Sangte Aika and Lokshahir Ram Joshi. Courtesy: https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc =s&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjNsc_ _3KqkJOw&ust=1538649495501231; https://www.google.com/url? sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved= 2ahUKEwiS; https://geetmanjusha.com/lyrics/16564-solawa-varis-dhokyach; https://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Lokshahir_Ram_Joshi. Accessed: 4 April 2017.

Ironically, later he presented the detrimental side of love for this art and artist in his Marathi/ Hindi movie *Pinjra* (The Cage) in 1973 where an ideal school master from upper caste falls for a tamasgir woman or female lead of lavani and gets completely ruined.



Figure 11 The movie Pinjra showing a principle minded teacher falling for a Tamasha artist and how his life gets ruined. Courtesy: https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc= s&source=images&cdWvUamkHT8CjEZ3o3S7l&ust=1538649928164355; http://protodigits.com/ photography/kashi-nashibane-thatta-aaj-mandali.php; https://punemirror.indiatimes.com/entertainment/ marathi-reviews/film-review-pinjra/articleshow/51445303.cms. Accessed: 8 April 2017.

Similarly in the movie Shirdi Ke Saibaba, a *tamasgir* or tamasha artist is sent by some notorious villagers to entice Saibaba along with a lyricist Ganu who excel in *Shringar Rasa* or flavour of romance. The female tamasgir performs but fails to do that and the troupe acquires enlightenment with the grace of Sai Baba and transcendent their art from *Shringar rasa* to *Bhakti rasa*, the flavour of devotion. Ganu becomes Bhakt Ganu of Sai Baba and began to sing immortal devotional hymns.



Figure | 12 Saibaba blessing the Tamsha artist Ganu and his troupe who all become his devotees. Screen grab: Film Shirdi Ke Saibaba.

4.1.11 Bhavai

The stage in Gujarat is vibrant with its own traditional 'Bhavai' – a unique stage art form, performed with 'Bhava', meaning expression revealing emotions. It's real meaning is made up of two words - Bhava and Aai. Bhava means universe and aai is mother, together it means 'mother of the universe', Amba. This art is exclusively performed by male members in various costumes and character forms. A long wind brass instrument called 'Bhungal' is played during the performance to call performing characters to the scene. Drums, cymbals and Sarangi are other instruments were also used. Bhavai is mostly held in open spaces. Women are mere audience to the 'Bhavai' performance as this folk dance play is strictly performed by males including women's role. Traditionally, theme of 'Ramleela' was performed earlier at places in Gujarat, however Bhavai gained its popularity with change of time as medium of entertainment. Bhavai is a kind of ritual offering made to Goddess Amba. In the courtyard of the Ambaji temple near Mount Abu the Navratri festival is celebrated with Bhavai performances. Play of Bhavai use to take place in temple (of Goddess Amba) on square shaped stage called *Chachar*.[105] Amba is the presiding deity of Bhavai. Bhavai plays in Gujarat convey social messages through humour and sarcasm and comment upon social stigmas such as social injustice, criticism on caste system or a current topic that calls for concern. The chief of the Bhavai Troupe is the

'Nayak' and he remains on the stage directing the course of action with commentary and intervention along with the Jester a clown. The script unfolds through dialogues, songs, speeches in prose and verse with a lot of singing and dancing. The main humour is of 'Ranglo' and 'Ranglee' which attract the audience.[106]

Bhavai, was initiated by group of people who were actually excluded from the caste system who later on they made their own caste called *tragala.* It was a kind of punishment given to them for not following caste norms. This group was led by Asiat Thakar who wrote about 360 *Vesha* (plays, also known as *swang*) among which 60 has survived till date. This group instead of protesting against social structure in violent manner took creative and sarcastic way of protesting. *Vesha* (performances) used to include satire on Brahmins, robbers and so on or social evils such as child marriages, dowry, untouchability (abhadchhat, most famous sarcasms) and so on.

As an inclusive art form, Bhavai had famous clown characters like Jhandoo, Jhulan and a Muslim fakir who represents harmony of Hindu and Islam religion. Many actors and musicians came from migrating communities like *Khachiya* from Uttar Pradesh; Gujjars from Mewar; Odra from Utkala, Kalinga, and Odra (Udra) Desa. Village community provide in support to this performing troupe in kind and services, like barbar shave for free, *Brahmin* (upper caste) gives oil and place of performance, *Baniya* (traders) provide food grains, *Dariji* (tailors) provided with costume. It is interesting to note that whole village support this art troupe whom they have excluded from their society and thus can be recognised as for fine example of successful social movement which attained its goals of being re-included in the society. With the passage of time, this folk theatre though became popular and started losing its basic features and it slowly and gradually adopted vulgarity and started facing criticisms from elite class. In mid 19th century it altered into vulgar theatre of lower strata population. Eminent writer like Dalpat Ram and others tried to revive Bhavai through their drama such as *Mithyaabhiman* and tried to remove vulgarity from Bhavai but this revived format was not much effective as the real one.[107] Cinematic adaptation of Bhavai is discussed at length in **Chapter Five** while reviewing the Ketan Mehta's movie Bhavni Bhavai. The film very effectively adapted this art form and is considered a 'master stroke' in the history of Art cinema.

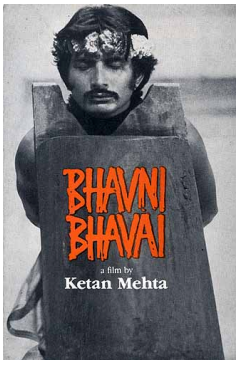


Figure | 13 Film Bhavni Bhavai was a cinematic adaptation of a folk lore in Gujarat. Courtesy: Cover page of the book Bhavni Bhavai[108].

4.1.12 Caste, Religion and Art in Kerala :

4.1.12.1 Kuttiyattam

The history of dramatic literature of India is said to have begun with the plays of Bhasa which are ascribed to 4th-5th century B.C.E. The most interesting of this is that the individual acts of Bhasa's[109] plays were performed by the Chakyar actor of Kerala in *Kutiyyattam* style in the temple theatres in Kerala.[110] Chakyar is an intermediate priestly caste coming under Ambalavasis community in Kerala and women of this caste are known as IIotamaas. The Chakyars are assigned with the holy temple ritualistic performance called Chakyar Koothu and Koodiyattam alias Kuttiyatam which is one of the only surviving theatres from ancient India. Chakyar is the main actor who performs the ritualistic Koothus and Kodiyattams inside the temple and their women that are Illotamaas are not allowed to participate in that. The women roles are done by ladies of Nangiyars or Nambiar community called Nangyarammas who are historically known as landlord clans in the North Malabar region of Kerala. [111] *Kuttiyatam* (*Kuti* meaning combined, *attam* mean play) style of performance as discussed and codified in the Natyasastra which is most complex and rigidly textured form of temple drama. It selects only one act of the Sanskrit play for performance and may take three to seven days to enact it. Speech is changed in a stylized sing-song pattern and is in the manner of Vedic chanting. There is *Vidushaka* (court jester) who is present throughout the performances to translate the dramatic text which is in Sanskrit into the native Malayalam. [112]

The form evolved in the temple of Kerala and has been performed in temple theatres known as *Kuttapalams* or *Kuttambalams* during temple festivals by few artist Brahmin families. Temple theatres called *Kuttambalams* are permanent theatre structures attached to some of the major temples of Kerala. Considered as one of

'*panchaprasada*', one of the five structures inside the temple complex, these were presumably constructed between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries. There are Kuttambalams in the temples in Trissur, Guruvayoor, Irinjalakkuda, Kidangur, Thrippunithura, Chengannur and Harippad. The performance of Kutiyattam was codified in ancient times through elaborate manuals of performance called Attaprakarams and Kramadeepikas, which have been preserved in Chakyar families and handed down from generation to generation through a master-disciple tradition. The theatrics action in Kutiyattam is based on these choreographic texts which detail every nuance of action and interpretation of the text-in fact, they are the real performance texts in Kutiyattam. These stage manuals, of uncertain dates and in all probability belonging to divergent periods in history, were jealously guarded by the Chakyar community and kept as secret documents until recently. Acting rights in different temples were assigned to different Chakyar families where performances took place through an annual calendar. The performers regarded the art both as ritual duty and as a sacred treasure offering. The professional artistic activity of the Chakyars and Nangiars were organised in such a way that it fitted well with the tradition of temple worship; for the actors, the attachment to the temple took care of their livelihood expenses, leaving them leisure to devote their time to the honing of their histrionic skills and passing them on to their next generation. The temple through generous gifts of land and stipend for individual performances supported them. However, with the crumbling of the feudal order and the freedom from the rigidity of the temple complex, Kutiyattam became accessible to a wider world and motivated people from other castes to start training themselves in it.

Kutiyattam, being a ritualistic and orthodox art stubbornly resisted change and opening up till recently until Painkulam Rama Chakyar, the master performer belonging to the Koypa family, took the initiative to perform outside the temple in 1949. This form was not accessible to anyone except people from the Brahmin and other similar higher caste and until 1960 restricted to the temple of sacred art.[113] However, the starting of a Kutiyattam school in Kalamandalam had to wait till 1965. The school broke the age-old practice and admitted students from outside the Chakyar community. Though this innovation met with heavy opposition from conservative sections and from the Chakyar community itself, it proved that change from an ingrained culture built around habit and tradition was inevitable even in a traditional art form like Kutiyattam. After this, two more schools, *Margi* and *Ammannur*

Gurukulam have been able to produce a new generation of artists and teachers in Kutiyattam, ensuring the sustenance and continuation of the tradition. These schools are now well established as representing three "schools" (*sampradaya*) of Kutiyattam and have opened up new possibilities for its training and performance to all caste aspirants.[114] With international performances[115] this art became accessible to other castes for learning. UNESCO has declared Kutiyattam as among the "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity". [116] Malayalam film Nottam made in 2006 directed by Sashi Paravoor. [117]



Figure | 14 Stills from film Nottam depicting Kuttiyattam. Courtesy: https://virali.wordpress.com/. Acceseed 13 April 2017.

4.1.12.2 Krishnattam

Krishnattam is a performing art that combines both piety and art. It is based on Sanskrit work name 'Krishnageethi' written by Manavedan Raja, the Zamorine of Calicut alias Kozhikode approximately 350 years ago. The work includes phases of the life of Lord Krishna and other incarnation or *Avatharam* of Lord Vishnu and ending with the Ascension to Heaven or *Swargarohanam*. The performance used to take place in temple and accession was denied to other caste people except the higher castes mainly of Brahmins and Kshatriyas varna. In 1931-32 Kelappan who was popularly called *Kerala Gandhi* led the *Guruvayur* Satyagaraha to secure the entry of the lower castes in temples. Then, the lower caste were allowed to go only up to place Thiyyarambalam that was more than about half kilometre from the temple. He started fast until death in from of the eastern *gopuram*[118] He broke the fast at the insistence of Mahatma Gandhi. It did not produce any immediate result but led to the entry of Dalits in various Kerala temples. In 1947 Guruvayur temple was opened for entry to

all Hindus and later Namaskara Sandhya (feast) which was only for the Brahmin community was scrapped and was opened to all irrespective of caste. Similarly, the art too became accessible to other caste people.[119] Adoor Gopal Krishna made a short film on Krishnattam funded by National Film Development Corporation.



Figure | 15 Krishnaattam perfomed. Adoor Gopalkrishnan made award winning short film on the art. Courtesy; https://www.revolvy.com/page/Krishnanattam; filmsdivision.org/shop/krishnanattam. Accessed: 15 April 2017.

4.1.12.3 Thiyyam

The people of North-Kerala look at *Theyyam* the main actor as a God and seek his blessings. Initially Theyyam was a form of tribal worship which over the years absorbed the elements of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism, but its tribal roots are still visible in its Mother Goddess cult and practices like spirit-worship, ancestor-worship, serpent-worship etc. Theyyam is based on the simplistic logic that after particular rituals like the god or goddess of the temple temporally manifests in the body of the performer.

In a society with divisive caste-system that denied majority of population entry into temples Theyyam became a popular form of worship because it embraced people of all classes, castes and even religions. While temples and idols belonged to the upper-caste, Theyyam was performed by the lower-castes, but such was the reverence for the sacred dance that even the upper-caste Brahmins sought blessings of Theyyam and patronised it.

Despite this the origins of Theyyam are shrouded in mystery. One hears conflicting origin stories for Theyyam. We know for a fact that the tradition exists in neighbouring Tulu speaking regions of Karnataka and it is believed Theyyam came from there. At the same time Keralolpathi recounts the story of how Parasurama sanctioned Theyyattam to the people of Kerala.[120]

Theyyam represents a host of Gods and Goddesses and as such has myriad forms such as Vishnumurthy Theyyam, Muchilot Bhagavathy Theyyam, Pulliyoor Kannan Theyyam, Pottan Theyyam etc. Theyyams wear face masks, eye masks or

false teeth. The last piece of the ensemble to be worn, common to all, is the headdress which completes his transformation to Godhead. When the performer wears the headdress he looks at his reflection in a hand held mirror and at this moment, called *mukhadarshanam*, he transforms into God, for when he looks into the mirror his eyes do not meet his, but of God. After the performance Theyyam blesses the people, he sometimes speaks giving people messages and it is believed he has the power to heal. The performance is therapeutic to onlookers because of the cathartic effect it has on them, cleansing them of their negative energy.[121]

Theyyam is different from the other art of Kerala, it lacks any sophisticated gestures or facial expressions or the grace of the other art of Kerala like Kathakali and Mohiniyattam, instead it has raw energy and martial drama that induces strong emotions in the onlookers. Theyyam is definitely not for the faint of heart. Being popular art Theyyam troupes exist that perform at your wish, but in such a performance Theyyam is considered one of the many art forms of Kerala and not the only divine dance of the Gods and Goddesses. Theyyam gained popularity as a again when actor Kamal Haasan's performed the art in his movie *Uttam Villain* that used mixture of five languages namely Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, English.[122]



Figure | 16 Original Thiyyam performing artist on left. Kamala Hasan performing Thiyyam in his movie *Uttam Villan*. Courtesy: https://www.flickr.com/photos/ezee123/3873406262; https://www.ibtimes.co.in/after-karthis-komban-kamal-haasans-uthama-villain-faces-ban-threat-628380; https://www.india.com/showbiz/kamal-haasans-uttama-villain-first-look-copied- watch-teaser-22588/. Accessed : 20 April 2017.

4.1.12.4 Kathakali

Kathakali where *katha* means story and *kali* means performance originated in the 17th century in Kerala, the lush tropical coastal strip of South India washed by the Arabian Sea. It was devised by the raja of Kottarakkara, who, angry over the refusal of a neighbouring prince to allow his dancers to perform a Sanskrit dance-drama in his court, decided to create his own dance troupe using Malayalam, the spoken language of the people. This school has its own *hasta*s, based on a regional text influenced by the *Natya-shastra* and later treatises. It also has marked elements of energetic ritualistic dances. The makeup has its roots in the grotesque pre-Hindu

Dravidian demon masks. Themes are taken mainly from the *Ramayana*, the *Shiva-purana*, the *Bhagavata-purana*, the *Mahabharata* and other religious texts. The superhuman characters represent primal forces of good and evil at war. Because of its terrifying vigour, men play all the roles. Most *kathakali* characters except those of women, Brahmans, and sages wear towering headgear and billowing skirts and have their fingers fitted with long silver nails to accentuate hand gestures.[123] Thus, Kathakali has been an upper caste experience in early years of its inception and caste and religious social formations were closely interconnected to the grand narrative of Kathakali though given little of no space.[124]

Another theory suggests that Kathakali in fact was the result of a marriage between the pre-Aryan Dravidian dances and the later ones which were introduced by the Brahmins. It combines the consciousness, the religious practices and the technique of these two cultural streams in perfect harmony and balance. Dravidian worshipped Lord Bhagvati and Kathakali have the dances of Bhagvati Pattu in honour of the triumph of the Goddess over Demon King Daruka.[125]

Similarly, another art form called Porathukali was performed by the people of lower castes and it has a feeble resemblance to the relatively much refined art of Kathakali.[126]

In modern times the art of Kathakali was made available to other caste communities. Kathakali enthusiast Narayanan Nampoodiri says, that 'One of the oldest forms of theatre, Kathakali suffered a decline because of the caste system. The Lower castes were not allowed to enter temple premises and so it moved away from the people. Revival activities began in the 1930s with Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayana Menon establishing the Kerala Kalamandalam. Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair made it really popular in the 1960s.'[127]

Leftist poet and playwright Iyyamgode Sridhara in 1995 began experimenting in the narratives of Kathakali. The vibrant example of this is his crusade against the system of caste discrimination and sanctioning this thought through religious discourse. In his play *Sneehasandesham* or The Message of Love, Iyyamgode chose to bring an independent interpretation to Krishna to the Kathakali stage. In the drama Message of Love, he created a highly charged counter-reading of Krishna's mythological past and based his interpretation of Krishna on the assumption that the 'dark' Lord Krishna as he first appears in the Rig Veda belongs to non-Aryan race and therefore his original role should be read not so much as divine but as a 'leader of

the downtrodden'. In the first scene Krishna returns to Mathura filled with fond memories of his childhood, his beloved Radha greets him and reveals with great pathos that while Dushkarma has been King, enmity has been sown between castes, untouchability has been introduced and the number of major sacrificial rituals has been increased. Krishna goads his lethargic brother Balaram who has done nothing about the situation in his absence. Krishna questions him, "Now you're sleeping and taking liquor. Why are you keeping silence about casteism?". Krishna reminds Balaram that the ritual and sacrifice favoured by the high castes are nonsense and that the truth is pursued through knowledge. The high caste instigates a fight among the lower caste leading to the destruction of one of the temples. Krishna appears, advising them not to attack each other since the human body is the greatest temple. King Dushakarma is killed by Balarama. Krishna appears at the climax scene and describes his vision of a world without class, caste, prejudice or discrimination.[128]

The film *Vanaprastham – The Last Dance* (1999) is a fine example of film based on Kathakali where art form being liberalised and inclusive of lower caste. The film is situated in pre-independence era in India and is based on the life of Kunhikuttan, a Kathakali artist belonging to lower caste. A girl from aristocratic family Subhadra falls in love with the artist in him and with the role played by him of Arjuna from the epic Mahabharata. Their love affair gets more intimate and Subhadra gives birth to his son but hides the truth for lifetime. [129]

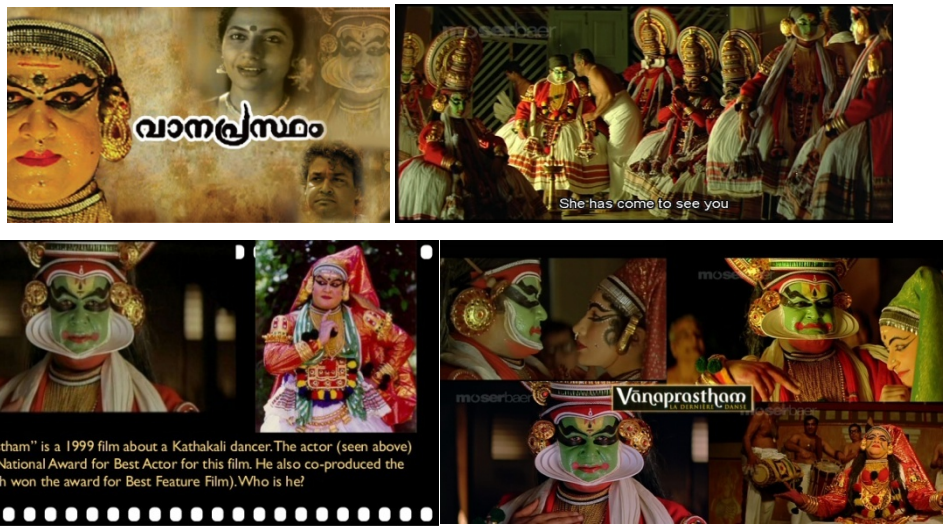


Figure | 17 National award winning movie Vanaprastham depicted the life of a Katakali artist, caste distinction and the art. Courtesy: https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi-v_mgkOrdAhVMfX0KHTE7Ak4Qjxx6BAgBEAI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdontcallitbollywood.com%538651099170988

4.1.13 Caste system and the art and tradition of Puppeteers in India:

Puppetry in India is practised in two forms, one string and other glove puppets. They are performed by particular caste in various states. Even the puppet makers carved out of wood too belong to a particular community. The puppetry performed in closed theatre that is on stage, are usually performed by upper castes where as glove puppets are practised by lower caste and nomads who travel from place to place, entertain and earn their livelihood.

4.1.13.1 Puppeteers in Rajasthan

Puppetry of Rajasthan is considered to be more than a thousand years old but there seems to be no written evidence of the same. Mainly the *Bhat* community practises this art termed *Kathputli* (*Kath* meaning wood and *Putli* meaning doll). Bhatt claim that their ancestors had performed for royal families and received great honour and prestige from the rulers of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab. Their legend goes back to the times of the Great King Vikramaditya of Ujjain whose throne *Simhasan Battisi* had 32 decorative dolls dancing and doing acrobatic feats. The first Bhat produced a play with 32 puppets on the life and achievements of king Vikramaditya and his progeny performed it for hundreds of years.[130]

Bhats are also known as Phakra. They are known as record keepers of geneology and chroniclers of earlier rulers in India. They write and sing about heroic deeds of their heroes. Their chronicles are considered to be significant historical source. Bhats are considered to be belonging to Brahmin community and their name is supposed to have derived from the word Bhatta connotating Lord.[131]



Figure | 18 Hindi movies have exclusively used the puppets like in the movie *Kathputli* and by Raj Kapoor in film *Chori Chori*. Screen grab: Film *Kathputli*; Film *Chori Chori*.

4.1.13.2 Puppeteers in Orissa

String puppetry is mainly centred in North Orissa. All puppeteers are *Ahir Gopal* by caste (cowherds) and believe that they have migrated from Vrindaban. They have no land and are economically poor agricultural labour, running small shops as

the sole means of livelihood. They are known to have migrated from the state of Rajasthan and placed under Other Backward Castes in Rajasthan.[132]



Figure | 19 In the film *Hindustani*, Puppet show is shown to have been used for bringing national awakening and unity among people. Also the show inspired people to fight against the British oppressor. On right the protagonist wife is shown to be a Puppeteer. Screen grab: Film Hindustani.

4.1.13.3 Puppeteers in West Bengal

In West Bengal mainly southward, glove puppets are known as *Bener Putul* that is doll of commercial people. The puppeteers characteristically belong to the schedule caste of the old palanquin-bearer or Kahar. They are normally from among landless labour. The themes are based on social events like linguistic differences, escapade of lover- couples, or even family planning. The puppeteer starts early in life and roams from fair to fair, charging money for each song. The *Tepir ma, Tepir baap* narrative presented at the festival by puppeteer Ramapada Ghorai of East Midnapore. If it seemed a tad propagandist it is because Ghorai, like most other puppeteers, often enters into contracts with government departments to use puppets to spread various social awareness messages from family planning to use of latrines to HIV-AIDS. While this is an acknowledgement of the mass appeal of puppets, one fears that in all the sloganeering the ancient *putul naach* drawn from *puranas* and epics may be slowly forgotten. 'We have so many ancient stories inside us, like of Draupadi, of Kangsa the uncle of Lord Krishna, but we rarely get an opportunity to showcase them,' Ghorai said. "For centuries, people have associated puppetry with begging because people from lower castes went from village to village performing for food and small change. No one ever gave us any recognition or honour," he said. [133]



Figure | 20 Hindi movies have widely used puppets and its concept. Courtesy : http://www.vpuppets.com/Featurefilms.php; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOJtqHRIymQ; https://alchetron.com/Kathputli-(1957-film); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyvWp85gneo.

4.1.14 Visvakarmas (the caste) and Art

Reference to Vishwakarma can be found in the Vedas and the Puranas. The Mythical stories about the origin of the caste tell of a five-faced, three eyed, ten armed god called Vishwakarma, who was born out of the third eye of Shiva and appointed as deity of all artisans. His five sons stemming from his multiple faces, became clan deities who are each responsible for one of five specific crafts: iron specialist (Manu), Vessel maker (Dwasta), goldsmith (Visvagnya) and icon makers who work in either stone or metal (Shilpi). The prominent example is of *Sthapathy* in Tamil Nadu with same surnames, many members of which include highly skilled and classically trained professionals, such as temple architects, bronze sculptors and stone sculptures. *Sthapathy* as they are called in Tamil Nadu are competent in more than one of the fields.[134] Thus, Vishwakarma is the term used in India for a caste of priests, engineers, architects, sculptors, temple builders and artists. The term is applied to five sub-castes; blacksmiths, carpenters, coppersmiths, goldsmiths and sculptors. Vishwakarma Brahmins are also called Rathakara Brahmins, and the Rathakara mentioned in the Rigveda (1.6.32) indicates high status and is associated with the placing of the holy sacrificial fire in the Yajna kunda. According to the Srautasutras, the Rathakara (Chariot-maker) is entitled to perform all the sacrifices. In many sacrifices, like the Rajasuya, the Rathakara played a role as recipient of the offerings. The community is spread widely throughout India and played a vital role in the village economy. Their socio-economic status varied from a very high level to the low level in different parts of India.[135]

Consequently, Prof. R. N. Misra in his book 'Art and Religion: A Study of Relations in Early India' questions whether the artists were allowed to enter the temple after their job was done. The post-Vedic labeling of *shilpins* (artist) as *sudras*, prompts him to ask the question. But clearly the *sthapatis* were not *sudras*. They seem to have had free access to religious texts and seem to be the ones who executed the crowning of the temple. When Prof. Misra is concerned whether the *shilpins* were allowed inside a temple, he promptly assumes that they in fact wanted to, whereas it is possible that they had their own gods and goddesses and did not revere upper class deities. [136] Indian film industry makes exclusive use of the artists in making sets, costumes, furniture, statue who belong to different castes.

Thus, under the rules formulated in the 'Natyashastra' the treatise on aesthetics attributed to the sage Bharata, the classic Sanskrit theatre represented a

harmonious blending of poetry, music and the dance. After the Muslim invasion Sanskrit court theatre began to decline and new blend of Indo-Islamic art type emerged. The entertainment began to be given by strolling players who derived their subject from two ancient national epics the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. These entertainments always formed part of the religious rites attached to cults of gods and holy men. These forms of entertainments were called by various names at different places such as *Jatra* in Bengal, *Ram Lila* in northern parts of India, *Kathakali* in southern India, *Ojapali* in Assam, *Jasha* in Kashmir, *Swang* in Punjab and etc. As Erik Bernouw and S Krishnaswamy point out that 'Indian films in 1930s were not only a heritage from the days of the silent film, it had inherited something far more powerful and significantly; the new means of expression combined with the great tradition of music that had continued during the thousands of years of an uninterrupted theatrical tradition'.[137] Likewise in south Indian film industry preference for mythological and historical subjects became bound with the movement for the revival of Dravidian civilization and to the activities of the Dravida Munnetra Kazaham (DMK). The Dravidian Progressive Movement which favoured autonomy in southern India or even separation exclusively considered stories taken from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to form favourable public opinion. Consequently, South Indian film industry witnessed the rise of super stars especially those playing the role of mythological Gods like Rama and Krishna to prominence and even become Chief Ministers of State for many years together.



Figure 21 Art-Artist-Politics: Superstars like NT Ramarao, MGR, Jayalalitha became successful and powerful Chief Ministers. They carried legacy of mythological characters and received support from most of the castes. Courtesy: http://sasidharan-mgr.blogspot.com/2011/04/ntr-mgr.html ; https://www.greatandhra.com/articles/special-articles/late-ntrs-sri-krishnavataram-idol-unveiling-in-la-usa-67354.html; http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/in-pictures-life-and-times-of-colourful-and-controversial-jayalalithaa-1481008579.html. Accessed : 23 April 2017.

The art and caste are interrelated because most of the folk and classical art are based on Vedic texts and two epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The art was just not meant for entertainment but it became a source of livelihood. Thus, art became profession and profession became caste as prevalent in ancient and medieval India.

As we discuss caste system and art and craft in India, a reference can be made to Bhakti movement. In the caste order particularly crafts are made each assigned a religious character and sanctioned as a scared vocation. Even the most despised of Hindu castes, not excluding that of thieves, members as their special fulfilment in life; and each caste nourishes its sense of dignity by its technically compete execution of its assigned vocation. However, as far as the crafts are concerned they are notably traditionalistic rather than rational. Caste ethic glorify the spirit of craftsmanship, not in economic earnings measured by money or nor in the wonders of rational technology but rather in the personal virtuosity of the producer as manifested in the beauty and goodness of the product appropriate to one's particular caste.[138] This became the basic essence of Bhakti movement Saints and through their complete dedication to their profession which is considered as service to God, a divine enlightenment is achieved. We may consider examples of Saint Chokha Mela, Sant Kabir, Sur Das, Dadu Dayal and so on. The art, artists and castes were no exception. This nexus continued the existence of particular art forms through the ages and there was always a quest to achieve ultimate spirituality. Similarly, Irfan Habib states that where sanskritization failed or was too slow a process, monotheistic movements, which condemned the 'ideology' of the caste system developed. The stress on equality and the condemnation of caste and the ritual observance was greater. Most of the teachers belonged to the low *jatis* or castes such as, Saint Ravidas a scavenger, Saint Sain a barber, and so on.[139]

Indian movies adopted this art very skilfully and effectively thus the art that was confined to a place; a community became accessible to all. This also brought awareness in masses about the importance of that particular tradition and also life of the artist and their anguish. The classification of art could also be noticed where classical forms are usually practiced by upper caste and folk art by lower caste. Indian movies have diluted this caste distinction while adapting this art and broken the barriers of accessibility.

Film medium has unique aesthetic properties and draw upon the other arts. The values from the other arts are integrated in the film form. From the novel, cinema learns the value of narratives and atmosphere; from drama, it borrows the structure of human conflict; from painting and sculpture it derives values of composition in space; from music it learns composition in time, as also rhythm and the quality of abstract. The medium of cinema absorbs these values and transforms them into the value of

film. The older arts have their special modes of conveying aspects of human experience and cinema evolve as a new mode of human expression in its own rights. This process of incorporating different art forms in the screenplay also accommodate other facets related to the social setup such as caste system, class system and situation of social structure.

In the globalised world with many influences coming in Indian cinema too presented this art with some experimentation. The performing art on stage when is cinematically adapted it is certainly with some constraints and limitations. But as Jerzy Toeplitz submits**, '**by its very nature the film has always and everywhere been influenced by the other arts, adapting and transposing the work and the traditions of writers, painters, composers, actors and playwrights. However cosmopolitanism much it owes to foreign models; a film nevertheless remains essentially national, linked to the social, political and cultural traditions of its country of origin'.[140] Thus the art and caste are positively related and films explore its vital expression.

Notes and References:

[1] A M Shah, 'Mirage of a Caste-less Society in India'*, Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 52, Issue No. 9, 04 March, 2017, p. 61.

[2] Henry Yule Ch and A.C. Burnell, *The Anglo-Indian Dictionary*, London: Hobson-Jobson, 1996.

[3] Ronald Inden, 'Oriental Constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.20, No.3, 1986, p. 405.

[4] Gita Dharampal-Frick, Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach, Rachel Dwyer and Jahnavi Phalkey (eds.), *Key Concept in Modern Indian Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 34.

[5] Such as, Priestly class, the Kings or warrior, the merchants, craftsmen, and peasants, labourers and so on.

[6] Dharampal-Frick, Gita and Katja Gotzen, 'Interrogating Caste and Race in South Asia' in Manfred Berg and Simon Wendt, (eds.) *Racism in the Modern World: Historical Perspective on Cultural Transfer and Adaptation,* New York, 2011, pp. 192- 212.

[7] Gita Dharampal-Frick, Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach, et al. op. cit., p. 39.

[8] Bernard Cohn, 'A notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture' in *An anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi, 1987, pp. 136-172.

[9] Ibid., p. 39.

[10] William Willberforce, 'Speech to the House of Commons', *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol.26. 22 June 1813, pp. 63-112.

[11] James Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol.1, London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1858, p. 131.

[12] Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, Vol.1, London: Penguin books, 1990, p. 76.

[13] Paul Broca (1824-1880) was a French physician, anatomist and anthropologist. The discovery of Broca's area revolutionized the understanding of language processing, speech production, and comprehension, as well as what effects damage to this area may cause. He believed that man's intellectual qualities could be measured by the size of his brain and asserted that men had larger brains than woman and that "superior races" had larger brains than 'inferior races'.

[14] Paul Topinard (1830-1911) was a French physician and anthropologist who was a student of Paul Broca and whose views influenced the methodology adopted by Herbert Hope Risley in his ethnographic surveys of the people of India.
[15] Also known as *Aryavarna*.
[16] Also known as *Dasvarna*.
[17] Please see -
a. Gita Dharampal-Frick, Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach et al. op. cit., p. 40.
b. Herbert Risley, *The People of India*, Calcutta: Spink & Co., 1915, p. 275.
[18] Jotirao Phule, *Shetkaryacha Asud (1881)*, new edition, Pune : Mehta publishing House, 2001.
[19] Jotirao Phule discusses about crisis in Agriculture and suggested solutions of the agrarian problems for the depressed classes.
[20] Jotirao Phule, *Gulamgiri (1873)*, new edition, Pune : Milind Prakashan, 2017.
[21] Dedication in the work of Jotirao Phule, *Gulamgiri*, Pune : Poona City Press, 1873.
[22] Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Phule and the Inversion of Brahman Myths' in Ishita Banarjee- Dube (ed.) *Themes in Indian History- caste in History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 172-174.
[23] A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, New Delhi: Picador, 1982, p. 144.
[24] R.S. Sharma, *Shudras in Ancient India – A social history of the lower order down to circa A.D. 600*, Bangalore: Motilal Banarsidass publication, 1982, p. 145.
[25] Radha Kamal Mukerjee, *Inter-caste tension - Caste tension studies*, Lucknow : University of Lucknow publication, 1951, p. 158.
[26] S. Gunasekar, 'The Significance of Atheistic Humanism of E.V. Ramasamy', *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, Volume 13, Issue 5, July - August, 201, p. 27.
[27] Ibid., p. 28.
[28] Gita Dharampal-Frick, Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach et. al., op. cit., p. 40.
[29] Ibid., p. 41.
[30] Vasant Moon (compiled), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writing and Speeches, Vol. 5, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, New Delhi : Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 14 April 1989, https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/amb/Volume_05.pdf. Accessed on : 3 March 2019, p. 6.; Also available in form of e-book on : http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/txt_ambedkar_castes.html.
[31] Ibid ., p. 20.
[32] Ibid ., p. 21.
[33] Ibid., p. 21-22.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 22.
[36] Ibid., pp. 100 -102.
[37] Gita Dharampal-Frick, et al., op. cit., p. 40.
[38]. M. N. Srinivas lecture at The Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lectureship, delivered at the University of California, Berkeley in May 1963. The lecture was later published in the *Journal of American Anthropologist*, Volume 69, Issue 3-4, Berkeley: University of California Press, September, 1966, p. 420.
[39] B.S. Cohn, 'Anthropological Notes on Disputes and Law in India', *Journal of American Anthropologist*, Vol. 67, part 2, pp. 82-89.
[40] In the words of Ramchandra Guha, 'Béteille has written insightfully about all the major questions of the day: India's encounters with the West, the contest between religion and secularism, the relationship between caste and class, the links between poverty and inequality, the nurturing of public institutions, the role and responsibilities of the intellectual.', http://www.thehindu.com/mag/2005/12/04/stories/2005120400480300.htm. Accessed : 22 March 2017.
[41] N Andre Beteille, *Society and Politics in India: Essays in a Comparative Perspective*, Delhi: Bloomsbury, 1992, p. 45.

42 M.S.S Pandian, 'One Step Outside Modernity: Caste, Identity Politics and Public Sphere', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 37, No. 18, May 4-10, 2002, pp. 1735-1741.
43 Ibid.
44 M. S. S. Pandian, 'Culture and Subaltern Consciousness: An Aspect of MGR Phenomenon', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 24, No. 30, July 29, 1989, pp. 62-68.

45 Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value (1951)*, Vol. III, English translation, Moscow: Progress publisher, 1971, p. 435.
46 Karl Marx, *The Capital*, Volume I, Ben Fowkes (transl.), London: Penguin, 1938, p. 331-332.
47 D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay: Sangam Books Ltd., 1956, p. 25.
48 The custom of marrying only within the limits of a local community, clan, or tribe.
49 Irfan Habib, *Essay in Indian History Towards a Marxist perception*, New Delhi: Tulik Publication, , 1997, p. 151.
50 Ibid., p. 171.
51 Ibid., p. 176-177.
52 Ibid., p. 178-179.
53 Gail Omvedt, 'An introductory Essay' in Gail Omvedt (ed.). *Land caste and Politics in Indian States,* Delhi : South Asain Books, 1983, p. 9.
54 Partha Chatterjee, 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness', Occasional Paper no. 111, *Journal of Centre for Studies in Social Science*, Calcutta, February, 1989, p. 11.
55 Hypergamy means the action of marrying a person of a superior caste or class. The term 'hypergamy' was coined by an official of the 1881 Census of Punjab and elaborated by Herbert Risley, the Commissioner of the 1901 Census of India, in his monumental work, The People of India (1915), and using information from different parts of India. Subsequently, a few sociologists studied hypergamy intensively. Nevertheless, it remains one of the least explored institutions in India.
56 A. M. Shah, op. cit., p. 64.
57 Manali Deshpande, 'Senior Project on History of The Indian Caste System and its effect of India Today', *Journal of California Polytechnic State University*, Fall 2010, San Luis Obispo, USA, p. 32.
58 Shruti Das, 'Ancient Indian Dramaturgy', *Journal Research Scholar*, Vol.3, Issue III, August 2015, pp. 135-36.
59 http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Natya_Shastra. Accessed : 29 March 2017.
60 Bharat Muni, *The Natyasastra – A Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy and Histrionics*, by Manmohan Ghosh (transl.), Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1950, pp. 553-556.
61 Ibid., pp. 557- 558.
62 The mortals *Kohala, Vatsya, Sandilya, Dhurtila* and other stayed in the earth for sometimes as mortal and put into practise this *Sastra*.
63 *The Natyasastra*, op. cit., p. 558-561.
64 Amit Rai, *Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India's New Media Assemblage*, London: Duke University Press, 2009, p. 223
65 There are many examples and it's not possible for the author to incorporate all of them. Thus, the illustrations that prominently make the point are included.
66 Cooked food.
67 Uncooked food.
68 Kumar Suresh Singh, *People of India: Maharashtra*, Part 1, Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 2004, p. 111.
69 R. E. Enthoven, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay (1920),* Vol. II, Bombay Government Central Press, Delhi: Cosmo Publication (Reprint), 1975, p. 103.
70 David Napier, *Masks, Transformation and Paradox*, California: University of California Press, 1987, p. xxv.
71 Sumita Chakravarty, *National Identity in Indian Popular cinema (1947-1987)*, London: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 6.

[72] Katherine Hansen, *Ground for Play- The Nautanki theatre of North India*, California: University of California, 1991, p. 15.
[73] Deepti Priya Mehrotra, *Gulab Bai : The Queen of Nautanki*, New Delhi: Penguin Press, 2006, p. 165.
[74] Don Rubin, Ravi Chaturvedi, Ramendu Majumdar, Chua Soo Pong, Minoru Tanokura (eds.), *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre : Asia/Pacific* Vol. 5, Taylor & Francis, 2001, p. 165.
[75] Deshkal Society (Deshkal) is a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) that focuses on land rights, sustainable livelihoods and education. In their work with Poorest Areas Civil Societies (PACS), Deshkal are working in 480 villages in the Gaya district of Bihar to improve the uptake of land rights and education by Scheduled Caste (SC) communities.
[76] Contesting Identities, *Caste and Power: Reshma-Chuharmal Nautanki*, A Dalit Folk Theatre in Bihar. The researcher acknowledges the rights of the study with Deshkal study and declares that this incorporating is not for commercial purpose but purely academic. http://www.deshkalindia.com/pdf/projects/culture%20and%20livelihood/6.%20reshma-chuharmal.pdf. Accessed : 24 April 2017.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] For example, if we look at the key distinctive feature of the Reshma-Chuharmal Mela which is organized each year near Mokama in Bihar, we find that this Mela works as a critical means for giving a new meaning to the identity of the Dusadh community and the associated political and social churnings in the communities and the society.
[81] Ibid.
[82] The movie received the President's Golden Lotus Award in the year 1966 for the best Feature film.
[83]Wasanti Paranjpe, *Khyal, Improvisation and Social change*. https://www.criticalimprov.com/index.php/csieci/article/view/1994/2662. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[84] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khayal_Gatha. Accessed : 5 March 2017.
[85] Martha Bush Ashton, *Yakshagan*, New Delhi: Abhinav publication, 1976, pp. 40- 43.
[86] http://www.deccanchronicle.com/entertainment/sandalwood/110516/colours-of-yakshagana.html.
[87] Martin Banham (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 280.
[88] Lakshmna Shastri Joshi, *Marathi Vishwakosh*, Khand 10, Pune: Maharashtra Rajya Marathi che Vishwakosha Nirmiti Mandal, 1987, pp. 15- 16.
[89] http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/36459/11/11_chapter%205.pdf. Accessed: 28 March 2017.
[90] Nagam Chandrashekara, 'Lingam Vs Government of India', *LAWS(APH)-1984-12-27*, High Court Of Andhra Pradesh, Decided on December 24, 1984.
[91] M. D. Muthukumarswamy and Molly Kaushal (ed.), *Folklore, Public sphere and Civil Society*, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, pp. 233-234.
[92] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bala_Nagamma_(1942_film). Accessed : 2 April 2017.
[93] http://www.discoveredindia.com/maharashtra/culture-in-maharashtra/dance/tamasha.htm. Accessed : 14 March 2017.
[94] Namdev Vatkar, *Marathi Lok Natya Tamasha Kala la*, Sahitya Yashasvi Prakashan, 1975, p. 46., http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25268/9/09_chapter3.pdf, Accessed: 5th March 2017.
[95] Ibid.
[96] http://www.discoveredindia.com/maharashtra/culture-in-maharashtra/dance/tamasha.htm. Accessed : 14 March 2017.
[97] The *Tamasha* artist or performer.
[98] Sharmila Rege, *Writing Caste , Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonies*, New Delhi: Zubaan, 2006, p. 128.
[99] Anupama Rao, *The caste question: Dalits and the politics of modern India*, London: University of California Press, 2009, p. 235.

[100] Louise Brown, *The Dancing Girls of Lahore*, New York: Fourth Estate publishers, 2005, p. 27-29.
[101] Sameena Dalwai, *Performing Caste: The ban on bar dancing in Mumbai*, thesis for PhD in Law, Keele University, United Kingdom, October 2012, pp. 24 -25.
[102] P. Nevile, *Natuch Girls of India : Dancers, Singers*, New Delhi: Ravi Kumar publishers, 1996, p. 35.
[103] Sachar Committee Report, *Social, Economic and Educational Status*, New Delhi: Government of India, November 2006, p. 193.
[104] Sameena Dalwai, op. cit., pp. 90-91.
[105] http://prathamthinking.blogspot.in/2012/07/bhavai-entertainment-as-way-of-social.html. Accessed: 5 March 2017.
[106] http://www.gujaratindia.com/about-gujarat/bhavai-folks-drama.htm. Accessed : 5 March 2017.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ketan Mehta, Bhavni Bhavai, Culcutta : Seagull Books, 1986.
[109] Bhasa is considered to be author of the earliest complete plays in Sanskrit. *Swapnavasavadatta* or the vision of Vasavadatta is his best work. His dramas were written in Sanskrit. Classical Sanskrit theatre was literary and poetic plays were sheer vehicles of poetry. Most Sanskrit plays were idealistic tales of love based on stories from mythology or religion. This theatre deeply and inseparably linked to religion.
[110] Shruti Das, op. cit., p. 135.
[111]Sudha Gopalkrishna, *Kuttiyatam*, Indira Gandhi National Centre of Art online archives, http://ignca.nic.in/kuti0001.htm. Accessed : 22 March 2017.
[112] Don Rubin, et al. op. cit., p. 174.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Sudha Gopalkrishna, op. cit.
[115] The Government of India sent a troupe on a performing tour to France and Poland in 1980.
[116] Don Rubin, et al. op. cit., p. 175.
[117] http://www.nowrunning.com/movie/2588/malayalam/nottam/615/review.htm. Accessed : 7 March 2017.
[118] A monumental tower that is usually ornate at the entrance of a temple and specially found in Southern India.
[119] http://www.aalayavanimagazine.org/2012/12/guruvayurappan-temple/. Accessed : 23 March 2017.
[120] http://www.avisabeachhouse.com/theyyam-sacred-art-of-kerala/. Accessed : 27 March 2017.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] https://www.britannica.com/art/South-Asian-arts/Dance-and-theatre. Accessed : 28 March 2017.
[124] Literophile. Org /?p=1082. Accessed : 4 April 2017; also available on http://niyogibooksindia.com/blog/discovering-kathakali-part1/.
[125] Raginald Massey, *India's Dances : Their History, Technique & Repertoire*, First edition, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 2012, pp. 104-105.
[126] Projesh Banerji, *Indian Ballet Dancing*, New Delhi: Abhinav publication, 1983, p. 40.
[127]http://epaper.timesofindia.com/Default/Layout/Includes/CREST/ArtWin.asp?From=Archive&Source=Page&Skin=CREST&BaseHref=TCRM%2F2012%2F09%2F15&ViewMode=HTML&EntityId=Ar01800&AppName=1, Accessed : 25 March 2017.
[128] Philip Zarilli, *Kathakali. Dance-Drama: Where Gods and Demons come to Play*, London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 201- 202.
[129] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanaprastham. The researcher has viewed the movie and agrees with the plot. Accessed 25 March 2017; http://www.peoplegroupindia.com/vanaprastham.
[130] http://www.puppetindia.com/string.htm. Accessed: 25 March 2017.
[131] http://www.peoplegroupsindia.com/profiles/bhat/. Accessed : 25 March 2017.
[132] CENTRAL LIST OF OBCs FOR THE STATE OF RAJASTHAN - **Ahir (Yadav)** 12011/9/94-BCC dt.19/10/1994 2. Badwa, **Bhat**, Rao Jachak, Jaga 12011/9/94-BCC dt. 19/10/1994 12011/88/98-BCC

dt. 06/12/1999 3. Badhai Jangid, Khati, Kharadi Suthar, Tarkhan. 12011/9/94-BCC dt.19/10/1994 12011/68/98-BCC dt. 27/10/1999.

[133] 'Puppets tug at heartstrings, No child's play: epics, folk tales & social message', The Telegraph, Calcutta, India, 6th April 2014 (Sunday).

[134] Øivind Fuglarud, Leon Wainwright, *Object and Imagination: Perspectives of Materialization and Meaning*, New York: Berghahn publication, 2015, p. 214.

[135] Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, McBrewster John, *Vishwakarma (the Caste)*, Munich: VDM Publishing, 2010, p. 3.

[136] R N Misra, *Ancient Artist and Art Activity*, IIAS Simla 1975, https://theblackyellowarrow. blogspot.in /2013 /05/caste-inand-history-of-indian-art.html. Accessed: 20 March 2017.

[137] Erik Barnow and S. Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film*, New York and London, Columbia University Press, p. 68.

[138] Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*. (online), https://www.ereading.club/ bookreader.php/145149/ The_ Sociology _of_Religion.pdf. Accessed : 28 March 2017.

[139] Irfan Habib, op. cit., p. 175.

[140] Jerzy Toeplitz, *Indian Films and Western Audiences* (translated from French to English), Paris: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 23 December, 1964, p. 1.

4.2 REFORMIST ROLE OF HINDI CINEMA : AN ANALYSIS INTO POLITICAL, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS DISPOSITIONS

Cinema is an integral part of Indian society from the time of its inception. It has profound effect on its viewers and do directly or indirectly affect audience. Its acceptance and rejection signifies social psyche. Present chapter discusses the role of cinema in disseminating political, social, educational and religious messages. It further deliberates on views and opinions of pioneering policy makers in India who were instrumental in defining the role of cinema in India.

4.2.1 Cinema and Nationalism - The *politicus*[1] reformist role of Indian cinema

Andrew Higson[2] in the book *Waving the Flag* stated that 'a nation does not express itself through culture but it is culture that produces the nation'.[3] However in context to nation and modern period the term 'national' remains elusive. Theorist Huge Seton-Watson has evaluated it as a product of capitalism, development as well as underdevelopment and tension between modernism and atavism that is traditional throw back, the nation drives mass movements and uprisings, determining the centre of gravity and destiny of not only politics and economics but also the citizen subject' sense of identity.[4] The media scholars have mainly considered Benedict Anderson's views on origin of nation to the spread of print media capitalism.[5] However in India literacy rate being low at the time, non-print media received far more importance. Hindi cinema influence particularly was more profound even more than state controlled radio and television.[6]

The Indian cinema can be considered as 'national' in character. It mainly because it's produced and consumed predominantly within national boundaries, inherits and circulates notions of national identity, negotiates conflicts experienced by the community, produces new representation of the nation and construct a collective consciousness of nationhood through special cultural referents. Hindi cinema in using family as the primary trope to negotiate caste, class, community and gender divisions, making for complex but decipherable hieroglyphics through which it configures the nation and constructs a nationalist imaginary. Thus non print media such as films facilitate elite hegemony and precede that super ordination by the state-particularly since the nation is constantly reinventing itself.[7] The nation is constructed

in Hindi cinema thorough a complex apparatus of metaphors, discourses and modes of address. It is imagined through a stock set of troupes, symbol, characters, and narratives that are meant first air and then resolve contemporary anxieties and difficulties. The films iron out tensions among various constituencies in the nation and play out utopian ideals those are embraced by audiences from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.[8] Considerably, Indian cinema bears a 'national-popular'[9] characteristic as per exposition of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's ideas on the national-popular bear tremendous significance for context, and the Italian left's reception of his ideas in the 1950s vividly parallels Indian popular cinema of the same period, especially the genre referred to as the 'social' and the presence of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and other leftist screenwriters, artist and personnel in Bombay film industry. The socially themed films during this period could be poised as national-popular culture because not only they proposed radical ideas but primarily redefined the concept of nationalism in a progressive and secularist manner. Earlier in India, national or nationalistic sentiments represented through films were through historic and anti-colonialist. But after independence Indian cinema assumed the position of reformer and virtual emancipator. Hindi films openly addressed societal conflict. Communal, Class and Caste issue are boldly articulated in the films to evolve the nationalist sentiments those are based on equality and justice.

In post-independence era, technology was both desired as a symbol of progress and feared as an alien imposition and films could be seen as an implication in nationalist concerns over economic and cultural self-sufficiency. The Nehru era particularly harped on this. Nationality was engrossed through progressive films such as *Naya Daur, Hum Hindustani*[10] and so on.

It is clear that Hindi films are sites which intersect political life and spill into its social text.[11] In India, the cinema was the latest entrant on the cultural scene and was responsible for taking over, even eclipsing earlier forms of cultural production. The cultural elite as official guardians of 'Indianess' labelled the commercial cinema an impersonating, debased and parasitic form, thereby seeking to main and police cultural boundaries. But cinema as a whole has used the masquerade to transgress boundaries with impunity and to inscribe the national itself as the ideal typical mode of impersonation. Cinema was thus entered into the debate of being 'good' or 'evil' for the naive Indians. Differences of opinion arise in India to ascertain the actual character of cinema. Whether it was a tool to bring reforms or was it detrimental to

Indian way of thinking. For instance, Bal Gangadhar Tilak considered cinema as an effective means to bring social and political awareness, whereas M K Gandhi almost considered it to be an evil. Thus the concept of nationalism and films kept changing as per political vehemence.

The pre-independence period integrated a significant trend of genre of stunt or action films that gave nationalist messages. They were either historical or quasi-nationalist. A lot of patriotic fervour can be found in these films and they were very popular in *mofussil* areas and attracted large number of illiterate audiences. The titles of these films were not only provocative but also carried hidden patriotic fervour in them. The tiles were given like *Azadi, Hind Kesari, Desh Deepak, Desh Dasi, Nav Bharat, Jawahir-e-Hind, Khudai Khidmatgar*, *Bharat ke Lal, Baghi Sipahi* and so on. Some of newly the setup banners also mocked the authorities by naming themselves as *Jawahir Pictures*, *National Movietones*, *Hindmata Films, Indian Liberty* and so on. The characters in these movies were usually shown as divided into two camps, one attired in costly costumes representing the oppressing ruling class and the other shabbily semi-clad a representation of the suffering masses of the society. The climax scenes witnessed high voltage drama with verbal confrontation between protagonist and antagonist in which people's right of democracy, good governance, justice and freedom of speech and expression were advocated.[12] K. A. Abbas observed that in the atmosphere of growing anti-imperialism, even the coarse 'stunt' films were used to portray and glorify the democratic aspirations of the masses. The British censor were satisfied at the climax by installation of the legitimate heir on the throne, but the native audience could not forget the earlier sequence dramatizing general public's defiance of a tyrant's authority.[13] Similarly, next strict control came over during the period of Second World War. 'Do or Die' call of M K Gandhi during the Quit India Movement instigated a sense of revolutionary spirit among the masses. The British government unleashed its obnoxious censorship policy on the films to stop the propagation of ideas and ideals of the national movement. The Director of War Publicity was put on the Censor Board to ensure that the films contained nothing that would work against the war efforts.[14] The colonial rulers made every possible effort to garrotte the nationalist aspirations expressed via the medium of films and use them as an instrument of propaganda to suit their colonial policies and diplomacy.

In post-independence era the conceptualisation vastly changed. Timothy Brennan's phrase 'myth of the nation' has its own connotation. South Asia scholar

Edwin Gerow states, "In term of historical variable relevant to the twentieth century, a nation consciousness, 'Indianness' appears to be a kind of response to awareness of other worlds, civilization becomes an object of consciousness, the moment it is perceived historically that value system are total self-validating and yet in some sense alternative."[15] The Indian national unity became subject to the work of cultural elaboration. It got globalised and a genre of non-residential Indian films and their bonding with their homeland. Nationalism emerges from the inert feeling of love for the country in global setup. Films set in foreign locations are such as, Subhash Ghai's *Pardes, Yadein* , Yash Chopra's *Chandini, Dilwale Dulhaniya Ley Jayenge , Lamhe* ; Karan Johar's *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham, Kal Ho Na Ho, Yeh Jawani hai Diwani*, revisit Indianness on international platform. At one point history of film culture intersected with discourse of nationalism in highly volatile ways. This was particularly true to the Third World film movements, which emerged under the regime of imperialism or have been held in conditions of economic and cultural dependency. Originally identified as 'Third World' cinema having a multinational entity, the phrase 'Third Cinema' now denotes a politically conscious, oppositional cinema often produced by 'Third World' segments of the population with in the First World. The Marxist critic Fredic Jameson recognised the utopian dimension of national commercial culture, where western world is shown to be assuming themselves as higher due to their economic prosperity and scientific development.[16] The films showing Indianness in 'they' and 'us' raised the sentiment of pride for nation and impressed upon high moral values, the greatness that is India.

Another nationality displayed in films is by considering communal themes. The films both in pre and post-independence eras cater to show harmony and gives message of peace. The suggestion for establishment of communal harmony mainly developed from the times of partition between India and Pakistan. Films not only showed the horrors of partition but in later period made films exclusively on feud between India – Pakistan. The dialogues inspire strong spirit of nationalism and communal harmony with in the country. However, this discord did not remain eternal. Homi Bhabha in his volume *Nation and Narration* sees 'the nation' as an 'impossible unity'. He reiterated British historian Tom Nairn's image of nation as a 'modern Janus'[17] in which progression and regression, rationality and irrationality, individuality and universality co-exist uneasily.[18] This justifies the making of communal themed films till the date. Films like *Padosi, Garam Hawa, Train to*

Pakistan, Earth 1947, Pinjar, Gadar, Bajrangi Bhaijan and so on are popular with Indian audience.

4.2.2 Social Reform Movement and Cinema

Cinematic reality does not rely on its resemblance to the phenomenal world, but Hindi popular cinema employs this semblance in a paradoxical way - it makes empirical reality present while simultaneously suppressing and eliminating it. The frequent deviations from the codes and conventions of the realistic style thus enable Hindi cinema to undermine the ontological validity of empirical reality, push it out of its dominant position in consciousness and experience in the world outlined by the medium.[19]

The struggle under the banner of Indian National Congress was imbued with a socio-economic outlook. Ironically, it was born of the stimulus provided by the Merchant Imperialism. The longer lasting colonist – Portuguese, French and English started schools in India and Indian willing to welcome the foreigners sought admission in the same. The better-off among them were encouraged to send their children abroad for higher studies. Returning home with overseas degrees, these young minds formed a nucleus of 'Westernised' elite. They had new ideas and were open to suggestions. With the benefit of Western education they inculcated a lifestyle where they prepared a mental balance sheet of what was useful in their acquisition and replaceable in their native tradition.

The Raja Ram Mohan Roy's school of thoughts derived a conclusion that a sweeping change was needed not just in the way of thinking and living but also in the institutional frame of socio-religious structures that had either became obsolete of fossilised. Certainly this was not immediately greeted with cheers, the gift of modern technology that came as 'the blessing' of Merchant imperialism yielded fruits sooner than expected. The reformation process began in the confluence of these two seed factor. Receptivity to this new chapter of reformation rightly called the modernisation of India, was however slow, reticent and it some way dependent on legislative intervention. The orthodoxy segment resisted change rather stiffly. Vested interest had sprouted around archaic customs and was overlaid with positive economic privileges. The inherent economic advantages disallowed the status quo to be disturbed. During the previous hundred years from 1757 to 1857 the British East India Company had effectively altered Indian economy, society and governance. They had banned *Sati*,

the system of woman from higher caste immolating herself on the pyre of her husband. British did not lawfully legislate a ban on untouchability but rendered it somewhat inoperative by educating a large body of converts to Christianity and employing them in Health and Railway department[20] that had greater mass contact than other branches of public administration. The Company Bahadur introduced a new education system devised by Lord Macaulay in London that gave primacy to English which soon spread to all urban areas. The knowledge of new language opened a window to the outside world. In India with this came modern literature, modern theatre, modern performing art and modern media journalism. The communication system developed and with advent of railways, large number of Indians of all caste and communities began journeying huddled together in Third Class coaches, doing away with caste segregation.[21]

The period from 1931 to 1947 was marked mainly by the increasing affirmation of contemporary trend towards reforming social conditions in a country where so much of the past survived. The degree of urgency in these filmed varied of course with the approach and the courage of individual directors and producers; but in all of them even the most sentimental and melodramatic the message was easily discernible. During the World war period and immediately after, until Independence the social temperature continued to raise, the demand for reform became more direct and open, and social criticism sharper.[22] The Second World War imposed economic austerity on the Indian film industry. Film was short, electricity rationed films were limited in length and number and a license had to be obtained before a film could be made. The Congress Party preached passive resistance and urged people not to help British. At the same time Japanese invasion from eastern side began to influence Indian people and Indian film makers. The film maker's choose social themes for smooth passing of their films through censor board and easy publicity. Another thing that encouraged and influenced the trend towards social criticism of films is appearance of Soviet movies on Indian screen in 1940s. The films such as Mark Donskoc's *The Rainbow* and N. Ekk's *The Road to Life* had profound effects on film makers in India.[23]

The foremost reformist agenda in nineteenth and twentieth century India particularly included economic, social and literary rudiments. The films too catered to similar concerns and their plots were more or else based on these themes. The economic themes included the issues like new deal for peasantry removing burden

that had yoked it to slavery; protection of tenure, land redistribution, timely relief in times of relief such as droughts, flood and consequent crop losses and famines, elimination of rural indebtedness, unemployment and land litigation, regeneration of village handicraft, rural health care, cooperative endeavours, empowerment of *Panchayats*, village administration councils, mill worker's problem and so on.[24]

The social themes included better deal for women, elimination of gender discrimination, rehabilitation of widows, prohibition of child marriages, marriages between unequal ages, *Sati* and *Devdasi* system, system of temple prostitution, prevention of alcoholism, promotion of literacy, especially female and adult literacy, removal of untouchability and eradication of evils and related superstitions, peasant problems and so on. These themes were supported by the leaders in Indian National movement such as B G Tilak who propagated that freedom had no meaning without socio-economic emancipation and cultural regeneration of India. The political worker and the social reformer found a common ground in the Swadeshi movement which began in Bengal and later became a national cry. It was a major plank in the platform of B G Tilak and M K Gandhi with the difference that B G Tilak stood for industrialisation while M K Gandhi was more focused on cottage craft. Thus where on one side B G Tilak encouraged new mass media like radio and films M K Gandhi resorted to traditional mass media like singing of devotional songs or *bhajans*. After the death of B G Tilak in 1920, Congress party steadily adopted the Gandhian programme as part of its political struggle for independence.[25]

After India got its independence, Jawaharlal Nehru integrated all the reformist strands right from the times of Company Bahadurs till Subhashchandra Bose's formula of a socialist society highlighting on a new deal for peasants and workers. The nation and film makers in India responded positively to these initiatives.

The birth of multicentre, multi lingual film was a major achievement of *Swadeshi*, for nothing like it had happened in any other European colony in that period. The films began to carry mythological themes permissible by Censor, except for political symbolism or intent was discernible. The mythological film projected the values needed for social regeneration. The versatility of the mythological frame was used by D. N. Sampat to convey outright political message in his *Bhakt Vidur*. Enacting the title role, Sampat clad in khaddar or hand spun cloth and sporting a Gandhi cap as *Vidur* sat at a charkha to spin yarn. The courtiers of Dhitarashtra a character from epic Mahabharata were called 'donkey Bahadur' in an allusion to the

officials of British India. Mention was made of villagers in Kaira district in Gujarat defying the Government by not paying tax in 1918 and also of the evacuation of Chirala town in Andhra as a mark of protest in 1921. British detested the political connotation in this movie. The censor called it 'a thinly veiled resume of political events in India'. When movie was released of then police had to lathi-charge the enthusiastic admirers and when that did not work the film was banned. Thus, besides injecting the social reform plank of the Congress party, Sampat had spearheaded the cinema of political protest. However, Swadeshi theme never left Indian cinema before independence as exemplified by *Charkha, Valli, Apna Ghar, Naam Irruvar, Vijaylaxmi* preached boycott of foreign goods.[26]

After money lending liquor addiction has been the greatest bane of rural communities, peasants and artisans alike. The Congress party was committed to its total prohibition. During the short lived Congress ministries in seven States in mid-30s efforts were made to implement prohibition. The film that put forward this issue was bilingual film *Brandichi Batli* / *Brandi ki Botal* an uproarious comedy in Marathi and Hindi respectively. The film has a dialogue where some people sitting at a nautch girl's place say, *'Yah kaisa Congress raaj? na bottle na pyali'* meaning 'How is this Congress governance? No bottle, no glass'. Significantly the man's addiction to liquor was depicted in the context of its dreadful effects on the woman and family in films, such as *Pati Bhakti*, *Grihlaxmi* and *Angoori*.

A tragic deprivation of rural communities has been absence of medical facilities and this was effectively brought out in *Doctor*, *Khushboo*, *Tere Mere Sapne* and so on. The post-independence movie depicted further problems like absence of schools, connecting of roads, for example, *Naya Daur* and safe drinking water.

Unemployment and underemployment is the issue dealt in both rural and urban situations. The issue was effectively dealt in B. N. Reddi's *Vande Mataram*. The Censor objected to the young man trampling upon his degree. Reddi told them the youth on protest film is indeed an anguished cry of young men without jobs, most furiously articulated in Zia Sarhady's *Hum Log* under Ranjit studio banner. An explicitly Leftist protest film, *Hum Log* became responsible for outstanding victories of Communists in India's first parliamentary election, two songs about urban neglect and unemployment by Sudhir Ludhianvi in film *Phir Subah Hogi* adapted from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and were immediately banned. The two songs were *Aasman pe hai Khuda aur Zameen pe hum, Aaj kal woh is taraf dekhata hai*

kum, meaning God is in heaven and we are on the earth, lately He looks down to us less often and *Cheen-o-Arab Hamara, Hindustan Hamara, Rahane ko ghar nahin hai, sara jahan humara*, meaning China and Arabia are with us, India is ours, although we do not house to live, whole world is ours. This ban was removed in 1966, when Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister.[27]

With unemployment was referred labour problem in films. Devanand's *Asli Nakli* dealt with this issue and later Rajesh Khanna's *Namakharam* brought labour problems to the forefront. Superstar Amitabh Bachchan starred in number of movies based on various worker's problems such as trade unionist's son and dockyard worker in *Deewar*, coal miner's issue in *Kala Patthar*, Taxi driver in *Khuddar*, railway station labourer's issue in *Coolie* and Dockyard worker in *Hum*. In pre-independence period Mohan Bhavnani's *Mazdoor*[28] also called Mill containing plenty of social criticism was stopped by the censorship for several years and then allowed to be shown after many cuts were made.[29] Similarly, Mehboob's film *Roti* was temporarily banned due to T. P. O. Connor Censorship Code, then in force that did not permit depiction of worker and peasant unrest. However New Theatre's *President* and *Humrahi*, already mentioned film *Mill*[30] based on immigrant labour and problems of Bombay mill workers. In post-independence period S. S Vasan's *Paigham*, B. R. Chopra's *Mazdoor* about textile workers, K. A. Abbas's *Rahi* and Tapan Sinha's *Sagina*[31] dealt with tea plantation workers of Darjeeling and also with various aspects of trade union movements.

Another perennial economic problem discussed in movies was that of the famines. In 1946 K. A. Abbas directed his first film *Dharti Ke Lal* or Children of the Soil, about the famines in Bengal in 1943. The film produced by IPTA[32] in cooperation with the All India Student's Federation and *Kisan Sabha* (The Farmer's Association) which organizations provided actors free of charge for the crowd scene. Its strength lay in its indisputable authenticity, its sincerity and in the total absence of embellishment or watering down. The tragedy of the famine which cost million lives was recounted in a way which was meant to startle the complacent. The film maker did not only limit himself in depicting the catastrophe but also he also proposed a remedy which would help to avoid any recurrence of such calamities and suggested to establish agricultural cooperatives. This film was one of the first attempts in Indian cinema history to produce an ideological rather than commercial film.[33] Similarly exploitation of Indian Peasant was a popular and appreciated theme. Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin* / Two

Acres of Land was based on the theme of a peasant being driven out of his land due to his indebtedness and how forces of industrialization deprive him of his ancestral land forever. The film adequately documented the peasant's struggle against the avarice of the village money lender and his course of redeem.[34] Though he is unable to save his land the film ends with a hope and the family is shown walking towards rising sun. Similarly, the epitome of peasant's story was seen in Mehboob's *Mother India* and became a classic in the history of Indian cinema.

The films from very long time generally carried the unfinished or unfulfilled agenda of Indian National Congress announced in 1930s to fight poverty and inequality. This theme included crusade against the untouchabilty and caste discrimination. This was powerfully exposed by active Congressman G. Ramabrahman in Telugu film *Mala Pilla*. A spate of films protested caste system such as *Acchut*, *Achhut Kanya*, *Mahatama Phule*, *Oonch Neech*, *Harijan Penn* (Tamil) and so on. Before independence the accent in films about caste system was mild and suggestive but after independence this theme became more vocal and was presented against the backdrop of economic denial as in Goutam Ghosh's *Maa Bhoomi* and *Dakhal* (Bengali) and Ketan Mehta's *Bhavni Bhavai* (Gujarati and Hindi).[35] Above mentioned films in Hindi are discussed in detail in **Chapter Five**.

Another vivid issue that affected Indian society from centuries and continue to do so even today is the problem of communalism and films catered to promoting inter-community harmony. Wadia's *Ekta*, V. Shantaram's *Shejari / Padosi* were popular movies in pre-independence period. With the Partition of India and Pakistan, the subject of communalism in the movies was treated in this perspective. Films like *Apna Desh*, *Garam Hawa*, *Gadar- Ek Prem Kahani*, *Pinjar* became very popular. *Chinnamul / The uprooted*, show the colonial apathy in terms of partition of India and consequent violence. The films reflect the filmmaker's personal concern with immediate social realities and were a milestone in the development of socially conscious cinema in India.[36] In later years the Hindu-Muslim communal problems are dealt in movies after actual problems or riots that happened in India such as in Mani Ratnam's *Bombay*, based on Mumbai riots after demolition of Babri Masjid, Aparna Sen's *Mr. & Mrs. Aiyer,* Anurag Kashyap's *Black Friday* on Mumbai bomb blasts, Rahul Dholakia's *Parzania* and Nandita Das's *Firaaq* after Godhra riots in Gujarat and so on. Earlier, film like *Hawaein* was made on anti-Sikh riots post Indira Gandhi's assassination. Another communal issue considered in movies is of the

youths becoming part of militant groups. Films like *Roza, Fanaa*, *Fiza*, *Pukar, Mein Hu Na* and so on, highlighted this issue.

The woman's questions have been defined in movies at different times and in different context. The director Chandulal Shah made two important films on family problems and inability of old moral standards to cope with new conditions of life. These films were *Typist Girl* and *Gun Sundari* also called *Why Husbands are unfaithful* and both were a huge box office success as much as the mythological genre of the time.[37] V. Shantaram's *Duniya Na Mane* raised two issues at the same time one being unequal marriage between old man and young girl and second, marriage against the consent of a girl. The film is based on real life story. In city of Mumbai a nineteen years old girl Rakhmabai fought a court case filed against her by her husband. She was a victim of marriage between people with unequal age and decided not to give conjugal consent. Her husband filed a suit in 1887. The case stirred a storm in Hindu society and Rakhmabai fought her case bravely. She however lost the case but it was mutually agreed that she pays Rs. 2000 towards the legal cost. In return she became a free woman. She studied further and became the first Indian woman doctor. Rakhmabai gave herself to cause of social upliftment of women and their medical necessities. Another, Kamal Amrohi's *Daaera* is based on similar theme. Indian cinema aroused social conscience against unequal marriage and rendered it unacceptable, which legislation introduced by itself could not. The issue of dowry system was addressed in many films particularly V. Shantaram's *Dahej*. This theme in films became more frequent after independence as dowry related crimes increased inspite of country economically progressing. Muslim women and practise of triple *talaq* is still a matter of huge debate and was dealt effectively by Yash Chopra in his film *Nikah*.

If a woman lived more than her husband archaic customs forced her to stay a widow for her life. Though after 1920s, M K Gandhi did not address this issue in particular but social reformers and leadership prior to him advocated widow remarriage. This practise was hailed by movies and showed many facets of the problem too. The pioneering attempt can be said to have been made by B. N. Reddi with his film *Sumangali*. Later films like *Doctor*, *Prem Rog*, *Diksha* and *Water* re-highlighted this issue.

The saga of modern and postmodern women was projected through many films such as in the field of modelling in *Fashion*; story of female actors in *Actress*, *Bhumika,*

Heroine, film *Kamala* based on real story of reporter Ashwini Sarin who bought a woman called Kamala from Dholpur village in Madhya Pradesh, India.[38] Some films represented sexual abuse on women such as in *Insaf Ka Tarazu*, *Zakmi Aurat*, *Damini*, *Grahan*, *Bandit Queen*, *Bhawandar* and so on. The life and problems of female prostitutes and courtesans were screened in many films such as *Aadmi*, *Pakeezha*, *Mehboob ki Mehendi*, *Chetna*, *Umrao Jaan*, *Mandi*, *Tawaif*, *Salaam Bombay*, *Baaghi*, *Sadak* , *Chandni Bar*, *Chameli* and so on.

Thus the creators of reformist cinema were otherwise leaderless foot soldiers who did what they thought was correct. They addressed the masses through their films and felt happy if they contributed to social changes and the stir their films created helped to earn profit. No official recognition was in existence in pre-independence period. Press too was no keen to assess and analyse the interaction between films and the society. In post-independence period the Government took initiatives in promoting subjects related to social reformation. Government not only announced awards on National and private levels for encouraging these themes but also sponsored such projects. Indian cinema continued to speak of Indianness, leaped over social prejudices and made an attempt to generate open debate thus affecting policy decisions to some extent. Themes that were tabooed formerly were discussed such as HIV Aids in *Phir Milenge*, *My Brother Nikhil*, sexual preferences in *Fire*, *Girlfriend*, live-in relationship and so on. It may be asserted that socially conscious Indian cinema will be a true guide to the social thought of Indian society and it is this facet of the medium that a watch should be maintained on to find out the kind of social revolution it will promise for the future.[39]

The films in modern India are said to be of three distinct types which set the pattern for all the films produced. The first type is the lavish mythological – or occasionally historical epic. The second were the modern films with strong social content. The third type represented comprise, an attempt to amalgamate and enhance the beauty and quality of previous two types along with an intention that the film will also attract the largest possible audience.[40] Most of the Indian films can be placed somewhere between two extremes, that is simply spectacular and purely social.

Furthermore, generally speaking films with largely non-realistic format have often offered for their elite consumers an escape into poverty just as commercial films have offered an escape into affluence for the masses. The Indian film makers by and large have canvassed their social ideas with commercial perspective.

4.2.3 Education and Film as a tool of reformation

Film making in India is attributed with many roles such as entertainment, education, employability and effectiveness. Dadasaheb Phalke the 'Father of Indian Cinema' in one of his interviews to *Kesari* stated that moving pictures are a means of entertainment but are in addition, an excellent means for spreading knowledge.[41] Similarly in 1940s in a talk at Madras, Dadasaheb Phalke re-emphasised on 'that a movie should not be too long and should preferably be accompanied by an educational film, travelogue or comic reel. He asserted that India needed to make more educational films.'[42] With passing time and changing perception in western countries film making in India also began to get influenced by progressive ideas and its potentialities.

In pre-independence era a thought aroused for films to be considered as a significant tool for educational purpose. This rather set role for cinema as educational promulgator.

Sheikh Iftekar Rasool[43] in 1930s wrote an article entitled 'Talkies and Education' where he adheres that the most popular uses to which sound films can be put may be classed under the headings of entertainment, industrial or advertising and educational purpose.[44] Rasool exemplify and impress upon the importance of films and their educational relevance as realised in America and England. He suggest to follow their model and proposed that the educational value of talkies has not been appreciated yet in India whereas in America and England almost very responsible educational authority is being approached who provide more and better educational facilities to incorporate educational films in mainstream educational system. Rasool, further explain that innumerable committees and commissions have been set up to investigate their position for the same. Apart from this the topical pictures with added voice and effect has added value became interesting and extremely popular.[45]

Rasool questions on if topical pictures can be made so interesting then there seem to be no reason why educational films can be not made as thrilling as a football game for every youngster. He suggests that there seem to be no better way to teach geography than by showing and explaining dress, custom, habit, business and environment of people of different caste and colour. It is therefore evident that the sound pictures are an instrument that definitely benefits a child in arousing an interest and the desire for knowledge that hitherto has been not perhaps non-existence but dormant.[46]

A decade later the relevancy of film making in India for educational purpose was again discussed. *Filmindia* magazine ran series of articles that emphasised on use of film for spreading awareness and educating Indian minds. Film critic and maker K A Abbas urge the claim of the cinema to be the most potent factor for mass education which, he indicated had already succeeded in educating a vast mass of people in Hindustan without any directive or co-ordinating programme and any state aid. He asserts that for good or evil the cinema was an educative force and whatever its quality by its very nature the film was an educative medium that enlarged human experience and extended the mental horizons of the audience.[47] Similar to what Rasool stated, K A Abbas too gave illustrations from western countries such as Soviet Russia, United States, Britain, Germany, Italy and Japan. K A Abbas states that in Soviet Russia maximum use is made of films as an instrument of mass education. Through the medium of the screen, they have been able to spread literacy in a country that two decades ago was steeped with illiteracy even worse than India. But through the medium of films Russians were able to teach the ignorant peasantry improved method of agriculture, hygiene and community organization. Similarly, country like Russia where conservatism was deeply rooted in the soil, the use of cinema screen is made to propagate progressive ideas, break down orthodoxy and social reaction, to create industrial consciousness and awaken interest in cultural life.[48]

K A Abbas also express his discontentment with film producers having inclination towards capitalism and operating under profit making motive and suggested them to follow enlightened capitalism programmed under enlightened administration for making considerable use of the motion pictures for educational purposes. He insists on assessing the American producers those who combined education with entertainment and thereby secured profits while rendering public service. He further states that the advantage of these types of educational films of Americans production were of interesting popular style and screened along with entertainment films and so reached vast mass of people in an unobtrusive manner.[49]

In continuation with his earlier thoughts K A Abbas wrote another article on reformist role of cinema where he emphasize on the value of educational films in the class room. He insists on study of the possibilities of using the film as a subsidiary medium of instruction in our school. K A Abbas suggests that the beginning of this endeavour may commence from schools that can afford to buy projectors and hire films and use the experience in these schools as basis and extend help to other

institutions who can't afford. He states that during Congress ministry in United Province nearly hundred villages were provided with radio sets and similar can be done with the projectors to view films. K A Abbas further opines that the most important thing is for the educationist, national leaders and social workers in India to study the practical utility of the film as an educational medium instead of adopting a defeatist attitude and refusing to make a beginning because all the schools cannot afford to have the projector.[50]

K A Abbas discusses which films to screen and should be put across to the intelligent teachers in school. What movies can be shown as a propaganda films for popularising adult illiteracy that is a vital problem in Hindustan. He suggests that it should be a matter of consideration, that how films may be used for the instruction of the whole community. K A Abbas determines that mostly all educationists have accepted medium of films significant for children and elders alike and presents significance of the same and states that these films were direct source of information such as, a film on mosquito as the cause of malaria, promoter of thoughts and the ones who provoke interest in particular problem, like a film about the evils of untouchability or the disadvantage of early marriage and developer of forming public opinion such as film exposing the evils of Nazi system of dictatorship contrasted with the advantage of democracy. K A Abbas insists that films cross the limitation of illiteracy and quotes an American educationist, "To be educative in the sense that it teaches is specific thing as does the text book, the motion picture must be used in a class unit, in a particular subject it is taught and at the time it is taught. Films in geography, history, nature study, or science must be used as an adjunct to class room teaching. When shown immediately after the study, the fact will be clinched by the visual image."[51]

As K A Abbas discusses this area in pre-independence period in India and affirm that under the aegis of M K Gandhi and Congress, a scheme of 'Basic Education' alias *Nai Taleem*[52] is put to effect on a nationwide scale where films can be used as a significant tool. K A Abbas reminds the principle of this new system of education was to teach everything to the pupils through active participation in craft – spinning- and weaving, agriculture or carpentry, so that education is co-related to the daily economic life of the village community of the pupil. K A Abbas suggests that films will be an important supplement to *Nai Talim* pattern of education where story of cotton, information about M K Gandhi may be told. He impresses upon the fact

that films were not substitute for teaching but an adjunct to oral and textual information.[53] Another, John Alexander a film critic erudite on cinema in India and impress upon educational values professed by M K Gandhi. He writes, "There are many subjects that one can make films on such as dying, personal crafts of weaving, pottery, brass inlaying work, spinning etc. that Gandhi mentioned in his recent issue of *Harijan*. Attention must be focused on people's condition with a series of films showing the origin and working of rural indebtedness, of caste system in the village, rise and development of co-operative schemes. These films maybe properly edited, added with English commentary and Indian songs and chants would look more interesting, likewise gain commercial value both in India and outside".[54]

In continuation in the same article, K A Abbas adds, 'that more films on advantage of using improved methods in agriculture, simple facts about hygiene, child welfare and removal of popular superstitions should be made. He submits that Film Advisory Board should help produce these films and cooperation is invited from Education, Health and Industries departments of the Government of India and provincial government. K A Abbas states that this is the cheapest and most effective means of mass education.'[55] Correspondingly, Mrs. Yamunabai Hirlekar[56] scripts in the Minute of Dissent in the Report of the Adult Education Committee where she suggests reorganising the Department of Visual Instructions for educational purpose.[57]

In post-independence period the role of films for educational purpose is reviewed. *Filmindia* magazine published an article from National Film Bulletin that discuss use of films in educational institutions and Government's role. The production of educative films is considered to be an imaginative venture and is expected to be according to the need of the nation as it had a wide and very strong influence on the minds of the audience. It is considered to be easier to learn by sight than by reading and thousand of social problems could be addressed by this medium. The films served all these purposes and would become in India a vehicle of ideas and public service.[58]
Analyses on the role of cinema is made and following deliberation are drawn -

a) Purportedly, cinema was presumed to be more powerful than press and radio.
b) The nations striving hard to come closer to each other could not find better medium than films. The films interpret different ways of life of the people of the world and foster better understanding of each other's culture.
c) World is very vast and wide that nobody can see the whole of it except through the eye of a movie camera.

d) It is film alone which can overcome the barriers of time and distance and bring about a closer interest in the life of communities and people otherwise far removed from one another.

e) The educational films are defined as the ones meant for exhibition in the class room as a supplement and illustration to the text books. There can be direct teaching films dealing with subjects included in the studies of the child and background films which deal with subjects of great value of the general knowledge of the students.[59]

Further, the Report of the Government of India Central Advisory Board of Education comprehend that the advantages of the motion picture film as an educational aid are - (a) the interest with which it is seen by the student and the consequent interest in the subject it creates in them...interests which does not subside when the picture fades from the screen but continues and develops into various forms of intellectual activities, (b) economy in the time taken to get things properly understood, (c) efficiency in the communication of knowledge and ideas to the students, efficiency not equalled by any other teaching aid for many subjects. The function of the motion picture film in education has been broadly defined as three fold such as to show what something looks like, to show how something works and to show how something happens. In performing these three functions the motion picture has a flexibility that is greater and more powerful than the vision of any one man. It does not have at its disposal the power of the telescope and the microscope; neither time nor space nor man's myopic vision are barriers that cannot be levelled by the camera. It brings into the classroom the world outside, the past and future. In range and flexibility, therefore, the motion picture film is unrivalled as a teaching aid.[60]

At the same time, Government of India recognised the great importance of medium of films and established a Central Board of Visual Education to help provincial and other Governments. Many provincial governments purchased projectors and set money for proper execution of this new popular culture. With encouragement from eminent educationist Mr. Goverdhandas Aggarwal a thorough study was conducted and an institution named National Education and Information Film Ltd. was established. [61] They decided to seek advice of experts in the field to ensure the 'educational' quality and standards of the film product.[62]

Similarly, it was proposed that Central Advisory Council and provincial boards consisting of representatives of local educational institutions, headmasters and

teachers' associations is to be formed and from time to time their advice is sought. The institution aspired to combine all three functions of production, exhibition and distribution of educational films by opening provincial film libraries and establishing mobile units who would exhibit these films on cheap price and thus make visual education available possible even for poorest. It was expected that with adequate public and Government help this new experiment will render great service to the nation and become a commercial success thus inviting more producers, exhibitors and film libraries owners. It was suggested that with this period required for a child's education will reduce and huge sum will be saved by the national exchequers.[63]

Thus, use of films to spread education has its realisation in colonial India and reassertion in independent India . More importance is given to educational as well as commercial film to enroot the idea of progressive modern India and secularism. The themes of national unity, societal parity, scientific inventions, dam operations, unifying against class oppression and spread of literacy is largely encouraged. Government aid such projects and further selects the developmental themes and invite establish directors of the country to make films on them for public welfare.

4.2.4 Hindu Religion and Hindi Films

Though there are many religions in India, namely Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Jainism, majority Indian films has adopted Hindu themes and expressions. The reason can be majority of population being Hindus and therefore would appreciate and relate more to their own set of beliefs rather way of life. Pioneer of Indian cinema, Dadadasaheb Phalke based his films on Hindu religious stories. Thus religion and cinema became inseparable entities right from the time of its inception. Hinduism usually always marked the content, structure and dominant moods of Indian films.[64]

To understand the nexus between Hinduism and Hindi films we require pondering into the basics of the religion that was customarily followed. The period when cinema made its ingress in Hindustan, the land was inhibited by majority Hindu population or those follow Hinduism, the caste and religious discrimination was widely observed. Many social reformists tried and brought instrumental social changes but on the whole caste and gender inequality continued to exist. Vast majority of people remained inclined to conservative outlook and viewed or rather imagined religious imagery or iconography as prompted by later Vedic texts.

Philosophically, Hinduism prominently advocated *Dharama* – the Cosmic Moral Social order, the obligation and the tendency to act in a particular consequences[65] and *Karma* - every action has its inevitable consequences. Films catered to promote these thoughts and further dissimilated it into notion of *Maya* - the world is illusionary[66]. The aspects of *ashramas*- four stages of a Hindu person's life became embedded in the narratives of Hindi films and followed by the idea of renunciation also found expression in many Indian films such as *Guide*.

Ascertaining relationship between Hinduism and films they may be classified as (i) films explicitly religious in nature drawing their stories from religious sources, (ii) those films that deal with the lives and features of religious saints, particularly *Bhakti* and (iii) films that deploy religious concepts and images as a way of investing the stories with greater significance (iv) films that portray different religious cult and (v) films that seek to criticise various religious institutions, practices and religiosities.

Another noteworthy aspect evolving from Hindu scriptures is the one based on epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. There are many films that evoke epic sensibility. It is understood that as Vedas were accessible only to selected few, the epics were written to educate the common man and to meet their religious and spiritual needs. The epics were meant to expound the esoteric knowledge in a popular way for the ordinary man.[67] Hence epics became foremost preference for cinema and theatricals. They are meant for masses, the ordinary people and served the purpose of dramatization along with diffusion of religious ideas.

The very first talkies *Raja Harishchandra* emerged from these texts and became extremely popular theme. Dadasaheb Phalke after watching *Birth of Christ* began to imagine Lord Krishna in its place and exclaimed to his wife "We are going to bring Lord Ram, Lord Krishna to our poor people! Instead of Mother Mary, we will see Yashoda and Kausalya! Ayodhya and Gokul will replace Bethlehem and Jerusalem! Our own stories will fill the screen..."[68] Dadasaheb had resolutely decided to make a film based on the story of Raja Harishchandra of Ayodhya, who was an integral and popular figure in Hindu mythology and would have a pan-Indian appeal.[69] This was followed by other stories such as *Lanka Dahan*, *Shri Krishna Janma*, *Kalia Mardan*, *Mohini Bhasmasur* and so on that had both national and international appeal. Men and women in the audience would prostrate themselves before the screen.[70] To popularise his creation and widespread appeal Dadasaheb Palke advertised in local newspaper and took his shows to hinterland often by bullock

cart for screening to rural audiences who were made to sit on ground before portable screen.[71]

The efforts made by pioneering filmmakers and their choice of religious subject gave sanctity to this medium along with creating an awe of seeing Gods in flesh and blood. Many films began to be made on similar lines. These films are casement for all caste and creed people for accessing Hindu religious chronicles and propounding philosophies. Such films are representation of indigenous mythological incredibility and also embodies nationalist message though traditional tales presented through intriguing new technology. The strict censorship of British authorities, ancient stories of demon-slaying heroes could serve as allegorical critiques of the colonial Raj.[72] Consequently, film *Sairnadhree* based on disrobing of Draupadi from Mahabharata was widely interpreted as a critique of the policies of the Viceroy Lord Curzon.[73]

Other producers also began to make movies on similar themes as those being popular and proved to be money makers. Himanushu Rai through his Bombay Talkies production collaborated with British instructional Film Ltd (U.K.) and Germans (Ufa) with a new perspective of making movies on orientalist themes that were clearly meant to capitalise on the westerner's fascination for the exotic and mysterious East. He made film *A Throw of Dice* that Satyajit Ray described as "a cross between Arabian Nights and the Mahabharata".[74] The outlook of film makers like Himanshu Rai towards Indian mythological theme was rather westernised.[75] Their choice of mythological theme was to entice western audience and get them accustomed with Hindustan's mystifying and moralistic past. Another contemporary film production house that made films both in Hind and Marathi language was Prabhat Film Company[76] founded in Kolhapur and then moved to Poona. Their first assignment was *Karna - The true battler* along with *Ayodhya ka Raja, Jalti Nishani, Gopal Krishna, Sant Dyneshwar* in Hindi. In post independence period S. Fatelal made *Jagatguru Shankaracharya*, *Ayodhyapati*.[77] In later period one of the movies that gained extreme popularity was *Maa Santoshi, Vaishnav Devi* and so on.

Mythology continued to be produced and reproduced such as tale of *Savitri* was filmed at least eight times by 1937.[78]

Likewise, the film reviews of that time also carried commentary on the projection of Hinduism, caste system reflected on the screen. One such instance is of film *Bharati Mata* where the reviewer Manohar Lall Gupta suggests that 'Curious still

is to see that a Brahmin Pandit is seen bowing before Behari a non - brahmin. The Hindu manners and customs seem to have been ignored here'.[79] Another movie *Bhakta Dhruv* was recommended for viewing as 'there was enough to see in it particularly with the mist of devotion in the Hindu eyes'.[80] Thus the series of dwelling among religious themes continued. Mythology was generally considered to be religious films and there were any hardly any distinction done between religious and devotional. The mythological and devotionals constituted the most distinctive early product of Indian cinema, one that "earmarked for the Indian film an area of subject matter that won for it an immediate and powerful hold in India and neighbouring countries". These films are said to have laid down the operative form and content.[81] It is important to note that these themes made films 'pure' who would otherwise consider this medium as polluting and earn larger audiences especially women.

Magazine *Filmland* ran an article entitled 'Devotional cult in Indian Talkies' authored by 'an Indian' elaborated on mythological themes and their presentation in Indian cinema during 1930s. It stated that, 'the unchanging east is still a believer in spiritualism. The reason that India an eastern country, is so fond of epics and mythological subjects is mainly because of its cinematographic treatment. The mass of Indian film fans will adore the director who introduces miracles. The heroes, heroines or saint character have great hold on the popular mind from the time immemorial. The roots of these movies are in its spiritual appeal and any rationalism or realism does not apply, particularly for the illiterates or credulous people with which the major part in India was populated.'[82] Interestingly, M K Gandhi is also known to submit to watch movie *Ram Rajya* the only Hindi movie he is known to have ever seen.

Other major component of Hindu religious films is the ones made on the life of *Bhakti* saints and prevalent customs in Hinduism. They remain to be popular with the masses and subjects got appended with addition of newer saints in modern times. This devotional genre from *Sant Tukaram, Gora Kumbhar* of Bhakti movement to modern period *Shirdi ke Saibaba*, *Shegaon ke Gajanan Maharaj* and so on.

In post independence period two fractions of film making receive prominence, namely Nehruvian modernism and another strong *Hindutvavad*. Hinduism is upheld by film critiques especially Baburao Patel who write disparagingly about how the mythologies and devotionals are handled by filmmakers. In *Filmindia* magazine editorial he states, 'Of all the deities inherited by the human race through ages, the

Hindu gods and goddesses are perhaps the slandered the most by film producers in India. 35 years of this mercenary vandalism has completely changed the face of Hindu gods. Never before the epic stories of any nation are distorted as has been with Hindu mythology... With our Hindu gods stripped off their spiritual tributes with the philosophy of the Hindu life and concept of divinity distorted beyond imagination no wonder our people are heading towards Communism.' [83] A call is given to fellow people following Hinduism to raise objection over vandalised projections of Hindu Gods and saints and popular ministers are cried out to protect the religious institutions and culture thus retrain from hurting religious sentiments.[84] Conspicuously, the article was incorporated by the prominent picture of *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh* leader Gowalkar Guruji with caption 'Every new leader is a symbol of the hope and frustrations of the people and a symptom of the change that is imminent in a nation's life. So is Guruji Gowalkar, the Sarasanghchalak of the R.S.S, who has been recently thrilling millions all over the country with his message of hope for the revival of Hindu culture and traditions'.[85] The article ends with a verse from Bhagvat-Gita. In another censuring essay a strong objection is taken on Hindu women in films addressing their husband as 'Nath' or 'Swamy'. This address was termed as neither Hindu nor Indian with no such reference appearing in Hindu religious scriptures or related books.[86]

In 1948 *Filmindia* magazine gives a complete list of films that went under censor's scissor. It publishes a detailed list of films gone for certification, what is found objectionable in them and went under censor's scissor. For instance, in movie *Detective* or *Jasus* made by Kismet Pictures, scenes where the comedian puts photo of a cinema actress over the picture of God Hanuman or Maruti is to be removed. Similarly in part 4 all reference to caste community as Chamar or cobbler and Bhangis or sweeper is to be omitted. [87] Similarly, entire song '*Jan gai vo nirlaj kanha lampat nimpat anari*' from *Matwala Shayar Ram Joshi* made by Rajkamal Kalamandir is made to delete. Likewise, shot showing Maratha Sardar offering Hindu girls to Muslim rulers in *Jai Bhavani* made by Prabhakar Pictures is to be omitted. In movie *Samrat Ashoka* made by Bombay Cinetone all shots showing women in the arms of men is to be removed and Brahmin and his daughter are to be shown as being given two strokes of whip only. In the movie *Chitor Vijay* made by Murari Pictures the scene of *Johar* or self immolation of women after their husband's death is to be curtailed and only two or three women sacrificing themselves into a blazing fire is

permitted to be shown, similarly scene showing the burnt remains of Rajput women after sacrifice is to be omitted.[88] Thus we may infer that religious, communal sentiments are safeguarded and more secular approach is adopted for healthy entertainment in the period. It is interesting to note that still the same concerns are shown and considered.

After India receives its independence, cinema industry ascertains certain codes for film making. With a view to ensuring that the cinema industry plays its proper role in the building up of a healthy national life, the Bombay Board of Film Censors offered a detailed suggestion to the producers. Although entertainment is considered as a chief aim of a film, Board averred only a healthy type of entertainment, which deprecated what is harmful and prompt what is helpful and can be expected to regenerate and build positive public opinion and lead people towards better social thinking and ultimately a better life.

The new codes are classified under seven heads – (1) Religion and Faith (2) People's Ideals and Morals (3) History and Mythology (4) Law (5) Crime (6) Sex and (7) Miscellaneous. Particularly, under **Religion and Faiths** code ascertained are (i) Profanity to God, or to religions or faiths or to their founders or accredited ministers shall not be permitted. (ii) All Religions and religious ceremonies shall be treated with respect ; Under **People's Ideals and Morals** some codes included are (i) Ridiculing or indicting whole nation, its race or people, its citizenry, its creeds, history and culture, its national emblems such as flags or national songs, its nation builders, living or dead will not be permitted (ii) Costumes and behaviour of characters shall not be presented in travesties so as to cause ridicule, contempt or hatred for the whole class or community which the characters represent (iii) Noble ideas such as truth, justice, chastity, etc shall not be ridiculed (iv) Treatment of low and disgusting aspects of life, necessary to show evil, shall be guided by good taste and shall not offend the finer susceptibilities of the public (v) Salacious incidents, obscene, ambiguous and irrelevant titles, obscenity in talk or songs or gestures, distasteful or prejudicial to good taste shall not be permitted (vi) No picture which will lower the moral standards of those who see it shall be presented; Similarly, under **History and Mythology** codes are (i) Presentation of history, mythology legends and classical works shall as far as possible be based on recognised documentary evidence (ii) Characters of Indian or other mythologies of gods and goddesses historical heroes or of sacred personalities shall not be presented in a frivolous manner (iii) Avoidance of

anachronisms in historical setting, costumes, music etc. (iv) Obscene or undesirable historical facts or similar mythological episodes shall not be presented. And under **Law** among other codes mentioned was (i) Controversial politics leading to class hatred, violence or disorder shall not be permitted.[89] Thus the undue liberty of film making on religious and mythological themes is censored and moralist code of conduct is imposed for safeguarding community sentiments. Interestingly by 1949 religious films are not taken on their face value and are reviewed with reminder of previous Production Code set up by the Government, for example film *Ram Baan.* [90]

Hindu subjects handled in films begin to become very sensitive with passing time. However, epical remain to be special preference of filmmakers. The formula and thematic movies begin to use it as their basic premises and built storylines on its underline philosophy. Film makers such as Shyam Benegal fashion a contemporary story from the Indian epic the Mahabharata by playing with the idea of archetypes. Benegal says, "The Indian mind creates stereotypes from essential archetypes. The Mahabharata is said to contain all of India, you see them in real life, and they are essential archetypes". His movie *Kalyug* represents the last age or epoch Kalyug, the dark age of sin, violence and corruption, after which the world will cleanse itself. Another Kumar Shahani's *Tarang* too attempts to reclaim the ancient epic in Marxist critique of industrialism for contemporary interpretation. The films fail at box office but became inspirations for future filmmakers. Film scholar Sumita Chakravorty considered these films 'as efforts to reclaim for the cinema, India's ancient epic and dramatic traditions, to wrest them away from the domain of the 'mythological film', these films are self-consciously 'academic'.[91] Another observance is that these films are set in urbanised high society that general masses felt difficult to relate to and the characters are contemporised whereas only ideals could have been adapted.[92] These films resist presentation of epics in its purely religious connotations and attempts to find contemporary meaning in it. Thus they earn limited, intellectual viewership and hardly mass audience.

However, with an exception an epical experiment performed by filmmaker Kundan Shah proves very effective and now holds a cult status. His path breaking black satire on corruption *Jane bhi Dau Yaron* had iconic climax scene inspired from Mahabharata. This is a fine example of how epics can be interpreted and reinterpreted as per convenience of the benefactor.[93]

In later period the showman Subhash Ghai explores the basis of epics in his films like *Ram-Lakhan*, *Khalanayak* where main character is called Ram*, Kisna : The warrior poet* and *Trimurti*. "Indians are epical people. We cannot live without these stories and we have been following them for the past 5,000 years. Whether it was Valmiki or Tulsidas, who could tell stories better than the Ramayana? Hence, the cinema in our country has been deeply influenced by these epics. My stories too were inspired by Ramayana and Mahabharata. All my characters were based on Krishna," Ghai reveals.[94] Likewise, Barjatyas through their Rajshri Productions make films on Lord Krishna that made actor Sachin a star, their another film *Raadha aur Seeta* became very popular and their torch bearer Suraj Barjatya's films like *Hum Apke Hai Kaun*[95], *Hum Saath Saath Haina* completely based the family drama on epic Ramayana. Another art cum commercial stylistic films Agnivarsha, an adaptation of Girish Karnad's *Fire and the Rain* proved to be less popular as it indirectly dealt with the epic, openly converse and impressed more on a woman's sexual desires.

It has become customary cinematic world named their characters as per one of the attribute of the Hindu mythological character such as *Ram* for straight forward and honest, *Krishna Kanhaiya* for mischievous yet sanctimonious, *Seeta* for obedient good lady, *Kaushalya, Janaki* for good virtuous mother whereas *Shakuni, Kaikayi*, *Duryodhan* are avoided for white characters.

The religious implications have profound effect in Hindi cinema and it keeps reinforcing Hindu idealism and sometimes ritualism.[96] Because the basic philosophy of life and moralistic codes remain the same films based on religious themes keep attracting audiences. The message from *Bhagwat Geeta* is reasserted. These films have free access to all and so caste and religious barriers are broken. However the content becomes controversial at times if particularly Hindu religious sentiments were 'hurt' or religious message misrepresented[97]. This becomes more illustrious when films project caste and/or women with anti-Hindu sentiments or a particular fraction of society not as reformers or aide but tormentor, for example, *Bandit Queen, Water*. Hindu reactionaries come strongly out in these cases and sometimes a law and order situation is created.

Thus, films from its commencement has adapted Hindu philosophy, stories and ideals and continue to do the same as basic structure and value system of the society in general remain unchanged. The concepts of Hinduism such as triumph of good over evil, kin love, virtuous behaviour, clean character, respect for elders,

societal hierarchy make interesting subject for the films and are perennially admired and paid for.

4.2.3.1 Caste system and Indian cinema

The films in pre-independence period did explore the subject of caste system. 1925 *Maharchi Por* (Marathi) is a bold attempt made in Indian cinema. This is an influential reformist social story about an untouchable girl who marries a Brahmin. The film draws influence from a stand of Ibsenite[98] naturalism. This is a brief occasion for the convergence of Left progressive with the mainstream Hindu reformism.[99]

Hindi films may have boasted of a reformist *Achhut Kanya*, the love story of a Harijan girl and Brahmin boy, very early on in its life but there has been few Dalit stories and characters down the hundred years of cinema. Bimal Roy's *Sujata* tug at our heart strings with its portrayal of a the pain and dilemmas of an untouchable girl growing up in a Brahmin family, the untouchable Kachra spun the ball to our fascination in Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* and *Aarakshan* had an utterly unconvincing Saif Ali Khan as the Dalit fobbing off caste biases despite being educated and empowered. However, the more credible and sustained explorations of caste issues have been in off mainstream, parallel films like Shyam Benegal's *Ankur* , *Nishant* and *Samar*, Satyajit Ray's TV film *Sadgati*, Prakash Jha's *Damul*, Gautam Ghosh's *Paar*, Arun Kaul's *Diksha*, Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen* and so on. The crowning effort is Jabbar Patel made biopic *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar* with south Indian actor Mammootty in the lead.[100]

The above mentioned films in Hindi did explore the subject of caste system in different ways and discussed detail in **Chapter Five**. In colonial India, two films in Hindi has touched upon the caste problem is a significant way – Nitin Bose's *Chandidas* and V. Shantaram's *Dharmatma*. Another Hindi film that became a major hit and is based on the delicate theme of untouchability is before mentioned *Achhut Kannya*. Devika Rani and Ashok Kumar are the two leads in the film. The storyline revolve around the caste prejudice and class barriers that prevent the marriage between Kasturi, a Harijan or a Dalit girl, and Pratap, a Brahmin youth – both childhood friends and in love. The film ends in a tragedy.[101]

In post-independence India, the most acclaimed classic film till this day remains to be *Sujata*. The film enjoys the status of a classic both at national and

international retrospectives of Bimal Roy's films and of Indian films. Its mechanisms of pleasure, blend of realism and idealism, and the humanitarian vision that it embodies denote a powerful, albeit fading currently in the symbolic universe of the 1950s. In and through *Sujata*, many of the oppositions that sustain between poverty and wealth, renunciation and worldliness, *dharma* and *adharma*, desire and law, the Brahmin and the Dalit – are worked out in terms of the family-as-nation/nation-as-family ideal.[102]

With the advent of style of new wave cinema, Shyam Benegal's *Ankur* (1974) and *Nishant* (1975) deals with the oppression by the high castes. The trauma of a Dalit woman is reflected by the character of Lakshmi, portrayed effectively by Shabana Azmi in *Ankur*. The film provides a deeper insight into the ugliness of Indian caste system, particularly visible in the rural areas. The film takes a deep look into socio-economic exploitation of lower class and gives a call for change through rebellion. His later film *Manthan* also portrays the caste divide in the rural pockets of the country. All the three films, without glamorizing the caste issues, focuse mainly on how caste plays havoc with the lives of the low-caste who are already crippled by poverty and illiteracy. These films bring Benegal's interest in power relations to the fore. The four-cornered struggle — among the untouchables, the traditional middle-class, the rising rural capitalists and the new cooperatives led by middle-class agents of change — all this is traced with a political consciousness.[103]

Prakash Jha's *Damul* is one of the boldest films that seamlessly explored the caste and capitalist politics in some pockets of rural India like Bihar. The onslaughts on the oppressed come like a whiplash. An entire Dalit *basti* is held to ransom; the *basti* is *gheraoed* to stop the residents from casting their votes, subjecting them to the mandatory repayment of debts they had never taken, forcing them to steal cattle for the landlord who leaves them to die if and when caught, but not at his doorstep. The final blow comes when Sanjeevana, an innocent Harijan from the Dalit *basti* is sentenced to be hanged to death because he turned wise to the landlord's wicket ways. Many years later, the same Jha make *Aarakshan*. The film purported to be a socio-political drama based on the controversies revolving around caste-based reservations in Indian government jobs and in educational institutions. Priyadarshan's *Aakrosh* dealt with honour killings in a pocket of Uttar Pradesh where the law and the police play havoc instead of implementing order and peace, the caste-schism is also played out between the two investigating officers, namely Pratap Kumar and Sidhhant

Chaturvedi who are brought in to investigate the mystery behind three young men who have gone missing. Pratap is a Dalit while Siddhant is from an upper caste and the two often fall out because their perspectives on the oppression are different. The film takes a peek into the horrors of caste system and power politics played by higher caste. However, the high stakes failed when the film turned out to be a box office disaster. The empowered portrayal of Dalit class is shown in Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *Eklavya* where the film presented the radical and 'new' Dalit in the shape and form of a bold police officer Pannalal Chauhar who not only asserts his Dalit identity but also bristles against the caste based feudal oppression that still pervades in parts of Rajasthan. Similarly many other films dealt with the theme of caste discrimination and aimed to present the issue in realist way. These films intends] to propose a discussion on the tribulations created due to caste discrimination.[104]

In the South the situation has been relatively better though the caste issue has also often come intertwined with larger themes of poverty and rural feudalism. According to film historian Theodore Baskaran the silent films and early talkies were committed to espousing Gandhian principle of anti-untouchability. In the 30s and 40s at least three Tamil films, all titled *Nandanar*, are made on a Dalit saint. *Tyagbhoomi* has a revolutionary shot of a Gandhian priest opening the doors of a temple to a Dalit to offer him refuge from storm. *Harijana Singham* is another path breaking film on the issue. Cheran's *Bharathi Kannamma* did portray a love story between a lower caste worker and zamindar's or landlord's sister. References to Dalits and B R Ambedkar can also be seen in films as recent as *Naadodigal*.

B.V. Karanth's film *Chomana Dudi* from Karnataka showcased the plight of untouchables working in the coffee estates near Chikmagalur. The film is based on 1930s novel by Dr. Shivrama Karanth inspired by the Gandhian idealism of the time and presented the story of the disintegration of an 'untouchable' family through the eyes of Choma, the central protagonist, who wants a small plot of land to cultivate from the Brahmin Sankappaiah. The film presents Choma's tribalism under the same Hindu umbrella as that of the Brahmin landlord, Sankappaih and untouchability is attacked. Choma the protagonist is lured with a piece of land in exchange of conversion to Christianity. However, he denies this offer and ends in tragic death. The film tries to project social and political subjugation of Harijans.[105] The film received Golden Lotus or Swarna Kamal National award for best film in 1975.

In recent times, though limited but there has developed writings on Dalit cinema. Suraj Yengde presents an elaborate discussion in his article 'Dalit cinema', where he argues that the mainstream film industry in India delivers the desires and principles of market and society by excluding a Dalit framework outright – a problem now being addressed by the entry of an explicitly Dalit cinema. He believed that film influences our perception of the intersection between the aesthetics of art and society Yengde states that compared to similar liberation or resistance movement since 1960s, Dalit cinema can be understood as a celluloid movement of visual creative art, relating to Dalit subjectivities, inspiring socio-cultural criticism and an universal monument of time and space.[106]

4.2.4 Views and Opinions of pioneering policy makers in India, who conceptualised the reformist role of Indian Cinema

4.2.4.1 Bal Gandhar Tilak and Indian Films

B G Tilak had great influence on early film makers in India namely Dadasaheb Phalke, Baburao Painter and Bhalji Pendharkar. B G Tilak the leader of the extremist faction of the Indian National Congress took the lead in establishing connection between cinema and the national movement. B G Tilak whole heartedly supported the art of film making and strived for getting financial help for them. B G Tilak considered this new found art to be a major tool in bringing awareness and inculcate nationalist ideas among fellow countrymen. Film maker like Dadasaheb Phalke was closely associated with nationalist hero B G Tilak, who also realized that the British would censor the political unless it was presented under the guise of the religion. Phalke became a staunch supporter of the *Swadeshi* movement[107] launched by B G Tilak and taking him further on these lines was suggested to launch a film company which he proposed could be called the Hindustan Cinema-Film Company with American assistance.[108] As Shoesmith argues, this early cinema mixed art, politics and capital. Dadasaheb Phakle's writing and interviews show that he was interested in film making as an act of nationalism.[109]

The biography on Dadasaheb Phalke mentions that, in 1905 when Hindustan rumbled with the Partition of Bengal, on a visit to Poona, in the same year Dadasaheb Phalke attended a speech given by a leading national figure B G Tilak. He had heard about him and avidly read his articles in newspaper *Kesari*.[110]

The public celebration of Ganesh Chaturthi and the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj were his brainchild; but hearing him in person, on that rain swept day in Poona, was an unforgettable experience! It was impossible to remain unmoved. He spoke with unbridled passion of self-rule for Indians and *Swaraj*[111] as a birth right. From that moment on Dada's heart was not in his job with Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). He did not wish to work for a government that denied Indians their basic rights. At the same time he recognised that he had no political leaning either. He wanted the freedom to create, paint and just be. He pored over Tilak's writings. Swayed by his clarions call and determined to do his bit for the cause he espoused, Dada became obsessed by one thought alone for the next few months : Swadesh! Swadeshi! Swaraj![112] As Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal also were up in arms a circular arrived from ASI headquarter that no government servant was permitted to attend political lectures or rallies of any sort. They could do so only by forfeiting their employment. Dadasaheb quit his job in few days.[113]

When Dadasaheb Phalke made his first short film 'Growth of a Pea Plant' he received a comment saying that Dada when planted the pea, he planted the seed of the Swadeshi film industry in India. Thus, Lokmanya Tilak's country's 'self-made' agenda was seen taking shape.[114] John Lyden opines that Phalke was closely associated with nationalist leader Lokmanya Tilak, who realised that the British would censor the political unless it was presented under the guise of the religion. Phalke was a staunch supporter of Swadeshi movement.[115]

As Dadasaheb progressed with his career and made his first feature film Raja Harishchandra, B G Tilak sent a personal message of congratulations. Although he could not meet Dadasaheb, he urged him to speak to *Kesari*. This was a great honour. B G Tilak's newspaper addressed serious social and political issues and this invitation meant the Swadeshi cinema was about to get its due recognition. On 19th August 1913, news paper *Kesari* published Dadasaheb's interview and there was a fresh round of congratulations.[116] News paper *Kesari* gave following excerpt for the film under the heading 'Swadeshi Moving Pictures'. [117] "For the last two months, the shows of 'Swadeshi' moving pictures, made by Mr. Phalke, are being arranged in Bombay, and it is learned that people like them very much. These moving pictures were brought to Poona last week, and the shows were arranged in the Baliwala Theatre in Bhavanipeth. On this occasion, Mr. Phalke himself was present in Poona, and our representative went to meet him."[118]

Satish Bahadur the former Director of Film and Television Institute of India writes that, 'when Raja Harishchandra was released in 1913, the newspaper *Kesari* was one of the first nationalist newspapers to review it and acclaim it as India's first *Swadeshi* film. *Kesari* a Marathi language newspaper founded by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak the eminent Indian political agitation, was primarily concerned with political and social events. That a newspaper of that character took note of the emergence of the Indian film is an interesting fact. Further clue is provided in the very title of the passage: '*Swadeshi* Moving Pictures'. *Kesari*'s writer and Phalke himself consider the beginning of film making in India as a *Swadeshi* endeavour. The concept of *Swadeshi* involved national political prestige and economic self sufficiency. *Swadeshi* implied among other things production of Indian goods by Indians and for Indians. This nationalist attitude towards film is a strong streak which has run through Indian film history. Even now there is a tendency to plead for a natural 'protection' for the Indian film, irrespective of its artistic quality simply on the ground that it is Indian. It is interesting embryo of this attitude right in the beginning of film-making in India'. [119]

Dadasaheb Phalke's *Swadeshi* proclivity could be observed from Phalke's writing in Navyug[120], "My films are *Swadeshi*, in the sense that the capital, ownership, employees, and the stories, are *Swadeshi*. The material and equipment required are simply not available in India at any cost. They are all foreign. I have read one of my fellow film maker's advertising his film as 'completely *Swadeshi*'. I am not able to understand the meaning of 'completely *Swadeshi* simply by using higher and higher superlatives. Oh India! You have already become the laughing-stock of the world, and the variety of types in the printing press is helping in this. The same advertisement says, 'made by a person who has not gone abroad'. This phrase filled nay heart with admiration for that man. I have never dared to do that I have been abroad thrice. Yes, I have the desire to go there for the fourth time, as it is necessary. There is no end to observation, education, and self-improvement. In a way, the phrase 'made without going abroad', is serving the national cause. We, the lowly traders outside Poona, have to be proud of the fact that India has been ready for Home Rule by this sentence, and will have to get inspired !"[121]

During the times of acute financial crisis that Dadsaheb Phalke was going through B G Tilak appealed to Paisa Fund and activists of *Swadeshi* movement who were now clamouring for Home Rule. But though B G Tilak himself interceded on his

behalf, convinced as he was about his venture and the philosophy behind it, Dadasaheb did not receive any money from his *Swadeshi* enterprise. Despite B G Tilak's enthusiastic support no help was forthcoming. The persons concerned with *Swadeshi* endeavour promised to help only at the end of the First World War when they expected to achieve Home Rule.[122]

Further, Dadasaheb Phalke elaborating on film making, Paisa Fund, scheme he launched, unenthusiastic response from other activist in Home Rule Movement and financial crisis wrote, 'It was a disgrace that on the publication of this scheme, which invited loans from one rupee upwards, with proper interest, I got only three supporters from Bombay and Poona, the two most vital cities of Maharashtra, like three diamond chips mixed in the shower of stones flung on me by people who were merely rendering lip-service to me. One of these three also wrote a long article in the *Daily Sandesh* the newspaper about my scheme, and appealed to the 15,000 heroes of the Home Rule to give me five rupees each. Phalke was not a stranger to these people, and his mission was already well-known to them'. [123]

'They were unable to give more, and were ashamed of giving less; but they had the democracy to justify their not giving anything at all. A very prominent leader of the Home Rule League assured me, 'You should first become a member of the Home Rule League. Then, when we get Home Rule, there will be no problem at all of capital for you.' Meanwhile, the Paisa Fund had decided to help me. A town which collected about 150 rupees for the Paisa Fund at the time of the *Dussehra* festival announced in the newspaper that it will contribute 1,000 rupees instead, if the sum was to be invested in enterprises like Phalke's Films'.[124]

'Two or three organisers of the Paisa Fund were very favourably inclined to me, and I do not know what prevented them from giving me the money about which they had already taken a decision. Or perhaps I could guess the reason, viz., four people working together can achieve results, but if ten people indulge in mere talking, nothing is likely to emerge. But such is my insane obsession with my hopes and ideals for this profession, and such is the love for my country, that even though I have no hopes whatsoever of getting any capital, I keep on accumulating quarterly compound interest. The curious thing is that my employees are equally obsessed with the same ideals. However, the worthy people of the *Swadeshi* movement took no pity on us'.[125]

Desperately, Phalke published his call to fellow countrymen stating that he pursued the dream and vision of making Swadeshi films in India. He yearn to be debt

free to build up this industry in India, to make films that not only entertain but are used to educate, films that serve a social purpose. On 17th May 1917, B G Tilak visited Dadasaheb's factory. He was in Nasik to preside over the Bombay Province meeting of the Indian National Congress. He believed in Dadasaheb's cause and invited him to speak at the meeting. There were more than 300 people in the audience. Dadasaheb spoke for 20 minutes and was heard out in pin-drop silence. Just as he was concluding, so overcome was he with emotion that his eyes filled with tears and he choked. People were so moved by this speech that they donated small amount on the spot.[126]

Dadasaheb Phalke's dream of establishing a *Swadeshi* film industry finally got realised. He had always wanted to establish a pan-Indian film industry and he had chosen his stories accordingly. From the beginning, since 1912, his films had carried subtiltles in English and Hindi and not in Marathi. The process of nation building was being aided in no small measure by the film industry which was such a wonderful, vibrant and dynamic means of reaching out and communication. B G Tilak, ever his mentor and guide, agreed with Dadasaheb's vision. It was B G Tilak who introduced him to financers Ratanseth Tata and Seth Manmohandas Ramji. They floated the ideas of starting private limited company and some projects settled Dadasaheb's earlier debts. The Phalke Company was established with these initiatives evaluating at Rupees Three Lakhs.[127] Thus, B G Tilak was a great support to Dadasaheb at various stages of his career and eventually during the infant state of Indian film industry.

During the latter years Dadasaheb decided to write a play called *Rangbhoomi*. The meeting of the All India Congress Committee was going to be held in Benaras in May 1920 and B G Tilak was attending. Dadasaheb looked forward to meeting him and seeking his views on the latest endeavour. He was not disappointed. B G Tilak approved of the excerpts Dadasaheb read to him and promised to inaugurate it himself, irrespective of when and where it would be staged. Sadly, this never happened as B G Tilak the guide and mentor died that August leaving behind millions of mourners. [128]

Baburao Painter a renowned film maker from Maharashtra too had profound influence of B G Tilak over him and was consistently supported. His film *Sairandhari* established Baburao Painter as a director of quality meaningful films and clarified his views on the potential of cinema as a medium of mass awakening. Baburao painter balanced his anti colonial nationalism with his concern with local politics.

Sairandhari allegorical paid public homage to B G Tilak, who he invited to the film's Poona premier while the realistic embodied an articulation between the sentiments of his royal patrons and his own caste. B G Tilak was the supporter of the nexus between caste and art. The support continued and Painter's patriotic toning picture *Sinhagad* appealed to B G Tilak so much that he conferred upon him the title of 'Cinema Kesari'[129].

The title bestowed upon Baburao Painter by B G Tilak was probably another goad. Like most Indians, he was sympathetically inclined towards the Indian freedom struggle which had eventually crystallised in M K Gandhi's Non Co-operation movement of 1921-22. He realised that the genre of the historical movie could be used to spread the message of nationalism since it was the perfect blend of entertainment, education and message. Towards that end, Painter set about making a series of historical which had but one aim: to highlight the ongoing struggle for Indian independence in a manner so implicit that the then British censors would be foxed.[130]

Chitratapasvi, Bhalji Pendharkar another stalwart in Marathi cinema industry came in contact with B G Tilak and secured a job of writing in his newspaper *Kesari*. Bhalji who mainly made historical films came in contact with Rajguru, Lala Lajpat Rai Atul Sen, Chandrashekhar Azad and was instrumental in installing Chhatrapati Shivaji's statue on the place of Governor Sir Leslie Wilson.[131] Following on the path shown by B G Tilak, Pendharkar made films that glorified Shivaji's history and resurrected feeling of pride amongst fellow Marathi speaking community and their glorious past.

Thus, B G Tilak was an intense adherent of Cinema and believed potentiality of this medium to bring awareness. The cinematic creations of the time were well supported by him by making gracious presence at premiers and related functions and cognizance taken by his roaring newspaper *Kesari*. For B G Tilak it was a *Swadeshi* endeavour and remained to be a significant tool for arousing nationalist spirit among Indians.

4.2.4.2 Sir Radhakrishnan on Indian Films (March 1942)

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan attended the premier of movie *Bharat Milap* and perhaps it was the first time that the grace of his distinguished presence was lent to an Indian picture. In an interview to Film India magazine, Sir Radhakrishnan gave his opinion on Films and role it may play in modern India. According to him a picture has to be made not only spectacular but interesting for the masses to be entertained. He

was aware that mythological themes appealed more to Hindustanis in view of the inherent traditions of religion and devotion in the mind of average Indian. He inferred that, consequently mythological pictures in whatever language they be, had a wider appeal as the relevant incidents were recognised and appreciated by masses all over the India. He felt that Indians were getting a little too much of this mythology and suggested that inspite of retaining ancient ideals the filmmakers must find parallels in the life of modern people and the modern conditions. He stated that it's necessary to get out of the mythology and saints in the various provinces and that then thirty years old industry must give to the nation pictures around the daily life and its social and economic problem.[132]



Figure 1 Dr. S. Radhakrishna attending premier of the mythological movie *Bharat Milap*. Courtesy : http://www.vijaybhatt.net/spotlight_phase2.html. Accessed : 24 July 2017.

Sir Radhakrishnan further explained that films should not give up on the ancient ideals of piety, loyalty patriotism, duty, brotherly love or any other fundamental human emotions and feelings, but to be more instructive should portray them against the modern background. He further emphasized that India's history both mediaeval and modern will supply several themes for biographical pictures. Similarly, screening of Travelogues, documentaries newsreels and shorts must also begin as they do it in America. Sir Radhakrishnan appreciated the status of film industry and suggested that it should not be given a high-brow attitude. The films have come to stay for all time and everybody should now see that they get an excellent deal out of them.[133]

Sir Radhakrishnan on reformist role of cinema opined that, in every country film industry can be a best means of propaganda for the crusade or mission of maintaining international peace and brotherhood of humanity. Pictures can be put to no limit for fulfilment of this ideal. Any film studio can give this vibrant message in all languages and primarily in the pictorial language understood by all. For him films

were a far more effective means for propaganda than even radio and literature and needs to be awakened to this duty. [134]

4.2.4.3 Mahatma Gandhi and Films (May 1942)

M K Gandhi's views mattered immensely in post 1920 and his statements rather became an 'ism'. M K Gandhi views on films seem largely debatable and reserved. However, they were enough to define this mass media as good or bad and if it was capable of playing a reformist role. M K Gandhi disapproved with cinema. It's interesting to note that in 40s M K Gandhi agenda was primarily to eradicate caste distinction and give equal status to all classes in Indian society. There certainly was difference of opinion between the Mahatma and prominent leader of depressed classes Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on this issue. In a heated debate between M K Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on the latter's article called 'Annihilation of Caste' we find Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar quoting film *Dharmatma* to explain his point[135] on work of saints in eradication of Caste system in Hindustan. Dr. Ambedkar argued that "And even saint Eknath who now figures in the film *'Dharmatma'* as a hero for having shown courage to touch the untouchables and dine with them, did so not because he was opposed to caste and untouchability but because he felt that the pollution caused thereby could be washed away by a bath in the sacred water of river Ganges"[136]. The film was well received by the audience but M K Gandhi continued to un-recognize importance of cinema as a reforming unit.

In October 1939 the well established writer, thinker and critic K. Ahmad Abbas published a public letter to Mahatma Gandhi alias Bapu on Cinema.[137] K A Abbas reasoned to write this message to Mahatma for the scrutiny and his approval for the new toy young generation has learnt to play – the Cinema! M K Gandhi two statements made in 1939 had surprised and pained him as Cinema was mentioned in slightly contemptuous terms. M K Gandhi had asserted at one place to have never seen pictures[138] and in another statement included Cinema among evils with gambling, horse-racing etc. and would like to banish. K A Abbas states that these statements coming from Mahatma are of great concern for the great position he holds not only in Hindustan but the world. Even the slightest expression of M K Gandhi opinion carries much weight with the millions of people. K A Abbas appealed that due to Mahatma's anti statements about Cinema one of the world's most useful inventions would be allowed to be discarded or left alone to be abused. Abbas went

further to explain the goods and evils of scientific invention illustrating radio, wireless, aeroplanes and stated that inventions are not bad in themselves but unscrupulous persons exploit them for undesirable purposes. He proclaimed that Cinema should not be alone branded as evil as and when properly used can be an instrument of much good in world. K. A. Abbas further states that there seems to be a general impression that Cinema films exclusively deals with sex and love and it's largely true in India but in foreign countries they perform relevant social and educational role. He explains that in most western countries visual instructions in Science, Natural History, Geography, History etc. is imparted through the screen to supplement the text books and lectures. Short films on diverse topics such as Lives of great persons, Travel, Household management, Hygeine, Cooking and so on are shown with entertainment films. Abbas explains that how films like *March of Times* provides intelligent information on some vital political problems of the world such as American Foreign policy, Japan's Problem, The New Turkey and so on. K A Abbas adds that Indian films such as *Sant Tukaram, Sant Tulsidas, Vidyapati, Janma Bhoomi Dharti Mata, Admi* are exceptional and even visually strictest moralist and if Mahatma saw them would have nothing but praise for them.[139]

K. A. Abbas adhere to his validation and state that National movement led by Gandhi has directly caused much purification and regeneration in the realm of Indian cinema. By giving back to Indians their national self-respect Gandhi has caused a tremendous cultural upsurge and revitalization of national art which has been naturally reflected in better and more socially useful films. Abbas comments on cleansing of Indian films with involvement of more number of honest and responsible people. He appeals to Gandhi by stating, 'You are great soul, Bapu. In your heart there is no room for prejudice. Give this little toy of ours, the Cinema, which is not so useless as it looks, a little of your attention and bless it with a smile of toleration.'[140]

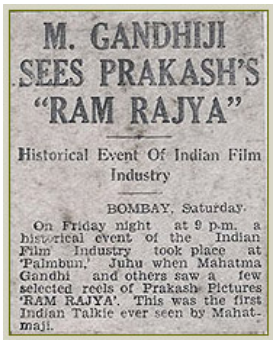
In the newspaper *Harijan* published on the 3rd May 1942 an interview between Mahatma Gandhi and a press correspondent was published. In an reply to one of the questions Gandhi said that the interviewer will be surprised to hear that he has never listened in to a radio, nor have he ever been to a cinema. The young correspondent amazed by this statement further asked Gandhi if he thinks that these things are bad. Gandhi replied, that he may not say so but, he may say that "cinema films are often bad". The *Filmindia* Magazine reproduced this interview and made a bold comment

that they dare not say that this votary of truth is telling a white lie but wonder how the old Saint of Sevagram can call a thing often bad when he has never seen it.[141]

The Editor's mail section in *Filmindia* carried a question by a film enthusiast and reader S. M. E. Raju from Bangalore states, 'In Harijan Mahatama Gandhi writes: "If I began to organize picketing in respect of them (the evils of cinema) I should lose my caste, lose my Mahatmaship". [142] He says that the cinema is an evil, but he says he cannot fight it'. Baburao Patel, the editor replies to this question and says, 'Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps the greatest living man and world respects him as a great social reformer and patriot whereas India look upon him as a saint. However he ridicules himself while talking about something that he practically knows nothing of it. As Gandhi has himself confessed that he hasn't seen films, Mahatma cannot know how far art of entertainment has progressed and what good it is doing in everybody's life. The editor further states that Mahatmaji's own pet obsession of having Hindustani as the mother tongue of the nation has been achieved through the medium of the screen. The films he said had been most effective medium due to its audio-visual property'.[143]

The film *Achhut* he said must be seen by M K Gandhi if the problem of untouchables in the country is dearest to his heart. The editor claimed that with a single stroke this picture will achieve more than the numerous lectures Mahatmaji had himself given on this subject. The editor appealed that it was high time that Mahatamji takes film seriously and harnesses its instructional potentialities for the good of the nation rather than condemn it from orthodox outlook. He reminded that almost 60,000 families were dependent on this industry and this champion of the 'Daridra Narayan' should meet film fraternity to understand the reality. The editor proclaimed that the film workers their condition is as bad as untouchables for whom the Mahatma's heart bleeds and should come to their rescue.[144]

Gandhiji happened to mellow down on Indian films by the beginning of 1940s. On 21st May 1944, Gandhiji watched the film 'Mission to Moscow'[145] on the request of Franklin D Roosevelt. During as his stay in Mumbai at Panban near Juhu he saw movie called Ram Rajya by Vijay Bhatt. Gandhiji was following *maun vrat* or vow to remain silent and only pated on Bhatt's back to show his appreciation.[146] These are only two films Gandhiji is known to have seen in his lifetime.



M. GANDHIJI SEES PRAKASH'S "RAM RAJYA"

Historical Event Of Indian Film Industry

BOMBAY, Saturday.

On Friday night at 9 p.m. a historical event of the Indian Film Industry took place at 'Palmbun,' Juhu when Mahatma Gandhi and others saw a few selected reels of Prakash Pictures 'RAM RAJYA'. This was the first Indian Talkie ever seen by Mahatmaji.

Figure 2 News report on Gandhi watching film Ram Rajya. Courtesy: http://www.vijaybhatt.net/spotlight_phase2.html. Accessed: 2 July 2017.

It is quite an irony that M K Gandhi who less favoured cinema, thrive on his principles and discourses. There were series of movies made to ascertain his principles and remind people of his greatness.

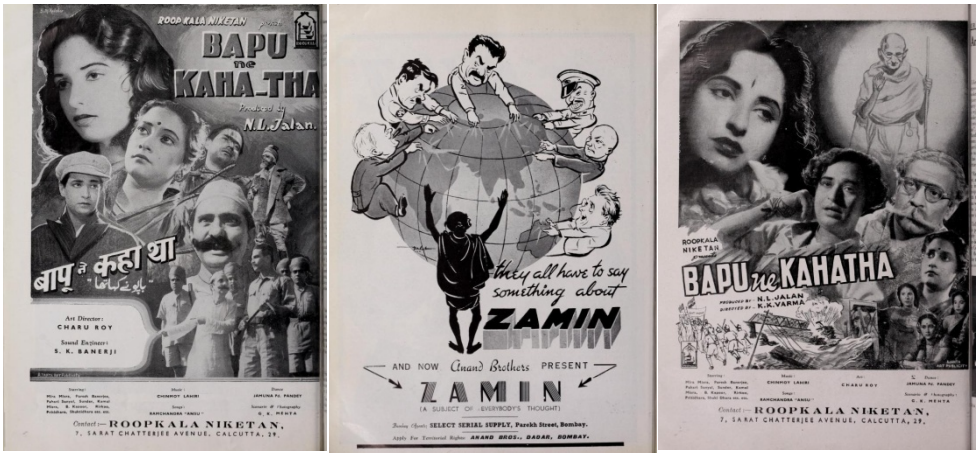


Figure 3 Movies inspired by the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi. Courtesy : *Filmindia* 1946.

4.2.4.4 Sir Stafford Cripps on Indian Films (May 1942)

Sir Stafford Cripps served as an ambassador in Moscow from May 1940 until January 1942. Later he joined the British War Cabinet, on behalf of which he conducted a negotiation between Great Britain and India that was an important milestone on the road to Indian independence. In March 1942 the war cabinet of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent the socialist Sir Richard Stafford Cripps, a close personal friend of Nehru, to New Delhi with a post war proposal. The meetings, known as the Cripps Mission, took place in Delhi from March 22 to April 12, 1942, and marked an attempt to rally, through the rival Indian National Congress and Muslim League, Indian support for the defence of the country against Japanese invasion. The failure of the talks increased the gulf between government and Congress.[147]

During his visit to India, in an interview given to correspondent from *Filmindia* magazine, Sir Cripps discussed the importance of films and gave Russian-Socialist example to make it a powerful medium to bring reform. On the question that 'since the Russian way of Life has been materially different from the rest of the world, since the Revolution, how did he find it reflected in films?', Cripps replied that 'It is obvious that Russia has done a tremendous lot to exploit the film medium for popular instruction. Any book on then present day Russia will testify to this'. On answering to the question on 'will he say something about the Russian effort to achieve adult education through films with particular reference to Lenin's work in this behalf?' Cripps replied that his view is not different from the one everybody gets in sympathetic books about Russia and her achievements in the field. He does think that the film is a powerful medium of popular instruction and in any rational scheme of national planning for a people's socio-economic prosperity and well being, the place of films would be of paramount importance. Opining on the writings of Sydney and Beatrice Webb with special reference to the potentialities and achievements of Cinema, Cripps said that he regards those books has paid tribute to the importance of cinema and that cinema is part of the Soviet Commissariat of education.[148]

The book 'Soviet Communism - A New Civilization' by Webbs states, 'It is significant that the theatre, the opera, the ballet and the cinema are in every republic of the U.S.S.R. as much within the sphere of the Commissariat of education as the school itself. The theatre was of outstanding excellence in Czarist Russia but any educative influence it had was confined to a small class. They appeal literally to millions. They are not limited to the great cities but exist in every town. Lenin said what we think of art is not important but what the millions say about art is important for Art commences only when its roots are spread broadly through the masses'. Cripps suggested to 'Follow Russia'. Cripps asserted that it was Government's duty to see that a prosperous and important industry was not allowed to die and is given adequate encouragement to hold its own in the troubled war times.[149]

4.2.4.5 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on Indian Films (June 1942)

In 1936 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, leader of the Depressed Classes in his interview to Film India condemned deification of men in films. According to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar films had a particular important function to perform in India. He felt that Indians are very serious people and they do not know how to laugh at things and

themselves and enjoy life. This seriousness meant concentration on nerves and therefore exhaustion of energy for no useful purpose. People are drab with dreary existence and regard comings to life here as punishment by God. Films, he said were the best medium of teaching people to see life, to laugh at it, to laugh at themselves, to indulge in self-inquiry and self criticism. He further said that Films are within the reach of all and he wish they spread about in every nook and corner of the country of the country because they perform this much needed task of providing relaxation to highly strung people. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar explained his thoughts by giving his own example and remarks "Take my own case I take myself very seriously, whatever people think of me. I am often dubbed as eccentric...Amusement has particularly no place in my life. How many films I have seen, you think, in my whole life? Not more than a dozen. Don't I know that there were a hundred others, which would have done me good, if I have seen them? But I have denied myself a legitimate enjoyment. This is a kind of self—torture in which all Indians indulge and they delude themselves that they are great philosophers, believers in the emptiness of life and omniscience and omnipotence of God. My wife was such a good soul, but she thought she was committing some sin and erring against the God whenever she let herself have a hearty laugh or indulge in a little mirthful or gay talk. That is the way we are made and I hope films will act as a corrective to us"[150]. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar appears to have disapproved the Gandhian notion of films as malevolent. He seems to believe entertainment as a virtue and as a positive side of films. Also his description about his late wife happens to be an overview of traditional Indian womanhood, brought up in orthodox surrounding.

More on films, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar states that films can very effectively play a part in educating the masses of India. He averred to be unaware if that has already begun and if films were used instead of the black boards. He encouraged films that were made to bring health and hygiene awareness. He opines, "Our people, the adult and the grown-ups are not merely children, need to be taught for instance, in our urban as well as rural areas, how to live, take care of the body, keep away from disease. Producers of pictures in this country would be doing a great patriotic service if they made such pictures and showed them to our masses. I saw a little while back a picture called *The Birth of a Baby*. That is my idea of an educational and a propaganda picture. With what wonderful effect, the picture teaches how girls and boys in their teens, in marital, prenuptial and post-nuptial stages should behave and

take care of the new born. What effective propaganda against abortions of the undesirable sorts and in favour of birth control of the right kind the picture contain! I wish some producing company here got permission to copy that picture, with slight alterations to suit the Indian scene. It would be very necessary social service."[151]

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar confessed that he was not a film man and not a fan. He reckons it as a misfortune. He was voracious and discrimination reader but did wish that films were his passion. He considers that films are undoubtedly a far more effective and potential means of education than books. One makes full use of his or her senses when they see a film that makes education easier and more effective. He appealed to the readers to take possible interest in films and their manifold uses for social well-being and social service.[152]

On his views on, if films made by idealist and progressive producers of the movement for the uplift and liberation of the depressed classes as it has developed till to-day will make excellent propaganda for the removal of untouchability from our midst, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar transpires that he does feel it will. He however disparages the producers who were yet to get out of the mythological stupidities, oddities and deification of mere men. He suggests that instead of having stories of saint Ekanath and saint Chokha Mela, with all their eccentricities and miracles as superstitiously transferred to screen as they are chewed with delicious devotion by Kirtankars and Puraniks which promote superstitions on a vast scale with twentieth century apparatus, the producers will do well to depict how the depressed movement has outgrown its humanitarian and religious shell and broken into a self reliant movement, demanding the Rights of Men.

Commenting on sustain mythological influence on films, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar states that, he will love to find the idols shattered on the screen. All the stories from the Puranas will have to be revised in the light of modern research and presented in their correct historical perspective. Nevertheless he does not expect any producer to do this as they will incur the displeasure and disfavour of their docile clientele. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar proposed on making documentaries on the depressed class movement containing an exposure or to speak palatably the correct representation of the role of the social reformers like V. R. Shinde and humanitarians like Mahatma Gandhi, Birla and Thakkar and the Nasik and Mahad Satyagraha episodes. He declares that the depressed class people are sick of merely being called Harijans, or done kindness to. They want to have equal opportunities with all other human beings and those too not

merely conceded in the academic fashion of the Declaration of Rights as obtained in the Constitution of United States of America. They will not rest content until they get economic equality which will be secured only in a socialist society and under a socialist State. If he had his way in making a documentary of their movement, he shall find place for the above said idealism in it.[153] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had extended his support to the regional film on Mahatma Phule produced by P. K. Atre. He attended its *Muhurat* or opening ceremony on 4th January 1954 at Famous Pictures studio, Mumbai where his wife Mai Ambedkar, Karmveer Bhaurao Patil, Shahir Amar Sheikh, Baburao Pendharkar, who played the role of Mahatma Phule and P. K. Atre himself were present. After release of the movie Dr. B. R. Ambedkar sent a congratulatory letter to Acharya Atre.



'फेमस पिक्चर्स'मध्ये झालेल्या 'महात्मा फुले' या चित्रपटाच्या मुहूर्ताच्या वेळी उपस्थितांना संबोधित करताना आचार्य प्र. के. अत्रे. शेजारी डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर, माई आंबेडकर, कर्मवीर भाऊराव पाटील, मागे शाहीर अमर शेख आदी.

Figure 4 Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar attending Muhurat of film Mahatma Phule. Courtesy: Newspaper Sakal, 25 September 2016.

4.2.4.6 R. P. Masani, (Provincial Chief, National War Front and Ex- Vice Chancellor of University of Bombay) on Indian Films (July 1942)

R. P. Masani an author, journalist, banker, social reformer, educationist, research scholar, and administrator as ex- Vice Chancellor of Bombay University in his interview to *Filmindia* elaborated on educational value of films of Cinema and its significance. He particularly showed his likeness for the film *Tukaram* . Answering to the question, how the standard of films can improve so as to make the cinema a really healthy social influence, he replied that to his mind the entry of educated, cultured men and women in the industry in all its departments will positively help to improve the pictures and raise its standards. He showed his satisfaction that number of University men and talented writers and authors are lifting industry from its deplorable position. On another question on how universities could take the help of films in their culture and educational work he said, "For cultural education, films are not useful as for scientific education, but in regard to both courses, much help can be

received from films. The radio and cinema are most potent means of promoting intellectual progress in our days and I have often said that best possible use should be made by school and college authorities and those directing adult educating classes of the instruments of education."[154]

On answering to his opinion on M K Gandhi's attitude towards films, he explained that Gandhi's condemnation of films is undoubtedly based on reports vicariously received by him and he was probably never been informed about several good films. Masani opined that so long as M K Gandhi does not object to the use of the cinema or the radio as a means of recreation or education, his attitude should not in any ways ne construed as being antagonist to modern ideas or instrument of progress[155].

R. P. Masani inaugurated the first Indian Educational Film Conference as the Chancellor of the University of Bombay in early 1939 held at St. Xavier's College Hall, Bombay under the auspice of the Indian Motion Picture Congress. In his presidential address, R. P. Masani stressed upon the need for a comprehensive scheme of visual instruction through the film in subjects amenable to interpretation by the visual method. He further stated that he had thought of a visual training course through the agency of the films for the faculty of Bombay University, some educational institutions are making good use of it and related suggestions are under consideration of the Committee of senate.[156]

4.2.4.7 Balasaheb Gangadhar Kher on Indian Films (August 1942)

B. G. Kher came to wide public notice when he was elected leader of the Congress Party in the Bombay Legislature and later became its Premier. Though he was a Gandhian, expressed his concern for films and its future in India. When Gandhian view on films was making news[157], B. G. Kher was questioned by the interviewer if he too concur the same sentiments. In an interviews to *Filmindia* magazine that he states that M K Gandhi has never applied his mind to the various educative services to which cinema has been put and can be put and thus landed into an error. He explains that M K Gandhi said cinemas are often bad and not invariably bad. However, his personal opinion was that he considered films as an agency worth harnessing for public good by both educational and entertainment point of view. He says that cinema has come to stay and will live as long as modern civilization lives and like other features of the modern civilization it must be fully exploited for human

welfare.[158] He asserts that for adult education there was no more suitable agency than films and he had some education shorts shown during the adult literacy campaign. He has seen some good pictures like *Tukaram, Padosi, Savkari Pash* and others.

B. G. Kher is affirmative while commenting adaptation of mythological stories in Indian films. He affirms that there is no wrong in having stories of Indian saints and mythological heroes as represented on the screen as they are by *Puraniks* and *Kirtankars*. He holds that thereafter cinema houses will be used as the temples themselves and its popular education with nothing wrong in it.[159] Recalling his activity on the service of Adivasis in the hilly tracts of Thana and Kolaba districts, Kher mentioned the plight of the underprivileged dwelling there namely, *Thakur, Katkaris* and *Warlis*. He suggests that someone should make a film with the background of thee people's miserable life in forest contractor's camps, rice fields and charcoal furnaces. He wants them to be voiced and expose landlords, money lenders and complacent Government policies. He calls it a 'sad chapter of Indian public life'. He proposes that a very good story could be written on this and made into a film.[160]

4.2.4.8 Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhaya (Leader and Patriot) on Indian Films (September 1942)

Kamladevi Chattopadhaya's entry in Indian politics and the women's movement has been of particular service. She is one of the founder-members of the Congress Socialist Party, organiser, Director and resident –instructor of the first all India Women's Conference. Studied in United Kingdom and with much international academic exposure Kamladevi had brief encounter with the silver screen, where she is known to have acted in two films namely, *Vasant Sena* and *Bikhare Moti*. In an interview given to *Filmindia* magazine, Smt. Chattopadhaya was asked that what according to her possibilities does Cinema have in India, what place it has or has in the life of its people and their progress. Kamaladevi replied that the cinema has the same possibilities in India like in other countries for general education, propaganda, rousing the social consciences of the people by vivid presentation of social problems, social evils etc. She declared, "It certainly is one of the most revolutionary weapons we have today".[161] On answering to M K Gandhiji views on Films, she answered that subject matter of films then, were not inspiring or enthusiastic. They are unreal and decadent and divorced from actual aspirations, hopes and struggles of the Indian

people. It's mainly because films in India ten were not made out of its own travails and creative impulses but mere bad copies of Hollywood. Public opinion needs to be educated and organised in this behalf.[162]

4.2.4.9 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on Indian Films (October 1942)

The first reference to Vallabhbhai Patel in relation to the film-world can be note when the makers of *Brandichi Batli / Brandy Ki Bottle*, director Vinayak asked him to support their troubled film project which was based on a campaign for prohibition of liquor. Patel recorded a speech for the film condemning the evils of drinking liquor and supporting the cause of prohibition. This speech became the opening scene of the film. From the Bombay port, Patel also helped in securing release of a smuggled film print on Subhash Chandra Bose and the Azad Hind Fauj (INA).[163]



Figure 5 Vallabhbhai Patel at the film's premier. Courtesy: *Filmindia* 1942.

Vallabhbhai Patel, then termed as 'Congress Sphinx' expressed his views on films and their functions in Indian society of 40s. He agreed on seeing films sometimes and believed with M K Gandhi that most of them were no more than trash. However, he said he was convinced that Indian films can be turned into an effective medium of propaganda for the National Movement for an all-round regeneration of the people. He felt that there must be a clear laid out plans on what is good for the people even in the entertainment field and those plans must be resolutely carried out when power rest in the hands of the Indian people.[164]

On questioned if Vallabhbhai Patel expects to get power in near future and make some plans for producing educative and propaganda pictures, he replies

affirmatively. Vallabhbhai Patel pronounces that Congress does expect India to be a self-governing country and then he has no doubt that in its nation building activities, the provincial ministries and the Central Government will formulate and execute plans which will include exploitation and propaganda purpose. He suggests that film journals should rouse the conscience of the film magnates to produce films that will combine entertainment and national propaganda for millions of Indian masses.[165] Vallabhbhai Patel explains that Indian national leaders too were supportive to the cause of Indian cinema. When some studio in Poona made a pro-prohibition film he himself helped them by allowing a scene of a meeting to be shot which he was addressing and it was there in the film. He advises that 'the film producers must give some serious thought to their duty to the country and not merely to their profit. They must understand that they have to render a service by satisfying a social need of the people and intelligent public opinion must awaken them to their social duty and responsibility in this matter'.[166]



Figure 6 Vallabhbhai Patel at the premier of film Veera Kunal at Novelty Cinema theatre. Courtesy : *Filmindia* 1942.

Later when asked to make some definite suggestions, Vallabhbhai Patel replies, that he is reminded of a Film India magazine had distributed a supplement which purported to be a specimen scenario for a short film about B G Tilak's life and times. It spoke of original research by someone but it seemed to Vallabhbhai Patel as the writer has not carefully studied B G Tilak's life. There was no reference to Home Rule agitation and the close cooperation between B G Tilak and Mrs. Besant in the Home Rule campaign or his association with Gokhale, Baptista, Kelkar, Khadilkar. Sardar Vallabhbhai suggested that M K Gandhi must have figured in a B G Tilak's

biographical picture. He explicated that B G Tilak dominated the National Congress in his last days and M K Gandhi has been doing so for the last twenty years. Vallabhbhai Patel recommends that a big film may be made on the subject such as tracing the evolution of the National Congress since the early eighties of the last century to 1940's. It will be an excellent educational feature for millions of Indian unlettered masses. He questions that how many educated people must have read Dr. Pattabhi, Ambika Charan Muzumdar and Mrs. Annie Besant's books on rise and growth of Congress. He comments that such film would even oblige English-educated idlers. Finally, he sarcastically remarks that after getting independence a reel may be added of Congress Session in which Congress will be dissolved because its function will then have ended.[167]

Later in the year 1946 Vallabhbhai Patel inaugurated picture *Veer Kunal* in Bombay and incidentally gave official verdict on the future industrial policy of the Indian National Congress. Vallabhbhai Patel states that political bondage of India is not affecting the film industry but all the industries of the country. Due to the dearth of political freedom film industry in India is at a pitiable state and only freedom to the country can change this circumstance. He further appeals to the people 'my countrymen' to see only Indian films whether good or bad and encourage an industry which provides a living to thousands of India's poor people.[168]

4.2.4.10 Chakravarty Rajagopalachariar on Indian Films (November 1942)

C. Rajagopalachariar seems to have thought loud on Indian films and emphasized on entertainment value of films. He states that when people wax eloquent on the educational values and possibilities of films, he feels they are making a rather tall claim. He thought that the screen is far too much a quick business for educational work. He believes in interpersonal teaching and said that films at best can be good supplementary. He feels that films should be content with entertaining people. Concurrently, he expresses his dislike for how cordially films put Indian stories from Puranas to use. He felt that in their pictorial representation the sublime characters like Rama, Krishna and Narada are ruined.[169] Rajagopalachariar comments that all commercial philanthropists who make endowments, in order to justify their acquisitions, some big picture-producers occasionally produce pictures which are wholly unobjectionable. But a very large majority of the films are a crude appeal to

sex and harmful to the health of Indian boys and girls. In the present order of society, producers make what sells, irrespective of the considerations about social good.[170]

Mordantly, *Filmindia* reproduced the above interview six years later when H. E. (His Excellency) Chakravarty Rajagopalchariar became the Governor General of India in 1948. The magazine anticipated that India's first Governor General for Indian soil and who already is a great philosopher, social reformer and education may be the first man in the high office to make use of such a powerful instrument as the film in the proper way and sweep the film industry clean of all the filth and dirt.[171] The magazine hoped for cleansing in film industry that may in turn help qualitative outcome benefiting the Indian society.

4.2.4.11 Sarojini Naidu on Indian Films (January 1943)

An inimitable artist and devotee of Art in its varied manifestations, Sarojini Naidu had progressive opinion of the filmic art. Sarojini Naidu's sister was a cinema artiste and brother was an advocate of the people's Theatre. Sarojini Naidu avers that she love films.[172] For her cinematic Art was the synthesis of many arts and therefore she called it Art of Arts. Cinema, she said is the symbol of modern civilisation and a pleasing combination of man and machine for production of human pleasure. Many intelligent people, artists come together to produce a single composite article. She mentions that the co-operative character of the whole film industry business is again symbolic of modern civilisation or its higher phase for which nobler minds, skilful architects, powerful brains all over the world were working. She states that Indian film industry consciously or unconsciously was blazoning the trail to superior human culture.[173]

Sarojini Naidu notes that she wants Indian men and women with ideas and ideals to invade every branch of the film industry and save it from the strangleholds of mere moneybags. Only then she says, will cinema serve as a useful and patriotic purpose of awakening and educating the people. Sarojini Naidu affirmed that cinema was the most powerful of all mediums that she can think of and it must make its full contribution towards popular education. She further says, Cinema can root out superstitions, make people rational and make them better informed along with providing useful entertainment. She highlights on Newsreels, travel talks, filming of highlights from the world's literatures and said that these can be delightful and

healthy instructive. Naidu felt that if Indian Film Industry is to justify its existence and fulfil its purpose it must plan on sound principles.[174]

Amid a debate was going on, on the antagonistic statement given by M K Gandhi on films and there was constant deliberation by the film fraternity to justify its significance. Sarojini Naidu during this interview was contest with the question that whether films are not her despair as they are for M K Gandhi. Sarojini Naidu replies that films are her love and hope. Let Mahatma be left alone to his own ways. She says that she is not an oriental obscurantist. She believes in the harmonious fusion of the East and the West. She wants Indian to absorb all the benefits of the Western civilisation and yet keep her spirituality.[175] Sarojini Naidu emphasise on human being having right to receive all good things of life. In her scheme of things, films have a positive place.[176]

4.2.4.12 Honourable Morarji Desai on Indian Films (November 1946)

In 1946 Morarji Desai was the Home Minister to the Government of Bombay. When India was nearing to her independence, the film fraternity was anxious to know their future and governmental policy. In an interview to *Filmindia* Morarji Desai[177] elucidate on quality of films and probable government policy in free India.[178] Moraraji felt that people should not be waiting for India to become free in-order to make qualitative films. The Indian film industry has generally been economically a paying business in India with hardly any foreign competition. He says that producers in India should stabilize their industry by making quality pictures as people learn to like things which they often see. He expresses his disappointment for the Producers who did not use their glorious opportunity well and made lot of cheap money by turning out worthless pictures. He states that the film makers did not seem to have realised social significance of the medium of the films. He emphasize on not to allow producers to make bad films, where labelling their pictures as historical, mythological and social, the producers have in several cases given heartless distortion of facts, events and problems that India's spiritual heritage, historical traditions and contemporary life have become an unrecognizable mass of trash and often shameful. He suggests that lot of stuff produced had been pseudo-historical, anti-social and anti-cultural and the day people became aware that they were duped, will ask for an inquiry into film's shady business and demand their money back and destroy the theatres showing such picture.[179]

On answering to the question on if Government has formulated some plans to reorganize the film industry, Desai replies that he attached, great importance to film as a medium of visual education for social, educational and cultural work. As there doesn't seem to be some Producer's making correct choices the unpleasant work of deterring will rest with popular government by implying corrective legislation. He further adds that Government was seriously considering the operation of a strict censorship, prescribing a definite standard of production from a national point of view through a Board of Censor. He insist that the Board will see those pictures poisoning the minds of the growing children and will do away with. It will issue different certificates for picture suitable for children and adults.[180]

As thorough Gandhian, Morarji meant on cleaning the industry and produce good films for social good. Replying on M K Gandhi's view on film as evil, Desai says that he refused to believe this notion in reference to context. He however believes that in a modern progressive state, the film can be used as a powerful medium of all-round instruction with immense possibilities just as nations like Russia, USA and England were then doing. He assures that Government will encourage all the films having both educational and healthy recreational values and later only such types of films will be allowed to be shown to the public.[181] In post-independence period Morarji Desai appeared in a film and spoke to children about M K Gandhi in Vijay Bhatt directed *Bapu Ne Kaha Tha* made for the Children's Film Society.[182]

4.2.4.13 Rabindranath Tagore and Films

It was during the making of the movie *Mukti*, in 1937 that Pankaj Kumar Mullick, the film's music director had gone to meet Tagore to seek his permission to use the song *Diner Sheshey Ghumer Deshey* in the film. The lyrics for this song were by Tagore but its music was not – it was in fact composed by Mullick many years prior to the movie. He had been unofficially singing the song at various gatherings but never in public. However when it came to using it in a movie, Tagore's permission was an absolute necessity because Tagore's songs (popularly known as Rabindrasangeets) and his poems - then, as it is now - were sacrosanct and nobody apart from Tagore had any right whatsoever to tinker with them let alone set tune to them. Given this scenario, Mullick set up an appointment with Tagore and with great trepidation rendered the song in Tagore's presence. Mullick had no idea how Tagore would react to such a situation and he feared the worst – that Tagore would get upset

with him and forbid him to sing the song ever again let alone use it in the movie. But what unfolded was absolutely contrary to his fears. Tagore was so overwhelmed on hearing the song that he embraced Mullick and uttered the words that gave Mullick the rare distinction of being the only composer allowed by Tagore to set tunes to his lyrics. In this manner Mullick was adorned with the unofficial title of being the 'First Man of Rabindrasangeet' – an epithet he aptly justified by making it his life's mission to popularize the songs of Tagore among the masses. He was also the first person to sing Rabindrasangeets in Hindi, Gujarati and Tamil in an attempt to spread the magic of Tagore's compositions among the non-Bengali speaking audience as well.[183]

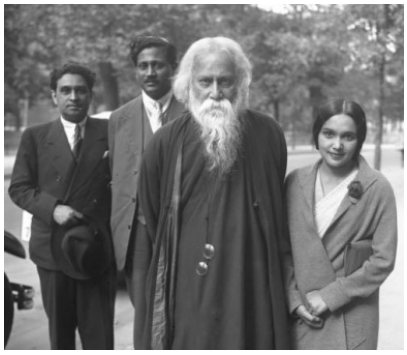


Figure 7 Rabindranath Tagore with his star actor grandniece Devika Rani. On the extreme left is Film maker, owner of Bombay Talkies and Devika Rani's husband Himanshu Rai. Courtesy: https://commons.wikimedia.org/ wiki/File:R._Tagore_-_Devika_Rani_-_Himansu_Rai_-_Berlin_(1931).jpg. Accessed: 24 April 2016.

Rabindranath Tagore was an exponent of films made in western world and wrote commentary letter where he expressed his concern about the German expressionism and Soviet Socialist approach. He happened to visit Soviet film studios and considered their films as euphoric. He disliked intervening titles coming between the frames and suggested that films should develop an independent art form and not be relying on literary sources. Cinema should develop its own language. He too differentiated film making in India and West, where former is primarily aesthetical and spiritual and later materialistic.[184]

4.2.4.14 Jawaharlal Nehru on Indian Films

Jawaharlal Nehru's first memories of cinema belonged to the films of Silent era. He passionately watched cinema and theatres and met many artists including Charlie Chaplin and Bernard Shaw. The earliest reference of Nehru's association with film world is of his participation in the Madurai Conference in 1931, organised by the Tamil Nadu Actor Association where he exhorted filmmakers and artists to work

towards the fulfilment of the objectives of the freedom struggle. Give years later after he watched *Achhut Kanya* with rapt attention at the Roxy theatre in Bombay along with Sarojini Naidu, he wrote a congratulatory letter to Devika Rani and expressed his desire to meet her.[185]



Figure 8 Jawaharlal Nehru was a great admirer of Actor Producer Devika Rani. Courtesy : R. M. Ray (ed.), *Indian Cinema in Retrospect*, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, 2009.

As soon as Indian cinema transformed from silent to talkies it took upon itself the role of advocating country's freedom struggle and Nehru was found reasserting similar thoughts.

Nehru facilitated establishment of Films Division in 1948 and described it as official appendage of Government of India for the production and circulation of informative films. Films began to be dubbed in five languages and the Films Division became a most imperative source of public information that tried to reach out to people in the farthest corners of India.[186]



Figure 9 Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was a great supporter of films and found it a potential medium to bring reforms and change. He delegated many from the Indian film industries to countries like Russia and China to establish friendly relations. Courtesy : R. M. Ray (ed.), *Indian Cinema in Retrospect*, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, 2009.

As Prime Minister of independent India, Nehru supported and enabled Jehangir alias Jean Shapurji [187] S. K. Patil to form structure for film industry in independent India.[188] New funding avenues were formed through Film Finance Corporation and Cinematography Act of 1952 was presented and passed in the Parlimanet. New thinking and ideas was promoted through National Film award Scheme. The rules, regulation and functioning of censor board was reconstituted. This

also formed a group of film makers and writers who promoted Nehruvian thoughts thorough their films.[189]

Nehru utilized medium of cinema in establishing and corroboration international relations. He involved his dynamic daughter Indira Gandhi in this process and efforts. Nehru's approach inspired Mrs. Gandhi to suggest Nehru to organize international film festivals in India. Accordingly, the first International Film Festival of India was organized in New Empire Cinema, Mumbai from 24 January to 1 February, 1952. The entire festival was organized by Films Division with the patronage of the first Prime Minister of India. [190]

The main festival opened in Mumbai, and was inaugurated by K. K. Diwaker, Minister of States for Information & Broadcasting. In Chennai, it was inaugurated by Chief Justice P.V. Rajamannar, on February 8, 1952. A highlight of the Chennai session was a parade of film celebrities in decorated Lorries.[191]

Delhi session was inaugurated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on February 21, 1952 and in Kolkata, and the opening ceremony was done by Dr. H. C. Mookerjee, Governor of West Bengal. A special feature of this IFFI brought in was the screening of films at the open air theatres, specially erected in all the three cities. In Mumbai, three open air theatres, with a seating capacity of 1500 per theatre, were operated at Azad Maidan. In Chennai the open theatre at Teynampet was used. In Kolkata, an open air theatre at Eden Gardens screened festival documentaries at free of charge Film Market.[192] Eminent personalities of the Indian film industry joined hands to support the endeavour.

Nehru had constituted Sangeet Natak Akadmie. The first national seminar on Indian cinema was organized at Sangeet Natak Akadmie. The seminar was jointly convened by Mrs. Gandhi and veteran actors Prithviraj Kapoor and Achhut Kanya fame Devika Rani.[193] Dr. Rajamannar, Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akadami in his welcome speech stated that for the first time in history of Indian motion pictures gathered the most distinguish personalities on the same platform. He assured to the Hon'ble Prime Minister they will be able to exchange ideas and they will be able to plan for future through exchange of ideas. He inferred that every invention of man designed for his use and advancement is also capable of abuse.[194]



Figure 10 Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the inauguration of first international Film Seminar in Delhi. Courtesy : Times of India Archives.

In the inaugural speech at national seminar Pandit Nehru stated that, "My point is that these creative arts must be allowed to grow and encouraged to grow with as little interference as possible. It is only when they manifestly become a social menace or a social danger that Government must come in and come in with a heavy hand; we cannot allow a social menace or a social danger to continue". [195] Further Jawaharlal Nehru expresses his disappointment over making of children films and he states that, "India has been lacking in not wholly but still largely –and that is children's films and I think they are of high importance. It is not the way to approach children or anybody to go about lecturing on the virtues to be cultivated. Inevitably, you drive that person to evil ways by your lectures. Don't sermonise too much. But there are subtle ways of pointing a moral or drawing a lesson, and a good children's film can be a very powerful instrument in developing the child".[196]

Thus, we may assert that Nehru took cinema very seriously. Nehru took keen interest and watched film that influenced large mass of India such as V.Shantaram's *Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani*, Bimal Roy's Sujata, Mehboob Khan's *Mother India*, K. A. Abbas's *Munna* and Satyajit Ray made *Pather Panchali*.

Jawaharlal Nehru's inclination towards socialist Russia and communist China also got reflected through the film world. Jawaharlal Nehru sent a delegation of fourteen people to Russia in 1954 including Dev Anand, Chetan Anand, Balraj Sahani, Raj Kapoor, Nargis. Devanand's *Rahi* and Raj Kapoor's film *Awara* became immensely popular with Russians and when Nehru visited Russia in 1955, he took Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand along with himself. He was very amazed to find that Russia was swayed by the popular number *Awara Hu*.[197] Apparently, when Nehru was in Moscow, Stalin asked him who this Kapoor was about whom he had been hearing so much.[198] Similarly, for ascertaining cordial relations with China

Nehru advocated sending delegation of film makers and actors to China such as Prithviraj Kapoor, Balraj Sahani, B.N. Sircar, Bimal Roy, Raja Paranjape, Krishna Gopal, Kamini Kaushal and Krishna Chandra in October 1955. The delegation met and was well received by then Prime Minister Chou En Lai and Mao Tse Tung then Chairperson of Communist Party of China in Peking.[199]

Nehru thus established a harmonious association of films and role it was capable of performing. Nehruvian ideology of development and modernism got rooted through the films of the period and among the generations to come.

4.2.4.15 India's Ministers on Indian Films (March 1949)

Filmindia magazine ran an editorial article in January 1949 titled 'National suicide' on derogation of filmic value and received response from popular leaders in office. Their written responses voiced the need for reformation in film industry and film making. There was strong objection taken on commercialisation of nationalism in films and a need was expressed for cinema to adhere to higher meaningful purpose. **Sardar Swaran Singh**, the Home Minister and Revenue Minister of the east Punjab government in 1949 wrote about the undignified practise of commercialisation of nationalism through the screen. The mighty struggle involving deathless sacrifices of a whole nation to achieve political emancipation was too sacred a theme to be exploited on a profit and loss basis. He said, that no count was taken of the intellectual and spiritual contribution made by Indian leaders and undue emphasis was laid on the so-called underground activities of certain workers. He claimed that these films were all in bad taste and dangerous in its appeal to the susceptible youth. He hoped for such pictures were only passing phase and soon shall be replaced by films informed by the high purpose and inspired by a noble ideal and revivified by true artistic and aesthetic sense.[200]

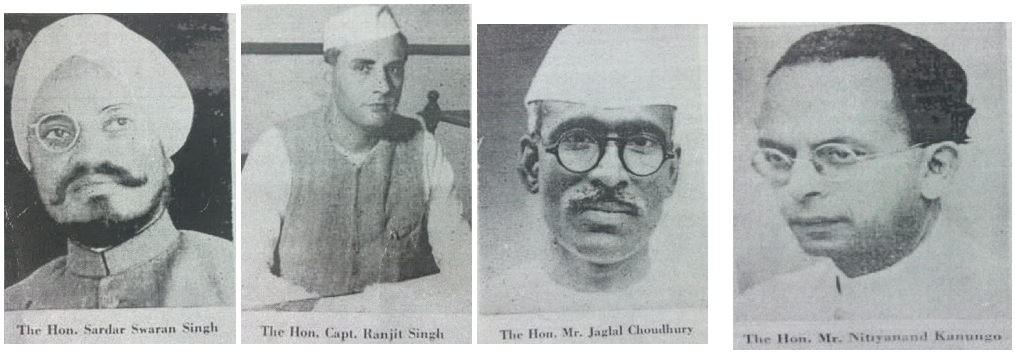


Figure 11 Congress Ministers in post independence India. Sardar Swaran Singh, Capt. Ranjit Singh, Jaglal Choudhary, and Nityanand Kunungo. Courtesy: Filmindia, March 1949.

Captain Ranjit Singh, Minister of Public Works, East Punjab stated that he greatly acknowledged the colossal value and importance of motion pictures in the field of education and propaganda. He said that the right sort of pictures go long way in elevating nation whereas those abound with themes of arson, loot, robbery, shooting, dislocation of communication and underground plotting were nothing but revolting to a citizen of a free State as they inculcated in the mass mind the spirit of lawlessness. Films showing slave country struggling to be free by violent means is not admissible in India that is pledged to *Ahmisa* meaning non-violence.[201]

Mr. Jaglal Choudhari the Minister of Public Health and Schedule Caste Welfare, Government of Bihar stated, to every lay mind it is evident that the mass mind grasps at the baser sentiment produced in a cinema show. The mass mind has greater appeal for the romantic aspect of the show, the detailed techniques of train theft, revolver shootings, blowing up bridges, wrecking communications and general sabotage rather than to the motive behind these bold acts of rebellion against foreign ruler. He opined that these acts of rebellion screened in free India look like training the mass mind in preparing for a bloody revolution in our country which the communist, socialist, the Sanghites have in their mind. Such pictures will make contribution to violent and anti-national programme.[202]

Mr. Nityanand Kanungo, Minister of Law, Government of Orissa, showed his discontent for films those were vulgarised in presentation of India's freedom struggle. He claimed that very base of the freedom struggle was non-violence and the stunts and sensational degradation of the historical struggle was not tolerable. He suggested that profit seeker in the industry should leave this theme alone.[203]

V. Kurmayya, Minister for Harijan uplift, the Government of Madras stated, film producers were exploiting than prevailing popular sentiments. R K Patil, Food Minister of Government of Central Province said that there were majority of films in India which were anti-national as they corrupted the minds of the young by inflaming their passions and creating in them a desire for sex life which is neither natural nor pure. He further said that he was aware of the educative value of the films but showed his concern that film trade has blindly copied from the western standards and in doing so corrupted itself and the nation. [204]

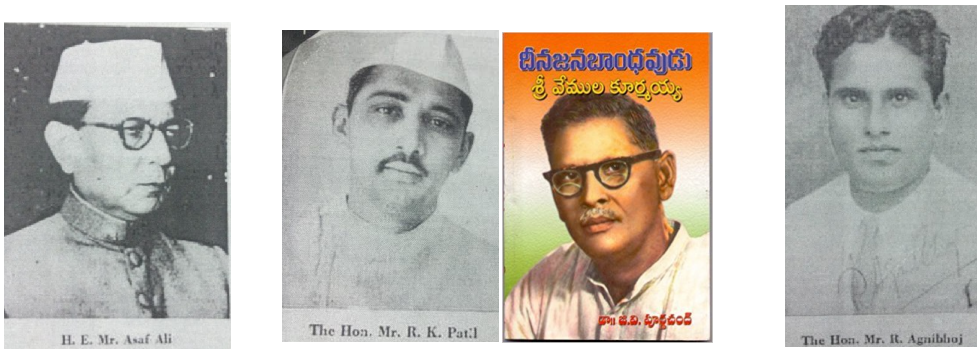


Figure 12 Congress Ministry Asaf Ali, R K Patil, V Kurmayya and R. Agnibhoj. Courtesy : *Filmindia*, March 1949.

H C Nasker, Minister for Forest and Fisheries in Government of West Bengal had a view that film was the index of national life and the great struggle into which India was plunged to win the freedom was naturally a suitable theme for films. He said, the problem that was with the modern films was that the producers did not set any value to the educative side of films or to the fineness of the art. With the eye on the box office they produced cheap quality to attract the masses. He asserted that the depiction of rebellions in a country struggling for liberty was not exceptionable if at the same time teaches how the people should behave in a free country. **Dr. John Mathai,** the Finance Minister to the Government of India suggested that cheap sensationalism in films with its emphasis on violence should be avoided.[205] Similarly, **R. Agnibhoj** Minister of Public Works, Government of Central Provinces and Berar stated that Films should impart education, pleasure and happiness and give moral strength. [206]



Figure 13 The Deputy leader Bhulabhai Desai and M.L.A S Satyamurthy of Congress Party at function organised by Filmindia magazine. Courtesy : *Filmindia*, 1939.

4.2.4.16 Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi the former Information and Broadcasting Minister and later the Prime Minister of India, had diverse views on Indian films and its making. In her tenure, the art of filmmaking had gone through pursuit of Nehruvian idealism and

afterwards suffered the backlash of strict censorship during the emergency period. Consequently, Indira Gandhi's perception towards films and their making changed periodically, as per the political situation and cinematic reactions she earned due to her imposed policies.

As an administrator, her views of films were progressive and she adapted significant measures to make it a potent industry. In 1966, Indira Gandhi stated that film has the quality of work of art and it depends on the vision of its creator and on the technical mastery with which he communicates this vision in words or sound or colours or images. Mrs. Gandhi impressed upon maintaining quality of films and corroborated that quality does not come merely from a didactic purpose but from the intellect, technical mastery the determination to be honest and from courage to be different, and non-conformist. [207]

According to Indira Gandhi, a good film like any other art should be an experience and considered it as a largest single medium of entertainment in India, larger than sports or music or art of travel. She felt that it was most economic medium of entertainment that was affordable to people of India in their present financial condition. [208]

Mrs. Gandhi believed that the cinema played a great role in education and has immense educational potentialities, but she also values it for the legitimate purpose of entertainment. She claimed that cinema like other forms of entertainment provides pleasure and aesthetic satisfaction and at the same time can also educate and elevate the audience and enlarge their sympathy.



Figure 14 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with the film fraternity. On right hosting Garden Tea Party at Prime Minister house. Courtesy: https://www.ndtv.com/offbeat/how-many-stars-can-you-recognise-in-this-pic-with-indira-gandhi-1222834. Accessed : 25 April 2017.

Indira Gandhi considered cinema as a single most potent cultural influence in the country. Indian films she said seem to be all pervasive and bring not only town and villages closer but provinces too. Thus, in numerous ways Mrs Gandhi felt that films have contributed to fostering a sense of oneness in India.

On the reformist role of cinema Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister of India states, "Cinema today even though it has strong rivals in TV and videos is the most important audio-visual manifestation of popular culture. Good work in films-making is being done by a number of gifted directors. Regional films have been specifically successful in dealing with worthwhile social themes and in reflecting our literary and cultural wealth. However, the majority of our films, I am sorry to say, exhibit violence and crudity. To me they are implausible. We hardly ever see a normal person. They give a stereotyped interpretation of life, generally degrading women and our society as a whole, lauding superstitious beliefs and portraying goodness, if not as stupidity, at least as dimness of mind. A better of person is invariably shown with a glass of whiskey in one hand and a cigarette in other. It is true that in end virtue triumphs, but that is not sufficient to wipe out the impact of two hours or more continuous vice, crime and violence. The morality at the end is only a cloak".[209]

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's contribution to film making in India and its conceptualisation come in different forms. Indira Gandhi was closely associated with her father Jawaharlal Nehru's implementation of new idealism through various ventures. In 1951 Mrs. Gandhi was instrumental in bringing Jean Bhownagary, a UNESCO film hand to India. She worked as an official hostess of the first film seminar in India and developed film culture with the help of evangelist of the Indian Film Society Movement of Marie Seton. Mrs. Gandhi hosted Marie Seton's lecture tour across the country on films as an educational medium and screening few films to scholl kids. Further she also supported scattered film club across India. Through her tenure as Information & Broadcasting Minister Indira Gandhi gave impetus to New Indian Cinema featuring non-realistic and Nehruvian thoughts. The last film enquiry commission was formed during her Prime-ministerial regime.

Later, during the presentation of National Awards in 1966, Indira Gandhi in her speech states that, "Our films seem to be all pervasive. They are bringing village and town closer. In numerous other ways also, films have contributed in fostering a sense of oneness in our country... a film has the quality of a work of art. It depends on the vision of its creator ad on the technical mastery with which he communicates this vision in words or sound or colours or images".[210]

Indira Gandhi remained a connoisseur of fine arts including films and is known to have been involved with clearing good films from the film censor board's conservative scissor. One such film was M. S. Sathyu's *Garam Hawa*. According to

Gautam Kaul's interview of DFL he was called by Mrs. Gandhi to see what was objectionable in *Garam Hawa*. The film was screened in the basement theatre at Rashtrapati Bhavan. After the screening was over Mrs. Gandhi declared to Kaul, 'what is objectionable in this film may be the noble family Muslim girl romancing on the shores of Yamuna at Agra. That we will be able to handle it...is it not? Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome* too was supported by Mrs. Gandhi with funding from Film Finance Corporation. This film is considered to have reenergised the new Cinema of India after Pather Panchali.[211] During her speech at the golden jubilee celebration of the Indian cinema in 1981, Indira Gandhi stress on "a good film like any other good art, should be an experience. Cinema is entertainment. It is no less important an instrument of social change. And believe that there is no dichotomy between the two'.[212] Mrs. Gandhi had well recognised political, social and economic importance of cinema in India and made significant contribution in defining its objectivity.

Further there has been no major political consideration of Indian cinema. Post Mrs. Gandhi government there arise political uncertainties. The process of filtering state ideology through films lessened. There arrived the age of Information technology with computers and android. Television with mushrooming channels, Radio with FM, low cost cable and Wi-Fi internet access paved the way for easy and home affordable entertainment. As Indian audiences confined themselves to home space from cinema hall space, it affected production of film making in India. Government too resorted to television and radio broadcasting to propaganda their ideas, achievements and social messages. Thus film making in India entered into another phase of competition.

Thus, it may be inferred that films in India still have a significant role to play in developing spirit of Nationalism and continues to supplement governmental reformist policies to bring social reform. The tide has again changed in the favour of cinema as it changed its course with changing times.

Notes and References :

[1] Political in Latin.

[2] Andrew Higson is Professor of Film and Television, New York: University of York, United Kingdom.

[3] Andrew Higson, *Waving the flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain*, London : Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 28.

[4] Huge Seton-Watson, *Nation and States: An enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, Colorado : Westview Press, 1977, p. 134.
[5] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London : Verso publication, 2006, p. 25.
[6] Jyotika Vardi, *The Cinematic Imagination, Indian Popular Films as Social History*, New Delhi ; Permanent black publication, 2003, p. 6.
[7] Jyotika Vardi, op. cit., p. 8.
[8] Ibid., p. 9.
[9] The 'National-popular' was adopted as the left intelligentsia's mandate after World War II in their use of progressive and socialist realism in various art forms, including film and literature. The thought is discussed in David Forgacs's article titled 'National Popular: Genealogy of a Concept' in *The Cultural Studies Readers*, New York : Routledge, 1993, pp. 177- 190.
[10] The movie had a famous song "Chodo kal Ki Batein, Kal ki Baat purani, Naye Daur mein likhenge milkar nayi Kahani Hum Hindutsani, Hum Hindustani". (Leave yesterday's talk they have become old now, we the Hindutanis together will write new story in new age)
[11] Jyotika Vardi, op. cit., p. 23.
[12] Manoj Sharma, *Hindi Cinema and Freedom Struggle*, Inclusive- Online Journal of Kolkatta Centre for Contemporary Studies, 7th July 2014. http://testing.theinclusive.org/hindi-cinema-and-the-freedom-struggle-1912-1947. Accessed : 22 October 2014.
[13] T M Ramachandran (edt.), *50 years of Indian Talkies (1931-81)*, A Commemorative Volume, Indian Academy of Motion Pictures Act and Science, Bombay, 1981, p. 31.
[14] Manoj Sharma, op. cit.
[15] Edwin Gerow, 'Rasa as a category of literary criticism', in Rachel Baumer and James R Brandon (edt.) *Sanskrit Drama Performance*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 1993, p. 52.
[16] Fedric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious- Narrative as a socially symbolic Act*, New York : Cornell University Press, 1982, p. 15.
[17] Janus was the god of beginnings and transitions in Roman mythology, and presided over passages, doors, gates and endings, as well as in transitional periods such as from war to peace. He was usually depicted as having two faces looking at opposite ways, one towards the past and the other towards the future. There was no equivalent of Janus in Greek mythology.
[18] Homi K Bhaba, *Nation and Narration*, New York : Routledge, 1990, p. 38.
[19] Ronie Parciack, *Popular Hindi Cinema: Aesthetics formations of the seen and unseen*, London : Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 2016, p. 86.
[20] In the film *Acchut Kanya* the main lead Kasturi's father is shown to be an untouchable working for Indian Railways. Her husband also belonging to same community is shown to be a railways recruit.
[21] Gautam Kaul, *Cinema and the Indian Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi : Sterling publication, 1998, pp. 172-73.
[22] Jerzy Toeplitz, *Indian Films and Western Audiences* (translated from French to English), Paris : United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 23 December 1964, p. 9.
[23] Ibid., p. 10.
[24] Ibid., p. 174.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., p. 178.
[28] The story is based on Munshi Prem Chand's story.
[29] Toeplitz, op. cit., p. 4.
[30] The Congress party position on worker's rights has been strongly articulated by Nehru and it found its first reflection in Mill. It told the tale of one Devidas a street hawker who rose to become an exploitative cotton mill owner,
[31] The movie has veteran actor Dilip Kumar and Saira Banu in lead.
[32] Indian People's Theatre Association.

[33] Toeplitz, op. cit., p. 10.
[34] Manoj Sharma, op. cit.
[35] Kaul, op. cit., p. 181.
[36] Mriganka Sekhar Ray, *Bengali Cinema: An Overview in Prabodh Maitra (ed.) 100 years of Indian Cinema*, Nandan, Calcutta, 1995, p. 17.
[37] Toeplitz, op. cit., p. 4.
[38] Sarin's report 'Buying girls from a Circuit House' was published in the Indian Express of April 27 1981 and opened with the following words : 'Yesterday I bought a short-statured skinny woman belonging to a village near Shivapur in Madhya Pradesh for Rs.2,300. Even I find it hard to believe that I have returned to the Capital this morning buying this middle aged woman for half the price, one pays for a buffalo in Punjab.'
[39] Kaul, op. cit., p. 186.
[40] Toeplitz, op. cit., p. 13.
[41] Dadasaheb Phalke's interview in Marathi newspaper *Kesari*, Poona, 19 August 1913.
[42] Sharayu Phalke Summanwar, *The Silent Film Dadasaheb Phalke*, India Connect, Pune, 2012, pp. 209, 229.
[43] Indian film actor, director who acted in films in UK, France and USA and was called Rudolph Valentino of the East. He set up Elephanta Film Corporation Limited and Sphinx Films in early 1930s.
[44] Sheikh Ifteekar Rasool, 'Talkies and Education', *Filmland*, 23 July 1932.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] K. A. Abbas, 'Educating India's 400 Millions Harness the movies to build a nation', *Filmindia*, August 1941, p. 58.
[48] Ibid., p. 59.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., p. 60.
[51] K. A. Abbas, 'Silver Screen to replace Black board - The value of Educational film in the Class room', *Filmindia*, December 1941, p. 61.
[52] M K Gandhi promoted an educational curriculum in where he states, 'The principal idea is to impart the whole education of the body, mind and soul through the handicraft that is taught to the children.' M K Gandhi elaborated on this in the article published in newspaper *Harijan* on 31 July 1937.
[53] Ibid., p. 63.
[54] John Alexander, 'Social Propoganda and the Indian film-harness the film for a better ideal', *Filmindia*, May, 1940, p. 47. Baburao Patel the editor of *Filmindia* put a special mention near the title that is, 'An article every serious producer should read'.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Founder of All India Women's Conference Dadar-Matunga branch for Women and Children and author of book Education in Germany - personal impression and experience.
[57] 'Notes and News', *Filmindia*, August, 1938, p. 33.
[58] 'Ambitious Educational Plan of Mr. Aggrawal! Teaching Little ones through the Camera Eye!', *Filmindia*, January, 1949, p. 51.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61]Now at 67, Maker Chambers 3, Nariman Point, Mumbai- 400 0021 functioning under the Directorship of Shivendu Goverdhandas Aggrawal.
[62] *Filmindia*, January, 1949, op. cit., p. 53.
[63] Ibid.
[64] K.Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake, *Indian Popular Cinema - a narrative of cultural change*, New Delhi : Orient Longman, 1998, p. 54.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Maybe that is the reason why film industry earned the name *Mayanagari* – a City of illusions.

[67] N. L. Gupta, *An introduction to Eastern ways of thinking*, New Delhi : Concept publishing company, 2003, p. 67.
[68] Ibid., p. 99.
[69] Ibid., p. 113.
[70] Erik Barnouw and Subrahmanyam Krishnaswamy, *Indian Films*, London : Replica books publishers, 2001, p. 15.
[71] Ibid.
[72] http://textofvideo.nptel.ac.in/109106086/lec25.pdf. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[73] Ibid., See - B.V. Dharap, *Indian Film Annals*, National Film Archives, Pune, 1983, p. 82.
[74] Indranil Bhattacharya, *Visions of Splendour – Himanshu Rai and Indian Cinema*, Pune : National Film Archives, 2009, p. 12.
[75] Writing about in the making of *A Throw of Dice*, Himanshu Mehta writes that he experienced two great events during his shoot were visit of Nizam of Hyderabad to Mysore state and reception of the Simon Commission by the Maharaja of Mysore. Himanshu Rai was spell bound with pomp and show of princely courts and modernised electric power stations.
[76] Founded and administered by V. Damle and S. Fatelal.
[77] Bapu Watve, *V. Damle and S. Fatelal – A monograph*, Pune : National Film Archives of India, 1985, p. 85.
[78] Barnow and Krishnaswamy, op. cit., p. 100.
[79] Manohar Lall Gupta, 'Bharati Mata', *Filmland*, December, 1932, p. 14.
[80]'Bhakta Dhruv proves a popular picture! Traditional story draws Crowds!', *Filmindia,* October, 1947, p. 13.
[81] Philip Lutgendorf, 'A Superhit Goddess Jai Santoshi Maa and Caste Hierarchy in Indian Films', Part I, *Manushi* magazine, No.131, Delhi, p. 12.
http://manushi.in/docs/742.%20A%20Superhit%20Goddess.pdf . Accessed : 12 January 2017.
[82] Signed by an Indian, 'Devotional Cult and Indian Talkies', *Filmland*, 8 April 1933.
[83] Editorial, 'Hinduism and Celluloid Demons', *Filmindia*, Vol. XV, No. 12, December, 1949, p. 3.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., p. 5.
[86] '"Nath" And "Swamy" on the Screen!', *Filmindia*, April 1949, p. 11 .
[87] Considered Lower castes in Hindu society but films were taking reformist and secular approach.
[88] 'Three Months of Censoring', *Filmindia*, January, 1948, p. 11, 13 and 15.
[89] 'Government sets new Production Code – Filmindia's Ceaseless Campaign Bears Fruits!', *Filmindia*, September, 1948, p. 31-32.
[90] Film review, 'Ram Baan an unpardonable Slander on Hindus!' , *Filmindia,* January, 1949, p. 47.
[91] Sumita Chakravarty, *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema*, Austin :University of Texas Press, 1993, p. 252.
[92] State owned television channel Doodarshan had commissioned two mega-serials around this time based on Indian epics Ramayan and Mahabharata to Ramanand Sagar and B.R.Chopra respectively. Both these serials became extremely popular and had received overwhelming family viewership. Comparatively, these films however had no religious connotation and so lacked mass popularity.
[93] Duryodhana's character is made to stand for the sanctity of Draupadi, as he says: *"Nahi, Draupadi jaisi Sati nari ko dekhkar maine cheer haran ka idea* ***drop*** *kar diya hai. Jai ho aisi Sati nari ki, jai ho."* meaning, 'I drop the idea of disrobing Draupadi, keeping in mind her purity'.
[94]http://sakaaltimes.com/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsId=5395568672168335620&SectionId=4724885822106096577&SectionName=Bollywood&NewsTitle=My%20stories%20have%20been%20inspired%20by%20Ramayana%20and%20Mahabharata:%20Subhash%20Ghai. Accessed : 21st January 2017.
[95] With special songs like *"Wah wah Ramji, Jodi kya banayi"* meaning 'Praise the Lord Rama, what a pair have you made'.
[96] After *Jai Santoshi Maa* became very popular, large number of people began to keep fast on Fridays and stall of sour fruits or food remained untouched.

[97] For instance the names Seeta and Radha given to the main leads in movie *Fire* who indulge in lesbian relationship or banning shooting of film *Water* in India by Hinduist groups who is supposedly known as the proponents of Hinduism.

[98] Henrik Johan Ibsen is a Norwegian theatre director, play writer and a poet. He is considered as a founder of 'Modernism in theatre' and is called 'Father of Realism'.

[99] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0256167/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 15th March 2017.

[100] Namrata Joshi, 'Tell us No Dark Tales', *Outlook* Magazine, 20 August 2012, http://www.outlookindia. com/magazine/story/tell-us-no-dark-tales/281947. Accessed : 15th April 2017.

[101] Shoma Chatterji, 'The Dalits in Indian Cinema', 6th February 2016. http://www.indiatogether.org/the-dalit-in-indian-cinema-reviews Accessed : 25th March 2017.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] T G Vaidyanathan, 'The Role of the Film in Social Progress', (online), p. 61-62. http://www.unipune.ac.in/snc/cssh/ipq/english/IPQ/6-10%20volumes/06%2001/PDF/6-1-6.pdf. Accessed : 22 October 2014.

[106] Suraj Yengde, 'Dalit Cinema', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 3 June 2018, http://www.academia.edu/36830718/Dalit_Cinema. Accessed : 12 August 2018.

[107] Swadeshi Movement was the political movement initiated by B. G. Tilak. It involved rejection of foreign goods and the support to the Indian made products. The policy was designed to strengthen the Indian economy and consolidate the nation towards political independence.

[108] John Lyden (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to religion and Film*, London: Routledge publication, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009, p. 146.

[109] B. Shoesmith, *Swadeshi Cinema: The writing of D.G. Phalke*, *Continuum*, Vol. 2, 1988, p. 44.

[110] The newspaper founded by B G Tilak himself in 1881.

[111] Meaning 'Self Rule'.

[112] Own Country! Country's own made things! Self Rule.

[113] Phalke Summanwar, op. cit., pp. 76 - 81.

[114] Ibid., p. 111.

[115] John Lyden, *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film*, London : Routledge, 2009, p. 146.

[116] Ibid., p. 127

[117] *Kesari,* Poona, 19 August, 1913.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Satish Bahadur, 'Some aspects of Phalke', *Phalke Centenary Volume*, Poona : Film and Television Institute of India, 1971, pp. 4 - 5.

[120] *Navyug* was a Marathi language monthly from Bombay established in 1913 and edited by Ganesh Vitthal Kulkarni. This popular magazine edited encouraged new writers and writings on varied subjects which made it different from the traditional magazines of that time. The magazine encouraged and published articles by D. G. Phalke on a new phenomenon such as Cinema.

[121] Dadasaheb Phalke, *Navyug*, Bombay, 1918.

[122] Phalke-Summanwar, op. cit., p. 155.

[123] Dadasaheb's article in *Navyug*, Bombay, 1 November, 1917.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Phalke-Summanwar, op. cit., p. 157.

[127] Ibid., pp. 164 - 165.

[128] Ibid., p.188.

[129] http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/a-man-of-many-arts-baburao-painter/. Accessed : 2 November 2014.

[130]http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/3433/10/10_chapter%203.pdf. Accessed : 2 November 2014.
[131] Dyneshwar Nadkarni, *Chitratapasvi Bhalji Pendharkar*, Mumbai : Bhalji Pendharkar Cultural Centre, 1992, pp. 3- 6.
[132] Special Representative, 'Sir Radhakrishnan on Indian Films, Says Character of its workers lend status too an industry', *Filmindia*, March, 1942, p. 59.
[133] Ibid., p. 60.
[134] Ibid., p. 62.
[135] Dr. B R Ambedkar, *Annihilation of caste: With a reply to Mahatma Gandhi*, Jullundar : Bheem Patrika publications, 1968, p. 35.
[136] Ibid., p. 35.
[137] K A Abbas, 'Ahmad Abbas writes a letter to Mahatma Gandhi', *Filmindia*, October, 1939, pp. 21.
[138] M K Gandhi had briefly stated in a reply to a request from the editor of a Bombay journal to give message on the occasion of the Indian Motion Picture Congress.
[139] Ibid., p. 22 - 23.
[140] Ibid., p. 23.
[141] Editorial, 'Tell us Another', *Filmindia,* May, 1942, p. 31.
[142] The Editor's Mail, *Filmindia*, January, 1940, p. 18.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] It was a Hollywood movie made to popularize America's alliance with Soviet Union, as mentioned by Rajmohan Gandhi in his book *Gandhi: The Man, His People and the Empire*, p.497.
[146]http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-ram-rajya-the-only-indian-film-mahatma-gandhi-saw-1897123; http://www.vijaybhatt.net/spotlight_phase2.html. Accessed : 10 February 2017.
[147] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stafford-Cripps. Accessed : 19th February 2017.
[148] Special Correspondent, '"Follow Russia" Says Sir Stafford Cripps Film People As Human As Others', *Filmindia*, May, 1942, p. 56 - 58.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Special Representative, 'Oh "This wretched Hindustan" says Dr. Ambedkar! Condemns Deification of men in Films!', *Filmindia*, June, 1942, p. 48.
[151] Ibid., p. 49
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., pp. 49 - 51.
[154] Special Correspondent, 'Mr. Masani Condemns the Stage. Does Not Justify Gandhiji's Attitude Towards Films', *Filmindia*, July, 1942, pp. 31 - 32.
[155] Ibid., 31.
[156] Ibid., 32.
[157] Commenting on M K Gandhi's views in general, B G Kher said in an interview to *Filmindia* that 'they were not meant to be dismissed light heartedly. Gandhiji's views were words that flow from fund of very wide and very deep experience, observation of human behaviour and a good deal of experimentation with the human mind. When he says that films are often bad he meant it and does not deserve to be ridiculed but sympathetically understood'.
[158] Special Correspondent, 'I Follow The Mahatma Says Mr. Kher Ex-Premier Of Bombay Believes In Films Cinema Will Be Future Temples', *Filmindia*, August, 1942, p. 47.
[159] Ibid., p. 49.
[160] Ibid., p. 51.
[161] Special Correspondent, 'Kamladevi once on the Indian Screen! Says Our Pictures are Unreal and Decadant', *Filmindia*, September, 1942, pp. 41 - 45.
[162] Ibid., p. 45.
[163] Gautam Kaul, *Cinema and the Indian National Struggle*, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, Pvt. Ltd., 1998, pp. 102-117.

[164]Special Correspondent, 'The Congress Sphinx Speaks At Last, Sardar Vallabhbhai Suggests Production Of A Congress Historical Film', *Filmindia*, October, 1942, p. 51.
[165] Ibid., p. 51.
[166] Ibid., p. 52.
[167] Ibid.
[168] 'Beware of Free India', *Filmindia*, Vol. XII, No. 1, January 1946, p. 1.
[169] Special Correspondent, 'India's Elder No.2 Commends filmindia! Rajaji thinks loud on Indian Films! Condemns Current Mythological Representations!', *Filmindia,* November, 1942, p. 53.
[170] Ibid., p. 54.
[171] 'Six Years Ago Indian Films Are "a Shameful Affair" Said H.E. Rajagopalachariar!', *Filmindia*, July, 1948, p. 29.
[172] '"I Am A Worshipper Of Art" Says Sarojini Naidu India's Nightingale On India's Films She loves Films', *Filmindia*, January, 1943, p. 39.
[173] Ibid., p.41.
[174] Ibid.
[175] In the same interview she explained that by spirituality she only mean a kindly, generous, altruistic attitude and not an otherworldly attitude.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Morarji Desai claimed to be a reader of *Filmindia* not only outside but also in jail and appreciated its good work.
[178] Savita Parekh, 'Films in Free India! The Home Minister's Candid Opinion!', *Filmindia*, November, 1946, pp. 45 - 51.
[179] Ibid., p. 49.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid., p. 50.
[182] http://www.vijaybhatt.net/spotlight_phase3.html. Accessed : 15th January 2017.
[183] http://pankajkumarmullick.blogspot.in/2012/06/pankaj-kumar-mullick-and.html. Accessed : 15 January 2017.

[184] Indrani, I Chakravorty, 'Tagore, Cinema and the Poetry of Movement', Lensight, Jan-Mar, 2015, p. 2 (online), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286452770_Tagore_Cinema_and_the_Poetry_of_Movement. Accessed : 16 January 2017.
[185] Lalit Joshi, 'Cinema and Periodicals in Colonial India: 1920-1947', in Manju Jain (ed.) *Narratives of Indian Cinema,* Delhi : Premus Books, 2009, p. 23. This message was printed in July, 1939 issue of *Filmindia*.
[186] http://filmsdivision.org/about-us.html. Accessed : 6 January 2017.
[187] Jehangir Shapurji Bhownagary was at Cannes, witnessed films like *Neecha Nagar* and *Sant Tukaram* both harnessing caste system in India made their mark in international film arena without any official backing and yet won accolades. http://supercinema.co.in/nehru-on-and-in-indian-cinema/, Accessed : 6 January 2017.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Many films made between 1948 and 1975 were termed as 'Films of Nehruvian Socialism' and along with those made by Bimal Roy, L.B. Prasad, K A Abbas and others.
[190] http://www.dff.nic.in/iffi.asp. Accessed : 6 February 2017.
[191] Ibid.
[192] http://www.dff.nic.in/iffi.asp, op. cit.
[193] http://bolywoodfiles.blogspot.com/2017/11/nehrus-love-for-indian-cinema.html. Accessed : 24 January 2017.
[194] R. M. Ray (ed.), *Indian Cinema in Retrospect*, New Delhi : Sangeet Natak Akademi, 2009, p. 23. Also available on http://supercinema.co.in/nehru-on-and-in-indian-cinema/, Accessed : 6 January 2017.

[195] Ibid., p. 29.
[196] Ibid.
[197] https://in.rbth.com/articles/2011/12/16/dev_anand_a_wayfarer_in_russia_14023. Accessed: 7 February 2017.
[198] Madhu Jain, *Kapoors: The first family of Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : Penguin India, 2005, p. 96.
[199] Chandrashekhar Joshi, *Raja Paranjape – a Monogram*, Pune : National Film Archives, 2009, pp. 101- 102.
[200] 'Stop selling Patriotism Say India's Ministers!', *Filmindia*, 1949, p. 43.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., p. 45.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] S.K.Dhawan, *Selected Thoughts of Indira Gandhi : A Book of Quotes by Indira Gandhi*, Delhi : Mittal publication, 1985, p. 114. Commented on 25th May 1966.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid., p. 115. Commented on 6th April 1976.
[210] *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi : Jan 1966-69*, New Delhi : Government of India Publication Division, p. 279.
[211] V. K. Cherian, *India's Film Society Movement – The journey and its impact*, New Delhi : Sage publication, 2016, p. 138.
[212] Indira Gandhi, *Selected speeches and writing of Indira Gandhi*, New Delhi : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India Publication Division, 1975, p. 378.

4. 3 CASTE SYSTEM AND HINDI FILMS IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD IN INDIA (1913-1947)

Films are considered reflection of the society and represent social issues of respective period. Films usually cater to than contemporary themes and adapt subjects that are of social concern. In pre-independence period in India, British government advocated the policy of social reform and therefore themes such as women emancipation, diminution of caste discrimination, problem of substance abuse and so on, found its way into film scripts and became very popular. Films begin to be considered as a powerful medium to influence Indian masses along with its capability to draw large profit. Feature films are the great popular passion of India, cutting across the social divides featured such as the divides of caste, class, religion, gender and language. In pre independence period in India some early films took up devotional or romantic themes; others were influenced by the social and political currents of the time. The movies of the inter – war period were redolent with patriotic imagery, the love for the nation-in-the-making manifest in their dialogue and songs.

Films in Pre – independence India With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi into the freedom struggle, his principles and ways became very popular with the Indian masses. Films that survive on popular demand could not keep away from the Gandhian propagandas. Post 1930s, one of the major call that M K Gandhi gave was eradication of untouchability and referred to the community as *Harijan*, the people of God. Films in Hindi with larger linguistic appeal adopted 'caste system' as theme and volunteered to supplement Gandhian call to fight and end the practice of untouchability. The theme was social and did not interfere with the political movement so there was hardly any government intervention. The films based on caste system include stories narrating romantic relationship between unequal castes, stories representing caste discrimination of particular community and treatment they receive, stories based on the life and work of saints from Bhakti movement in India and so on that profess message of humanism.

4.3.1 Chandidas (1934)

Director - Nitin Bose **Production - New Theatres Ltd.**

Plot : The story is based on Chandidas, a humanist who is a disciple of Acharya who belives in universal brotherhood. The village also consist of washerman Baiju, his wife and sister Rami. The landlord in the village Gopinath though show outward affection for religion and Brahmins, actually from inside nurtures evil intentions. Rami daily sweeps temple compound and Chandidas falls in love with her. Gopinath has eyes on Rami and kidnap her. Rami escapes but Gopichand puts all blame over Chandidas and strongly objects to his association with a lower caste woman. Chandidas agrees to repent but after knowing what happened with Rami renounces his abode and leaves village along with Baiju, his wife and Rami.[1]

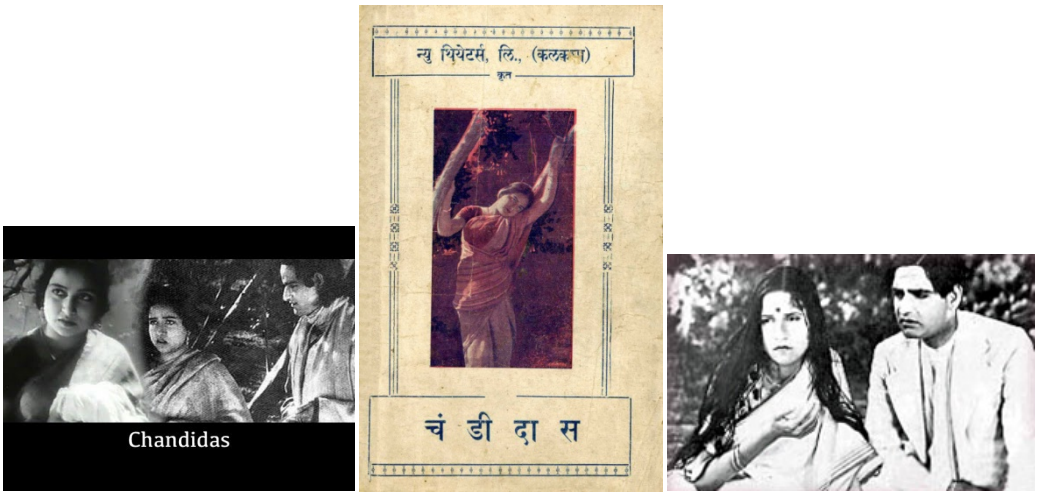


Figure | 1 Chandidas was a great box office hit with immortal songs of K. L. Saigal. The movie showed successful love story between upper caste boy and lower caste girl. Courtesy: https://www.indiavideo.org/cinema/chandidas-7372.php; https://www.cinestaan.com/movies/chandidas-203. Accessed: 5 September 2016.

Review : Chandidas was released in 1934 and was based on caste discrimination and advantage taken by affluent class of the poor. The film tells the story of poet Saint Chandidas who denounced practise of untouchability and condemned caste discrimination.

Earlier the film was made in Bengali. Debaki Bose's first talkies *Chandidas* made in 1932 on the life and poems of the sixteenth century Vaishnavite poet allowed Bose to explore themes that were until then unaddressed in cinema.[2] Nitin Bose simplified the version and its songs became extremely popular.

In short, the protagonist who is a temple priest Thakur is shown falling in love with a low caste Dhoban (washer woman) who is also shown sweeping floor. The society (men) that followed untouchability is shown beating up women that is the heroine and her sister in law. When their house is set on fire a shot suggests Rami almost committing Sati but is rescued by Chandidas. Chandidas's father asks him to take penance and advises him that nothing is above Dharma (religion). Rami is heartbroken and questions Chandidas if she has impure him and if that is the reason he is taking penance. Chandidas gives in to her call and take her in embrace before the society. He fights the Brahmin taboo against washerwoman Rani dhoban's entry into a Hindu temple, weighing the arguments for humanity *manushyata* over religious conduct *dharma*.[3] The society tells them to leave their village as they have insulted their religion and temple. As both the couples (Chandidas and Rami and her brother and sister–in-law) get ready to leave for good they hail Love! And consider themselves as free birds those may fly in open sky. They begin to walk away from village and towards the dawn. By the film's conclusion, a coalition of commoners supports the transgressive couple's vision of an egalitarian future for India.

The film certainly was a revolutionary approach featuring a super singer star Sehgal. The caste distinct couple is shown freed by the society to live their own lives and do unite in the end.

4.3.2 Dharmatma (1935)

Director - V. Shantaram **Production - Prabhat Film Company**

Plot : Eknath extends charitable and affectionate help to lower caste community. This is disliked by religious gurus called Mahant who express his strong opposition to activities of Eknath. On one of the religious occasions Eknath feeds lower caste community members first and so Brahmin community abandons eating at his house. At another instance Eknath has food at the house of an untouchable. Eknath is criticized for his actions and summoned at religious congregation in the holy city of Kashi. Eknath defends his side by reciting his poems to Pradayananda Shastri the religious head and is greatly recognised and appreciated.[4]



Figure 2 Saint Eknath is invited to the house of untouchables to have food with them. He accepts the invitation entire community is joyous and celebrates. Screen grab : Film Dharmatma.

Review : V. Shantaram directed Dharmatma was made in two languages that is Marathi and Hindi. Bal Gandharva an established Marathi theatre actor and popular for playing female lead played the role of Eknath. The film is based on life and teachings of Bhakti movement saint, Sant Eknath who authored devotional texts such as Bhagvata Purana along with bharuds and abhangs.



Figure 3 Saint Eknath having food at the house of the untouchable. Screen grab: Film Dharmatma.

Hari Pandit at the beginning of the film expresses his discontent about Eknath's generosity towards lower castes to his mother and reaffirms the duties of a Brahmin as mentioned in *Smriti*. He asserts that society is been divided into four folds to work efficiently. Brahmins have the responsibility of maintaining good social system. He states that his father is polluting the community and their house by allowing a low caste girl within. Eknath is supposed to be advocating annihilation of caste and put forth logical questions on creation of human being from *panchmahabhoot* or five natural elements in nature. Eknath feeds lower caste people at his home during religious rites of his dead ancestors and thus earn annoyance of the Brahmin community. They do not perform the annual rites and leave. Eknath and his wife feed three Harijan children and envision trio Gods, *Bramha, Vishnu, Mahesh* dining at their home.

At instigation from a local priest Eknath is invited by Harijans to eat at their place. Jai the Harijan girl who is close to Eknath is given this responsibility. The girl however is insulted by Eknath's son. Jai is comforted by Eknath who assures her to eat at her home. Director has very well screened the practice of untouchability when overjoyed Jai runs through the street back home is avoided touch by passerby.[5]

He does go and a miracle happens where Krishna taking Eknath's form and shows his presence at his home too. There is a quick reference to Shabari episode from Ramayana, when the Harijan girl Jai tastes *kheer* or sweet rice before being served to the saint. Jai's father overjoyed sings Eknath's praise and states that Eknath dining at their home has emancipated his forty two *kulas* or clans.[6]

Eknath is challenged by the local *Sanatan* priest and asks to make his presentation before High Priest from *Kasi* the holy place of Hindus. When Eknath begins his presentation in Marathi it's considered impure, but the High Priest allows it to continue. The priest later calls him Mahatma.



Figure 4 Saint Eknath feeds Harijans at his home. No Brahmin community comes to his house to have food. Saint Eknath get realization of three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh in three children who dines with him. Screen grab : Film Dharmatma.

It's interesting to note that the film is reformed as per Gandhian ideals and propagated his ideas through the mouth of the saint. Gandhi's calling of untouchables as 'Harijan' could be well noticed in Eknath's *abhang,* hymn that says, 'The one whom everyone calls as low *varna* are Sri Krishna or Hari's people'. Similarly, Gandhi's drive for cleanliness and emancipation of sweeper class, Bhangis is also propagated through this film. The last scene the noble ideas propagated by Mahatma Gandhi of *Ahmisa* or non-violence), *Satya* or Truth, and ending caste difference is given and virtue of 'Humanity' is celebrate.[7]



Figure 5 Saint Eknath advises Harijans about the importance of Cleanliness and the entire ghetto begins to follow him. The roads are cleaned, clothes are washed, animals are bathed and every one cleanse. Screen grab: Film Dharmatma.

The film was first entitled as Mahatma and was rejected by Bombay Board of Film Censors. Prabhat made desirable changes especially two scenes where Eknath closely interacted with untouchables. There were separate Censor Boards in each states of India and Calcutta Censor Board had immediately approved Hindi version of the film.

4.3.3 Achhut Kanya / The Untouchable Girl (1936)

Director - Franz Osten **Production - Bombay Talkies**

Plot : Kasturi is a beautiful Harijan girl, the daughter of Dukhia, the pointsman at the level-crossing. Her closet friend is Pratap, the shy, handsome son of Mohanlal, the village grocer who is a Brahmin. Though tongued wag in the village about this unnatural friendship between the castles untouchable girl and a boy from highest Hindu caste, the young people ignore what they say, for their fathers are friends too. The most raucous critic is Babulal, the village quack, who actually has another axe to grind. His pills and potions are not as effective of that of Mohanlal prescribes. Even as their feelings transform into love, brought up in an environment of strict social norms of behaviour, Kasturi and Pratap accept without any real protest the fact that they have no future together. Social taboo untimely separates them. The villagers,

hearing that Pratap has even eaten food cooked by an untouchable, are up in arms against both families.[8]



Figure 6 Friendship between high caste Brahmin father of Pratap and low caste father of Kasturi. Screen grab : Achhut Kanya.

They are even more incensed that when Dukhia is ill, Mohanlal has decided to bring him to his own house, to look after him. Mohanlal is accused by the upper-caste community of destroying their religion. The confrontation becomes full-scale riot when Mohanlal is injured, the fever-racked Dukhia rushes out to stop mail train so that he may bring the doctor back to junction. The railway authorities promptly dismiss him for this irresponsible act, and an untouchable youth Manoo, the son of an old friend, is employed in his place. Manoo insists on sharing his home with Dukhia and Kasturi. Pratap is soon married to Meera who feels neglected by him, for he finds it difficult to return her affections. His thoughts are always with Kasturi who is given in marriage to Manoo.[9]



Figure 7 Love blossoms bwteen high caste Pratap and low caste Kasturi who are childhood friends. Courtesy: http://www.bollywoodgoogly.com/blog/ashok-kumar-palate-many-colors/. Accessed : 5 September 2016.

A dutiful wife, Kasturi welcomes estranged wife, Kajri, to their home even though Manoo will not have her back.Kajri and Meera both feel that Kasturi is the source of all their unhappiness. Between them they hatch a plot which goes tragically astray. Pratap has a small stall in a nearby village fair, where he meets Kasturi after a long interval. Kasturi had come to fair with Kajri and Meera, but now finds that she

has been abandoned by them. Pratap gives her a ride back home in his cart. All this while, afraid of their feelings, they had wisely kept out of each other's way. Now the chance encounter brings back both of them memories of their time together. Meanwhile Manoo is told that Kasturi has left him for Pratap. In a wild rage, Manoo sets out to kill Pratap. They meet on the railway tracks as a train approaches the level crossing. Locked in battle, both the Brahmin youth and his untouchable antagonist are unaware of the danger. Kasturi, in desperation tries to halt the onrushing train. She dies to save man she loved and the man she had married.[10]



Figure 8 The poster of Achhut Kanya - The Untouchable girl. Courtesy: http://thebigindianpicture.com/2013/10/birth-of-an-industry/. Accessed: 6 September 2016.

Review : *Achhut Kanya* was the most celebrated movie of the era based on Caste system in India. The story 'The Level Crossing' is written by Niranjan Pal, the son of famous extremist leader Bipin Chandra Pal.[11] He wanted the title of the film with the same name but since there was no equivalent word for the Level Crossing in Hindi, *Achhut Kanya* was finalised which Pal didn't like. For the first time in Hindi cinema such theme was taken up, though there were such films in Marathi and Bengali. The railway crossing was used in the film that was shot in Khar that was a railway yard.[12] The movie gave stardom to Devika Rani and Ashok Kumar. The renowned writer Manto said, 'Ashok Kumar became the ideal for school and college students who would stroll around singing "Tu ban kichidiya, main ban kapanchi / Ban banboloon re... from *Achhut Kanya*'.[13]

Newspaper *Times of India* carried a long article that said that the film has broken all the box-office and popularity records. Beyond question no better production has ever come of any studio in this country. Songs were said to be brilliant and film craft exquisite. The story was considered to be wonderful with no preaching

or suspicion, except in tiny bits one notices they come so naturally from mouth of the Brahmin and the untouchable father. Times said that it is village life, Indian life in a million villages, in ten thousand towns, presented with delightful naiveté and refreshing naturalness. Everything and everyone is absolutely true to life.[14]

The Motion Picture magazine stated that the climax of Bombay Talkies's achievements was reached with *Achhut Kanya* depicting the tragedy of a girl of the untouchable classes who fall in love with a Brahmin and portraying in powerfully dramatic fashion the evil of the caste system with such candour and sympathy that it won unprecedented popularity throughout the length and breadth of the country. The film was shown in almost all colonies where Indians emigrants have settled and a visitor from Trinidad had testified that the release of this picture came to be regarded as a national festival for Indian settlers abroad wherever it was shown and people came from incredible distances to see it.[15]

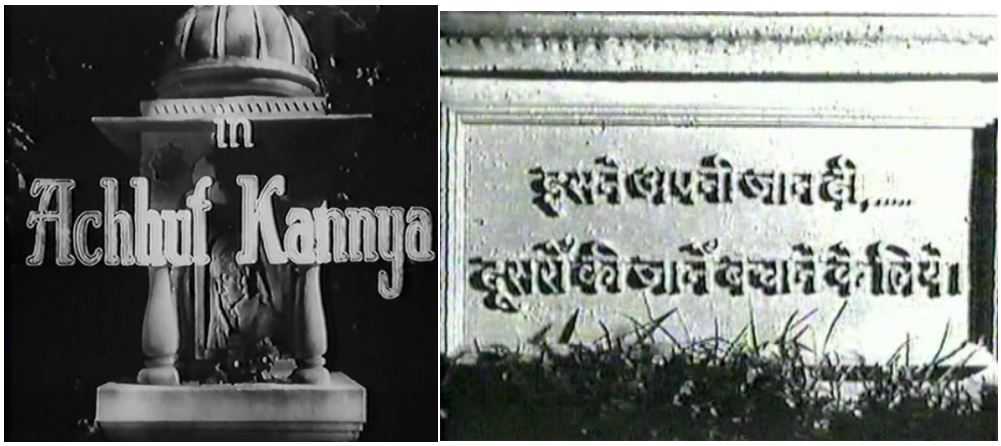


Figure 9 The movie celebrates the virtues of bravery, loyalty, love, dedication and sacrifice of an untouchable girl that makes her immortal and centre character of the film.
Screen grab : Film Achhut Kanya.

The film was a bold subject where an untouchable girl was shown to be in reciprocating love with a Brahmin boy. The film aptly depicted village system in India and the rooted caste system. Mr. Colin Pal [16] considers this film to be Franz Osten best.

4.3.4 Jeevan Prabhat (1937)

Director - Franz Osten **Production - Bombay Talkies**

Plot : The plot is a social story in which a Brahmin girl from the village marries another Brahmin boy; but the marriage is denied a child for a time and then there is another wife. The first wife returns to her father's house and there gets a child quite

unexpectedly. Complications step in, because in the village there is a Harijan boy who loves the heroine.[17] Osten returns to the familiar terrain of rural caste division as in *Achhut Kanya* , adding polygamy to the theme in this story of Uma played by Devika Rani. Uma belongs to high caste and conservative Brahmin family and develop friendship with lower caste potter named Ramu. Uma marries a man from her own community Nandalal, Uma however comes back to her Parent's home when she is unable to conceive. She makes Nandalal remarry but later discover that she is herself pregnant. Nandalal begins to doubt Uma's fidelity. The problem is only solved by Padma's generous withdrawal from the scene.[18]



Figure 10 Story of a higher caste Brahmin girl who befriends a lower caste boy. Courtesy : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeevan_Prabhat; http://wirschingarchive.com/portfolio/bt-jeevan-prabhat-1937/. Accessed : 6 September 2016; Courtesy : *Filmindia*, November 1937.

Review : Devika Rani was praised for her looks and screen presence, however Kishore Sahu the hero was considered a pitiable combination. The magazine reviewed that the picture failed to give any sensible message. The storyline suggested that the character of a upper caste girl is been questioned due to her friendship with a lower caste boy and her pregnancy is questioned due to her brief stay at her husband's abode. Similarly, there is an angle of polygamy and miserable state of a woman in the society.



Figure 11 Uma a higher caste girl befriends a lower caste Nandlal that creates problems for her in future. The Harijan community in discussion. Courtesy : http://wirschingarchive.com/portfolio/bt-jeevan-prabhat-1937/. Accessed : 6 September 2016.

4.3.5 Hurricane Hansa (1937)

Director - R. N. Vaidya **Production - Wadia Movietone**

Plot : Veer Singh has a daughter named Hansa who is attacked by his enemy Zalim Singh. During the encounter Hansa's mother gets killed, father is badly injured and her sister Padma is abducted. Hansa is taken by a Harijan family and grow up as one of them. She changes the word Harijan to Hurrican and overthrows Zalim while donning a mask. She falls in love with Diler the good son of Zalim. The film features key role of horse Punjab-Ka-Beta who rescue Hansa from falling off the cliff and while Hansa leaping over wall set on fire.[19]



Figure 12 Fearless Nadia playing the role of a brave masked Harijan girl who stand alone against the injustice and emerge victorious. Courtesy: https://www.lyricsbogie. com/movies/hurricane-hansa-1937/prem-hi-jag-mein.html; https://www.cinestaan.com/ articles/2017/jan/8/3697/fearless-nadia-s-top-10-film-posters. Accessed: 8 September 2016**.**

Review : Actor Nadia popularly known as 'Fearless Nadia' played the role of lower caste girl and who revolts against the tyranny. This onscreen transition was very novel as it was first about a woman than too coming from a lower caste who turns into a defiant and fights for justice. She becomes the 'voice' of the community and sublime into being called Hurricane a storm from Harijan the term given by Mahatma Gandhi to the untouchables.[20] Nadia solidified a whip carrying horse mounted avengers who delivered rescue from a variety of oppressions. Making a social stand in this movie an orphaned Hansa is initially known as 'harijan Hansa', relegating her to be socially ostracized until she grow up to take her vengeance and becomes known as '*Hurricane Hansa'*. [21]

Rosie Thomas writes that JBH Wadia responded to *Achhut Kanya* with a jokey twist on the caste theme in *Hurricane Hansa* in which Nadia plays a harijan girl who transforms into *Hurricane Hansa* dons her trademark mask and takes revenge on a village who had destroyed her family. Inspired by the ideas of the radical Bengali Marxist and humanist M.N. Roy, JBH Wadia left the Congress Party and in 1940 became a founder member of Roy's Radical Democratic Party.[22] This film could be considered as his initial expressions towards Marxist ideas of class and relatively casteless society.

4.3.6 SachHai / It's True (1939)

Director - R. Chowdhary **Production- Saraswati Cineton**

Plot : Roopa is a Harijan girl in Banares living with her old father Badal. Kashipati a stern Brahmin is the head of the Anand Math. His son Chandan is a poet and loves Roopa in opposition to the wishes of his father and of his people. Kashipati however has other plans and wants him to get married to Mangala so that Chandan may succeed to the *gadi* or seat of Math. Complications are created by Shripati a local chief with the help of Lalita a courtesan and Guru, a semi-gangster. In the midst there are several romantic interludes. The end is framed in some spectacular storm scenes, but with all that it proves unpopular. Chandan ultimately goes away with Mangala, while Roopa joins hand with her own kind in Baldeo.[23]

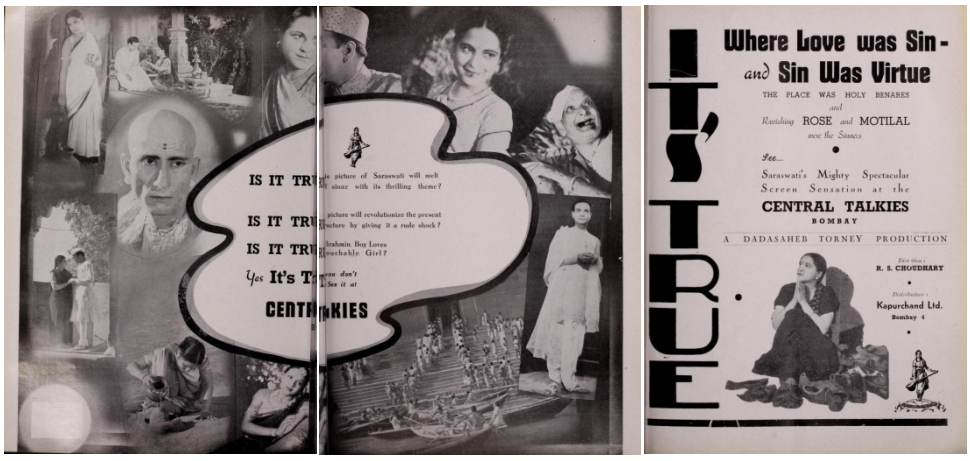


Figure 13 SachHai is a reformist romantic story between a high caste boy and a lower caste girl. The story is set on the bank of Ganges. Courtesy: *Filmindia*, March 1939.

Review : The film is reviewed as a story of ideals in conflict. The writer is said to have set out with a theme of untouchability but in end fails to justify it. The reviewer felt that perhaps the grip of orthodoxy is too strong on the writer and story becomes provocative in places because of the diverse aspects of contrast between orthodoxy

and reform. The story is supposed to be more erratic and less logical. The end of the movie is meant to have been worked out with a nervous eye on the *Sanatanists* in the country with the result that it failed to meet the popular demand or give the story a different purpose. Artistically the picture is called beautiful but the director is pronounced to have failed in delivering the real issue.[24]



Figure 14 Anglo-Indian actor Rose playing the role of an untouchable girl.
Courtesy: *Filmindia* March 1939.

4.3.7 Achhut / The Untouchable (1939)

Director - Chandulal Shah **Production - Ranjit Movietone**

Plot - The film opens with Lakshmi, daughter of a lower caste trying to bring water from the temple well used by upper caste, where the village temple priest breaks pot on her head. This terribly upsets her father who embraces Christianity. However his wife decides to remain Hindu. Lakshmi's befriends merchant's daughter Savita and later both girls fall in love with same boy Madhukar from higher caste and good economic background. Merchant Seth Haridas is forced to send Lakshmi back to her village. Lakshmi after returning back is shocked to see the condition of her community and decides to emancipate them. Lakshmi takes lead and bring social revolution and Lakshmi's struggle is successful. The temple doors are finally opened to the Harijan.[25]



Figure 15 Actor Gohar playing the role of Achhut. Courtesy: http://www.mahalmovies.com/film-hunt/achhut/. Accessed : 14 September 2016.

Review : The film is considered to be an aide to Gandhi's teaching and his article in Harijan on *Bhangi* or sweeper caste. He writes, 'Don't think your work is inferior to that of Rashtrapati Bose or Jawaharlal Nehru. No, not an atom. They serve and you serve and, in fact, I value your work more. I myself am an experienced Bhangi and a competent Bhangi. The Bhangis had been most despised of the Harijans, because his work has been regarded as the most degrading... The volunteer Bhangi's work is unselfish and so nobler than that of mothers.'[26] Gauhar's posters were everywhere carrying broom and basket for cleaning. The film exemplified Gandhi's views on the *Bhangi* or sweeper class and made a visual comment on their emancipation.



Figure 16 *Filmindia* magazine supported Gandhiji's call for ending caste discrimination by making this its cover page and along with canvassing the movie Achchut. Courtesy : *Filmindia*, January 1940.

As per *Filmindia* review, Gohar a leading actor in the industry is said to have given an irresistible performance as Lakshmi the untouchable girl. Sitara who acted as child Lakshmi too was complemented for her performance and called 'ideal Harijan girl'. The film language though is Hindi there is distinct use of language of Kathiawar where story is supposed to be set.[27] Chandulala Shah invited Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to inaugurate the movie at Royal Opera House. In his inaugural speech Sardar Patel

discussed vital importance of the cinema and stressed on the immense capability of this medium to bring positive attitudinal change in the country. He stressed on, film *Achhut* rendering a noble service to the social cause of depressed class. He insisted that untouchability has to be removed from India and called it an obstacle in attaining Swaraj.[28]

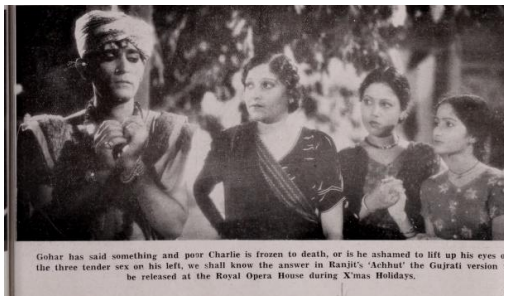


Figure 17 Caste discrimination as visible in film Achhut. Courtesy: Filmindia January 1940.

In May 1940, *Achhut* is once again reviewed and is compared to a genuine social film of the *Dead End* [29]. The article discusses the film and issue of untouchability at long length and how good films can bring social reform by rightful projection of social issue. This film is considered to have squarely dealt with the problem of the untouchables as a class and not as isolated oppressed individuals. The review states that no false happy ending was introduced to obscure the moral issue and ended on a symbolic question. It states that the films that base their appeal on picture of upper class life than on the condition of poor are rather first class in entertainment but moderate in propaganda to doing any social good.[30]

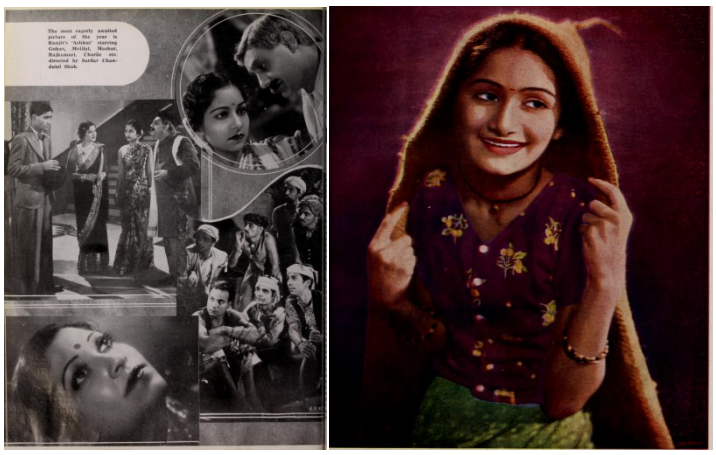


Figure 18 Stills from Achhut and the young untouchable girl. Courtesy: *Filmindia* January 1940.



Figure 19 Still from film *Achchut*. The story discussed the practise of untouchability and showed the deplorable state of lower cast community. Courtesy : *Filmindia,* January 1940.

The article further implies that Producers should make short films with commentary in English and perhaps full length Indian films with English sub-titles. The subjects suggested for these films are personal craft of weaving, pottery, brass inlaying, spinning as mentioned by Mahatma Gandhi in one of the issues of Harijan. The other themes mentioned are condition of the peasants, working of rural indebtedness of caste system in a village and rise and development of co-operative schemes. The article impresses upon the readers that the cultural and social standards of any people can be best raised by an assiduous application of the needs of the lowest classes and this could be done by honest social films, whose message are un-obscured by the introduction of irrelevant romantic and melodramatic themes, and which portray without distortion the daily lives of the not so fortunate.



Figure 20 Posters of film Achhut. The audience's patriotism is called for seeing the movie. Courtesy : *Filmindia,* January 1940.

The author of the article appeals to the readers that as films have reached technical and directorial efficiency comparable social pictures should be made and encouraged.[31]

4.3.8 Sant Dnyaneshwar (1940)

Director - V. Damle and S. Fatehlal **Production - Prabhat Film Company**

Plot : Vithalpant who had become Sanyasi or an astute comes back into family fold. He has four children Dnyneshwar, Nivrutti, Sopan and Muktabai. Vithalpant is ostracised by local priest and is subject to abuse and social segregation. The intensified persecution leads Vithalpant and his wife to embrace death.

The eldest son Dnynshwar takes responsibility of his siblings. He travels to Pithan and show miracles by making male buffalo recite Vedas the holy scripture of Hindus. Back in village Dnyneshwar interpret and write Geeta understandable to general masses in regional language. Dnyneshwar establish as saint and gives spiritual discourses for wellness of human kind.[32]

Review : The film is reviewed as a good picture with need of slight improvements such as presentation of 'miracle' scenes and Hindi diction of the actors. For devotional people they state that the film is a supreme fare whereas for others it is considered to be philosophy not to be missed. The film is called 'Picture with a Message'. [33]

The movie provokes a debate between showing miracles on screen and effect that it generates in the masses. The question is if this makes people more superstitious and whether in the process the masses lose sight of the underlying philosophical thoughts.[34]

Movie *Dnyaneshwar* seem to do well also in Hollywood and this was the first Indian film that is sponsored by the august body, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. A Hollywood Report states, 'The picture was 'A Boy Saint' (The English title) produced by Prabhat Film Company of India. We enjoyed it immensely not only from an entertainment point of angle, but especially because it gave Americans a real inside view of India, her customs and her people, their humility, their love of God and man. The audience, made up of important people in the film industry, writers, directors, film executives as well as actors applauded several times throughout the unreeling of the film. One particular highlight enjoyed very much by

this audience, was the sequence in which the farmer, having given the children ride to his home, sings happily and with great charm and gaiety, during the ride. This bit of Business as Hollywood would call it might be considered a Frank Capra direction'.[35]

Frank Capra said in *American Cinematographer* that he is surprised to find that a technically well-made film like *Sant Dnyaneshwar* could be produced in Poona, a smaller town than Bombay.[36] The reporter of newspaper states that 'We are sure everyone will congratulate Prabhat Film Company and its artists and technicians for making an educative and informative film in both Marathi and Hindi.[37] Herald Tribune too wrote an excerpt entitled *Dnyneshwar wins praise in America*.[38]

The review in the newspaper *Times of India* considers the film as inspiring in the sincerity with which the life of this great Maharashtrian saint is depicted. The papers reports that, the story tells how the parents Dnyaneshwar, having offended against the inexorable religious code of Hinduism became the victims of an ostracism that reduced them to a level infinitely more degrading than that to which untouchability is condemned in the Hindu pale.[39]

Sant Dyneshwar movie also gives rise to an interesting debate on what is the meaning of 'Saint'. K.A. Abbas appreciates the movie but suggested on propagating philosophical thoughts significantly *Manush Dharma* or Universal Brotherhood than explicitly glorifying a saint's virtue of super-human miracles. The epigram about Sant Dnyneshwar that 'A saint is something more than a magician' sums his criticism[40]. Other review from the *Bombay Chronicle* elaborates on the societal structure in the times of Sant Dyneshwar, his philosophical greatness than the miracles he performed and further made a comparative analysis of him with M K Gandhi. It states that, 'The people of Dnyneshwar's times were by no means gullible. Gangadhar Shastri, for instance, was among those who declined to take cognizance of the 'caste admission pass' issued by the Paithan priests, on the ground that it had been procured with 'magic and black art'. Yet he was among the first Brahmins to acknowledge *Dnyneshwar*'s lead. The Prabhat scenarist boldly faces the problem of miracles himself, when he makes Visoba say : "If we recognise purification certificates obtained by magic and miracle, the low caste snake charmer may as well claim to become a Brahmin... So long as heroes exist, popular imagination will give its own varnish to exceptional deeds".[41]

Is not Gandhi, in our own times, regarded as an incarnation of God by the very masses for whose enlightenment he lives and strives? In another age, less egotistically

cynical and more reverently imaginative than our own, the Dandi march and the moral victory over the White man in South Africa would be moulded into the shape of miracles.[42] Thus the saint genre was presented by print media with contemporary connotation and appreciated.

4.3.9 Narsi Bhagat (1940)

Director - Vijay Bhatt **Production - Prakash Pictures**

Plot : Narsi Mehta a high caste Brahmin is a saint from Gujarat. He mingled with untouchables and gave message of humanism and equality. His preaching and reformist activities are not liked by orthodox Brahmin community. Narsi Bhagat triumphs in establishing his sainthood and all oppositions are let down. [43]

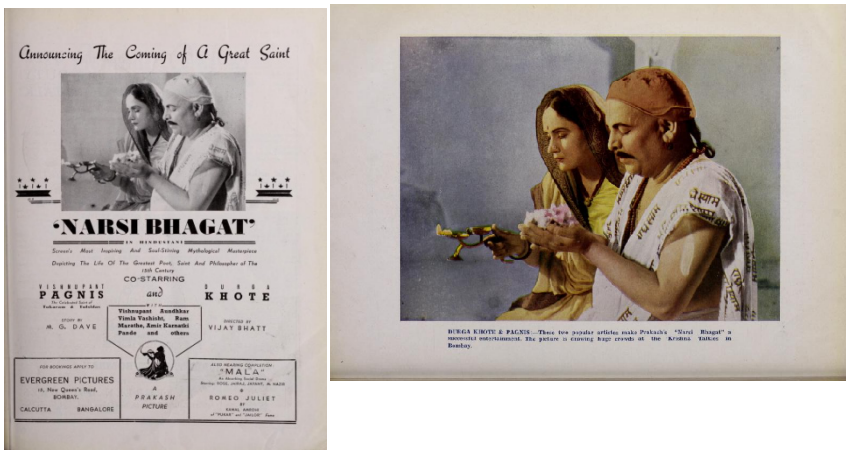


Figure 21 Posters of film Narsi Bhagat. Courtesy : *Filmindia* September 1940.

Review : The actor Pagnis and Durga Khote is said to have given a topping performance.[44] *Narsi Bhagat* is a hit at the box-office whereas in one of the post release advertisements an inscribed post card is given with a note that said '*Narsi Bhagat* at regal talkies Ahmedabad has suppressed all collections hitherto in Ahmedabad cinemas...'. Narsi Mehta's *bhajan* or devotional song *Vaishnavjan to tene kahiye je peer paraayi jaane rey* is considered most favourite of M K Gandhi and had nationwide invocation. Ironically, M K Gandhi's political prominence, his inclination towards Narsi Bhagat's preaching and his caste annihilating activism rightly gave this movie popular response. [45]

4.3.10 Raj Nartaki / The Court Dancer (1941)

Director - Modhu Bose **Production- Wadia Movietone.**

Plot : This is a story of a love between a prince and a court dancer. It was an ancient story from one of the most colourful kingdom of India- Manipur. Indrani, the lovely court dancer attached to the kingdom of Manipur was in love with Prince Chandrakirti, the heir apparent to the throne. The Prince reciprocated the sentiment of the dancer with equal sincerity and warmth. The politics interfere with their life and change the course of the story. The neighbouring kingdom of Tripura has a long standing feud with the kingdom of Manipur. People of both the kingdoms anxiously look forward to the termination of this feud by the marriage of the Prince of Manipur with the Princess of Tripura.[46]

The King of Manipur, father of the Prince, is only too willing to forge this alliance with the neighbouring kingdom to end an old feud with a powerful enemy. The welcome news spreads far and wide. Goswami Kashishwar the religious head of the community decides to travel to Manipur with the Sacred Dust of the feet of Lord Chaitanya and to bless the people of Manipur by the distribution of the Sacred Dust.[47] In Indian life, religion has always played a vital part and even after ages of deterioration, religion is still the supreme urge for the 400 million Indians. In the ancient times, therefore, the Sacred Dust and its distribution would be considered the most sacrosanct event in the history of a kingdom.

The High Priest Goswami Kashishwar arrives in the court dancer's garden and watches her Radha-Krishna dance in quite admiration. The court dancer's chaste and excellent interpretation of this symbolic dance of divine love wins his admiration and in a moment of ecstasy he offers her the sacred Dust. But the King who arrives just then intercepts him by informing him that Indrani was a mere court dancer and as such had not 'enough caste' to receive the holy blessing. The High Priest checks himself and refuses to bless the court dancer. The first evidence of her social status is thus bought home to the court dancer and she becomes sad and depressed.

At the court, the Envoy Extraordinary of Tripura is pressing King Jaisingh of Manipur to announce the engagement of the Prince to the Princess, but the Prince becomes adamant in love and the thought of taking another woman as a consort tortures him. His love for the dancer was divine. Next day, the King orders the court dancer to dance at the court assembled to announce the engagement of the royal

prince. Indrani dances with love in her heart and eyes on the Prince, but when she hears of his engagement she is broken hearted.

With a mountain of despair on her head and a storm of emotions within, the court dancer repairs herself to a ruined temple on a hill top to pray to the Lord. The Lord answers her prayers and she beholds the Prince standing besides her solemnly swearing that he will marry her and make her his Queen.

The drama rushes into emotional climax. A rejected lover of the court dancer excites the subjects of the King and denounces her as a witch. On other hand, the King of Manipur is furious at the behaviour of his son and prepares to exercise his royal authority. Prince is irreconcilable and rushes to the chamber of the court dancer and they plan to elope. The King is in dilemma and doesn't know how to solve this problem. The Envoy Extraordinary of Tripura presses harder on the marriage and just then the Goswami Kashishwar volunteers to speak to the curt dancer. They meet at the hill top and there the High Priest in his soothing and yet stern voice tells her the divine duty of kingship. And in the name of love for the Prince urges her to sacrifice it to enable the Prince to fulfil a higher destiny. The court dancer is impressed with the teaching that greater love lies in sacrifice.

Next day when Prince arrives to take his beloved she refuses to go with him and disillusions him by telling that he was of no use to her if he had to give up the throne. The Prince is broken hearted and goes back as a wise man. In the city of Manipur, the mob fury kindled by the rejected lover now assumes huge proportions and the mob rushes to burn the witch as called by the people. At the last hour Prince comes to know the truth through the repentant High Priest, of the virtue and loyalty of the court dancer and he rushes to save her. But he is too late and his beloved has already made supreme sacrifice and departed from the world.[48]

Review: The drama was born out of the maladjustments of Indian social values since time immemorial. This was first Indian film that was made in English after its release in Hindi and Bengali version. The cultural atmosphere of the story was well maintained and there was excellent histrionic work. The drama happened to be a love saga of a Prince and a court dancer whose love is not socially acceptable due to their societal status. Film suggests that inspite of adoration of divine love of Lord Krishna and Radha by chaste Hindus, the pure love in form is outright rejected between unequal statuses. The religious imposition come from the High priest who define lives

of the people and assumes to be a custodian of faith. There is element of Bhakti again where the dancer experiences the divine existence. The film however ends with separation of lovers thus justifying the religious code of morality. The drama shows political interests of the rulers in marriage versus divine love that blossom between the Prince and the court dancer. The religion intercepts in the story and finally ends it into a love tragedy.

The editor of Filmindia, Baburao Patel gave a special column called 'The Salute' in the same review where he appreciates Wadia Movietones's initiative to make first picture in English also and calls this picture an eloquent ambassador of thrice unlucky home land. He stated that in foreign countries all coloured men are taken for a barbarian. This truly was a picture of cultural propaganda and calls it a 'patriot gift' of the Nation. [49]

4.3.11 Doctor (1941)

Director : Subodh Mitter **Production : New Theatres**

Plot : The story is based in a village in Bengal where a father and son comes in conflict due to beliefs in caste system. The father is an aristocrat where as son is a doctor with humanist ideals. The son renders his services to poor and downtrodden in the village who are suffering from cholera. In the due course the doctor marries widow Maya who belong to lower rank in Brahman caste itself. Maya dies giving birth to a son and the child is sent to grandfather's house without him knowing his identity. The child grows into an educated young man and again the issue of caste discrimination rises its head. The truth about the relationship is revealed and the old landlord realizes his mistake. [50]

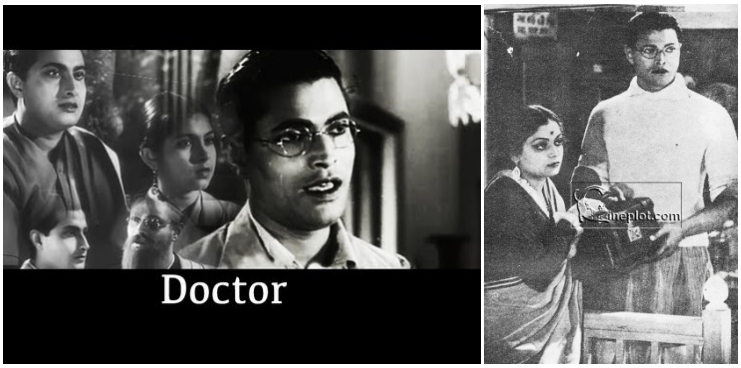


Figure 22 Film doctor shows reformation through the story of a doctor who marries a lower positioned Brahmin widow. The film shows caste difference within the Brahmin community. Courtesy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 7_SrvAT0xxU; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7UJxZw5zP0. Accessed: 6 September 2016.

Review: The story is based on caste system in Brahmin *varna*. The Hindu tradition and rules are reassured. The hero's father is a Shiromini Brahmin called Raja Drishtnath Rai. The family is considered to be most high within Brahmin caste and class. They are shown to be Zamindars or landlord who have set up the village which is then called *Raidhaam*. There is an interesting tangle of modernity and traditionalism espically when a high caste Brahmin boy opts to take medical profession. A comment is made on the nature of the Doctor profession where the protagonist require to handle or incise corpse that is considered very impure and done only by low caste people. The doctor hero proposes that his father will come out with some penance to get him purified.

The female lead in the movie Maya also a Brahmin but lower in stature of that of the hero's family is shown to have been living through societal prohibition. Maya and her father's expulsion is because she was left during the marriage ceremony for undue demands. When the protagonist informs his father that he has taken Maya as his wife, the father reminds him of the Hindu *Shastras* or religious scriptures that states that incomplete marriage is also considered as complete marriage and such a girl cannot marry again. She is considered as a deserted woman*, swamy ki thukrayi*, and is not fit for him. The hero certainly do not fall for any suggestions and is ex-communicated by his own family. The protagonist's father when shows his suspicion to keep an abandoned child (who happens to be his own grandson) at home his servant suggests that he can't let a Brahmin boy let go in some asylum and get impure by mixing with other seventy two castes. When the child grows up and is foreign educated informs the old man about getting married, senior Rai first enquires about the caste, *kul, vansh* and *gotra* of the girl he wishes to marry.

However, towards the end of the movie, relations and love triumph and senior Rai accepts that it was his mistake to let his son go.

The film certainly is overburdened with caste issue and shows how caste system overwhelms familial relations. The film has a soothing undertone of bringing modernization, nobility of medical profession, rejection of ideas not helpful for society to progress and upheaval of the thought of humanity.

4.3.12 Mali (1944)

Director - V. Shantaram **Producer - Rajakamal Kalamandir.**

Plot : The film story is of Sanvata Mali, the gardener-saint of Maharashtra. It is a seven hundred years old story of a good and a wise gardener, Sanvata who lived at Arangaon near Pandharpur. He was a devotee of God who believed in His Omnipresence and refused to recognise the deification of idols. He worked hard believing in the divinity of work and very rarely did he mix up with the professional worshippers of his village. It was very natural that man of his temperament should become unpopular. And Sanvata did become very unpopular with the people of his village. Finally his devotion is acknowledged and his sainthood gets recognition.

Review: *Mali* was not highly criticised by Filmindia magazine and stated that Shantaram should have never have screened this movie. V. Shantaram was criticised for making a poor film and pitied that if this was for making quick bucks and quit the industry than it be the greatest tragedy of Indian film industry to lose one of its foremost artist from the active field of production. The magazine stated that it was shockingly strange to find *Mali* a picture too rotten for words, in story, in acting, in music, in diction and in presentation. [51]

Interestingly, remarks were made on the language used in the film. The magazine comments, '*Mali* has, however one novelty which has accidently crept in. It is the first picture of India in Kolhapuri Hindustani and to those who are curious to know how this strange dialect sounds to the ear, we recommend *Mali* very strongly because this picture is so completely Kolhapuri in its accent and diction that it fully represents this strange combination dialect almost perfectly'. [52]

4.3.13 Lakharani (1945).

Director - Vishram Bedekar **Production - Prabhat Film Company**

Plot : Rani Bichhwa is the queen of a colony of social outcasts who are professional temple acrobats and performers. They are shown to be intense devotees of God, who lived on food given by other devotees who appreciate their daily devotional performances before the temple. If these people missed their regular performance then they also missed their daily meal. Over this mythical community Rani Ma - the Queen Mother - rules with strict scales of justice. Rani Ma has a daughter in *Lakharani* and a son in Lachhman. When the story opens Rani Ma is evidently leading a retired life of

devotion and Lakha and Lachhman bear the main burden of the professional daily performances. One such daily 'tamasha' is interrupted by Rajkumar the prince of the neighbouring state of the godless. Hero meet the heroine and are attracted towards each other. Ultimately, the hero kidnaps Lakha and brings her to his father's court. She is not accepted due to the present King's atheist views and Lakha is tied to a horse back and sent away. She reaches back to her own place and prince begins his chase. He becomes a fisherman and meets Lakha. The Rani Ma intercept between them and after knowing the fact disown her. Lakha goes to back to her prince and they marry only after Lakha has sworn to atheism. [53]

However, population of her community (colony) starts starving and Lakha becomes unhappy. The climax is soon rushed in which Rani Ma and Lachhman bring story to end and Lakha breaks off the shackles of atheism and Lord Krishna emerges out of the stone.

Review: The film is a journey of a believer to scepticism. There seems to be a coveted Bhakti movement spirit. An outcast girl marrying a prince who has an atheist background and the said heiress of the outcaste community finally evoking God and brings solace to everyone certainly seems to be a devout theme. *Lakharani* was not appreciated by the film reviewer who also called the story unimaginable stupid and Vishram Bedekar was considered a wrong choice made by Prabhat Film Co. However, Durga Khote was acclaimed for her Rani Ma performance. [54]

Observations :

Films based on Caste system in India represent various perspective such as romance between unequal caste and failed love story, devotional genre, heroic agitation and progressive endeavours. Censor Board under British regime gave an easy pass to social subjects and so theme of caste system was popular. The protagonists were fair skinned Anglo – Indian artists such as Gohar, Rosie, Nadia, and western educated Devika Rani and so on. These films also complimented Gandhian call to fight against caste distinction.

Notes and References :

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandidas_(film). Accessed : 5 August 2016. Researcher has watched the movie and scribed the plot.
[2] Madhuja Mukherjee, *New Theatres Ltd. - The Emblem of Art, the Picture of Success*, National Film Archives, Pune, 2009, p. 17.
[3] Priya Jaikumar, *Cinema at the end of the empire*, Seagull books, Calcutta, 2007, p. 2.
[4] Researcher has watched the movie and scribed the plot. Plot also available on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharmatma_(1935_film); http://wikivisually.com/wiki/Dhartmatma_(1935_film). Accessed : 5 August 2016.
[5] https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Dharmatma_(1935_film). Accessed : 5 August 2016.
[6] Rachael Dwyer, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, Routledge, London, 2006, p. 70.
[7] Ibid., p. 80.; http://archives.org/stream/ keuneColumbia0054D10394/Keune_columbia_0054D_10394_djvu.txt. Accessed : 5 August 2016.
[8] Amrita Ganger, *Franz Osten and Bombay Talkies : Journey from Munich to Malad*, Max Muller Bhavan, 2001, p. 19- 21.
[9] Ibid., p. 22.
[10] Ibid., p. 23. ;Plot also available on http://wiki.phalkefactory.net/index.php?title=film_in_india. Accessed : 18 November 2016.
[11] http://www.phalanx.in/pages/article_1005_magical_world.html. Accessed : 20 November 2016.
[12] Amrit Ganger, op.cit., pp. 13- 14.
[13] 'AchhutKanya', Film Review, *The Times of India*, September 4, 1936, p. 38.
[14] Ibid.
[15] 'AchhutKanya' , Film review, The Motion Picture Magazine, October 1937, p. 22.
[16] Grandson of extremist leader Bipin Chandra Pal and son of the story writer of AchhutKanya Niranjan Pal.
[17] "JEEVAN PRABHAT", Film Review, *Filmindia*, Vol.3, No.8, December 1937, p. 36.
[18] Ashish Rajadhyakshya and Paul Wiemann, *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema*, Routledge, 2014.p. 272. ; http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0029063/mediaindex. Accessed : 20 November 2016.
[19] Ibid. ; http://wiki.phalkefactory.net/index/index.php?title=film_in_india. Ccessed : 20 November 2016.
[20] http://www.apex-magazine.com/women-in-pre-1947-chinese-and-indian-horror-fiction-and-film/. Accessed : 20 November 2016.
[21] Anirudh Chawda,' The Making of Hindi Film Super Hero', *India Current Magazine*, Vol. 25, No.8, November 2011, p.12.
[22] Rosie Thomas, *Bombay before Bollywood : Film City Fantasies*, Orient Blackswan Private limited, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 100- 101.
[23] 'Its True', Film Review, *Filmindia*, April 1939, p. 53.
[24] Ibid., p. 54.
[25] 'Round The Town- Acchut', Film Review, *Filmindia*, January 1940, p. 48. Available online on http://archives.org/stream/filmindia194006unse/filmindia194006unse_djvu.txt.
[26] *Gandhiji's speech to Sanitation Volunteers*, *Harijan*, 19 February 1938.
[27] Ibid., p. 49.
[28] http://archives.org/stream/filmindia194006unse/filmindia194006unse_djvu.txt. Accessed : 22 November 2016.
[29] (i) The movie Dead end projects life in slum in the city of New York. The film showcase indefensible existence of this kind of life and discriminating social system it formed.
(ii) Op.cit., *Filmindia*, May 1940, p. 45.
[30] Ibid., p. 46.
[31] Ibid., p. 47.
[32] http://archives.org/stream/filmindia194006unse/filmindia194006unse_djvu.txt. Accessed : 22 November 2016.

[33] Ibid.
[34] Filmindia , January 1940, op.cit., p. 37.
[35] 'Dnyaneshwar in Hollywood', JUDAS-Bombay Calling, *Filmindia*, December 1941, pp. 5- 6.
[36] 'Dnyneshwar movie Review', Dnyan Prakash, Pune, 19 May 1940, p. 5.
[37] Ibid.
[38]Bapu Watve, *V. Damle and S. Fattelal A Monograph*, (as published in Bombay Chronicle 8th June 1940), National Film Archives , Pune, 1985, p. 41.
[39] Ibid.
[40]K. A. Abbas, Bombay Chronicle, 25 May 1940, p. 32.
[41]BapuWatve, *V. Damle and S. Fattelal A Monograph*, p. 39.
[42] Ibid.
[43] *Filmindia*, October 1940, p. 43.
[44] Ibid.
[45] https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/tag/narsi-mehta/; http://archive.org/stream/filmindia...djvu.txt. Accessed : 2 December 2016.
[46] 'India's First Picture in English, The Court Dancer a Beautiful Picture, Excellent Dialogues, Excellent production Value', *Filmindia*, October 1941, p. 16.
[47] Ibid., p.17.
[48] Ibid., p.18.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Researcher has viewed the film and scribed the plot. Plot also available on http://cineplot.com/doctor-194-review/. Accessed : 12 December 2016.
[51] 'Shantaram Produces Some Motion Picture Rubbish! 'Mali' Has Neither Art Nor Entertainment! A Picture Boring at Every Foot', Our Review, *Filmindia*, May 1944, p. 59.
[52] Ibid., p. 61.
[53] 'Lakharani Prabhat's Expensive Tomfoolery! Bedekar Presents Pseudo-intellectual "Tamasha"! Picture Provide Neurotic Torture!', Our Review, *Filmindia*, November 1945, p. 51.
[54] Ibid., p. 53.

4. 4 CASTE SYSTEM AND HINDI FILMS IN POST INDEPENDENT INDIA (1947-2013)

The films referring to caste system in post-independence period in India –

Films based on caste system in India are persistantly made as this social issue never resolved and discrimination never ceased. However, the nature of discrimination differed, as other elements such as feudal system, globalisation and gender inequality became correlated with the mainstream caste system. Earlier, Indian masses were fighting against an external or foreign enemy and now it was time to fight with the internal social discrepancies. In later decades there was a positive transition in the position of depressed class community but this new change was not welcoming for conservative individuals. Films featured the hypocrisy where an individual would befriend a lower caste person but will never allow for marriage alliance. Films continue to represent this concern and made love or marriage between an estranged couple from two different and unequal castes communities a desirable theme. This theme proved to be a popular subject and was a box office success.

Another issue related to caste system in India is achievement of political power at the cost of a particular society. Post independent period films effectively feature this idiosyncrasy where a person from a particular lower caste is elected but the real power vested in the hands of higher castes.

Similarly, these films explore caste issue from both the sides, the perspective of both higher caste and lower castes respectively. The message of changing according to times, breaking free old customary rituals that are detrimental to peaceful co-existanc, humanism become an essential part of storytelling to re-assert social reforms.

The films based on caste system in post independence period presented newer perspectives and challenges before its viewers and appealed for emancipation from inhuman and derogatory social practice.

Caste System and Hindi films post independent India (1947 – 1990)

The following six four enlisted films in post independence period from 1947 till 2013, are based on issues related to prevailing caste system im India and socio – casteist subject. The films either directly refere to caste discrimination or has a strong

under current of the representation of the issue. The films are listed and analysed as per year of their release with futher elaborative information on the director of the film, production house that made the film, plot and review. There are some films those had international release and were screened at various international film festivals. Such films have an alternate English title. These titles are mentioned where applicable along with original Hindi name of the film.

The plot is a story of the film representing caste issue. At some places the story seems to be extensively given but it is inorder to acquaint readers with specifications of caste system and caste discriminations as projected through the film and reforms desired.

The review consists of various repostes from journalistic media and researcher's own assessment of the film. The plot and review are aptly supplemented by screen shots / screen grabs from the film and acknowledged internet image sources to support the statements. There are thirty three films enlisted between 1947 -1990. The trend shows making of both commercial and alternate cinema.

4.4.1 Pujari (1947)

Director - Aspi Irani **Production - Ardeshir M. Irani**

Plot : It is a concoct story of a devdasi, a Prince and appearance of God as part of enlightenment the protagonist experience. Guru Mahananda is a pujari or priest of a temple to which he has dedicated his only daughter, Purnima, who dances to the fanatical beat of Mahananda's drum. Mahananda is evidently a devoted fanatic worshipper of Goddess Kali. Purnima grows into an attractive woman and a Prince is attracted to her. Mesmerized by Purnima's dancing skills, Prince falls in love with her and asks Mahananda for her hand. The fanatic priest refuses as he wants his daughter to remain dedicated to temple inspite of the prophecy that she would become the queen of the land.[1]

Rajkumar, the prince loses his temper with his heart and decides to get Purnima by subterfuge. He changes his costume and becomes a foreign poet wanting to write poetry for Purnima and manages to live as a guest at Mahananda's house. Then begins Purnima and Rajkumar's love games and climax is rushed by Rajkumar's father who could not die quietly without seeing his son married to someone. A

conventional royal caparisoned bride is soon chosen and marriage day is announced. But Rajkumar marries Purnima on the quiet and the King dies in despair.[2]

The father of the proposed bride feels insulted and he spits out the usual Rajput talk and goes to war with the prince. Before going to war, however, Rajkumar takes a promise from Purnima that she would not go and dance again in the temple. This doesn't suit the Pujari who goes on a hunger strike and upheavals God. The God in heaven gets disturbed. The male God had to save his male devotee whereas Goddess has to look after Purnima and her future harmony with her husband.[3]

The climax is reached when the Goddess takes the form of Purnima and dances in the temple to induce Pujari to break his fast whereas the God takes the form of the Prince and saves Purnima from immolating herself in the fire. The emotional storm is brought to a rest and all becomes well.[4]

Review : The review of the film seems to be less positive. Mahananda was said to have reconciled himself with the wrong spiritual interpretation. The film basically caters to priest, his daughter given away as devdasi and Rajput *kshatriya* or warrior class Prince correlation. This made-up story caters to aspiring divinity and transformation of sublime devoutness. The glimpses of Bhakti cult may be discerned as the God of veneration is shown to be Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi. The devdasi system tradition usually had marrying girls to Krishna an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The tradition became unpopular due to the creeping of prostitution this religious blasphemy. A Brahmin forcing her daughter into remaining a devdasi was a wrong message given by the film which was again justified by Goddess appearing as one. There were conflicting views presented. At one place the tradition instead of being condemned was given a divine status and at another place a high caste Rajput does not hesitate to marry a devdasi (though a daughter of priest but a dancer) and ask her to leave her dancing for good. The film hardly had any message to give but the story line suggested that a traditional religious-caste issue is explored here to give the ultimate message of Bhakti.

4.4.2 Samrat Ashok (1948)

Director - K. B. Lal **Production - Bombay Cinetone Ltd.**

Plot : The film is based on the story of Smarat Ashoka who had change of heart due to the battle of Kalinga. Due to the violence the King had change of heart. However, before this transformation King Ashoka practised aggressive imperialism and ill treated priests and monks.

Review : The phase of historical continued even after independence. The film Samrat Ashoka was one such attempt to remember India's past legacy of Emperors. The film however got deviated from the real history and there were few cinematic elements added in order to make it more appealing. As the story is about the Great Emperor accepting Buddhism as his way of life after bloodiest war of Kalinga, the film projected his change of heart due to a female Buddhist monk, a *bhikshuki*. To make Hindu audience arrive in theatres a fabricated melodramatic addition of a Brahmin priest is made. The Brahmin is made King for a day; sometime his daughter is tortured by Ashoka's officers in his early terrain and so on. The film poster also gave tag line as 'The justice of the Brahmin will prevail'. Thus it was given a casteist colour. The film was criticised by leading magazine *Filmindia* where it states that those who have seen movies made by K. B. Lal can compare the Ashoka of history with the creature of the film men's imagination. Ashoka is shown surrounded with fictitious female characters and is shown getting swamped over by feminine flesh. Moreover in an attempt to squeeze a juicy formula love story out of dry pages of history whole character of Ashoka has been perverted. Not a spiritual conversion but romantic interest in a charming Buddhist female who is a monk is sought to be made the motivation for Ashoka's epochal change over from violence to non-violence. To add to the historically false atmosphere, a melodramatic episode has been grafted on to the story of Ashoka – a priest becoming 'king for a day' and ordering the Emperor to be hanged to dramatize Ashoka's sense of justice.[5] The film though dwell into the life of Ashoka, there are Hindu high priest elements added to make it appeal to larger audience. The *Filmindia* magazine on January 1948 reported that Censor Board has along with other suggestion remarked to show a Brahmin and his daughter being given only two strokes of whip.[6] The status of Hindu priest is glorified and justified and as mentioned before the film posters displayed Bramhanical supremacy.



Figure 1 Film posters of film Ashok highlighting Brahmin's story of justice. The poster says Brahmin's justice will ever live'.

Courtesy: Filmindia May 1948.

4.4.3 Matwala Shayar Ram Joshi (1948)

Director - V. Shantaram **Production - Rajakamal Kala Mandir**

Plot : Ram Joshi is the true story of the eighteenth century Maharashtra under the Peshwas. Ram was a young Brahmin who, instead of learning the scriptures according to family tradition, discarded the puranic code of his caste, and adopted the career of a wandering entertainer (contemptuously called as *bhaand*). He was a born poet and by identifying himself with the life of the common people, he sought inspiration for his poetry in the earth, rather than in the heaven of Gods and Goddesses. He became a real 'poet of the masses', singing their songs and telling their tales, amusing and entertaining them, educating and inspiring them. The moral code which he followed in this career was certainly not conservative, conventional or ascetic; the fanatical Brahmins of the eighteenth century did not approve of his way. Yet Ram Joshi not only won the love and admiration of the common people but elicited recognition and praise for his art from the Peshwa and the *mahakavi*. He gave new dignity and status to 'tamasha'- which, till then was regarded as cheap and vulgar, and the monopoly of the alleged 'lower classes'.[7]

Towards the evening of the life however, Ram Joshi not only gave up his profligate ways but also his – tamasha - career, and took to *bhajan*-singing instead, returning home to his long-forgotten wife, like a minor saint. Hence, the Director made his peace with God, orthodoxy and the conservatives in the end of the movie.



Figure 2 Shahir Ram Joshi a Brahmin and the lady from Tamasha. Middle Shahir singing before his father the song dedicated to Krishna. Courtesy: https://bombaymann2.blogspot.com/2014/02/film-matwaala-shair-ramjoshi-1947.html. Accessed : 25 March 2015

Review : Ram Joshi was pre-eminently, a vindication of the popular folk entertainment of Maharashtra known as 'tamasha' and had come under censure and ban of the Home Minister Moraraji Desai whom the Filmindia magazine termed as morality-obsessed and felt it appropriate to call him as Moralji by another magazine *BLITZ*. *Filmindia* acknowledged the fact that an element of vulgarity has crept into the songs of the 'tamasha' as has happened in other forms of entertainment and suggested that such vulgar portions could have been eliminated instead of clamping down a blanket ban on entire concept of 'tamasha'. It was asserted that perhaps what was found objectionable was not the alleged vulgarity but the extempore with of the performers of this medium whose slashing tongue do not spare the high and the mighty, the pompous and the hypocrites, whether they wear crown or Gandhi caps. The magazine explained that 'tamasha' was not only a form of entertainment but it is a living 'People's Theatre' with a tradition of outspoken social and even political criticism. The magazine alleged that while the Congress ministry seeks to ban 'tamasha', the Socialists and the Communists, and the People's Theatre artistes, have all adopted this medium to propagate their respective ideologies.[8] Like the puritan Brahmins, the Khadi clad of twentieth century also couldn't approve of the theme.

The Filmindia magazine in its review considered the film as V. Shantaram's directorial brilliance. A story set against the unsophisticated background of rural Maharashtra does not give much scope for any self-conscious and deliberate exhibition of the technical virtuosity. Shantaram adopted a simple and straight forward style of presentation. The review stated that Shantaram has given his best while screening the musical contest between Ram and Baya, the development of love

between the two, the scenes where Ram Joshi defies the orthodoxy by staging a 'tamasha' at the very doorstep of the temple, the montage of 'tamasha' scenes. It further elucidates that, the Krishna Gopi dance sequence imagined in Peshwa court was not very brilliant and second half of the film, interests only spiritually inclined who appreciate the final conversion of the 'bhaand' into a routine 'bhajan' singer. Ram Joshi was considered one of the few pictures which were both good and popular.[9]

Baburao Painter brought to V. Shantram's attention a script by G.D. Madgulkar on a Brahmin poet Ram Joshi, who had devoted himself to the folk art of 'tamasha' and the writing of lavani only to be ostracised by his community.[10] The film on the release proved to be a super hit and Shantaram's distributors in the north were confident that the Hindi version Matwala Shair Ram Joshi would repeat the same success of the Marathi version but their predictions were proved wrong and the Hindi version flopped.[11]

The Film Censors made remarks and suggested few cuts in the Hindi version of the movie, such as omitting the jokes about milkmaids carrying earthen pots filled with milk that is a part of local tradition of Tamasha and known as *Gavlan*. In song No.10 they suggested to omit the words "piya ki sej riya" and in song no. 11 "Ek purush sajani sang gharmen raat raat bhar jagen hot hi darke mare aankh bachake bhage" and "Jan gai vo nirlaj Kanha lampat nimpat anari" that did not adhere to the moral codes.[12]

4.4.4 Oonch Neech (1948)

Director - Hem Chunder **Production - New Theatres Ltd.**

Plot : The story is of an untouchable girl having been brought up as the daughter of a high caste family, falling in love with the same young man as her high-caste sister, the discovery of her real identity and the consequent suicide. In between of course there are number of inconsequential sequences showing the love with which the humble-born girl is brought up, her naive and carefree nature, and an attempt is made to inject a bit of sophisticated cynicism through the character of Doctor Choudhary, the philosopher-reformer-cynic. In the whole it's a simple and goody story with an eventful death of the heroine.[13]

Review : The theme was considered to have impressed the movie lovers ten years before and regarded as a progressive and daring step worthy of commendation. The film reviewer found it most deplorable due to the theme of Untouchability that had been taken up was nowhere supported by a dramatically strong action. The audience aren't shown the plight of the untouchables or the emotional conflict between the two sisters. Everybody seem to be good and kind and the 'problem' is supposedly presented through processions and a well sung song *Karwaten badal raha zamana.*

The review further appreciates that movie has scored on creating authentic atmosphere of the old world feudal society of Bengal. On the whole it is concluded to be a clean, wholesome, good intentioned film but insipid picture that may not do too well at the box-office.[14] Interestingly, a story on the similar line was made into a film called Sujata that went to become a *classic* in Indian cinema. However, the end was not tragic or unaccommodating like in the Oonch Neech, but the protagonist gets married into the high caste.

4.4.5 Geet Govind (1948)

Director – Ramchandra Thakur Production- Shree Kanu Desai Production

Plot : The story is of the famous saint poet Jaidev who authored the famous work of Git Govind. The story began with Padma an adopted daughter of temple Pujari becomes a devdasi to be dedicated to the service of the gods inside the temple and incidentally become the cynosure of sinful eyes outside the temple. Poet Jayadeo takes shelter from a storm and falls in love with Padma. There is a confrontation between the believers and the non-believers with Gods appearing and thus bestowing sainthood to Jaydev.[15]



Figure 3 Film Poster of Git Govind.

Courtesy: https://www.osianama.com/indian-film-cinema-publicity-memorabilia/song-synopsis-booklets/git-govind-1947-1106100?sindex=0. Accessed : 25 April 2015.

Review : The film is made on the same lines as that of film Pujari. The film was moderately reviewed by Filmindia and considered to be having good music but mediocre storyline. Git Govind is collection of erotic poems where the love relation between Krishna and Radha is concluded into a divine adoration. Conversely, the producers however could not bring original Git Govind on screen for fear of making the picture obscene and invoking wrath of our seemingly ultra-moral Congress ministry. [16] Jaydev is the composer of the erotic poetries based on divine love of Radha and Krishna. The conservative community of the time found it unsuitable for the masses and found it awkward to discuss intricacy of love between lovers. Saint Jaydev a Brahmin is believed to have married a Devdasi named Padmavati and broken societal norms. Jaydev a renowned bhakti saint was a worshipper of Krishna.

4.4.6 Paroo (1949)

Director - Shorey Daultalvi **Production - Peerless Pictures**

Plot : The story opens with Mangloo the sweeper, his coughing wife and their little girl betrays a craving for school which belonged to the 'oonch' and debarred the 'neech' from entering its portals. Her father, however, doesn't like the idea.

Though Paroo somehow manages to stand outside the portals of the school and pick up a few crumbs of primary education her enterprise soon comes to end with Zamindar pulling up the teachers. The romance between Paroo and Devendra the little son of Zamindar begins. Paroo's mother succumbs to her cough (illness) and Paroo grows into a Harijan hoyden who falls for Devendra who returns after his education in England. That sets the romance rolling and soon the audience through the punctuations of a screen affair. The Harijan girl a professional dancer with the progressive purpose of bringing relief and uplift to the Harijans through her rhythm on the wooden stage is seen. Devendra sticks to Paroo through thick and thin. He maintains his progressive principles along with a theft, murder and finally gets together with Paroo.[17]



Figure 4 Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar attending premier of film Paro. Courtesy: http://www.keywordsuggestions.com/ZHIgYmFiYXNhaGViIGFtYmVka2Fy IGRpZWQ/. Accessed: 15 February 2015.

Review : The film was reviewed as 'picture provides killing boredom'. The audience were said to be getting disgusted with the crude, insipid and utterly amateurish yarn which fails to appeal due to its outdated theme, hackneyed plot and mediocre treatment. The director was criticised for his directorial flaws. The actors performance was considered to be of average and a mocking comment was made that 'it was a treat to hear the 'progressive' manner in which Paroo the Harijan girl, called her father 'Papa' - or was it 'Puppa'?. One wonders how many Harijan girls call their fathers in this English style'. The exhibitors were advised to avoid this picture completely.[18] The review appears to have been negative due to lack of realism in the film and have been deficient in substantial representation of the subject.

4.4.7 Sujata (1959)

Director – Bimal Roy **Production- Bimal Roy Productions**

Plot : Upendranath Chaudhury, a district Railway engineer and his wife Charu were blessed with only child, their daughter Rama. Yet circumstances brought to their household another baby girl whose utter helplessness moved the couple to give her temporary shelter. The infant has lost both the parents in the severe cholera epidemic that was raging in the area. Her father, an untouchable, had been a railway coolie in Upendra's department.

Giribala, a rich family friend holding ultra-conservative views, was much-respected figure in Upendra's family. Her coming on a visit at this time could not but create complication. Giribala become horrified that an untouchable girl was given

shelter under the same roof and she walks out demanding the child be disposed of forthwith. Upendra and Charu sincerely try to find a suitable home for the waif form amongst her own people, but the Cholera wroughts such havoc on the coolie population that those who were spared do flee. Whether by choice or by circumstances, the child grows in Upendra's home. Her sweet nature wins the heart of her foster parents and they name the little girl 'Sujata' meaning '*of noble birth'*. Thus, Rama and Sujata grew up together, sometimes quarrelling, sometimes sharing each other's joy and sorrow, like two sisters in natural circumstances.[19]

When Upendra retires, he returns to his home town with Rama and Sujata, both grown into charming maidenhood. Here, for the first time, it becomes apparent to Sujata that there is some real difference between her and Rama. Rama is invariable introduced to family and friends as their daughter where as Sujata is introduced as 'like a daughter'. It pains Sujata a lot and her sister keeps wondering about the reference.

The passage of years has not changed Giribala's views even a bit, and she obstinately refuse to tolerate the presence of an untouchable girl in Upendra's family. Girilbala is hopeful of arranging a suitable match for Rama with her grandson Adhir. But till Sujata is removed, she would not think of marriage on card. Meanwhile Adhir becomes a regular visitor to Upendra's house and both Charu and Giribala encourage these visits thinking Adhir is interested in Rama. However, Adhir fall deeply in love with Sujata.

On one night when the whole family except Sujata goes to see theatre, Adhir on the Gandhi Ghat and by sacred river Ganges, confesses his true feeling to Sujata and they solemnly pledge to be united for ever, despite of Sujata's fears and reluctance.

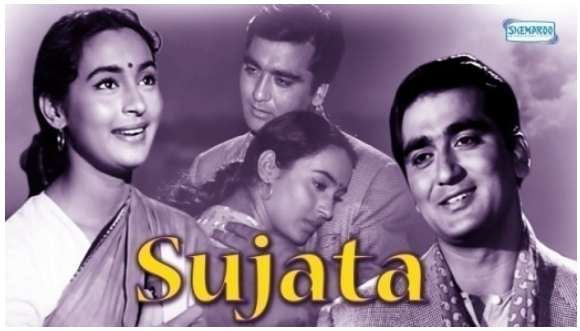


Figure 5 Sujata is the story of an untouchable girl and an upper caste boy falling in love with her. The film gives strong message of annihilation of caste system. Courtesy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13v6shtaN4o. Accessed : 15 August 2015.

Sujata's joy is short lived and her dreams world collapses when she learns that Upendra and Charu have finalized plans of Adhir's marriage with Rama. To return a little of the obligation she owes to the family, Sujata decides to shirk off Adhir and make her forget about her and their love.

Nevertheless, Adhir is a progressive intellectual, not easily shaken by rigid traditions. At a crucial moment it gets proved that human blood is all alike and God or nature did not provide for any caste or class differences. There is a change-of-heart, a shakeup of minds and the untouchable girl weds into the high caste family.[20]

Review: With Sujata, Bimal Roy regained some of his past form with a socially relevant theme given an offbeat realistic base, though done in a slow soulful, lyrical than a rebelling style. The problem of an untouchable girl, shown in pitiable plight in early films was now put as a modern dilemma within the household of a high caste family. If only they had taken the adopted girl as a daughter and not like-a- daughter, *beti jaisi* then whole discrimination would have gone and the eligible young man preferring her to the daughter of the family would not have been so painful. The film telling brought out these mental reservations which could not be removed by legal and social reforms. So the barrier could have been broken by something other than a climax-time transfusion to suggest that human blood is the same and now science can mix up the caste and community differences.[21]

Teaching of Buddha and Gandhiji, revival of the story of Chandalika, were sensibly woven into the drama without any blatant loudspeaker gimmicks. This did win for the film the approval and aid of the country's leaders. Nutan as heroine was turned into dark and simple girl and the hero Sunil Dutta's determination to marry her at any cost was the most progressive aspect. The director's eye for detail and identity with nature created some lovely scenes. Not so acceptable were the songs, like the popular one on telephone. With all the fine qualities, the movie remains a product of National cinema[22] and a classic.

Sujata was lauded for its purposeful theme of removing untouchability and there was a spate of receptions and felicitations. The Mysore Film Chambers of Commerce commended Bimal Roy for his persistent efforts in making films of outstanding merit, three of which were exempted from entertainment tax. Mysore's governor and other ministers saw Sujata and found it moving and poetic. Mr. Y. B. Chavan, then Chief Minister of Maharashtra, attended a show arranged by the

Bombay Board of Harijan Sewak Samaj and spoke complementing Bimal. The biggest tribute came from Pandit Nehru, then Prime Minister of India in the form of a letter : 'I am glad to tell you that I liked your film 'Sujata' which I saw earlier this month. It's a good film, with good photography and the story is interesting. There is always a danger, in films which have too obvious a moral purpose, to become dull. I find that in 'Sujata' this error is avoided and there is considerable restraint in dealing with the subject, which is of course of great public importance'.[23] Film Sujata received an honour of being screened at Cannes, France.

4.4.8 Char Dil Char Rahein (1959)

Director - K. A. Abbas **Production - Naya Sansar Production**

Plot : Govind belonging to high caste hir community returns back to village after twelve years with Gandhian idealism. In the village he has female untouchable girl belonging to Chamar or cobbler caste as a friend. This certainly gives way to consternation and gossips. Chawli is also a widow. The affection between both increase and Govind takes her to village temple to get married. This antagonizes upper caste community and Chawli's house is burnt down. However, she escapes the mishap and begins to work at dam construction site. Govind later comes to know about her being alive and both of them unit with the dream of no caste and classless India.[24]



Figure 6 Actor Meena Kumari plays the role of a Harijan girl and is darkened. The high caste Govinda is in love with her and wish to marry her. Screengrab : Film Char Dil Char Rahein.

Review : The film elaborate on how an upper caste youth is stopped from marrying a lower caste but his conviction keep them bonded and finally unites. The film gives various instances of how caste system is followed. When Govinda has Prasad or offering from Chawli his community people put ban on having food from their house.

Govinda is shown to be saying that 'now door of temples are open to all' which indicates that though lawful provision has been made by the Government there is hardly any change in the people's attitude. Chawli carries an inferior complex and considers herself, lower caste that too from a cobbler caste *Chamaran*, child widow and orphan. Thus the heroine is shown to be lowest of low. However, Govinda loves her. Mahatma Gandhi's picture is shown at Govinda's house.



Figure 7 A Brahmin boy and untouchable girl are childhood friends. The boy when grow up wishes to marry the untouchable girl. Influence of Gandhiji's thoughts could be seen through his picture in the background. The progressive films in 50s and 60s show entry of lower caste in temples.

Screen grab : Film Char Dil Char Rahein.

Govinda says he has brought a new religion that has no low or high caste. When Govinda reaches to marry Chawli, her house is burnt by her own community people. Chawali escapes the mishaps and finds a job in a mine. There she meets a social reformist. The film through him informs about Five Years planning building of new roads and Chawli is educating herself. She is also made aware about her rights and asks to stop having self pity and empower. He explains her about 'Socialism', that is it is like a dynamite that will blast the old world having old ideas and will give birth to a new world. He further explains that in this new world no one will be without clothes, food or shelter. Shyly Chawli asks that, if in this new world an *Ahir* boy can marry a *Chamar* girl.

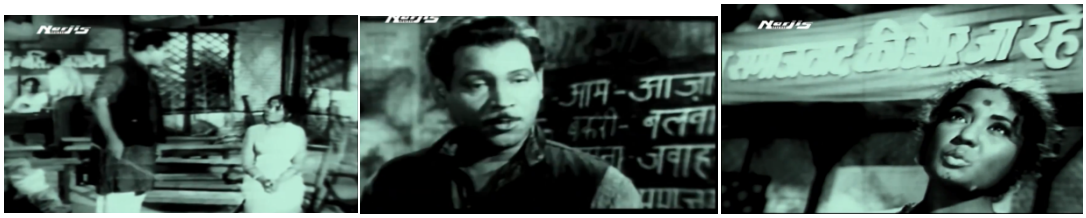


Figure 8 Chawli a girl from cobbler caste is made aware of emancipation through education. She is explained the importance of Socialism. In the background the banner read 'Going towards Socialism'. End of caste discrimination is seen through Nehruvian socialist perspective.

Screen grab : Film Char Dil Char Rahein.

The reformer says yes, there will be no social barriers to prevent loving hearts to get united. The road is an indication of Jawaharlal Nehru's New India policy a step towards socialism. An entire song on 'ideal society' utopian thoughts is played while

road is constructed. Chawli and Govinda fix dynamites and mountain is broken to build road. People gathered at the site pronounce that the mountain has not broken on its own but broken by the victims of the system. The film ends with the couple facing towards a dawn indicating new beginning. This film represents Nehruvian socialist message where film director K. A. Abbas pictures a caste less society.



Figure 9 The poster show a upper caste boy and lower caste girl as a couple. Courtesy: https://bombaymann2.blogspot.com/2015/09/film-char-dil-char-rahen1959.html. Accessed : 17 September 2015

4.4.9 Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan (1963)

Director - Babubhai Mistri **Production - Roopkala Pictures**

Plot : Jainath is born in a lower-caste cobbler family living with his father Raghu and mother. He incurs wrath of upper-caste Hindus in his childhood especially at the hands of Bade Thakur (Elder landlord), when Jainath dares to venture in the temple of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. At this time Sage Atmanand intervenes, makes Jainath his disciple and teaches him about the Vedas and Bhagwat Geeta. When he grows up he meets Roopa who is also a lower caste. Their relationship is not liked by Roopa's maternal uncle, Kallu, who dislikes Jainath. Meanwhile, Bade Thakur has an eye on Roopa and wants to exploit her despite of her caste background, but she rejects him. Feeling humiliated Thakur sets a trap with others in community where Roopa shall be married to an elderly man and her uncle get money in return. While Jainath is to be arrested, brought before the Maharaja - and sentenced to death he worships God to save the ailing son of the King. The child is saved, Lord Krishna shows miracle and Jainath is recognised as a true *Bhakt* or devotee of the Lord.

Review : *Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan* is based on a story of an untouchable who become a saint. Interestingly the plot is not inspired from a real life saint from Bhakti

movement but it is a fragmented story that gives the message of annihilation of caste. Thus a saint is created in Hindi cinema to spread the message of caste equality and unity. Certainly the story has devotion or Bhakti at its centre stage and the protagonist Jainath is shown great devotee of Krishna, the Hari.

Caste system and discrimination reflects all through the film. The film begins from a temple scene where a lower caste woman of cobbler caste called *Chamar* comes with her son to offer coconut and flowers to Lord Krishna. While doing this she instructs her son not to enter into temple as they are untouchables. The child unaware of the social division asks her what does that mean? The film through the character of an untouchable woman explains that untouchables are those whose shadow should not fall on other caste people, one who should speak to other caste people from distance, the one who are not allowed to enter temple or should not touch the idol of God. The boy unable to understand these stigmas enter into temple when woman prays with her eyes closed.



Figure 10 Left: The film announces that the characters and story are imaginary. Woman from cobbler cast worshipping God from distance. Screen grab : Film Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan.

There comes a group of upper caste people led by Bade Thakur who consider themselves as saviours of Hindu religion. The boy is dragged and thrown out ruthlessly but is grabbed by a Brahmin teacher Atmanand who doesn't believe in caste distinction. He gives example from epic Ramayana of Sahbri and Lord Rama and how Lord Rama accepted berries offered to him from a lower caste woman. Thakur still argues that caste system is made by God and Atmanand says all are equal all have same blood. Atmanand states that if Dnyneshwar can make a male buffalo to recite Vedic hymns than he shall teach the child Vedic scriptures. The child is accepted as his disciple.



Figure 11 Untouchable boy is thrown out of temple and accepted by a Brahmin priest as his disciple. He is included in the Ashram system and taught Hindu scriptures.
Screen grab : Film Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan.

The only person evolved among the higher castes is Thakur's son Chote Thakur (Younger landlord), who is a good musician, plays *dholki* or drum. Once he hears the hymn sung by Jainath and goes to the ghetto of Harijans. He is warned by his community mate that it is Chamrauti area where untouchables reside. Chote Thakur ignores his advises and gets involved in story of Krishna told by Jainath to his community people that gives the message of victory of good over evil. Chote Thakur gets so impressed that he embraces Jai and also eats Prasad or offering. He is stopped by his father and dragged home. A *Shuddhi* or purification ceremony is performed as he has touched an untouchable and had food from there.



Figure 12 Chote Thakur the son of the landlord doesn't believe in caste system. He embraces Jaidev and has food from him. Thus a Shuddhi or purification ceremony is performed.
Screen grab : Film Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan.

Meanwhile Jai develops romantic relationship with Roopa another untouchable girl. Bade Thakur keeps eye on her and grabs her one day. His son just then appears and questions his father that he has performed purification ceremony because he touched an untouchable man and how is Bade Thakur going to purify himself. Chote Thakur takes the untouchable girl as his sister. The reference comes as from an incident from Mahabharata Lord Krishna saving his foster sister Draupadi who has once tied a piece of cloth on his wrist. Later when Jainath and Roopa wish to get marry in temple Bade Thakur interferes and this course Atmanand who comes to help the couple dies when Bade Thakur struck him on head. The first miracle usually associated with Bhakti saints occurs when the idol of Krishna also begins to bleed. Atmanand's last message is that all are equal, God has made all alike and a super

imposed added voice says 'Santo ne kaha hai...' meaning 'Saints have said...', '*Jaat paat puche nahi koi, jau Hari kau bhaje sau Hari ka hoi!* Meaning, 'Nobody asks about castes or rank, who ever worships Hari, they become part of Hari'. The word Hari gives constant reminder of M K Gandhi's calling Dalits as Harijan (People or Children of God).

Jai travels at different pilgrim places in India and comes back enlightened. In order to stop Jai's reformist activities, Bade Thakur forbidden the lower caste villagers from fetching water from village wells and tanks. At this moment, another miracle takes place where Jainath's small bowl disperses plenty of water for the thirsty villagers. The first revelation of his sainthood is witnessed. Later Jainath is trapped in a false case of poisoning and punished to death but right then the King's son is bit by a snake. Queen begs for pardon and after Jainath's prayers snake miraculously comes and suck poison out of prince's body. King very happy and ashamed of his behaviour, give up on caste discrimination and considers Jai a Saint and requests him to take a favour. Jai asks for a piece of land where he can make temple of Lord Krishna where all caste people can come and worship. King grants him the same. This is a new attempt seen in Hindi cinema where the idea of temple open to all caste people is propagated.



Figure 13 Miracle happens when Jaidev small pot begins to disperse gallons of water for the untouchables. The idol itself emerges from the well it was thrown in and install. The idol from temple where only Brahmins have access too comes and merges with the one that is to be worshiped by all. Screen grab : Film Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan.

Meanwhile Bade Thakur considers this as his insult and defeat and gathers all higher caste community people to stop installation of God's idol into the new temple. They proclaim that this will end their 'upper caste' status. However, miracle happens. When Bade Thakur immerses the Lord Krishna's idol made by lower caste into the well, it appears out of the well. The idol from the regular village temple that only upper caste worship also rise from its place and both merge together and get installed in the newly built temple. This signifies the unity of faith of upper castes and lower

castes and accord into one divine faith. Bade Thakur admits his mistake and accept Jainath as a saint.



Figure 14 Jaidev is accepted as a Bhakti saint practise of untouchability is denounced. Higher and lower caste community embracing each other. Screen grab: Film Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan.

Thus, *Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan* propagate Gandhian ideas of caste equality and uses religious cloak to put forward the idea of oneness which appeals more to Indian viewers.

4.4.10 Punarmilan (1964)

Director – Ravindra Dave **Production - Nagina Films**

Plot : Dr. Mohan comes from a decent upper-caste Brahman family. He is of marriageable age, and is in love with Shobhna Bakshi. They plan to get married soon. The marriage takes place, and during this process, someone raises a question about Mohan's caste, and when Mohan is asked repeatedly whether this is true, he replies that he does belong to a lower caste - the untouchables. Everyone is shocked, and the marriage is cancelled, leaving Mohan's family to wonder as to why he claims to be an untouchable person.

Review : The film deals with the lower caste protagonist and final disintegration of caste system. The film reflects and disparages caste system and indicates its felony. The protagonist Mohan is shown to be born in a low caste family but bought up by a high caste. However he is unaware of his low caste birth and becomes a professional doctor. One fine day he comes to know about his low caste status and reveals it to the world. He is engaged to a high caste girl and the engagement is called off when the truth comes out. He relocates himself with his actual family having mother and sister, who belong to sweeper caste. When the female lead elopes, her father blames Mohan for the mishap and blames his low born blood. The father searches for in the house where Mohan once lived and boldly state that Mohan cannot be trusted because he belongs to lower caste and is an untouchable. Mohan’s sister is secretly married and is impregnated by a high caste who repeatedly humiliates Mohan by calling him by his

lower caste status and doesn't even allow him in his house. Mohan sister is blamed by her own caste people. However, Mohan a doctor is a progressive person and emancipates his sister by educating her and trains her to become a nurse. The song *Hind ki beti* plays in the background reflecting Nehruvian dream. He makes her aware of her rights and responsibility towards her child. Mohan's ex-fiancé's father experiences a medical emergency and the most talented doctor who could be a life saver is shown to be Mohan. Mohan refuses on the ground that he is an untouchable so how can he perform this surgery but the lady touches his feet and he agrees to fulfil responsibility of a doctor. Meanwhile Mohan's sister nurses her father-in-law without disclosing her caste. But a person Bheem Pehelvan a sweeper from her locality informs him and she admits. A crime drama parallel follows that has no caste relevance. In the end all gets well. Mohan is married to his lady love, caste system is submerged and Mohan's sister is revealed to be high caste born. The irony of the movie remains that though it highlighted the idiosyncrasies of the caste system somewhere it tends to become bias. Mohan's sister who tends to bear a child of high caste and would also marry into a high caste family is shown to have sudden caste change. Whether, a woman be it from high or low caste, educated or uneducated is shown to be a submissive to her family and society. Her life would only be defined by the male counterparts.

4.4.11 Cha Cha Cha (1964)

Director - Chandrashekhar **Production - Bhavdeep Films**

Plot: Lily belongs to a wealthy family and visit Kashmir for vacation. Lily's grandmother donot approve of Lily's modern behaviour and one day sends her to temple to seek blessings. She hears a man singing in temple and misunderstand that he is singing about her. Lily slaps the singer and later regrets when the temple priest informs her that the singer is Puran, a blind person and belongs to lower caste. Lily decides to treat his eyes and brings him to city. Lily falls in love with Puran but her father objects to his lower caste status. Meanwhile, Puran participate in Cha Cha Cha Dance competition and wins the contest. He is able to unite with his lady love Lily.[25]



Figure 15 The film Cha Cha Cha is of a Harijan boy who makes it big through the western dance form Cha Cha Cha. He is shown devotee of Krishna, the Hari. The film show Harijan been allowed in the temple. Courtesy: https://www.cinestaan.com/movies/cha-cha-cha-3158. Accessed : 16 August 2015.



Figure 16 A higher caste girl's loves blossom for a lower caste boy. Garlanded picture of Mahatma Gandhi in the background. Screen grab : Film Chah Cha Cha.

Review : The film shows a Harijan boy's migration from village to city proving his competency as an artist. The higher caste girl though modern is forbidden to have relationship with him due to social constraints. But the boy rises above all this and finally the couple unites. The film makes a statement on how caste system is not different in rural and urban India and it always carries its baggage. However the modernism creeps into Indian society, the basis would remain the same. Adaptation of western culture would rather loosen the traditional casteist ties. Puran is shown to excel the western dance style Cha Cha Cha, popularised by a Latin American, Cuban Charanga band in India in 1940s and 50s and finally establishes himself in city.[26]

4.4.12 Sant Tukaram (1965)

Director- Rajesh Nanda **Production- Ashok Films production**

Plot: Tukaram is shown to be a Shudra and a poor village folk. Mumbaji the Pujari or priest of the Ganesh temple has permanent grudge against him. He instigates another grocer of the village to set fire to Tukaram's shop. Famine comes and he becomes more terrible. Tukaram's old mother, his second wife and son die of starvation. Tukaram becomes detached from the world and spends whole time in prayer thus receiving enlightenment. He gives life to a dead child and is now revered. His second wife implores him to seek some vocation and a kind hearted land lord offers him a job of the watchman. Mumbaji drives cattle in the field to destroy the crop but lord Krishna comes to the rescue and the yield becomes double. Landlord very happily gives Tukaram some share. Meanwhile Mumbaji along with another landlord goes to enjoy a dance girls known as Rumbha's performance and asks her to spoil Tukaram's reputation by enticing him. This plan doesn't become successful.

Mumbaji and folks inform the High Priest that Tukaram a non-Brahmin does write *Abhanga*, the devotional songs. Rameshwar Bhatt the religious head of Dehu village orders Tukaram to stop writing since he is a low born Shudra and order him to throw his *Gatha* (collection of *Abhanga*) in river Indrayani. He does so but in distress takes vow that he will fast until death till his *Gatha* was restored to him. The river Goddess surfaces and returns the scripture to Tukaram. Mumbaji now informs Shivaji, then a future King of Maratha empire that Tukaram is extracting money and is a con. Shivaji himself comes to check the matter and meets Tukaram. He first tries to allure Tukaram and his family with rich clothes and jewellery but Tukaram declines and also makes his family decline. Shivaji falls to Tukaram's feet and asks for guidance. Mumbaji infuriated by Shivaji's behaviour towards Tukaram informs Mughals who are badly searching for him abouts his where about. Shivaji attends religious discourse recitation by Tukaram when Mughal army comes to catch Shivaji but a miracle happens and Shivaji's illusion gets created. Thus, Shivaji could not be captured.

Mumbaji and Rameshwar Bhatt get punish for their sins. Mumbaji become a leaper and Bhatt's body began to feel burns. Tukaram gets an enlightenment from Lord to come to Heaven and village folks throng the streets in tears to witness this departure. Tukaram forgives Mumbaji and Bhatt and they become normal. A celestial

carrier or *viman* descends from the sky and takes off Saint Tukaram to heavenly abode, *Vaikuntha*.

Review : Popular actors Shahu Modak and Anita Guha starred in this film. The film is a Hindi version of Prabhat's Marathi movie Sant Tukaram with few modifications. The movie begins with historical narration and a commentary on violent rulers such as Alexander, Napoleon and Hitler and brings out importance of saintly teachings of India of peace and non-violence. The narration is further narrowed down on Sant Tukaram who though belonging to a lower caste, through his utmost devotion and message of humanity got elevated to become a popular Bhakti saint.

The film was shot in a real village of Maharashtra and the locals are used to make the movie more realistic. Mumbaji's character of a Brahmin, a temple priest is negative and he is shown to be earning money through astrology, forcing people to make rich offerings to God and selling what comes to temple such as coconut to local vendors. The film had *abhangas* composed for the film. The caste system in the film is distinctly visible and greatness of Sant Tukaram is effectively brought out. However, the film having acute local features, especially of Maharashtra must have had less appeal to the all India filmgoers.

4.4.13 Ashirwad (1968)

Director - Hrishikesh Mukherjee **Production - Film Enterprises**

Plot : The story is based in Chandanpur and revolves round a kind hearted wealthy landlord Shivnath Chaoudhary. He lives with his wife Leela and small daughter Neena. Chaudhary befriends lower caste community in the neighbourhood which is disliked by his affluent wife. Shivnath also lovingly called as Jogi Thakur is a great apprecaitor of music and shares his musical passion with Baiju a lower caste. In reaction to one inceident, Leela in rage orders to burn down huts of lower caste community and forbid Shivnath from meeting his daughter Neena. Heartbroken Shivnaath goes to Bombay and when returns back to village finds out that Baiju's daughter Rukmini is abducted. Shivnath finds the abductor Ramdas who accidently gets killed by him. Shivnath gets life imprisonment. After many years shivnath returns to village to bless his daughter on her wedding day and breathes his last at Harijan basti or ghetto among his lower caste companions.[27]



Figure 17 Jogi Thakur a high caste learns mrudang from a Harujan Baiju.Screen grab : Film Ashirwad.

Review : The film gives a story of good hearted husband of a woman feudal lord who mingles with Harijan community. He though being a high caste Brahmin learns *mridang* or drum for a low caste person called Baiju and considers him as his guru or teacher. We are reminded of treatise Natyashatra where the Shudras were meant to teach the art on the earth to other fellowmen. Thakur popularly called as Jogi Thakur says to Baiju that Brahmin is the one who imparts knowledge. When the Dalit Baiju's daughter Rukmini brings food to eat for her father, the Brahmin Jogi Thakur shares their food inspite of being told that it is forbidden to him. Thakur goes to see Nautanki cum Tamasha and participates in it as an art form.

Rani Ma the lady landlord sends her Munimji or account keeper to get tax from the Harijans and says for non payment shall punish them by burning their ghetto. The clerk goes and gives the warning and eyes the young daughter of Baiju. Jogi Thakur helps Harijans by stealing cash from his own house and furious Rani Ma orders to burn down houses of Harijans. Jogi Thakur leaves home in anger but after many days when comes back is broken to see the ghetto turned into ashes and Baiju gone insane due to disappearance of his daughter. The girl is abducted by the clerk and while saving her Jogi Thakur kills the clerk. He confesses to crime, gets life imprisonment and finally terminally ill, lastly comes at back to his village in anonymity to bless his newly married daughter. He takes his last breath in same Harijan basti listening to the *mridung* played by a Harijan boy, the music that brought about the soulful and celestial bonding of a higher and lower caste individual.

4.4.14 Ankur / The Seedling (1974)

Director - Shyam Benegal **Production - Blaze Film Enterprises**

Plot : The story is of Lakshmi who lives with her deaf and mute potter husband Kishtyya. She works in house of village landlord. Landlord's son Surya comes to live in village and develop physical intimacy with lower caste Lakshmi. Meanwhile Surya gets married to Saru. Lakshmi gets pregnant with Sury's child but is accepted by her husband. Surya brings his wife home and in fear mercilessly whips Kishtya. Lakshmi comes to his rescue and curse Surya. The film ends with a child belonging to lower caste community breaking glass pane of Surya's house as a sign of rebellion.[28]



Figure 18 A lower caste woman Lakshmi is lured by upper caste landlord's son Surya. Courtesy: https://www.thehindu.com/features/cinema/ankur-1974/article3918198.ece. Accessed : 16 September 2015.

Review : Ankur literally means 'Seeding' and was a rhetoric portrait of 1970's India, where Benegal criticized the caste system and exposes the hypocrisies of the ruling class prevailed in the era. Shabana Azmi with her realistic portrayal of young servant Lakshmi-wife of a low caste, drunken, deaf-mute farm hand ends up having an illicit affair with her young and upper class employer Surya.[29]

Benegal's films offered an 'alternative' history of India as well as an example of film-making practice from the margin. This is a history that challenges assumptions about national progress and provokes considerations of the consequences of this development. Ankur may be read as a cinematic rendition of the story of a nation in continuous transition. While most of the film makers in India were celebrating consumer culture Benegal through his films drew attention to cast and gender inequalities – those basic unavoidable realities of Indian life that are airbrushed out of the rosy images conjured up by Bollywood for the benefits of a global market. However, though Benegal's movies dealt with caste, gender or community at the core

of each lie deeply humanist narratives that reach beyond their specific settings. Strongly delineated individual characters are set in a recognisable social milieu.[30]

Benegal touted the story of Ankur for fourteen years, knocking at the doors of the producers who turned down his proposal. Finally he managed to get financing from Blaze Films who convinced Benegal to make this film in Hindi and not in Telegu which was director's original plan. Set firmly within the realist aesthetic, Ankur deals with feudal oppression in the microcosmic rural world of a village in Andhra Pradesh. The film contains explicit reference to the peasant's movement, initially led by the Communist Party of India, which acquired a national dimension following the failure of the 1971-72 harvest.[31] The style of film was considered alien to the Hindi film industry. Film used dialect of *Dakhni Urdu* used around Hyderabad and was shot at a village called Yellareddiguda near Hyderabad. Ankur has been defined as deploying psychological realism and regional authenticity to the accepted narratives style of Indian films. Ankur carries a Brechtian sense where it does ask the audience to react to what is represented, rather than telling the viewers what to do. The story is based on real life incident in Hyderabad and Ankur becomes a symbol of new cinema. Shabana Azmi made her debut as Lakshmi in Ankur who is a low caste woman with subservient background.[32] All characters look true to life and there is no romanticising of rural idyll.[33]

Surya the landlord is a contradictory figure who uses the guise of liberalism to get what he wants, which in this case is Lakshmi. When Lakshmi questions about here low caste status when Surya request her to make tea, his response is radically ideological where he asserts 'I don't believe in castes'. His rejection of the caste system that operates in the village is regarded as breaking a social taboo and an act of defiance. At first the audience is not sure if he is invoking such liberal sentiments simply to impress Lakshmi but later when the village priest shows up at the farmhouse to express his displeasure at Surya's defiance of custom he is met with further rejection when Surya dismisses religion.[34] In another incident is of Surya's discovery that his father has given land to his mistress who belongs to lower caste and has an illegitimate son with her. This reveals a level of hypocrisy in the figure of the corrupt patriarch establishing a power relation in which the crimes committed against the lower classes are silenced so that feudalism can continue to exist.[35] Similarly, according to Shyam Benegal, Lakshmi's relation with Surya means a certain rise in status for her considering her social position. Surya's father is shown to be involved

in related situation and takes responsibility of the same. But Surya's denial, his brutal and nasty rejection suddenly realise the power game and Lakshmi ceases to remain in a feudal situation and becomes relentless exploit. The character of Surya is shown debatable, at times carrying the bequest land lordship. When he reaches his house in village, Surya stamps his authority over the area in ways more egoistic than politics. He cuts off the irrigation source to the land of his half-brother, transparently out of spite, asserting his superiority over the less legitimate heir to the estate; forbids the local women to draw water from his well; and he orders aides to be vigilant against toddy pilferers. Despite his perception of his own importance, he declares that he does not believe in the caste system, so enabling him to exploit his low caste cleaning woman, Lakshmi, as maker of tea, cook and later as sexual object. Perhaps his claim to have no interest in caste distinctions is in consonance with his sexuality overriding his social and religious sensibilities. After all he is indifferent to the visit of the local Brahman priest and unconcerned for the food he might prepare for him, when he offers a solicited donation for the temple; the priest has to remind him of offer money with right hand and not left. Nevertheless, his high caste status is never questioned thus ensuring deference from other in the village.[36]



Figure 19 Ankur depict feudal oppression, hypocrisy in following cast system, poverty, situation of a Dalit woman her subjugation , her outcry against injustice and her Dalit husband Kishtaya who epitomises lower caste existence. Screen grab : Film Ankur.

The character of Kishtaya a lower caste and labourer is shown to be a mute and that is symbolic. His silence becomes a metaphor for the collective exclusion of those castes including most noticeably the Dalits in Hindu society. Kishtaya is the real victim of Surya's actions as his weakness is exploited in such a way that strips him off his dignity as both of a husband and human being. Yet out of four major characters Kishtaya is far the most sympathetic. Lakshmi informs us that he was once a good potter but with the growth in popularity of aluminium utensils his skills have become obsolete. Kishtaya's unemployment illustrates a major theme of Ankur, that of the

modernity and its effects on rural traditions. It is his victimisation as a symbol of caste discrimination that makes him important to the final outcome of the film as Surya's cowardice manifests itself in the ugly violence directed by Kishtaya.[37]

It is not surprising that the low caste peasant woman Lakshmi is the sole character that chooses to speak out against the discrimination and injustice that people like her are made to suffer under the feudal system. Lakshmi is the archetypal Benegal woman as her marginalised status in society makes her infinitely sympathetic while the resilience she displays constructs a realist female representation. Benegal highlights Lakshmi's subservience to Surya as he views her as part of his property – in his eyes, the ownership he maintains over the land applies equally to the people in his employment. Saru the wife of Surya's rejection of Lakshmi also stems from a need to maintain the caste system and to preserve a dominant position in the house, but like Lakshmi she is witness to the brutal cowardice of her husband and to violent laws that govern such an archaic feudal order[38] completely dipped in class and caste system.

4.4.15 Nishant / Night's End (1975)

Director - Shyam Benegal **Production - Blaze Film Enterprises**

Plot : Nishant is a harrowing study of the power and gender relations in a village that is dictated by the hegemonic impulse of a feudal law that marginalises women and provides moral immunity for the male landowners. In one of the most disturbing moments in the film, Sushilla, wife of the local school teacher, is abducted by the abusive sons of the zamindar and literally held against her will in the local farmhouse. Sushilla is repeatedly raped and becomes a prisoner, forced to co exist with the wife of the youngest son. The abduction of Sushilla is made altogether more powerful as it takes place before the very eyes of the villagers who like the school teacher are powerless to resist feudalism. At first, Sushilla's husband criticises the villagers for their complicity in his wife's abduction but his plea for help from civil institutions like the local police unveils a system that is corrupt, oppressive and regressive. Benegal politicises the school teacher and gradually he realises that the frightening ancestral impunity and political influence manifested by the zamindars can only be contested if feudalism and orthodoxy are openly challenged through collective revolution and in this case, violence as a means of self defence. The rage unleashed

by the villagers at the end of the film upon the zamindar is bloody and chaotic, bringing about a justifiable reconstruction of power relations. Nishant is provocative cinema in how it asks a multitude of pertinent questions relating to patriarchy, feudalism, caste system and feminism.[39]

Review : Based on Vijay Tendulkar's story which has its source in a real incident, Nishant continues with the theme of rural oppression in Andhra Pradesh. About the historical truth of the peasant struggle in Telangana, Benegal states, "It started as an anti-feudal uprising. Eventually the leadership was taken over by the communists. There was a larger uprising against the Nizams; meanwhile India became independent and the communists refused to accept that was true independence".[40] This evokes the paradigm of peasant movement as subaltern mobilisation that Ranjit Guha describes in his manifesto. [41] The interesting thing about the Telanagana movement was that it did bring a great deal of awareness about the basic human rights as far as the people of Telangana district were concerned, as it affected all the districts over there. The peasants grabbed the land and succeeded in creating a pocket of their own soviet. The land had been eventually taken back from them in 1950s, when Acharya Vinoba Bhave started the *Bhudan* movement which was supposed to change the confrontationalist pattern to one which people voluntarily gave them land.[42]

The story opens with village priest discovering the temple jewellery been stolen and accusation is laid on an innocent man from the village. The priest and the constable meekly submit to the hierarchy of the landlord, symbolising that God, religion and law are below their authoritarian reign. Similarly there is a complete demonstration of debauchery by the landlord's brother including sexual exploitation of peasant class woman who is referred as 'milking cow'. The abduction of school teacher's wife Susheela shows the first scene of helplessness of school master and villagers at the hands of notorious landlords. The realist narrative is cleverly channelled into an epic when Ravana abducts Sita. Susheela settles down in her role as mistress to the landlord brothers and starts asserting her upper caste status by asking for a separate kitchen. She once meets her husband in temple and rebukes him for not taking any action. A discussion follows between the priest and the teacher which embodies the core debate of the film. The conflict in views of tradition and modernity, of resignation and rebellion are played out in this exchange. The priest is convinced by the teacher that as a spiritual leader if he admits the truth the whole

village will awaken.[43] Thus, the religious domination is reasserted and words of the priest, a higher caste Brahmin with respective religion and caste attributes is given more credence and people begin to revolt at the call of priest and teacher who too belongs to higher caste. Thus, the voices of the upper caste inspire the subalterns to uprise and it is not the voices from within the community. However, here the struggle takes a face of class struggle and merges into a caste-less revolt to get justice.

The village revolts against the tyranny of the landlord and final annihilation begins. The reassurance of a resolution is denied in the absence of closure. Nishant leaves us with the spectacle of destruction, which is inevitable before the new order is built. This new order is a break away from the medieval feudal order and social system in the village. The society progresses toward a new classless system with a complete close down on exploitation in the name of status, class, caste, sex or ownership of land.

4.4.16 Kondura / The Boon/ The Sage from the Sea (1977)

Director - Shyam Benegal **Production - Raviraj International**

Plot : *Kondura* is a story whose protagonist is a young Brahmin named Parshuram. He is married to Ansooya but is dependent partly on his brother for living. This makes the elder brother chide him often and that drives him away from home. However, as he is leaving 'Kondura', the mythical sage from the sea appears and apoints him the guardian of village, to cure it of all sins. The sage also grants him a physical-boon, which is a dried herb. The boon works if he remains celibate. Prashuram returns home to celibacy. Often, the goddess of the village, grants him appearance in person, speaking to him through his wife, a phenomenon still seen in Indian villages, where a person is believed to have sudden visitation by God or Goddess, who speaks to people through the person. The goddess instructs him to get the village rid of evils, which he interprets as rebuilding the parts of the temple. For this, he enlists financial support from the village landlord who is otherwise a tyrant and womaniser. It is known that Bhairavmoorthy takes in any woman in the village who catches his eye, including his younger brother's wife, both of whom die leaving behind a physically challenged son Venu to an otherwise heirless fiefdom. It is rumoured that Vasu is his son but Bhairavmoorthy maltreats him all the time. He marries him off to young and beautiful Parvati, who comes from a very poor family. Bhairavmoorthy is said to be eyeing

Parvati too, but Parvati is stronger than rest of the women in the family and challenges his might at occasions.[44]

Meanwhile, as the news of Kondura's boon and visitations by the Goddess coupled with constructions at the temple spreads, Parshuram becomes a revered Guru with a decent following of his own in the village. Followers see him as a counselor and a person with charisma. There are celebrations at the landlord's house. Parvati is expecting a child. Landlord's wife Kanthama is busy doing all ceremonies. The gossip in the village is that the baby belongs to Bhairavmoorthy. The Goddess makes a visitation to Pashuram through Ansooya. This time he interprets that the Goddess is telling him to abort the baby, as it is at the root of propagation of evil. Totally possessed and egged by the landlord, who also makes him believe that the baby is his, Parshuram makes Parvati drink Kondura's herb that aborts the baby. Once the sin is committed, the landlord makes the revelation that how he conned Parshuram into believing that the baby was his, which in reality was his nephew's, and that he could not bear the thought that his crippled nephew sires one and not him.[45]

Gripped with immense guilt, Parshuram takes a radical path of atonement. He tries to invoke the Goddess by praying to his wife, Ansooya, but, when that effort fails, he decides to repent for his sin by forsaking his celibacy. While Ansooya resists the temptation, Parshurama forces her to succumb to it. Shocked by the action and her loss of purity, Ansooya commits suicide by jumping in a dry well. Parshooram wakes up searching for Ansooya and upon finding her dead body; he runs widely screaming her name.[46]

Review : Shyam Benegal generally explores the forces which can endanger or wreak human communities, and what happens to individuals in the process. The result is often pitiless. Hopes are crushed, and ties bruised. Instincts are hypocritically presented as virtues and the cruellest calculations take the place of relationships. In *Kondura*, also called 'The boon' or 'The Sage from the Sea', the 1934 born pioneer of Alternate Cinema investigates the world of sacredness and religion, whose laws are just as ruthless. The story takes place somewhere along the coast of India, in a village where we focus on a Brahmin family composed of two couples, one of which is dependent on the other.[47] The film begins with ritualistic taking of food in Brahmanical manner, setting the tone of story of a higher caste Brahmin family. As the narrative progress a complex play of religious beliefs, casteist imagery, personal

judgements and vulnerability begins. Shyam Benegal doesn't treat the story with any anti-religious biases but explores surfeit of gullibility in divine manifestation to an extent that they begin to manoeuvre human lives and are subjected to committing grave mistakes. Benegal suggests about the forces of the sacred turns the film into a kind of documentary on popular religion: left to their own resources, uneducated human passions run the risk of transforming themselves into forces whose violence is justified by divine purpose and order: and the ensuing havoc, because it is seen as resulting from divine realities, is passively accepted. One way or another, *Kondura* with surreal atmosphere and central theme of superstition belongs to the harsh series of religious analysis, alongside with Satyajit Ray's *Devi* and *Ganashatru,* both very critical of superstitious religiosity. In all the film is a well balanced account of the importance of popular religion, with its complexities and inescapability, but also its need for enlightened understanding.[48] It has a fable like quality to it - a divine boon that can turn into a curse. A link of sexual repression with guilty desire by a Brahmin in this strange tale of passion and fear is seen. The rationality is characterized by village teacher Ramanayye Master who is often seen scolding the people for their blind faith and shown nodding helplessly at the end of the movie indicating a statement made on the rot of religious superstition and blind faith. The film thus explores realistic trajectories and expressionism further giving flavour of surrealism[49] to Kondura.

4.4.17 Ganga Ki Saugandh (1978)

Director - Sultan Ahmed **Production - Sultan Productions**

Plot : Based in rural setup the story is of a young peasent Jeeva. The village is dominated by the land lord Thakur jaswant Singh who is merciless and exploitative. Jaswant Singh increases taxes for the villagers. Jeeva stands against the tyranny of Thakur. Feeling offended Thakur conspires against Jeeva and with the help of temple preist put the balme of killing a cow on him. Cow is considered scared in Hindu religion and killing one is considered a heneious crime. Jeeva is outcastes and he turns into a bandit. Jeeva takes a vow to end Thakur's unjust rule and take this oath of river Ganga, that is considered holy by Hindus.[50]

Review : It's a story where a man is excommunicated from the village because he killed a cow. Ironically this crime is done by a village priest who is commanded to do this by the village landlord. Jeeva the protagonist's exile land him into becoming a

dacoit and avenge the injustice happened to him. The movie begins with the protagonist Jiva visiting the house of a low caste cobbler referred to as Kalu Chamar all through the movie. Jiva a high caste but poor like Kalu's daughter Dhaniya. When his mother notices him at cobbler's place she gets very angry and climbs the threshold to beat him. But Jiva warns her that by doing this she will loss her caste. She immediately steps back. There is clear indication of caste discrimination and practise of untouchability. In the background are seen pictures of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri. Dhaniya goes to give shoe order to the villainous landlord or Thakur and he tries to make a pass at her. Meanwhile villagers are paid very less and Kalu Chamar stands against this injustice. Villagers support him and a low caste assumes the role of a leader who wishes to get justice. He is however very badly beaten up by the Thakur. Once Thakur who is still eying Dhaniya an untouchable tries to molests her and Jiva comes and protects her. Furious he orders to burn down house of Jiva. Kalu Chamar along with other villagers helps Jiva built a new house and this angers Thakur more.

Simultaneously, Jiva is blames for killing a cow that is doing *Gauhatya*, which is considered a heinous crime in Hindu religion. The villages priest Pandit Kashinath and local money lender Lala has hatched this plan against Jiva on the advice of Thakur. Jiva is badly beaten up by the landlord's men and when Kalu goes to help him he too is abused. Jiva's mother dies is little later and a high caste Jiva hold Ganges water in his hand and takes oath to avenge his mother's death. He turns into a bandit. Thus the feudal oppression turns him into an anti social.

Thakur gets very upset that an untouchable has let him down, helped Jiva and ask his men to burn down the ghetto where untouchables lived including Kalu. They all leave the village and settle in another area. Jiva comes back to village for Lala and ask him in from of all villagers who had killed that cow. Frightened Lala tells the truth that Pandit Kashinath did this. This is a very bold statement that this movie makes that a priest himself kills a cow for his own vested interests. Meanwhile Kalu the cobbler applies for loan to the Indian government. His loan is approved and he is given a cash of five lakhs for rehabilitation. This is a very positive message this film gives which rarely is shown in caste based commercial movies.

The end of the film has strong religious context as the small aircraft carrying Thakur hit a *trishul* or trident placed on the temple top and catching fire rolls down into river Ganges. Jiva exclaims "Jai Ganga Maiya" that is 'Hail the Mother Ganges'. Protagonist Jiva has a lower caste partner and Kalu chamar is shown to be a man of principle, knowledgeable, supportive and able leader who successfully brings the wind of change against the atrocious Thakur.

4.4.18 Manthan / The Churning (1978)

Director - Shyam Benegal.
Production - Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, Sahyadri Films.

Plot : The protagonist of Manthan, Manohar Rao is a veterinary doctor and government official who is sent with his team to a village in Gujarat to establish a dairy cooperative. The urban-educated bureaucrat is a committed worker in a reformist socialist programme. The cooperative is a metaphor for a new structure which challenges existing hierarchies and power equations. The contemporary political context is established through emergency slogans on the radio. Rao faces challenges from three directions. There is the owner of a private dairy, Mishra, who has been underpaying the farmers and whose income will be threatened by the cooperatives. Mishra makes a dig at the youthful idealism and states that it doesn't last long. Rao argues that the situations demand change and new methods have to be implemented. Rao makes his round in the village collecting milk samples facing hostility from the villagers towards outsider especially coming from urban dwellings. Rao explains the concept of a cooperative at public meeting and encounters another challenge. The village head or *Sarpanch* needs the villagers on his side to villagers on his side to retain power. His authority is based on caste divisions and traditional power structures and can be subject to challenge if villagers are given a voice in elections. Finally, there is Bhola. The illegitimate son of a city engineer and is volatile and deeply distrustful of city people. He represents the lower caste farmers who comprise the bulk of the populace. The poor Dalits or lower castes will support cooperative only if they can secure loans.[51]

Rao's associate Deshmukh expresses a more conservative approach to reform and development. Rao believes in radical intervention. When a villager's child falls ill Rao decides to treat the child in the absence of the doctor. The risk he takes pays off

when the child is cured. Rao continues his strident intervention by persuading the Dalits to participate actively in the programme. Stone throwing disrupts the screening of a documentary for the villagers. Bhola is arrested but Rao bails him out and gradually breaks his resistance. A Dalit woman Bindu, sides with Rao and speak up for him to the villagers. The Dalit file a nomination and after the votes end in a tie, the Dalit candidate Moti is elected thorough a draw of lots. The power of upper caste now rears their heads. Rao is accused of raping Bindu and is summoned back to headquarters and Dalits huts are set on fire after which Misra offers them aid. Meanwhile Bhola has taken the cause of the Dalits, concincing them that the cooperative is theirs. The bureaucrats are transferred from the village, the external agents of change return to the city and seed of change now is expected to come from within. Bhola is liberated; he emerges as a potential leader for the Dalit farmers in his village and assumes a leadership role.[52] The intervention by the bureaucrats has produced a development strategy. The intervention by the bureaucrats has produced a development model and an 'organic leadership'.[53]

Review : Shyam Benegal's Manthan offers a brilliant social critique of a situation in which government bureaucrats enter a village and try to change the social and economic perceptions of its inhabitants. Manthan captures the dynamic picture of a nation in transition. It is the full articulation of the development aesthetic, particularly in relation to cooperatives.[54] The story is situated in Gujarat and relates to real life milk cooperative activism and its pioneer Dr. Kurien. India was rolling through a phase of change where Indira Gandhi was aided by a mobilised bureaucracy which implemented the socialist programme. In 1973, bonded labour was abolished and princely states lost their special privileges. The emergency was declared during 1975-77 and this limited the cooperative programme. However in Gujarat the programme continued to operate and became an ideal model for milk cooperative sector.

Shyam Benegal suggested to Dr. Kurien that he shall make a fiction film beyond a documentary he had created earlier. Benegal budget it for about 10 lakh rupees. Kurien gave him the idea that this film should be funded by the farmers themselves and it was easy to arrange. The farmers would bring milk in the morning and evening to the collection centre and they were told to contribute two rupees each. There were half a million farmer in Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation and the money collected was put in a kitty.

The film reflects the philosophy that life is far more complex like the churning of the ocean and from it both nectar and poison emerges.[55] The film combines a cinematic feel for village interactions and energised dynamic of change. It metaphors the caste, class and gender wise churning of the rural society in a tide of change and further merge into the growth of Indian consciousness and its role in changing political situation. Benegal used the concept of realism in making of this movie. He insisted that the characters wear their costumes throughout the shoot and not change them, so that they looked worn in the village. Some people in Rajkot at the time there were not so many films being shot in that particular region. They came to get a glimpse of the stars, and asked for the hero and heroines but no one looked glamorous and some young kids made exchanges opinions where one pointed at Smita Patil who was playing the role of Bindu, and said she was just a Dalit low caste woman of the village. The crew and cast had frequent experiences like this.[56]

The character of Dr. Rao solemnizes the governmental policies in villages and his character itself is subject of *Manthan* or theorising about caste in rural independent India. As a symbol of progress and improvement, Dr. Rao, a western educated urban professional is socially at both an advantage and disadvantage in the village. His high caste statud commands ready respect from the local leaders, although he is seen by some of the more lowly members of the village to be yet another agent of privilege out to exploit them. His education is seen as a possible stumbling-block by the upper castes in maintaining their privileged hold over the many, something which they have to use their wits and whatever deviousness they might employ to get around while to the conservatives and uneducated masses he offers the frightening prospect of the new and unknown. And despite his sustained gentle urbanity, his big-city identity underlines his alienation from local authorities. There is also tension between Rao and the untouchable community who see him as a natural defender of the privileged; even though it is they who stand to gain most from a cooperative enterprise. Although such actions as successful treating a sick child, albeit unethically, and dismissing the womanising Chandavarkar from his team convince many of the low caste people of his sincerity. However, it takes time for Bhola, their undisputed leader to be won over, while Bindu's husband, steeped in his own brew of bitterness, remains hostile.[57]

Solanas defines third cinema[58] films as political weapons waging an ideological warfare and giving a voice to the exploited and oppressed. These films

clearly and lucidly 'unveil the safe and comfortable bourgeois image of reality' and replace it with 'real images of living beings'. Theorist such as Solanas and Gettino, Willemen and Gabriel define third cinema as cinema of the marginalised that edit, produce, distribute, act in and watch their own films. Manthan actually fits very well within these parameters. It was produced by the farmers in the Anand cooperative, who both acted in and watched their film. Third cinema questions the relationships between politics, cultural traditions and socio-historical situations. In Welleman's opinion, this cinema recognises the many-layered nature of culture, shaped by internal as well as international forces, inhabiting a space that is neither myopically nationalist nor evasively cosmopolitan.[59] These low-cost films revile shoddy emotionalism and endorse a critical understanding of society. Benegal's work can be read as grounded in an understanding of the dialectical relationship between social existence and cultural practice.



Figure 20 Manthan. Courtesy: http://jinnions.com/smita-patil-movies/

Teshome H. Gabriel talks about the relation between activism, aesthetics and critical spectatorship which operates as much in the after-effects of the film as in the creative process itself. This Third Aesthetic forms the basis for the film Manthan, in which the film maker offers a certain perspective on the relation between cultural and social. In keeping with the neo-realism, Benegal's characters are placed in a specific psychological and social environment, which is seen as a dynamic determinant of human behaviour.[60]

It must be emphasised that, in India third cinema was used as a means of social critique and to empower the subaltern. Benegal's film can be read as third cinema in their deployment of an egalitarian agenda. However is this cinema used as a weapon to overthrow the government? Social change is sought very much within the democratic structure of the nation. Benegal's Manthan pointed out to the unrealised vision that was stated in the constitution of India.[61] Commenting on the socio-historic

sense and presentation of Shyam Benegal, writer Anil Dharkar states that 'Shyam is a social historian who looks at the mass experiences of history through his films. That he is an accomplished film-maker who tells a good story rather well is a bonus we have enjoyed for a quarter century'.[62]

A Spearhead teams were created by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) consisting of milk biologist and vets and thee people began to take Manthan into the villages and showed the film as a mean of getting people involved. This helped in creating more milk cooperatives throughout India. Later on it was viewed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well in countries outside India. Morarji Desai presented a copy to the Soviet Union and China, where the film was widely shown. Manthan was also used in a United Nations sponsored seminar in Seattle and Washington in United States.[63]

4.4.19 Bhavni Bhavai (1980)

Director - Ketan Mehta

Production - Sanchar Film Cooperative Society Limited

Plot : Film *Bhavani Bhavai* is based on a flokloore from Gujarat. It's a story narrated by lower caste. King Chakrasen is childless and has two queens. One day he smell bad odour in his palace and enquires for the reason. He is informed that no sweeper has come to work on the day due to wedding in their community. King becomes furious and orders for strict punishment to them. Later King is informed that his elder queen is preganant. The younger queen gets jealous and along with the prime minister and royal astrologer conspires a plan. The child is disowned by the King on the basis of superstition and ordered to kill. The soldier however instead of killing the Prince, put him in a box and floats him in the river. The box is found by Malo Bhagat, a sweeper or bhangi caste member. Malo raise the child and name him Jeevo. After many years the kingdom is affected by water scarcity and King's stepwell doesnot get water. King is suggested that he must sacrifice a man with thirty two qualities, that is 'Batrees Lakshno Purush' to get water. Jeevo is said to be the chosen one. Jeevo puts a condition before the King that he should end practise of untouchability for his community in the kingdom. The film has two alternate endings where a jester named Ranglo informs the king that Jeevo is his son and execution is cancelled. Whereas in another ending Jeevo is executed. The climax show glimpses of struggle during Indian National Movement.[64]

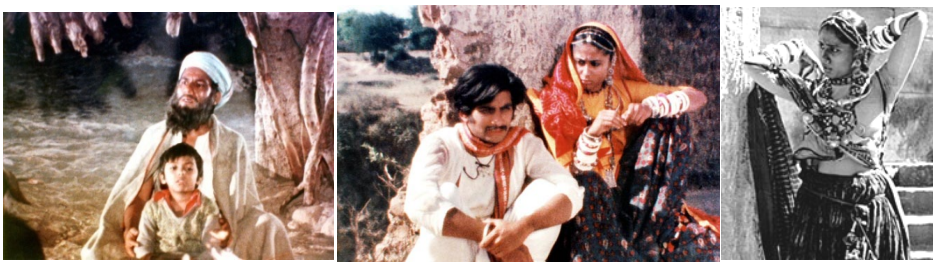


Figure 21 Left: The lower caste story teller. Film is based on folk lore from Gujarat of lower caste

Review : The original of Bhavai, a popular folk dramatic form prevalent in Gujarat and Rajasthan, can be traced to the fourteenth century when Asait Thakore, a Brahman from Siddhpur in north Gujarat, was said to have composed three hundred and sixty short plays as an offering to the Mother Goddess Amba. That the Bhavai plays are traditionally performed by the non-brahmins caste of the *targala*[65] is a fact that it is directly linked with a legend associated with Asait Thakore himself. The unhappy encounter with Hindu orthodoxy led him to create a new dramatic tradition outside the closed precincts of the palace and the temple. One can find a *vesh* a dramatic piece or sequence in the Bhavai for each of the eighteen main caste groups that formed the infrastructure of medieval Indian society. Ketan Mehta's Bhavni Bhavai is based on one such dramatic sequence, *Achhut no vesh* meaning the *vesh* of untouchables.[66]

Though Ketan Mehta's *Bhavni Bhavai*, the Bhavai of life cannot be described as a cinematic representation of the Bhavai in its purest state, it does utilize many of the significant characteristics of the form. In the Bhavai, Rangla is a peripheral character, usually acting as an announcer between different *vesh*. In Mehta's film he is a commentator, an intermediary between characters, a bit of a court jester, and at certain points in the drama, deeply involved with the course of events. Nimesh Desai, who played the role of Rangla in the film, was himself an exponent of the Bhavai form.

The narrative style is simple. The story within story is an old contrivance, in keeping with the tradition of the narrator - the Nayak in the Bhavai. The palace intrigue, the coincidence by which Jivo is discovered as the lost prince, the comic ruse with Rangla and the two soldiers adopt to escape from the prison, are all part of a time honoured theatrical convention and therefore as predictable as the dramatic development of any classical tale. Even the appearance of the same characters in different roles in the two stories would not come as a surprise to the folk viewer. But then, for generations, even in diverse cultures, part of the pleasure of watching a play

has risen not out of the element of surprise, but out of a skilful handling of an identifiable set of events.

The basic difference between *Bhavni Bhavai* and an authentic Bhavai play lies in its successful translation of a popular dramatic tradition into the language of contemporary cinema. The second striking difference in the film is its individual use of acting style. Acting in Bhavai is not realistic acting in the western sense of the term. Instead, its highly stylized, often reflecting the various characterization of the classical Indian theatre. Though Mehta uses a different sort of stylization, it is in the palace and the temple that the characters are unreal caricatures. The untouchables always remain human and identifiable.

Bhavni Bhavai also makes an extraordinary use of humour. The comic is however used for the upper class, caste as sarcasm but no comic is shown about the untouchables. Not even their strange clothes, signs of their subjugation – the spittoon hanging round the neck and the broom trailing behind. They are real, flesh and blood, just as their compatriots are in the modern-day story that provides the framework for the film; and the link between the two stories is further strengthened by the three common faces that appear in both. It seems inevitable that the fairy tale ending of Jivo's story would be unacceptable to his real life counterparts. His voice of protest reaches across the boundaries of unreality to snatch at the timeless, tragic truth of the untouchable's predicament. [67]

Mehta has effectively used verse and songs to express a variety of emotion. Mehta in an interview to film magazine *Filmfare* stated that Thakore and Brecht are the two influences on his this film. He wanted a comic strip effect in the palace sequences. He was inspired by the Asterix comics in directing the king and the courtiers.[68] He also used the *James Bond* music and All India Radio signature tune as a means of distancing the audience from the action and also making them realize that the story did not necessarily happened long ago – it could be happening in present. He also borrowed elements of commercial cinema which it had taken from folk art – speed, rhythm, colour, flash.[69]

Bhavni Bhavai thus demonstrated violence against the depressed classes and the casteless forms part of a history of exploitation that has kept pace with the country's march towards economic progress. As always, such exploitation has political overtones and implications which can be universally recognized, for it appears in one form or another even in the most highly industrialized nations of the

world. Mehta's film expresses a deep sense of outrage which he shares with his protagonist, the young untouchable, who will not allow opiates to lull him into sleep any more, must seek a final, bitter confrontation with justice and truth. Over the voice of the newsreader, dispassionately listing the statistics of exploitation and violence fall the shadow of Malo's last curse: Today the deluge will come. [70]

From Director's Desk – Ketan Mehta

Udayan Gupta interviewed film Director Ketan Mehta, who is known for being a integral part of India's 'New Cinema' movement and his effort to develop a popular, conscious cinema for movie going audience conditioned by the stereotypes of commercial Indian cinema. [71]

The Director was interviewed and expected to comment on various facets of his film Bhavni Bhavai. Cineaste inquired why he made a film about casteism and untouchability as for most westerners that seem to be a thing of the past. Ketan Mehta replied that after graduating from the Film Institute he toured to various parts of Gujarat and did a series of programs on landless labourers, untouchability and the lower caste and their condition is terribly oppressive. He felt that he had to do something about it and Mehta found the seeds of a very vital type of social consciousness. Mehta suggested that this folk story is about three to four hundred years old and basically Gujarati in form. The film based on this folk tale reveals the plight of the untouchables not only just in Gujarat but over a much wider area. Mehta believed that the segregation and oppression is a historical reality and exists even today in some form or the other. [72]

The film however did not open in India, immediately after its certification. As soon as the film completed there were violent caste riots in Gujarat. Since the film dealt with the subject of untouchables and the caste system, no distributor was willing to pick it up. The Film maker was even threatened that the auditorium would be burnt down if the film was shown anywhere. Ketan Mehta was however insistent to release the film under his banner. [73]

On *Bhavni Bhavai*, Cineaste enquired that the film making style and content are different from many similar Indian films and whole process of involving audience, and then distancing them through narrator, is extremely effective. What requires

comment are two endings one in which the untouchables' revolt fails and one in which they succeeds. Mehta replying to the question state that In Indian theatre there is no tradition of tragedy. Happy endings, the idea that all is well with the world, is the way every play is supposed to end. It is absolutely essential. Yet a happy ending may often be in total contradiction to the existing realities. So in *Bhavni Bhavai* when the older narrator sums up history to produce a happy ending using the generation of story tellers, it contradicts what went before it. In spite of the consciousness building throughout the film, the ending is a trick played upon the audience. So, the son of narrator who is the part of the audience interrupts the narrative and says, 'Enough of the happy ending! Let's stop pretending, let's stop creating stories that don't contribute to any understanding'. [74]

When asked if film like Bhavni Bhavai that is based on folk tale and based on evils of caste discrimination, can bring about major change in film making in India, Mehta replied that, it is easy to crush alternative cinema like of his but moment there is increase in making of these kind of films the movement shall augment . There are more films coming out which are socially conscious, more relevant, and which takes definite stand against oppression and the status quo (such as Manthan, Mirch Masala coming from same region). Mehta feels that it is difficult to continually suppress these films, and they will eventually reach the people for whom they are intended. [75]

4.4.20 Hum Panch (1980)

Director - Bapu **Production - S K Films Enterprise**

Plot : The story revolves around a small rural village where the local Zamindar or landlord Veer Pratap Singh rules with an iron fist, as his ancestors have before him. He is nominally 'the protector' of the village and its inhabitants but in reality he is a man who will feed a pigeon with his own hands and then kill it for breakfast. Singh's own family is estranged from him like his sister and nephew Arjun live in the village. Arjun blames Veer Pratap Singh for his father's suicide, after Singh cheated him out of all his money and is the only person in the village who dares to stand up to him. Singh's brother Krishna is a saintly sort who lives at the local temple where Singh keeps him steadily supplied with liquor to keep him from claiming his share of the family property. Singh's own son is a wastrel who is rarely home.

Veer Pratap Singh's chief bodyguard is a strong young man by the name of Bhima who has grown up in his boss's household and served him loyally since being orphaned as a boy. Bhima is privy to all of Singh's secrets, including his unsanctioned marriage to one of the village beauties, Soundariya belonging to untouchable caste, whom he seduces nightly near the temple. A young son of the village named Suraj arrives home from the city where he has been studying to no avail, since his father Chandravan failed to send the money necessary for his exams. The reason for this is that Chandravan spends his evenings at Veer Pratap Singh's palace gambling and has gradually lost all his ancestral property to the landlord.

Fed up, Suraj goes to confront his father and Veer Pratap Singh. As he leaves Singh's property, he passes Soundariya and her two brothers who had come to plead with the zamindar to do the right thing. Soundariya she is pregnant and has told her brothers that she is married to Veer Pratap Singh. Singh sends his greedy sycophantic manager Lala out to get rid of them, and then appears himself to repudiate poor Soundariya and have them thrown out.



Figure 22 Soundariya a lower caste untouchable woman is exploited by the land lord with a promise to marry her and left to suffer after she conceive his child. Due to this her brothers revolt against landlord.

Screengarb : Film Hum Panch

She is heartbroken and her brothers resigned, but Suraj and Arjun convince them to take their case to the village priest. He calls Veer Pratap Singh to the temple, Singh being a very pious man who worships daily, to ask him again about marrying Soundariya. Bhima who witnessed the marriage first-hand is obviously disturbed when Veer Pratap Singh once again denies having married her, but he stays silent. Nobody believes him, although he is somewhat ineffective at handling him but there is nothing they can do. Soundariya loses her mental balance at this final betrayal. Bhima stops the two brothers when they want to chase down Veer Pratap Singh, but he is regretful. Krishna now makes an appearance, singing a sanctimonious song about God coming when his devotees ask, but needing their help too sometimes. This

character knows all about his brother's faults and Veer Pratap Singh even seems slightly afraid of him when he appears out of nowhere on occasion to intervene.

Consequently, Bhima is in love with village girl Lajiya but her father agrees to let them get married *only if* Bhima can provide a mangalsutra or marriage necklace for her. Bhima goes to Singh to ask for the money to buy one. Veer Pratap Singh scoffs at the idea of Bhima getting married. Knowing that Bhima's request will likely be refused, Suraj has coached him in advance to remind Singh that he's been working for him for twenty years. This absolutely enrages Singh despite Bhima's humility, and after Bhima reminds him of his broken promises to Soundariya too he beats Bhima with his walking stick. Bhima refrains from fighting back, but leaves vowing never to go back. Singh then has one of his men announce to the village at large that Bhima is now *persona non grata*, not to be fed or housed.



Figure 23 Hum Panch is a team of five who revolt against the repressive land lord that includes twoo untouchables whose sister has been sexually exploited by him. Screen grab : Film Hum Panch.

Suraj leaves his own home when his father refuses to let Bhima stay there and tries to find another place for them to live—to no avail. The entire village closes its doors on them. Disgusted by their cowardice, Suraj vows to return to the city and leave the village behind. Bhima and Arjun try to stop him. But it is another song from Krishna which changes his mind, about abandoning your own people and your own home. Finally the team of Hum Panch or We Five, come together and give an armed resistance to the authority of villainous Thakur thus ending his tyrannical rule.

Review : The film maybe considered as a modern adaptation of Hindu epic Mahabharata. There are many instances that film gives the message of good win over evil. The film's Mahabharata allusions are densest in the second half of the film and are greatly acknowledged by the characters themselves. The rebelling five heroes when reunite at last Lala Nainsukh the aide of villainous Thakur, comments that 'the

Pandavas have taken birth again'. The Thakur's comeuppance as Krishna himself announces, will come about through the 'awakening' of the entire village, catalyzed by the consciousness-raising the young untouchable Swaroop and Mahavir and the Shudra slave Bhima and their uniting with the Kshatriya and Bania youths Arjun and Suraj to become the unstoppable fist of 'we the five Pandavas' – a symbol of a caste-liberated collectively.[76]

4.4.21 Aakrosh / A Curse / City of the Wounded (1980)

Director – Govind Nahlani **Production - Krishna Movies Enterprise**

Plot : Bhiku a tribal stands against the diktat of forest contractor, who inturn physically physically abuse his wife Nagi alongwith top officials in the district. Bhiku resort to silence when the balme of killing his wife is put on him. His case is taken by a lawyer Bhaskar Kulkarni a Brahmin who works under a lower caste mentor Dussane. When Kulkarni begin to work on the case he begins to receive threatening calls and Dudssane is warned of his lower caste status. Also Kulkarni is abused for working against his own higher caste community. Bhaskar is tipped by a social worker about how some powerful has actually committed the crime. Bhaskar stands by the justice but when his father dies and he sees the lustful eyes of men towards his sister he kills her.[77]

Review : An off-screen narrator dispassionately delivers the terse news account that on December 25, 1978, the body of an Adivasi tribal woman named Lahanya Nagi, was found at the bottom of a dry, abandoned well near the village of Kondachiwadi, as the image of the sombre faces of a group of resigned villagers, having quietly assembled at a clearing on a dark, still night, are illuminated by the intermittent glow of a nearby fire. A stoic and inscrutable man, Lahanya Bhiku, wearing a crude restraining device fashioned from rope tied across his torso, then advances with a lit torch towards what is revealed to be the funeral pyre for his late wife, Nagi, before being led away by the authorities to prison. The following day, the impassive Bhiku is brought to court for his arraignment on the murder of his wife, but refuses to respond to the charges brought before him, much to the irritation of the presiding judge who is eager to conduct a swift trial, and to the bewilderment of Lahanya's public defender, an energetic and idealistic young lawyer, Baskhar Kulkarni who finds himself pitted in his first, independent case against his mentor and family friend, a seasoned

prosecutor named Dussane. Dussane is also a tribal raised to the status of a public prosecutor who treats Prabhakar, a Brahmin, like his son, refuses to face the truth, revealing in the process the degradation of a man who cares only for holding his place secure on the social ladder.[78]

Frustrated by his own client's enigmatic silence and unwillingness to provide a motive or proclaim his innocence, nor cooperate in the formulation of his own defence strategy, Baskhar embarks on an independent investigation into the facts surrounding the seemingly clear-cut case, leading him to a wary and evasive editor of the weekly periodical National Welfare who had recently published a case involving the mysterious death of another Adivasi tribeswoman at a hotel, his client's equally inhospitable and guarded ancestral village as he attempts to interview Bhiku's elderly father and young sister, a well-intentioned Marxist 'social worker' and perhaps, a Naxalite agitator, who has come to the remote country to help the tribal village organize a collective, and a wealthy businessman, Bhonsle and his politically connected cronies who employ the Adivasis as menial labourers for his lucrative logging operations. Thus, here is *Aakorsh* using the incident of rape and murder to issue a corrosive indictment of a vicious socio-political order in a small place in Maharashtra. Vijay Tendulkar's story picks up a coastal town where a handful of so called elites a doctor, public prosecutor, president of district committee, M. L. A and forest contractor rule the roost hiding behind the respectability. With the veneer removed, what you have is a bunch of unscrupulous men secure in their knowledge that however long the arm of the law may be, they as the powerful elite of the town are beyond its reach. The hands that kill in the farm house can also deal cards in the officer's club.

The researcher wishes to clarify that though this movie has the victims as Lahnya Bhiku and his wife who are tribal, they are repeatedly addressed as lower caste or *neech jaat*. The lawyer named Dussane belonging to the same community is also shown receiving calls from an unknown, appearing to be from the higher caste who badly curses him calling him low caste and mocks that giving refuge to a Brahmin at home will not make him elevate his caste position. Lahnya too is shown performing last rites of his wife and father in Hindu way that ascertains his connection affirmatively with the Hindu religion.

Film Director Govind Nihalani creates a lucid, richly textured, and pungently incisive commentary on class stratification, exploitation, amorphous and often

malleable, interrelation between law and justice in *Aakrosh*. From the opening image of a handcuffed and literally leashed Bhiku, Nihalani illustrates the inescapable marginalization and subjugation of the poor and dispossessed, often from the fourth - and lowest - Hindu class of *Shudras* in contemporary Indian society. Moreover, through the anonymous telephone caller's hostility towards and implicit resistance of Dusane's upward mobility from tribal to professional and seemingly successful integration into privileged society, Baskhar's, a *Brahmin* socially problematic role as advocate for the lower caste Bhiku, and the radical social worker's controversial presence among the Adivasi in an attempt to incite revolution in the village towards a path to self-sufficiency, Nihalani presents a complex portrait of the social entrenchment of traditional caste that arises, not out of human weakness, complacency, or inertia, but as a resigned impotence towards the incestuous union of power, wealth, and authority, as well as the systematic intimidation and victimization - the *silencing* - of the underprivileged. Inevitably, it is this pervasive dehumanization that propels Bhiku's unconscionable act - a desperate coup de grace borne, not out of madness or displaced rage, but a tragic sense of merciful liberation from the inescapable corruption of privilege. Nahlani, making his directorial debut with this movie, thoroughly matches Vijay Tendulkar's incisive narrative with powerful visuals. With giving the film treatment of a thriller, Nihlani establishes a realm of dread. The character of Lahnya played by Om Puri stands out. He lets us watch Lahanya suffer, but doesn't ask for our sympathy. His eyes never rest on any face, and the only emotion he displays is by swallowing lumps of anxiety when his sister's name is mentioned. Finally, when he acts you expect a gruesome scene, but Nihalani avoids the temptation of going in for sensationalism.[79] The silence is broken by a loud cry an 'aakrosh'!

4.4.22 Sadgati / Deliverance (1981)

Director - Satyajit Ray **Production - Doordarshan, Government of India**

Plot : An untouchable Dukhi approaches the village Brahmin to request him to set an auspicious date for his daughter's upcoming wedding according to the Hindu astrology. The Brahmin promises to perform the task in exchange of Dukhi slaving over household chores in return. Already ailing and weak due to a recent fever, Dukhi agrees and begins with cleaning the Brahman's house and stable. When Dukhi is asked to chop a huge bloc of wood his anger increases with each blow. Working in

scorching sun, hungry and malnutrition, he dies. The corpse lies close to the road used by the Brahmins to go to the village well. The untouchables shun it for fear of police investigation. Thus, no one is able to decide the fate of the corpse of an untouchable. Late in the evening, when no one is around, Brahmin ties a noose around its ankle, slides it out of the city limits and sprinkles holy water on the spot on the road to cleanse it of the untouchable's touch.[80]

Review : Deliverance the fifty minutes film Satyajit Ray made in late 1981 for Indian television moved a Bengali who knows India's villages well and may be considered that Satyajit Ray has travelled a long way from the poetry of *Pather Panchali* to the terrifying prose of Sadgati.[81] Sunil Ganguli described it as Ray's 'cruellest' film. It is certainly his starkest, his most naked work. As Satyaji Ray himself put it 'Deliverance is a deeply angry film, but it is not the anger of an exploding bomb, but of a bow stretched taunt and quivering.[82] Premchand's short story Sadgati was published in 1931. Satyajit Ray's film based on this short story was shown on Indian television Doordarshan channel in 1981, and subsequently on Channel 4 in the United Kingdom. The transcribed screenplay used for analysis here was supplied by The Hyphen Films, London.[83]

Ray had several reasons for picking up the story. First it had strong cinematic elements which can be told as a gripping narrative. It also struck him that it would fill a gap in his work by dealing with a stratum of society that he hadn't treated at all in his films. And he felt a duty to make Indian aware of what was happening in India. Ray stated that, 'These all happened simultaneously. One is not more important than another'.[84]

The plot, taken from a short story by Premchand, is distilled simplicity itself, in keeping with its ancient theme the harsh exploitation of one class by another, with society's sanction. In this case the lowest caste under the control of Brahmin is shown from central India. Dukhi is from *chamar* caste someone who works with hides and skins and who is therefore particularly objectionable to a Brahmin. His name means 'sorrowful', an attempt at averting the envy of the gods. He belongs to the last caste Sudra[85]. In casting Ray selected the finest actors of post-independence generation where both of them are able to convey with searing truth the struggle of poor people to remain human under inhuman pressure. Similarly, Ray has relieved Ghashiram's callousness with just enough humanity to make his condemnation of him all the more

devastating. Ghashiram's character is the authoritarian head of the house, the devout worshipper, the kindly counsellor to his fellow man in grief and the man of aloof detachment from the valueless untouchable.[86]

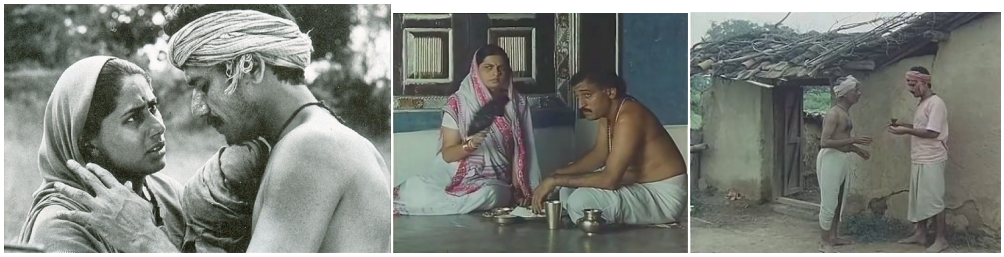


Figure 24 Sadgati defines a story of an untouchable and a Brahmin man and caste system that keeps no room for humanity. Screen grab: Film Sadgati.

Casteism in behaviour could be observed at different instances and the societal structure is steadily established. Crucial to the artistry of the film is the careful balance between the extremes of the untouchable's hut and the Brahmin's house, with the narrative of Dukhi's labours holding the two logically together. The callousness of the high to the low is established with disquieting candour[87] . First task given to Dukhi is sweeping veranda. One of the persons seeing him performing a futile task is shown to be a *Gond* [88] who advises him that he must demand food from the Brahmin. Even the coals to light his tobacco that Dukhi begs from the Brahmin's wife are literally tossed in his direction in a gesture of total disdain, burning his ankle. Dukhi fears even worse humiliation to ask for food. When Dukhi is dead the corpse creates dissension in village. The *chamar* community briefed by the angry *Gond* do not agree to remove the corpse while Brahmins strongly insist to get it out as they cannot draw water from the well nearby. The act of untouchablity is shown in most piercing manner when the Brahmin scared of police removes the corpse by hooked stick and thread, slips a noose around and drags it. The penultimate scene is grotesque and brilliantly handled to stop just short of black comedy, in which the Brahman raises the leg of the corpse with a hooked stick. He dumps the body into a dumping yard with animal carcasses; delivered from the earthly cares in a way he could never have dreamt of – by a Brahmin, no less.

The screening of Sadgati on Doordarshan, the government run television channel, provoked a strong reaction from audiences and critics. Many people seemed unable to accept the film; it was said to be both too shocking and not shocking

enough, even by the same critic. Ray felt that part of this response derived from the poor conditions of viewing on black and white television sets. The film was again shown in 1984 when colour sets were introduced in India and the reaction was somewhat similar. One of the critics stated, 'One wonders at the incredible turmoil this slick sort of 'art' cinema can cause in the not so discerning mind'. He recommended that, for a mass audience at least, 'morality themes should replace the stark cold-bloodedness of Sadgati'.[89]



Figure 25 Untouchable Dukhiya dies and the Brahmin ties his body with a help of stick and rope. He drags the body to the dumping ground and leaves it with the animal carcasses. While doing this Director has taken extra care of showing *janau* the holy thread worn by Brahmins tucked in his ears which they do while performing impure work, such as toiletry. He performs *shuddhi* or purification back home. Screen grab: Film Sadgati.

Premchand's story though appeared in 1931, Gashiram and Dukhi could easily belong to the India of half a century before, half a century later and even today.

4.4.23 Prem Rog (1982)

Director - Raj Kapoor **Production - R. K. Films**

Plot: Orphaned at a very young age and adopted by his Uncle, a Brahmin by caste and temple Pujari, Devdhar lives a poor lifestyle with them and their daughter Radha. Pujari works for Bade Thakur, a wealthy landlord and prepares astrological charts and organizes pooja and ask for financial help from them so that Devdhar can go to Bombay and study further. This is approved. Years later when Devdhar has grown into a young man and returns home he again happen to meet his childhood friend and

niece of bade Thakur Manorama and falls in love with her. She is very naive. Radha's marriage gets fixed to a man much older to her age whereas Manorama's marriage gets fixed to another wealthy Thakur Kunwar Narendra Pratap. Manorama's wedding takes place with great pomp and show and heartbroken Devdhar leaves back to city for further studies. After few months when he visits his sister Radha who is pregnant, he gets shocked to know that Manorama has become widow on the very next day of her wedding. He come back to the village and is very upset to see Manorama's condition as widow and how she is treated as low and untouchable. Manorama has one time simple meals, no foot wares, treated as ill omen, simple white garb and totally recluse to her family. Devdhar tries to bring back some smile on her face and then decides to remarry her. This creates a huge conflicting situations leading to a rebel, violence and deaths. Finally the social structure is broken and Manorama is married to Devdhar with the concern of bade Thakur who is a changed man.

Review: In Prem Rog, Raj Kapoor raises his concern about condition of a widow from elite families and supports widow remarriage. Through this movie, he voices his opinion against caste discrimination and weaves the plot in a sensitive love story between an upper caste widow and man of lowly status. The irony is shown at the beginning of the movie when the head of the family Bade Thakur consensus and initiates re-marriage of a widow, daughter of a man called Mehto (indicating smaller caste) with a man playing band in marriages and is also a part time agricultural labourer.

There are many instances where evils of caste system and customs are reflected throughout the narrative. The film explores the condition of a higher caste woman as a spinster, as a married woman and as a widow. Yet, no definite stand towards few customs and beliefs is taken but left to the rational minds of the audiences to make their assertions. Instances such as considering matching of astrological chart before marriage and changing them as per the convenience, forbidding the tonsure of Manorama and her elder brother in law getting attracted to her long hairs and raping her, a lower caste considered to be untouchable but have physical relations with their women, Bade Thakur asking Devdhar to run away from Manorama and proposes to make all the arrangements but not let her remarry and stay in village are some of the discrepancies that are presented, when Devdhar goes to meet Bade Thakur lights goes off and is considered inauspicious by his Aunt whereas

lights illuminate again with Devdhar's mention of triumph giving an indication of 'light of change'. The film is a vivid comment on the hypocrisy and questions the Hindu customary and manipulations made by the higher caste to assert their authority. Film also make one think that whether the old traditions and customs were made for protecting a woman when her husband was dead, such as the defacement of a widow and make her look ugly as to protect her from lusty male gaze, where there is a dialogue '*sunder kes anarth kar dete hai*' (Beautiful hair could be very disastrous) and so on and makes one aware of the utmost violation of human rights. Manorama is also taunted once by a *halwai* or sweet mart owner that how inauspicious it is to see her face first thing in morning and does not know what will befall him. The wife of the Bade Thakur can be seen as an epitome for the society and practitioner of customs and traditions. At many instances a higher caste and class Thakur is shown to be considering himself as a guardian of the caste laws and societal norms. At another place blind faith and superstition are shown to be used for extracting money.

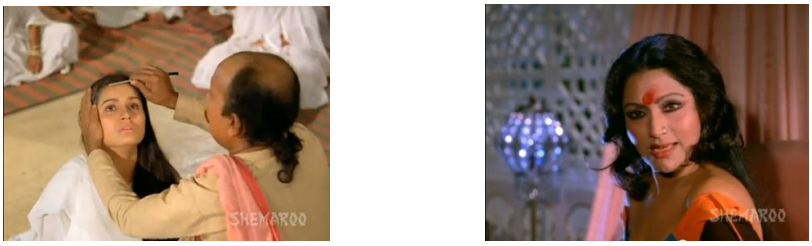


Figure 26 Left: Manorama belonging to upper caste and become a widow is tonsured as per caste ritual. Right : A lower caste potter woman is sexually used by landlord where caste discrimination doesn't play any role. Screen grab : Prem Rog.

When Manorama becomes widow and returns back to her maternal house after rape incident, she is made to live a life of chaste and not indulge in any merry making. The life of the widow is defined as cooking their own food, use very simple things with no ornamentation, go to temple, eat once in a day and no delicacies, read religious texts, tonsure and etc. When Devdhar comes to visits Manorama, the cook or Maharaj a Brahmin leaves plate brought for Devdhar outside her room and she is treated like an outcast. When the love relations gets revealed to everyone and Manorama's father strongly object, his wife contradicts him by saying that 'he being a Thakur (higher caste) he won't communicate directly with the lower castes and class people, won't take water that they have touched but can have physical intimate relations with the women from their community'. Thakur is shown to have been having illicit relations with the backward caste woman - a *kumhar* or potter.

By keeping in mind his family honour, high caste status, community and society, Bade Thakur handles this situation differently. In dialogue with Devdhar he explains him that they live two lives one for themselves and other to show to the society. Devdhar apprehend the anti-societal ways suggested by Bade Thakur and states that it is not alone about him and Manorama but about the age old wrong customs and beliefs. He calls it a *Dharma Yudh* or War against Social Custom regarded as religious and moral duty; and there will be no compromise. Thus, age old Hindu customs are challenged and strong need for reformation is proposed.

However, similarly the societal structure between Brahmin (first in the Hindu Vedic order) and Kshatriya (second in the Hindu Vedic order) is also challenged. Thus the movie concludes with Bade Thakur making a statement that 'Devdhar was right in saying that all bad, wrong customs begin from the houses of higher caste and class people' and he accepts the union in front of the village. Breaking the taboo, Manorama's mother and now a widow is shown doing the *gathbandhan* (tying knot) ritual during the wedding of Devdhar and Manorama. The film thus carries a strong social message and gives emancipating end.

4.4.24 Souten (1983)

Director - Saawan Kumar **Production - Mercury Production International**

Plot : Shyam a businessman in Mauritus is in love with a girl from wealthy family Rukmini. Shyam employ Gopal, a lower caste in his office nd provides him with all official aminities. Rukmini is caste conscious and believes in practice of untouchability. Govin lives with his daughter Radha in office quarters and Shyam befriends the family and share lunch. In meantime Shyam and Rukmini gets married. However, Rukmini begins to doubt relationship between Shyam and Radha which leads to devastating all three lives. The film occasionally shows caste discrimination followed by Rukmini and later her penance.[90]



Figure 27 Shyam's wife Rukmini doesn't like sharing food with a Harijan but he doesn't believe in caste system. Radha is shown a devotee of Lord Krishna, Hari keeping with the term Harijan. Screen grab : Film Souten.

Review: Souten was a popular commercial movie based on interpersonal relations intertwined between differences of caste and class. Film begins with Gopal played by veteran actor Shreeman Lagoo a very fair actor painted black. He comes for interview before the scheduled date and when asked to come next day by the owner and the protagonist Shyam, he explains that if he comes next day he will not get the job because he is a Harijan. He looks very submissive and obliged. The hero of the movie Shyam and the Harijan character Gopal shares different names of same God, Lord Krishna. Also Gopal's daughter Radha is shown to be a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna too signifies in the name given to lower castes community by Mahatma Gandhi the Harijans, where Hari means Vishnu or his incarnation Krishan and *jans* are his children. Shyam's occupation is of fisherman and is belittled in the movie in later part. Shyam's lady love who becomes his wife is called Rukmini, all contextual names from the epic Mahabharata.

Film shows incidents where caste system reflects very strongly and demonstrates treatment given to lower caste community at different points. On a day of Holi Gopal works in office as no one plays Holi with him as he is a Harijan, an untouchable. Shyam touches and puts colour on him discarding the practise of untouchability. Meanwhile Rukmini a high caste and class person reach there and when Gopal is introduced to her as a Harijan she remembers her childhood incident. Once while Rukmni is playing with a Harijan girl child, her mother comes there and shoo away the girl saying 'Harijan ki Beti bhaag yaha se' (Run away you daughter of a Harijan). She instructs Rukmini never to play with Harijan girls as they are bad people. This impression is carried by Rukmini all through. In the next scene Rukmini's car break down and need to be pushed. Shyam tells her if she permits, he can call Gopal for help thhough she has reservations towards Harijan, and its only Gopal who is around due to festival time. Rukmini nods. After Gopal's help, the car starts and Shyam mock her that she must wash her car and also herself after getting back home as a Harijan has touched it. The practice of untouchability is criticized here.

Later in the story, Shyam gifts Gopal a mansion as a token of his respect and tells him that he considers Gopal a father figure. Gopal requests Shyam to make peace with Rukmini and says, from thousands of years Harijans are laying and covering sheet of insult[91] and he must not spoil his relationship with Rukmini because of a Harijan. Shyam and Rukmini settle their differences and get married.

On one of the days Shyam invites Gopal home for dinner and Rukmini arrives. Se gets very angry to see Gopal sitting on her bed and having dinner with Shyam in her bedroom. She yells at Gopal and asserts that how dare Gopal sat on her bed and forgot that Gopal is a *achhut* or an untouchable. Rukmini informs Shyam that she will never use that bed again. Later one day Gopal's daughter Radha invites Rukmini and Shyam for lunch and Rukmini turn down the invitation saying that she can't have food from a house of untouchable.

Shyam however goes for lunch and after meeting Radha begins to find solace in her. He goes and meets her in the library. The sequence is shot in Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius and we can see their vans in the vicinity. This also gives the holistic connection between teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, his movement to eradicate untouchability and theme of the movie.



Figure 28 Commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's call for eradicating caste system, few scenes in the film is shot at Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritus. Their parked vehicles too can be seen.

Screen grab : Film Souten.

Meanwhile Radha and Shyam develops a platonic friendship and Rukmini begin to doubt their relationship. She however pretends to be good and invite both daughter and father for a party at her house. She tells Gopal that she is apologetic for her past actions and she doesn't anymore believe in caste discrimination and also that she will tell everyone that Harijans are to be worshipped. In party, Rukmini courteously enquires about Radha's marriage to Gopal, on which he replies that in his community it is difficult to find a match for an educated girl. This signifies the social constraints of a Harijan girl and that education is not taken by the majority Harijan community. Rukmini stage a loud drama insults Shyam, Gopal and Radha and informs her father that her husband Shyam has made an untouchable girl her *Souten* the second wife. The film takes a dramatic turn after this in which Radha is tricked into marrying an old man and father of three to save Shyam and Rukmini's marriage. However her husband dies and Gopal commits suicide. Shyam suffers a huge loss in business and is back being a fisherman. Radha gives birth to a baby girl conceived from her failed marriage and later when misunderstandings reach their climax

commits suicide. The truth is revealed that there was nothing romantic between Radha and Shyam and Rukmini deeply regret her actions.



Figure 29 Rukmini realises her mistake only after the death of Radha. She breaks the barriers of caste system and accepts her daughter as her own. Screen grab : Film Souten.

Rukmini repents for the low caste, untouchabilty and low class syndromes she carried breaks down these false, oppressive and egoistic practise. She accepts Radha's daughter as her own and caress her. The final sacrifice of an untouchable girl Radha doesn't go waste and annihilates caste system and superseding human emotions and dignity.

4.4.25 Paar / The Crossing (1984)

Director - Goutam Ghose **Production – Orchid Films**

Plot : The film of exploitation in rural Bihar, in which a landlord's men wreck a village and kill the benevolent schoolmaster who was a progressive force in the village. The labourer Naurangia breaks with a tradition to passive resistance and retaliates by killing the landlord's brother. Naurangia and his wife Rama become fugitives from justice. After many efforts to find sustenance elsewhere, the two decide to return home. To earn the fare, they agree to drive the herd of pigs through the river, causing the pregnant Rama to believe she has lost her baby. But they have to swim across a wide, swiftly flowing river, in which they nearly drown before reaching safety. At the end of the film Naurangia puts his ear to her belly and listens to the heartbeats of the unborn baby. That glorious thing called 'Hope' is not lost yet.



Figure 30 A lower caste couple transporting pigs from one bank to another. A work only could be done by a lower caste as the matter being the handling pigs. Courtesy : https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087868/fullcredits/ ?ref_=tt_ov_st_sm; Screen grab: Film Paar.

Review : Paar or The Crossing is based on Bengali story Paathi by Samaresh Basu. Goutam Ghosh's this film is tough to watch. With the success of *Ankur* and Benegal's focus on rural exploitation, parallel cinema made this into a virtual trademark. *Paar* also explores feudalism and exploitation of the untouchables in Bihar but unlike *Ankur* which hints at the potential for peasant revolt, *Paar* sees a worker, Naurangia, retaliate against the oppressive system by avenging the murder of the local schoolteacher who initially helps the workers to unite and resist. However, Naurangia and his wife, Rama are forced to flee when the villagers are massacred in a night of carnage.

A despondent Naurangia and pregnant wife Rama end up in Calcutta and this is where the film becomes much darker and visceral in its impact. Survival becomes the only aim for both the impoverished husband and wife and soon they are faced with a life and death ultimatum. Homeless, destitute and starving, Naurangia's only chance of making some money comes in the form of an absurd proposition; to take a herd of pigs across a river crossing. A Herculean task and the centrepiece of the film's narrative, the desperate image of Naurangia and his pregnant wife Rama trying to stay afloat whilst directing the pigs across a wide river crossing morphs into a symbol of human struggle. Admittedly, this is a film of two halves and whilst the first half tends to offer some kind of sociological explanation why Naurangia is forced to flee the village, the second half dispenses with narrative concerns and depicts with great intensity an odyssey of pain and determination. Ghose seems unconcerned exactly where Naurangia and Rama are headed as it is their physical exhaustion which he captures so vividly through the hard edged cinematography and frantic performances. *Paar* is another key work of parallel cinema and Ghose is an auteur who seems

equally impressive as Shyam Benegal, Aparna Sen or even someone as radical as Mrinal Sen. It will be interesting to see how the rest of his work stands up to the beauty of *Paar*.[92] The urban and rural spaces are effectively explored in the context of caste. Their migration and their dwelling in city both are shown to be a result of the caste problem they experience.

4.4.26 Damul / Bonded until Death (1984)

Director - Prakash Jha **Production - Prakash Jha Productions**

Plot : The film reveals the problems of bonded labour in a village in Bihar. Exploitation of the lower classes by those wielding power is brought out in almost documentary style. 'Damul' - Bonded until Death, produced and directed by Prakash Jha under his own banner of Prakash Jha Productions, is a stunning comment on the happenings in contemporary rural India. The story of the film, which is set in Bihar, dwells on the all-round exploitation of the backward communities and the atrocities perpetrated on them by a handful of powerful men who operate the 'Panha' system, 'Panha' meaning shelter and protection. The landlords trap potential bounded labourers into committing petty crimes, mostly planted and then grant them shelter and protection when the police arrive. The labourers are left with no choice but to do the landlords' bidding – they steal for them and pay back the loans, the stealing being mostly confined to cattle.

Though 'Panha' provides the thread line to the story of 'Damul', the film also takes a very close look at the rural milieu and the developments therein – caste conflicts, atrocities on Harijans, labour problems and political pollution. Madho Pande, the mukhia or the village chief, is a Brahmin and a very powerful landlord. His younger brother is an overseer who has been given the contract to construct a canal. There is rivalry between Madho Pande and Bachcha Singh, a Rajput, who is waiting for an opportunity to settle scores with the former. At the time of the local election, Bachcha Singh induces old Gokul, a Charmar (cobbler), to oppose Madho Pande, although Gokul is a apprehensive and wails 'bahot khoon kharaba hoga' meaning a lot of blood will be spilled. On the polling day, the overseer and hired goondas prevent the Harijans from leaving their basti their dwelling and exercise their right to vote. A complaint made to the presiding officer falls on deaf ears. Madho Pande is elected. There is great jubilation in the victor's camp in the shape of a grand feast and a nautanki dance performance to booth.

The standing crop in the field of Sanjeevan, the son of deceased Punia Chamar, is being sheared at the instance of the Munshi of Madho Pande. The bullocks are also being led away. Sanjeevan runs to Madho Pande, who pretends as though he knows nothing of the whole affair. The Munshi refers to the loan taken by Punia which has remained unpaid. Finally, Sanjeevan agrees to pay back the loan, about which he knew nothing, and puts his thumb impression on a blank sheet in the 'wahikhata' of the landlord. Back home, Sanjeevan's wife upbraids him for having put the thumb impression on a blank paper.

Comes the time when Sanjeevan is accused of theft. A police Jamadar arrives and he heavily bribed. Sanjeevan hides in Madho Pande's house and is given shelter and protection after which the young man agrees to steal cattle for the landlord and thus repay loan.

Around this time, Mahatmain, a young widow returns to the village from Banaras where she had gone for an abortion. Though she is a keep of Madho Pande, she is a spirited woman. On her return, she tries to spurn the landlord's advances but does not succeed.

Sanjeevan's brother-in-law Nageena also gets involved in the cattle theft racket. On one occasion, Nageena is hit by a bullet. Sanjeevan brings the body to Madho Pande's house and tells the Mukhia that Nageena has given his life for his (mukhia's) sake out the landlord retorts by saying that Nageena has been killed while stealing.

At the canal site, there is trouble. The labourers, not happy with the low wages being paid by the overseer, prepare to leave for Punjab. Helping them make the trip is Bachcha Singh. As they wend their way to the railway station, they are mercilessly fired upon by the overseer and his hired men. Many of them are killed, while the rest run back to the basti where their huts are set on fire. When Madho Pande learns of the incident, he asks his brother to disappear from the scene. He then has a dialogue with Bachcha Singh and agrees to all his terms. Bachcha Singh, who has been all along using the Harijans as pawns in his game of power politics, is now a changed person.

A case is made out that dacoits raided the basti and were responsible for the killings and burning. The Magistrate accompanied by newsmen arrives on the scene to conduct an inquiry. A Minister also arrives and blames the opposition for encouraging terrorists and assures the residents that everything will be all right, that each and every culprit will be apprehended and tried.

Everyone in the village knows what has happened but does not have the guts to come forward and name the perpetrators of the heinous crime. Finally, Mahatmain decides to come out openly and make a statement before the authorities. Madho Pande learns of her resolve and arranges to bump her off and sees to it that Sanjeevan is arrested for her murder. Sanjeevan is tried and sentenced to death by hanging.



Figure 31 An upper caste landlord being injured and beaten up by a lower caste woman when her innocent husband is sentenced to death because of him. The shot shows her revolt and her agony. Screen grab : Film Damul.

On the day Sanjeevan is to be hanged, there is a congregation at Madho Pande's house where someone asks as to what could be the last wish expressed by Sanjeevan before hanging. There is some derisive laughter but it is cut short when Sanjeevan's wife deals a mighty blow to the Mukhia with a huge knife. The mukhia collapses and writhes in pain while the others in gathering try to hold back the angered woman with all their might.

Review : The story of a bonded labourer who is forced to steal bonded until death for his landlord. When the oppression of the landlord becomes diabolically throttling and the bonded labourer begins to die of suffocation. He cries out in anguish - "What can he more do?....Hang me on DAMUL?". 'Damul' is almost documented life in the first half it picks up seed and momentum and achieves dramatic intensity of a high order. Most of the time, the photography is in low key in keeping with the backdrop and the nature of the theme. Parkash Jha's direction is competent and his treatment of the theme is deft and skilled. He has been able to extract superfine performances from the artistes, almost all of whom are new to films. Rajen Kothari's photography and Raghunath Sheth's musical score are other assets of the film. The story by Shaiwal, who has also written the dialogue, is quite moving.

In the Ganges belt of Bihar, there exists the system of Panha which means, in literal terms, shelter and protection. The landlords trap the potential bonded labourers into some planted petty crimes. As prearranged, when the police arrive looking for the criminal, they are sheltered and then protection is offered from the impending threat of being arrested. The poor labourer, already bonded neck deep with the generation of loans and the ever mounting interest, is left with no option but to do what the landlord asks him - steal for him and pay back the loan. Farmers in this part invest their harvest into land and cattle - and cattle lifting have been a flourishing trade organised in real mafia style.

The landlord compels his bonded subjects to steal cattle and deposit them to his agents. After a couple of days the agent informs the owner to come and collect his cattle by paying a certain arbitrarily fixed amount of money. This amount is called Phirauti. So, if the phirauti is agreed upon by the owner he takes his cattle back - if he is unable to pay, the cattle are sold in the open market and if there is a dispute over this amount, a small Panchayat consisting of a few local mafia chiefs is called to do justice. Their verdict is final and binding : The man whose cattle have been stolen pays the expenses of the Panchayat. Everybody knows about the big landlords who are involved in this but nobody dares to take their wrath by informing the police. As it is, the police in these parts are hardly effective.

Panha forms the thread line of Damul - which goes deeper into several contemporary related developments like - caste conflicts - atrocities on Harijans - labour problems and worst of all - political pollution of the society at the grass root level. A large population of workers involved in agriculture, construction and other labour intensive jobs in the entire northern belt of India hails from Bihar and this movie kind of tells you why. The social and economic divide in the country has compelled several film makers over the years to present their rendition of the story of exploitation and poverty and how feudal lords and powerful people have ruled the masses. Over the decades, the only thing which has changed is the nature and impact of this exploitation. The common man on the road is still struggling to find a voice and make him heard. However, what sets this film apart is that it sets itself in a time and place warp and doesn't attempt to outdo itself. The camerawork is low key and narration is documentary like and accentuated by strong performances throughout. The beauty of this movie rests in its mediocrity – depicting the situations and allowing

the viewer to make his own judgment. Another thing that probably works in this movie's favour is that the onus of carrying the story doesn't rest on the shoulders of a single actor but is shared throughout by its cast.[93]

Magazine *Sunday Observer* observes, that the insights are so acute and the technique so brilliant that there seems little doubt that Prakash Jha's Damul will rank among the best films ever made.[94] Similarly, *The Telegraph* states, Damul, may call forth an assortment of epithets, but few will contest that it is an outstanding film.[95] Whereas, *Amrit Bazar Patrika* wrote on Damul as a scathing exposure of social and economic realities with minute attention to detail of colour and sound, technique, acting, music giving it an extraordinary richness.[96]

The reason this movie is still very significant and appealing is because, though set in 1980s and involving characters struggling hard to make ends meet, the situation can be superimposed and still applied to present day living which is very deplorable. Thirty two years after its make, people are still struggling to fight the corruption stemming from politics and even today justice eludes those who can't pay for it.

4.4.27 Giddh / The Vulture (1984)

Director – T. S. Ranga **Production - Darpan Chitra**

Plot : The story is based on Devdasi system in India where lower caste young girls are married to God and are driven into practise of temple prostitution. The girls are booked by higer caste and affluent men and girls are conditioned to serve them. One such victim is Hanumiakka who tries to rescue a girl from this traditional exploit. However her attempt fails when the girl falls into the hands of city pimp Veerappan.[97]

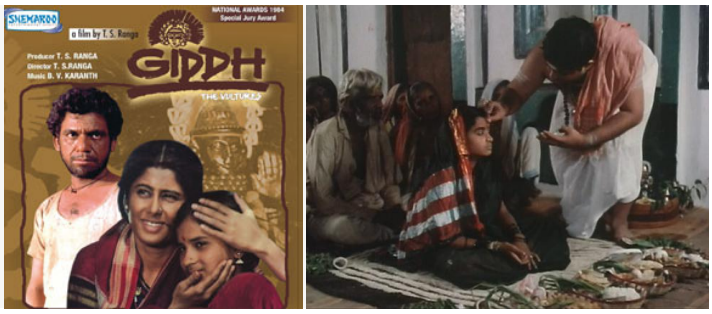


Figure 32 Giddh is the story of a lower caste community who make their daughters Devdasi and are put into prostitution. Ourtesy: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0260928/ ; Screen grab: Film Giddh.

Review : Giddh is considered a 'realistic film' that shows how poor villagers and young girls are exploited for religion and rituals. Their financial needs are satisfied by giving up their young daughters to money people for sexual pleasure and this all is sanctioned in the name of religion. The villagers are followers of goddess called *Yellamma* and there is a usual trend of woman becoming devdasi or servant of God. Poor villagers from lower caste community, vow to dedicate themselves, their spouses, or their children, especially the girl child to Goddess Yellamma. The custom is called in the movie as 'Moti bandhana' or tying of pearl necklace after the girl attains puberty tires of her. Girls are married to the God by the village priest and tuned into *devadasi*. Thus, fourteen or fifteen years old girls are sexually exploited by village headmen with power and money. After some years these girls are left off and driven into city prostitution by urban pimps. The story is of Hanumikka a devdasi and who has turned to prostitution when disowned by her master and lives in utter poverty. Basya is a pimp who helps with getting her some business to survive. Hanumiakka and Basya along with the school teacher are against the feudal lord and evil custom that prevail in the village. But as usual the feudal lord called *Dhani* or Master alias rich man uses his money and power to suppress them. In the beginning of the movie Landlord is seen warning the school master that he has become a frequent visitor to Harijan *basti* or ghetto and trying to bring social reform among them including devdasis. Landlord says they will never change.





Figure 33 Film shows a dead animal being carried by lower caste community and have a feast. Screen grab: Film Giddh.

Hanumiakka rescues Lakshmi and put her in a bus to Mumbai to her uncle. However lakshmi meets the city pimp Veerapan in the bus. The movie ends with the bus starts moving with the close up shot of blinking red light of the bus indicating the future of the girl travelling in it.[98] The film gives an elaborate picture of lower caste woman exploited in the name of religion and custom. They too resort and comply with it for the need of money and utter financial crisis. There is no trace of education or

scientific endeavour. In an instance when Hanumiakka falls ill she declines going to doctor and goes for village man who does *jhad phuk* or tantric rituals. An elderly *devdasi* considers this as a vicious circle never to end. Thus, women are considered as a source of income by her families and subject to sexual exploitation. The lower caste of the community is again projected by villagers carrying the carcass of a dead animal and having a feast.

The film represents a community of people those are oppressed and demeaned by the upper caste and class. However, the film voice a required change, suggest it should come from within the community and illustrate absolute violation of both human and civil rights. Thus Giddh constitute a fine example of 'ritualized prostitution' in India. The custom is explained by some women as 'men manipulating social customs and norms to suit their needs and entrap women'. Giddh did the university circuit in the United States and Germany. It was screened on Doordarshan and later on Sony Max.[99]

4.4.28 Ghulami (1985)

Director - J. P. Dutta **Production - Nadiadwala Films**

Plot : Ranjit Singh is the son of a peasant living in a village which is dominated by a rich landlord family. As a teenager studying in the village school, Ranjit is rebellious and defiant. He is bullied by the two sons of the landlord, who are of his own age. Two girls who also study in the same school are sympathetic to Ranjit. These are the daughter of the school-master and the daughter of the rich landlord. Sick of the exploitation he sees around him, Ranjit runs away to the city.

Several years later, Ranjit's father dies and a telegram summons Ranjit back to the village to perform the last rites. Ranjit returns, to find that nothing has changed in the village. He is also told that his father had taken loans from the landlord to pay for his medicines and healthcare, and that Ranjit now is required to repay those loans, or forfeit his lands and house, which was the collateral for the loan. Ranjit feels that this is a great injustice. His logic of reasoning is that the peasants have been tilling the land and working hard for many generations, that the landlord only owns the land and does not work, and therefore if the landlord has lent money to a peasant, the loan does

not need to be paid back. A long and emotional monologue delineates this logic for the benefit of the viewers.

The circumstances clearly call for class war and revolution, which Ranjit duly proceeds to ignite. He begins by storming into the landlord's living room, accusing him and his ancestors of being blood-suckers, and challenging him to take possession of the mortgaged land if he dares. The landlord's daughter, who listens from behind a door, is deeply impressed by the scene created by her old schoolmate. Ranjit then retires to his house to perform his father's funeral, and bonds with his other friend, the school-master's daughter. The stage is set for a love triangle and for a revolutionary vendetta.

The love-triangle is however solved very quickly. The landlord's sons make an attempt to rape the school-master's daughter. She is rescued by Ranjit, who then marries her because she clearly needs a protector, and her father is too old to defend her adequately. The disappointed Thakur's daughter then agrees to marry the police officer chosen by her father. She however carried her unrequited love in her heart, and her husband soon discovers that she had been in love with this other man. He is incensed and joins hands with his two evil brothers-in-law in their bid to finish Ranjit. When Bade Thakur's daughter Sumitra marries the police man a buffalo is slaughtered and left to rot in the community well thus poisoning the water and resulting in several deaths including the school master. By this time, after a random gunfight or two, once over the fact that the landlord's men were collecting their share of the harvest from the village peasants, Ranjit had become a fugitive from the law. Therefore, it is possible for the police office to go after him, beat him up in jail, and so on.

The rest of the movie comprises general bloodletting and defies description. Ranjit is supported in his vendetta a villager who has returned home after serving in the army Jabhar, and by the village policeman Gopidada, whose son had been murdered by the landlord's henchmen for daring to ride a horse on his wedding-day. The film ends with the slaughter of most of the protagonists on both sides. The violent climax underscores the harsh reality that the rebels always die, the cruel and unjust system does not.[100]

Review : This is one of these eye opener movies that show the ground reality of India. It shows the caste system and difference between poor and rich. The average

household isn't allowed to marry their children like the rich landlords. Most of the peasants in the rural region are poor and in order to fulfil their requirements they need money from the money lender. These money lenders take their farm land as a guarantee and after sometime they capture their land. Ranjit the protagonist in the film is a low caste person represents the feeling of the young generation, whose ancestral land has been taken away by the rich zamindar or landlord. He is a teacher who turns into a bandit for the cause of masses, along with his friend Jabbar and Hawaldar whose son is killed by the rich landlord.[101] Thus, film gives the story of a lower caste person exploited and repressed by the feudal lord. This suppression leads to rebellion and the lower caste person taking law in his own hands and doing justice that is otherwise denied. The film shows a lower caste person finally relieving the villager from the clutches of the landlord. However, this is shown to have become possible only after he changes his moral and principle minded ways as a teacher to an anti-law bandit. The justice is shown to have gained through violence but finally ends into the destruction of the protagonist himself.

4.4.29 Chameli Ki Shadi (1986)

Director - Basu Chaterjee **Production - Prakash Mehra Productions**

Plot : Charandas lives a poor lifestyle in a small town in India along with his older brother, Bhajandas, and Bhabhi. He is unemployed and commits himself to be a wrestler with Ustad Mastram Pahelwan, who gets him to promise to be celibate until he is 40 years of age. But when Charandas meets with a school student, Chameli, the daughter of a low-caste Coal merchant, both fall head-over-heels in love with each other, go on dates, exchange love letters, much to the chagrin of Chameli's father, Kallumal, who has plans to be the next Municipal Chairman, and mother Champa, who decide to enlist the help of Champa's brother, Chaganlal, as well as arrange Chameli's marriage with Advocate Makhan, the son of Lachuram, who is of their caste. As events hilarious spiral out of control, Charandas must now decide whether he prefers to be known as the semi-senile lover, Majnu, or as Prithviraj Chauhan, who dared to abduct his future wife, amidst stiff all-round opposition.

Review : *Chameli ki Shaadi* is a commercial film and revolves round the story of two lovers Chameli and Charandas from different castes. The parents of the girl wishes to marry her in their own community commonly referred to as *Jaat Biradri* in the movie.

The girl's father is appointed as a treasurer by his community *Panchayat* or assembly of prominent five and so finds it more obligating to get his daughter marry in their own community. The girl however is in love with a boy who is supposedly from a higher caste. This is reflected through Charandas' elder brother referring to Chameli's father as *chote log* or 'lower people' and this statement is not made in economic sense.

The couple's secret love is revealed by a community member of girl's father called Natthilal who becomes self assigned protector of caste honour. The family of the girl is upset and locks her up and her notorious uncle is called who exclaims to murder Charandas. The entire scenario is shown comical. This love story has an intelligent lawyer character the one who believes in true spirit of love and helps the couple to unite. He gives Charandas example from history such as love between Prithviraj and Samyukta and how they eloped. Charandas too does the same thing and their marriage is arranged by the lawyer. The lawyer explains to them that they have set a fine example of annihilating caste difference and India that faces a prominent issue of caste distinction require such things to happen. The film shows that community members from both sides come to protest and take violent action against this marriage.



Figure 34 Both girl's and boy's side relatives try to stop maarrige by making it a question of community's and caste's honour issue. They however are beaten up instead by supportive group. Screen grabs : Film Chameli Ki Shadi.

However the clever lawyer tricks both sides where he assures Chameli's father of his electoral successes because this marriage and boy's side about the professional benefits they will reap due to this alliance. Chameli's father Kallumal is overwhelmed thinking about his future of bright political career and lawyer on his behalf declares award of Rs.25000/- (Rupees Twenty Five thousand) for couple who will have inter caste marriage. And everybody applauds that shows the societal acceptance.



Figure 35 Lovers from two different castes get married and set an example for inter-caste marriage. Screen grab : Chameli Ki Shadi.

The film makes reference to Indira Gandhi's programme to educate girls and empower them and necessary products being subsidised and sold at 'controlled rate'. However, the base of the film is to support and encourage inter-caste marriage. Today, many States in India have declared award for couple having inter-caste marriage and this is well pronounced in the film of 1986. The award ironically is shown as a political move for gaining public support to Chameli's father in upcoming elections. Thus, film significantly reflects the changing trends of society through inter caste marriages and how it may lessen the problem of dowry and class distinction.

4.4.30 Tamas / Darkness (1988)

Director - Govind Nahlani Production- Doordarshan, Government of India

Plot : Nathu , an innocent low caste Chamar or a tanner, is finishing his work in his shop when the thekedar or a contractor walks in and asks him to entice a pig from a nearby piggery into his shop and kill it for the Veterinary doctor who needs it for medical purposes. Nathu tries to decline saying he has never killed a pig before and doesn't have the necessary skill for it, offering instead to tan the hide if required provided the people from the piggery kill it. Thekedar insists that he wants Nathu to do it and gives him five rupees for it and leaves the shop saying that the work must be done by morning when the Jamadar will come to take the carcass.



Figure 36 The story of India Pakistan partition through the eyes of a lower caste. The film begins with a lower caste tanner tricked into killing a pig which results in deadly Hindu – Muslim riots. Screen grab : Tamaas.

Early next morning Bakshiji and a few other members of the Congress party gather at the Congress office and march out for cleaning the drains in a Muslim *mohalla* or area for propaganda, singing patriotic songs. Initially they're received at

the *mohalla* warmly and are joined in by the residents in cleaning the drains. Later they are confronted by an old Muslim and asked to leave for their own good. Soon stones fly at the party members from neighboring houses and they flee the scene. Party members soon discover that someone has thrown a pig carcass at the steps of a mosque.

Fearing unrest in the community Bakshiji and Hayat Baksh, the spokesman of the Muslim League, visit the Deputy Commissioner Richard at his house and urge him to take preemptive measures to bring the situation under control. Richard declines the suggestions of Bakshiji and Hayat Baksh to deploy police or impose a curfew and instead tells the party members to urge their respective communities to maintain peace and order.

Nathu having seen the pig carcass at the mosque and having witnessed slight unrest in people wonders whether it was the same pig he had killed the previous night. While returning home in the evening he stops for a couple of drinks and sees the thekedar in the street. Nathu runs after him trying to talk to him but the thekedar ignores him completely and rushes off hurriedly. Now sure that it was the same pig, Nathu feels terribly guilty and goes home and confesses it all to his pregnant wife Kammo. Outside at a distance they see burning houses and Nathu blames himself for the erupting communal violence. Nathu decides to leave his house and go to another city with his wife and mother. They start off on foot, Nathu carrying his old cripple mother on his back. During the travel Nathu's mother dies and has to be burned in the forest without proper funeral rites which further devastates the conscience-stricken Nathu who in his naivety holds himself responsible for the holocaust.

In another nearby village Harnam Singh and his wife Banto, being the only Sikh family in the village, decide to leave their house and a small tea stall and go to their daughter Jasbir's house where they have a substantial Sikh community. As soon as they leave, their tea stall and house are plundered and robbed by a Muslim mob. They travel on foot all night and the next morning reach a village and knock a door seeking shelter. The house belongs to a Muslim, Ehsan Ali, who has been a friend of Harnam Singh since long. Harnam Singh and Banto hide at the house during the day, but at night are discovered by Ehsan's son and are asked to leave immediately. On their way the next morning they meet Nathu and his wife in the forest and they all go together to a gurudwara, place of worship of Sikh community where Jasbir and several other Sikhs have taken shelter.

At the gurudwara Teja Singh, the leader of the Sikh council, informs the Sikhs that Muslims are continually collecting arms and hence they should do the same for their own protection. Later that night a junior granthi comes to the Gurudwara and informs Teja Singh that the Muslims realizing that the Sikhs are outnumbered and not sufficiently armed have asked for two lakh rupees for truce. Teja Singh and the Sikh council deem the amount too much and send the granthi and Nathu to negotiate with the Muslims. Teja Singh and the council members watch from the terrace of the gurudwara as Nathu and the granthi are approached by the Muslim mob, surrounded and attacked. Sikhs enraged by this take up arms and go out to fight shouting Sikh slogans. Back at the gurudwara Jasbir leads all the Sikh women to a collective suicide by jumping into a well, some with their children in their arms.

Richard is later shown addressing prominent figures of the city where he informs the gathering about the relief measures taken by the government and proposes the leaders to form an Aman Committee to send out a message of peace. Bakshiji, Hayat Baksh and Jyot Singh from Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee are made the vice presidents of Aman Committee. At the conclusion of the meeting the Aman Committee members decide to go and visit the refugee camp. A bus has been provided by the government for this and as it arrives we see the thekedar seated by the driver and shouting communal harmony slogans.

Harnam Singh, Banto and Kammo are at the refugee camp. Harnam Singh requests a government employee to help find Nathu who hasn't been seen since he went with the junior granthi for negotiating with the Muslims. The employee suggests they inquire at the hospital tent where he might've been admitted had he been found in the city. Kammo looks through the dead bodies lying in a row on the ground and identifying Nathu's dead body among them she collapses. She goes into labor immediately and is taken into the hospital tent by nurses. Harnam Singh and Banto sitting outside the tent hear the newborn's cries from inside the tent mixed admist ‘Allahu Akbar’ and ‘Har Har Mahadev’ coming from a distance.[102]

Review : Tamas is a 1988 period film made for Doordarshan channel, written and directed by Govind Nihalani. It is based on the Hindi novel of the same name by Bhisham Sahni (1974), which won the author the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975. Set in the backdrop of riot-stricken Pakistan at the time of Partition of India in 1947, the film deals with the plight of emigrant Sikh and Hindu families to India as a

consequence of the partition. It was first shown on India's national broadcaster Doordarshan as a mini-series and later as a one-off four-hour-long feature film. At the 35th National Film Awards, it won three awards including the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration. In August 2013, it was shown on History TV18 as a series.[103]

Tamas basically is a film that sees partition of India and Pakistan through low caste Hindu's eyes. The story begins with exploitation of a lower caste's innocence or rather ignorance which culminates into communal crisis. The story involves Hindu, Muslim and Sikh characters but the protagonist is a Dalit tanner. The entire episode of communal violence, barbaric massacre and exodus are marked with action of a low born chammar but a Hindu, who alone would touch, kill a pig that otherwise is taboo for both Muslims and higher caste Hindus.

4.4.31 Jag Utha Insan (1984)

Director - K Vishwanath **Production - Film Kraft**

Plot : Sandhya belongs to a Brahmin family and is in love with Hari who belongs to lower caste community. They have artistic bonding. Sandhya is however married to Nandu from her own community. Nandu is unable to accept his wife and soon comes to know about her affection towards Hari. Nandu convinces Sandhya's family and decides to unite them. However, upper caste villagers strongly object to this union and attack hari. Hari gets fatally injured and dies, whereas Sandhya dies of shock.[104]



Figure 37 The story revolves round love between a Harijan boy who is a flutist and a Brahmin girl a classical dancer. Screen grab: Film Jaag Utha Insan.

Review: The story begins with establishing contextual relations between the protagonists's Hari Mohan who is shown to be a Harijan and the name Hari of Lord Krishan, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Hari Mohan is an excellent flute player and is referred to movie that no one can be of any match to him but the lord himself. The film extensively deals with caste system and has many incidents that strongly reflect

the evil practise of untouchability. The female lead belongs to high Brahmin caste and is in love with the Harijan Hari Mohan a flutist. This reminds us of Harijans being having the artistic quality as mentioned in *Natyashatra* and discussed in **Chapter 2**.

The very first incident of caste discrimination is shown in the village temple where an untouchable widow comes there with a sick child and wishes to offer a coconut so that her child recovers. When a high caste man assuming himself as a custodian of Hindu religion and faith, accidently touches her shawl becomes very angry and starts cursing her. He begins to shouts that now he will have to take four times bath in river Ganges and keep fast for three days as penance and purification. The assistant priest or pujari Nandu who is a pious and kind hearted man disregards all this and blesses the child by touching him. A Brahmin boy standing and watching this incident says to pujari that now that he has touched a Harijan child Pujari will go to hell, he has become impure. When Pujari questions him that who told you this, the boy replies that this has come down to him through generations. Thus this reflects how strongly caste system is deeply rooted in the society and the way this feeling of discrimination is passed from one person to another.



Figure 38 The film begins with an issue of a Harijan widow trying to offer prayers to God and how she is insulted. The priest however helps her with ritual which is disliked by a Brahmin boy.

Screen grab : Film Jag Utha Insan.

Unfortunately Sandhya's courtship with Hari Mohan doesn't last long and her grandfather fixes her marriage with the temple priest Nandu. Sandhya cannot publicly accept her love for Hari Mohan and he too advises her to marry the priest as she belongs to upper caste Brahmin community. He explains to her that, if they elope there is no such place where their caste status will be accepted. They will have to live a life in disguise. She will have to call herself a Harijan or he will have to lie that he is a Brahmin. And the day everone will find out, he just won't be beaten but burnt alive. They can't live an untruthful life. Similarly, Hari says he is not the only Harijan or she is not the only Brahmin who has fallen in love. This will give rise to riots. This is a long social struggle and there is no compromise seen. There will either be victory or defeat. He suggests her to marry the priest and asks her to preach her children that

there is no pride in being born as Brahmin rather one should be Brahmin by his deeds.[105]

Sandhya recalls the past when they had met and remember the caste related incident. A shepherd boy who is an untouchable tries to learn flute again indicating towards Lord Krishna. He becomes a link between Hari Mohan and Sandhya but Sandhya is unaware of Hari's caste status. They get attracted to each other for the love and appreciation of art. One day the small boy is badly beaten up by the villagers for he has touched and tried to drink water from their tank. Hari arrives at the scene and questions them 'what is the caste of the water?'. Villagers pick up violent fight with Hari. When Sandhya comes to the scene Hari asks her to explain that how does water become impure when someone touches it and informs her that he is a Harijan. Sandhya is taken aback and she couldn't believe it's true at the beginning. However, she realises that she has already fallen in love with Hari.

Hari says that he is not ashamed of his Harijan identity. The creator must feel ashamed for making him a Harijan, the society must be ashamed for making him a Harijan. He narrates his childhood incident to Sandhya. He says he developed keen interest in studying Vedas and being a Harijan was certainly prohibited from learning the script. He therefore pretended to be a Brahmin, steals a holy thread called *janua* and mixed with other Brahmin students. He began to learn Vedas and consequently became the favourite student of his teacher. When one day his true identity got revealed he was badly beaten up and thrown out of temple ashram. As a punishment he was burnt with an iron string on chest making a mark like that of holy thread. Hari sardonically says that burn mark made him Brahmin for rest of his life. Thus Hari shares his traumatic casteist past and illustrates the humiliations inflicted by upper caste on lower people.



Figure 39 A Harijan boy gets interested in learning scriptures and secretly joins the group by stealing the holy thread. He gets caught that he is a lower caste. Screen grab: Jaag Utha Insan.



Figure 40 The boy is thrown out of the temple ashram and punished with burning an iron thread on his chest. Screen grab: Jaag Utha Insan.

Hari says that his affection for Sandhya is bonding of two artists and art has no religion. In another scene Sandhaya imagines that when her father will come to know about their relationship he will get him hanged and beaten up the way a Harijan will be treated to fall in love with a high caste Brahmin girl. Sandhya under pressure married Nandu and another symbolism of Rama a justice giver, *maryada purshottam,* likely meaning upholder of Dharma. After marriage Nandu begin to see Goddess in Sandhya and do not consummate their marraige. Later, when he comes to know about Hari and Sandhya's love relations, he decides to bring them together. The family objects on a Brahmin girl marrying into the house of Shudra but he debates their argument. Nandu the preist questions, "Who are Shudra? We all are Shudras." Nandu's brother supports him and quotes Manusmriti and says, everyone is born Shudra they become Brahmin with their Karma, that is their actions. Nandu gives example of Vishwamitra who was a Shudra and became a Brahmin Rishi with his karma or deeds. Nandu asserts that all are humans and humanity are to be celebrated as defined in Dharma. Sandhya's grandfather agrees with his views and decides to break the strict societal rules and allows her to go with Hari.

However villagers become very furious and decide to execute Hari. A big fight arises and Nandu and Hari are badly beaten up for protecting religion. Meanwhile a villager hardly hits Hari on head and he falls dead on ground chanting verses from Vedas. Sandhya is shocked and dies. Her corpse falls inside the temple whereas dead Hari lies outside the temple. Nandu exclaims to the villagers, now that both are dead, they should now procure Brahmin wood and Shudra wood to burn them. While doing this they should ask trees their caste, they should ask soil its caste where the ashes of these two will fall on, and they should ask the river its caste where finally their ashes will be immersed. Nandu says that all these natural elements will reply that they are Brahma's creation and have no caste. Thus, a reference to pre-Vedic age is made where nature was worshiped and caste system in its repulsive form was yet to transform.

The child who was shown in the beginning of the movie defending caste system due to his ancestral knowledge comes next to Hari, sits near the shepherd untouchable boy and begins to wiping Hari's blood. The film concludes with the narrator's commentary 'This is a symbol of false barriers of caste system been broken. From the sky and earth only one echo will be heard – *Jag Utha Insan*, the individual has woke up!'. The film makes a strong comment on caste system, humanism and ends with a subtle rebellion.

4.4.32 Tere Naam Mere Naam (1988)

Director - Ramesh Talwar **Production - Talwar Films**

Plot : The film has two heroes a Brahmin Agnihotri and a scheduled caste Parmar. Agnihotri, the Brahmin boy is shown arguing in favour of caste based reservation in India. Both were from middle class families and are unemployed. There is discussion on reservation policy and job opportunitiese available in India to the unemployed youths.[106]

Review : The film is a breezy entertainer, like films from the commercial stream. Yet it deals with the serious subject of caste reservations and suggests an affirmative action. Ravi Parmar a handsome youth belongs to a scheduled caste. He is shown happy man where as his friend Agnihotri, from higher caste is shown to be a serious student. Parmar spends his time watching television and flirting around. However, he fairs well in exam than the Brahmin boy Agnihotri. Both characters are given good roles and there is a discussion on reservation policy in India. The caste related subject does not constitute main part of the story and is a thought presented. Later, it is the scheduled caste Parmar who is shown to be getting the main heroine, Ms. Sharma from a higher caste.[107]

4.4.33 Mahayatra / The Voyage beyond (1989)

Director - Gautam Ghosh **Producer – Angel Digital**

Plot : The story revolves round the practice of Sati and financial exploitation by upper caste community. Very elderly Brahmin man Shankarnarayan is on his death bed and gets married to young and poor girl Yashumati from his own caste. She is supposed to go sati along with Shankarnarayan after his death. Yashumati at the funeral ground

meets chandal a lower caste who burn the deads. They develop intimacy and finally gets drown in over flooded river.[108]

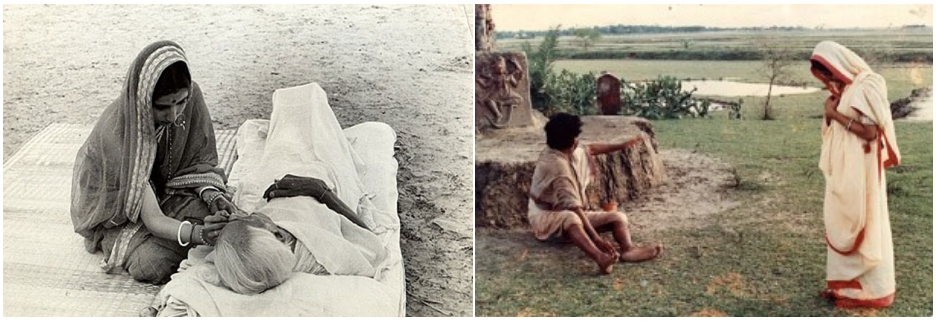


Figure 41 Mahayatra shows a high caste newly married girl ready to go Sati on the pyre of dying old husband. She comes in contact with a Dom a lower caste who will set that pyre. Courtesy: https://www.arthousecinema.in/2014/06/ antarjali-jatra-1987/. Accessed : 16 February 2016.

Review : Antarjali Jatra or Mahayatra is based on novel written by Kamal Kumar Majumdar. The film received National award and was screened at Cannes Film Festival. The film shows evil of Sati practice and economic exploitation of poor people in the name of caste rituals and religion. The film display confrontation between social stigma and human feelings.

The film's end sums up a major controversy surrounding Ghosh's filming of a difficult text. Yashobati's death, which in effect constitutes the act of sati, is shown as a combination of accident and desire, further contrasting her 'holy' condition with Baiju's tradition less bestialise. Much of this is revealed in the original novel through broken syntax, interior monologue and a dense, graphic style of disjointed phrases, from which Ghosh assembled something like a coherent story.[109] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1992) contrasts the book with the film, suggests that Majumdar's novel 'takes as understood a fully formed ideological subject, a question that can only be asked by us, as Hindus, of ourselves. This text is exactly not for the outsider who wants to enter with nothing but general knowledge, to have her ignorance sanctioned'. [110]

The film was almost going to be banned had not film maker Satyajit Ray had not intervened. Just after Ghosh has finished shooting, Roop Kanwar's self immolation (Sati) controversy shook the nation. It became a very sensitive issue. When the film went for certification, the board apparently developed cold feet. The film maker recollects that a select preview of the film had been held at Nandan, which included Satyajit Ray, Salil Chowdhary, Tapan Sinha and others. The day censor controversy broke out; all of them gave their statements in favour of the film. That

worked and a fresh preview was arranged for Central Board of Film Certification and film was given U/A certification. Also, though based on a novel, a disclaimer had to be added that it wasn't based on any real-life event.[111]

4.4 Caste System and Hindi films post independent India (1991 – 2013)

The post 1990s films represent caste system in different forms, such as through bio-pics, real life incidences and current state of caste discrimination in India. The films are based on modern day politics of reservation and vote bank, atrocities on woman and their fight for justice, honour killings in India and going back into the historical period to address the issues such as high caste widows, lower caste women as *Rudalis* and so on.

4.4.34 Diksha (1991)

Director - Arun Kaul Producer - National Film Development Corporation.

Plot : Circa British Rule in India, a man vows to make his only surviving son, Narayan, alias Nani, a Brahmachari to atone for the deaths of five of his children. He takes this child to a remote village in Karnataka, South India, where he leaves his eleven year old son in the care of a learned Archarya, Udup Pandit. Here Nani gets to meet two other disciples of the Archarya, as well as his widowed daughter, Yamuna, and another male by the name of Shrikar Upadhyay, who also teaches the British how to read and write in Hindi. The Archarya goes away for a few days, and when he returns nothing is the same anymore. His daughter is pregnant and the villagers are all set to remove her from the village, they are also angry with him for refusing Yamuna to follow the traditional way of a Hindu widow. The Archarya must now find out who impregnated his daughter - whether it was one of his two young disciples; an untouchable male named Koga. The Archarya must also decide what is to be done with Yamuna as it is up to him now to decide her fate, not that he has many choices - for the prescribed Hindu punishment for this is death.[112]

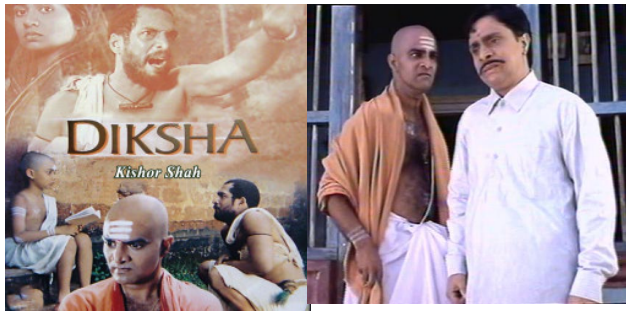


Figure 42 Film narrates a story of the widow, a

daughter of a high caste priest who becomes pregnant and related social problem. Courtesy: http://parallelcinema.blogspot.com/2005/11/ dikshainitiation-1991.html. Accessed : 26 November 2016.

Review : *Diksha*, a film directed by Arun Kaul, based on a story by eminent Kannada litterateur U.R. Ananthamurty, and explores the traditional Brahmin culture. The movie portrays how some acts in society are considered 'sacred and profane'. Koga is a servant, an untouchable who does many works at the ashram. He gets all the left-over food to eat. He becomes a good friend of who comes to the hermit for becoming a priest. In one scene, the little boy insists to touch Koga, but Koga refuses saying that if you touch me, you will become unholy. Nanni insists to touch him and nears towards Koga, Koga in response climbs a coconut tree and shifts to other trees and finally climbs down and runs away. Koga learns to chant the sacred scripts by coming near to the Ashram and listening to Upadhaya's chanting.[113]



Figure 43 The lower caste Koga who defends the high Priest's daughter and reminds him of his responsibility as a father. Courtesy : http://www.rediff.com/movies/report/i-am-a-better-cook-than-actor-nana-patekar/20150227.htm. Accessed : 28 November 2016.

After Acharya goes away for a few days, the entire scene changes in the village. Yamuna, who is a widow, becomes pregnant after seduced by a local teacher and the villagers come to know about it. They want to remove her from the village. The lover is timid and refrains from taking responsibility, thus insists her to go for abortion. Yamuna and her partner plan for an abortion. She goes to a Shudra's home, accompanied by young Narayan at night and abortion is performed. The little boy waits for Yamuna outside the house till morning. Meanwhile, the school teacher leaves the village in fear.

Acharya returns, highly tensed and downfallen. Koga speaks to Acharya. But Acharya, does not take him seriously. Koga furiously shows his anger and says what

kind of Brahmin you are. Koga chants many shlokas or religious verses, which he has secretly learnt at the Ashram. He loudly recites and reminds Acharya of one of the shlokas namely, "...*Brahman woh... Jeetendriya Dharmaparah... Swadhaaya Nirata Suchi...Kamakodou..Wasouwatsiya...Kamdevou....Brahamanam, Vidhu...Brahmana Brahmana...natatou mata...*", meaning 'I was able to save your daughter from forest, snakes and wild animals but was not able to save from Brahmins'. He questions Acharya, "What is the purpose of being a perfect Brahmin when he had failed to be a good father?". The low caste Koga recites the *shlokas* or religious hymns better than the Acharya's students, signifying that recitation of *shlokas* is nothing but a thing of practice and it's not something that only a Brahmin is able to do. It also shows that there is nothing like caste based intellect. Koga begins to find all this hypocrite and start consuming wine and non-vegetarian food. His age old faith in following of caste system and the virtuousness of Brahmin is lost.

The film represents conflict between spirit of humanism and following of strict social norms especially in Brahmin culture. Narayan is taken back from the Ashram by his father back home. Finally, the Acharya agrees to declare that Yamuna is not his daughter anymore and considers her as dead. He chants verses offered for dead person and performs her last rites called *Shraddha* while she is still alive and caste system overshadows humanism. His Brahmin identity triumphs over his fatherhood.



Figure 44 The high Priest punishes his daughter by considering her as dead inspite of her being alive and performs her *Shraddha* or last rite. The girl is sent into absolute seclusion and is out-casted. Screen grab : Film Diksha.

The film shows stringent casteism being followed, and duty towards the society is preferred. The film also makes one realise the great work of Jotirao Phule

for higher caste widows who had no shelter if cheated by man or any shelter for them and their child.

4.4.35 Antarnad / The Inner Voice (1991)

Director - Shyam Benegal **Production - Suhetu Films.**

Plot : The story is based on Swadhyayis or self preachers who intend to transform lives of villagers for betterment. The plot revolves round a Swadhyayi Arvind who along with his wife Ragini tries to bring good change.

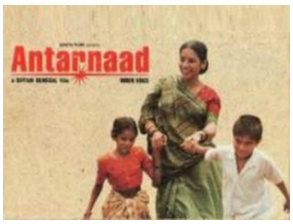


Figure 45 Film Poster of Antarnad. A story of empowerment of lower castes in India. Courtesy : https://in.bookmyshow.com/person/shabana-azmi/2087/filmography. Accessed : 26 November 2016.

Arvind makes regular visits to neighbouring villages with his friends. The childless Ragini is harassed by her mother-in-law and so she spends time with women's group in the village. Arvind tells her of his plan to visit notorious village of Neemda which is ruled by bandits. Ranchod and Tilu are the notorious bandits who are shown looting wedding family wedding. Tilu gets killed during the loot and his widowed wife Hansa vows to make their son avenge her husband's death. In another village Kanakvada the process of conversion to Swadhyaya has already begun among the fisher-folk. The two principal obstacles are wealthy smuggler Arjun and fish merchant Shiva.

Review : Intrigued with the rapidly spreading Swadhyaya movement Shyam Benegal along with his writer Shama Zaidi, spent months around the villages on the Gujarat coastline. Swadhyaya is the study of self. In the late 1950s a person of faith Pandit Pandurang Shastri Athavale sought to use Bhakti or devotion as an active principle in the transformation of both individual and society. Athavle along with his friends visited many villages and called it Bhakti Pheri raising the self-confidence of low-caste villagers in particular fisher folks particularly known as *koli* or *dhimar* in Maharashtra. In due time these villages showed profound social and economic

changes. The villagers created a working concept of impersonal wealth. By the 1990s this work had grown to become a silent revolution embracing 15,000 villages and five million people who are part of Swadhyaya family. Motivated by this people's movements Benegal made his film Antarnaad on the basis of what he saw, heard and researched. The story received itself to docudrama treatment. Amid a congregation of Swadhyayis, Arvind is shown urging the people to become self-reliant. The low caste Shiva is persuaded to give up alcohol. The film ends in Aurangabad where five million Swadhyayis gather to celebrate their faith. Ragini who too has overcome stigmatisation because of her sterility overcomes her self- conflict put forth a question before newest convert that, 'If God is with me, then why the question of high and low caste or of feeling inferior?' The film borders very close to the chronicling of an historical movement. The film was funded by fishing community and propagates humanitarian values.[114]

4.4.36 Rudaali (1993)

Director - Kalpana Lajmi

Production - National Film Development Corporation

Plot : Rudali is a story of a woman named Shanichari belonging to lower caste community. She lives with her son Budhwa and is liked by local landlord's son Lakshman Singh. Shanichari has many tragedies befalling her but never sheds tears. One day, she meets Bhikni who is a Rudaali or professional mourner. After Bhikni leaves the village Shanichari receives the news that Bhikni is dead and has given a message before she dies that she infact was her mother Peewli and did not disclose her identity to Shanichari. Shanichari gets totally devastated. There comes the news of Thakur's death and Shanichari loudly cries her heart out only later to become a renowned Rudaali.

Review : Rudali, a custom of professional mourning prevalent among the lower caste women of rural Rajasthan for the deceased males of the upper castes, is a culture which can be regarded as a site of contestation where gender, class, caste and economic status are intertwined. This culture of publicly expressing essentially private emotional experiences - grieving and crying - is rarely considered as a creative practice. Abject poverty and social oppression drive these women to such a dehumanised state that they become compelled to earn their living by displaying their

heart-wrenching sorrow in the service of the wealthy upper castes that can, as it were, purchase their tears. This practice can be read as the gendering of the bodily space and site that serves the purpose of patriarchal hegemony called *Niranjana*. The complexity of this issue of exploitation of private emotions and turning those into saleable commodities has been poignantly handled by Mahasweta Devi and Kalpana Lajmi in the short fiction and film bearing the same title *Rudali / Rudaali*. Both the writer and the film director have shown passionate commitment in their exposure of the social injustices and exploitations through their creative works. Mahasweta Devi strongly believes that 'social injustice, communal discord and evil customs' should be the 'material'.[115]



Figure 46 Left: Hut of a lower caste in Rajasthan. Right : Real life Rudalis. Courtesy : http://www.talkativeman.com/category/travels-and-journeys/page/3/. Accessed : 26 November 2016.

Kalpana Lajmi's handling of Mahasweta Devi's text in her film adaptation is marked by major departures like the portrayal of an alcoholic husband of Sanichari in place of the supportive one delineated by Mahasweta Devi. Lajmi's primary focus is on Sanichari while Mahasweta Devi insisted on the portrayal of the community as a whole. Again, Laxman Singh has been projected by Lajmi as much progressive thus leading to a development of an emotional relationship with Sanichari, no trace of which can be found in Mahasweta Devi's writing. When asked by Sanichari about her secret of instantly shedding tears as a rudali performer, Bikhni divulges her secret of a kajal-like substance which creates a burning sensation and thus brings out tears. This addition of Lajmi is brilliant to show the thoroughly professional attitude of rudalis like Bikhni. While Mahasweta Devi's Bikhni inspires Sanichari to perform along with her, Lajmi turns Bikhni into the estranged mother of Sanichari, the death news of whom brings tears in the eyes of Sanichari for the first time. She cries vehemently giving expression to all the pent up feelings of suppression and exploitation she had been a victim of throughout her life. This cry has a cathartic effect on her and finally she gains in strength and self-determination to adopt the role of rudali.

Mahasweta Devi's primary focus is the portrayal of the community life of 'ganjus and dushads' who form the majority in Tahad village. But ironically this majority is pushed to the margin by the malik mahajans who have 'elephants, horses, livestock, illegitimate children, kept women, venereal disease and a philosophy that he who owns the gun owns the land'. The movie begins with a priest performing Puja for donation of calf or Gaudaan by the old Thakur, where it establishes the higher caste status and class of the Thakur family. This is in sharp opposition to the lives of the lower castes who inhabit 'decrepit mud huts roofed with battered earthen tiles'. Mahasweta Devi stresses on the exploitation of an entire community and does not make any effort to individuate Sanichari, around whom the story revolves. She is introduced not through any personal details but by her caste: 'Sanichari was a ganju by caste'. This caste discrimination is so very much rooted in their daily drudgery that they genuinely believe that certain diseases are meant for the lower castes: '… I heard that the upper castes never got smallpox? That it was a disease of the poor and lower castes'. Again, this caste-system is fraught with gender issue since prostitutes are considered to be a 'separate caste'.[116]



Figure 47 Dimple Kapadia as Rudali a lower caste of mourners. Screen grab : Film Rudali.

The death of the rich is fraught with other social complexities pertaining to the domination of the lower castes. *Rudali* effectively explores nexus between Hindu religious customs, profession, caste, class, gender and livelihood. The reason for the emergence of the tradition of Rudali is commented as, 'Amongst us, when someone dies, we all mourn. Amongst the rich, family members are too busy trying to find the keys to the safe. They forget all about tears'. In order to conceal the family rivalry and the revelation of vested interest, the Mahajans always make death a grand affair full of pomp and splendour: '… the amount of money spent on the death ceremonies immediately raised the prestige of the family' The prestige is further enhanced by the number of rudalis that can be arranged at the funerals who mourn at the death of their oppressor and earn their living. The mahajans who kick and beat the lower castes with slippers do not hesitate to give 'money, rice', 'clothes and food' to the rudalis for whom professional mourning is a regular business. When Sanichari is asked to

perform as a rudali and she hesitates because she could never shed tears even at the death of her son. Finally she agrees and pour her heart out through crying. The profession is given respect for that particular time where as there is no sexual exploitation. So it is a professional performance for those women who have 'nothing to sell but their howls'. However, this profession doesn't earn enough to bring financial empowerment. But, it is because wailing, for these rudalis, involve a public space, shorn of all emotions. They are conscious that this is the only time that they can negotiate with upper caste patriarchy according to their own terms and conditions - 'Just for wailing, one kind of rate. Wailing and rolling on the ground, five rupees one sikka. Wailing, rolling on the ground and beating one's head, five rupees two sikkas. Wailing and beating one's breast, accompanying the corpse to the cremation ground, rolling around on the ground there – for that the charge is six rupees'.[117]

At the end Sanichari discovers the meaning of life and discovers the means of survival through crying for the dead. She turns into a professional rudali and adopts the profession so thoroughly that she does not even hesitate to use saliva in place of tears during her performance. Hence, the voice of the margin cannot be suppressed; rather its voice of wailing can be read as an agency of subversion of the class, caste and gender atrocities hurled by the centre at it.[118] On the similar lines one may observe in this film a suggestive romance between the higher caste Thakur with divine status and lower caste Shanichari and no offence is found.

Kalpana Lajmi's Rudaali is considered to be a milestone in the career of glamorous actor Dimple Kapadia. Dimple played Shanichari, a woman who has never cried despite a sad life but is compelled to weep for a living. It won her the National Award for best Female actor. "I was proud; I'd proved that an actress from mainstream cinema could win an award," she told *Filmfare* in October 1993.[119] *Rudali* thus is a cinematic experience of the life of a traditional mourner whose past is shown to be such great tragedy that nothing hurts her more and brings tear in her eyes. Her caste gives her profession for survival and later achieves solace in wailing her grief out.

4.4.37 Bandit Queen (1994)

Director - Shekhar Kapur

Production - Channel Four Films and Ka. Lei. Do. Scope

Plot : The story is a biographical sketch of Phoolan Devi a lower caste Mallah woman who turned into a bandit. Phoolan is married at age of eleven to a much elder man and later abandoned by her husband when she resists his advances. She turns into a social outcast and later is gang-raped by the upper-caste men of Behmai village. She takes her revenge by organizing a massacre in the same village that leaves twenty upper caste Thakur dead. Devi ultimately leads a band of latter-day Robin Hoods on bold raids against landowners in Central India during the late 70s and early 80s, often taking their spoils and redistributing them to poor tenant farmers. By the time she is arrested in 1983, Devi has become a folk hero, especially to the women who live in rural India's brutally patriarchal society.[120]



Figure 48 *Bandit Queen* a story of a lower caste woman turned bandit and avenged her insult. Screen grab : Film Courtesy : Bandit Queen, https://www.amazon.com/Bandit-Queen-POSTER-27-40/dp/B01LXL7Q12. Accessed : 26 November 2016.

Review – Bandit Queen is a full-fledged commercial production handsomely produced and directed by talented Indian filmmaker Shekhar Kapur. The film details the hardships that Phoolan faced in her youth as a female member of a lower caste. Subject to sexual abuse at the hands of numerous men, Phoolan isn't treated with respect until she falls in with a gang led by Vikram Mallah. Later, Phoolan forms her own gang and gains a remarkable level of notoriety across India.[121] Bandit Queen painfully exposes a controversial aspect of Indian culture, while providing a triumphant portrait of female empowerment.

Bandit Queen an Indian biographical film based on the life of bandit Phoolan Devi. The film portrays an unusual is the bitter indictment of Indian society, its sexism, and the caste system. Men in the movie seem to regard all women as potential temptresses, and when a man rapes Devi his defence is that "she said she was itching

for it." The movie has been directed by Shekhar Kapur with unflinching realism, and the occasional touch of sad poetry, as when the gang rape of Devi is accompanied by the sound of the door to the room, creaking again and again as men enter and leave. As we watch Devi surrender to the state governor as thousands chant her name, we react not only to her fame but to their joy that a lower-caste illiterate village woman was able to live her life freely and independently. That she was a criminal is almost beside the point, in a society whose rules are themselves a crime against women.[122] The Gaurdian aptly reviewing the movie stated, 'She was a warrior queen who rallied men into battle and won the hearts of her people. Before Shekhar Kapur made this brutal epic about Phoolan Devi, a bandit who became a household name in India in the early 80s. With palpable outrage Kapur shows Devi bartered into marriage, then raped, imprisoned and later kidnapped by a gang of outlaws - before becoming one of its leaders. For all its unapologetic myth-making, Bandit Queen offers a terrible ratcheting-up of violence, ending with her bloody revenge on a village in which she was gang-raped. Devi's life was no less interesting after it was put on film. Released from prison, she went into politics and was assassinated in 2001'.[123] From a totally different view point this is a positive film about resurgence. M. Srikanth reviewing the movie for IMDB writes, "The fact that a physically traumatised, mentally tormented, low caste woman from a depraved Indian village chose not to give up but stand up and fight her own battle is amazing. This movie stands as fair testimony to this life of resurgence".[124]



Figure 49 Upper caste atrocities on Phoolan Devi. Paraded naked and brutally raped for three days. Screen grab: Film Bandit Queen.

Kevin Thomas of Los Angeles Times reviewed, 'Director Shekhar Kapur and writer Mala Sen have bonded dynamic adventure and romance and fiery social protest together with an electrifying effectiveness. *Bandit Queen* is an astonishing, overpowering piece of rabble-rousing, consciousness-raising, epic-scale filmmaking that unquestionably breaks ground in the Indian cinema in brutal candour if not theme. Kapur and Sen place Devi at the worst possible conjunction of caste and gender. A member of the lowly Mallah caste of fishermen and their families in the

state of Uttar Pradesh, she is traded by her father to a man twenty years her senior in exchange for a bicycle and a cow. She has in effect been sold into slavery and is promptly raped by her husband. From the start, however, young Phoolan displays a proud resistance to her fate. Yet in running away from her husband, Devi rapidly discovers that now she has no status to protect her from rape by many men, in particular the higher-caste Thakurs. A woman of lesser spirit and strength surely would have died or been driven mad by such incessant brutality and public humiliation, but Devi survives and propel inevitably into an outlaw gang. Its leader is shot to death by the handsome, enlightened Vikram Mallah while raping Devi and in no time Devi and Mallah are an Indian Bonnie and Clyde with Robin Hood instincts. Kapur's Devi, is shown to be unapologetically vengeful on a very large scale, which the real Devi has protested vehemently. *Bandit Queen* on its own terms succeeds as a galvanic, eye-popping experience whose pain, vigour and passion is as richly expressed in Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's mesmerizing score as in cinematographer Ashok Mehta's indelible images'.[125]

From Director's Desk

Shekhar Kapoor – Shekhar Kapoor on his blog page shared his experience while making of his film Bandit Queen. He shared that, there was caste division in the village where he shot the film. He when apparched one of the house for water, he was refused for it as the household belonged to lower caste person. The man also explained that as kapoor was having food in higher caste house he must restrain from having water from lower caste community houses. Kapoor express that it is difficult to break century olf traditions and system.[126]

While speaking in the press conference International Film Festival of India 2015, Shekhar Kapoor stated that "…If you really believe in intolerance, go out, do something. Giving awards back is the easiest thing to do. Intolerance is not affecting you as much as the people who are living under the caste system." He further said "If you see nearly 40 per cent of Indians… don't have a say… they are oppressed by caste, community, lack of food or homes — their voices should come in the talk of intolerance".[127]

4. 4.38 Tarpan / The Absolution (1995)

Director - K. Bikram Singh

Production - National Film Development Corporation of India, Doordarshan

Plot : Jorawar looses his first daughter and his second daughter too falls severly ill. Local doctors give up hopes and Jorawar and his wife approach village elders Jasso. Jasso suggest them to go to one Sukku Baba who has extraordinary powers and can cure their child. Jorawar along with his wife and daughter meet Sukku Baba who further advises them to clean a higher caste Thakur's well. An elderly woman in the village Rammo helps them. Here Joravar comes to know about the horrifying secrets, the demons that dwell within the minds of the villagers, as well as the ghosts that dwell in the well - ghosts of tormented lower caste men and women and who now want their absolution.[128]

Review : Tarpan deals with the roots of caste system in India and communalism amid which lies greed, hatred, intolerance the nature of power structures and the failing leadership. It reflects divide not only between different societal structures but also among the genders. The film presents interrelated incidents in the form of four stories that initially appears as separate disputes between members of different communities having varied livelihood and different lifestyles. These different narratives merge into a single storyline of casteist holocaust. The film is treated with strong narrative but a nonlinear construction with the shades of fantasy.

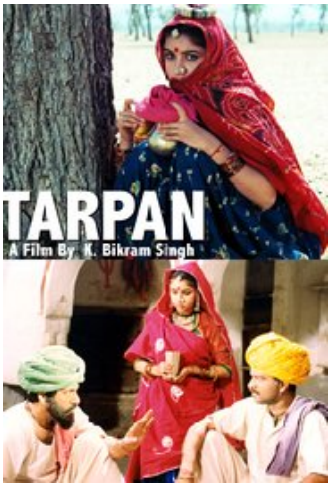


Figure 50 Tarpan a folklorist story of caste oppression and acute caste discrimination followed in India. Courtesy: https://www.google.com/ www.imdb.com % 2Ftitle%2Ftt0278761% &dust=153881. Accessed : 26 November 2016.

The story is set in the Shekavati region of Rajasthan in India in a rural setup. The film firstly highlights gender discrimination where foremost issue is shown of non-survival of a girl child beyond seven years in the village. As the Joravar whose daughter is unwell and treatment lies in cleaning the well, used by upper caste community proposes to do so, the *sufiana* Sukku Baba insist that it is not an ordinary task. The well is in the house of the Sarpanch or village head. The well is surrounded by crude murals that depicts horrifying scenes of violence reflecting philosophy of *Dharma* and *Karma* and suggests that this well is dominate by women and children thrown in the well. As the cleaning begins ghosts in the well begin to appear and narrate their stories of discrimination, victimisation and assassination. The first story is of Chinto Kaki who kills her daughter-in-law because she belongs to lower caste. The newlywed is also not allowed to draw water from the community well due to caste distinction. Chinto Kaki suggests her to draw water at night when no one is around and finally pushes her into the well thus killing her. The second incident deals with farm related problem between a high and lower caste where the depressed caste person end up getting killed. Third story shows rape and victimisation of a lower caste woman by her landlord thus getting her pregnant. The woman also dies leaving the child behind who is illegitimate daughter of Thakur Lakhan Singh and now Joravar's wife Lachmi. The landlord or Thakur accepts her as his daughter and ask for penance. Finally, the Sarpanch is blamed for his bigotry where as a village head should have guarded everyone's interests. But he always protects and supports his own higher caste community and does injustice to lower caste community. Sarpanch accepts his mistakes and seek forgiveness a geyser of clear water springs from the well thus bringing a new spirit of equality, end of discrimination and injustice. The incidents show that caste factor emerge with other elements such as anger, greed, guilt, control of natural resources and perspective of community leaders to look at the injustice in limited sectarian angle rather than welfare of the whole community. Thus the film revolves round the societal pressures of caste discrimination, hypocrisy and class struggle.

4.4.39 Fire (1996)

Director – Deepa Mehta **Production - Fire Films Inc.**

Plot : Biji an old widow is a paralytic and cannot communicate verbally and has to be looked after. She lives with her two sons, Ashok with his wife Radha who is unable to

conceive and Jatin who is in love with a Chinese- Indian girl Julie who runs a beauty salon. The family has Mundu a male servant as help. When Julie refuses to marry Jatin for his joint family living status, he gets compelled into marrying Sita for bearing child. Ashok leads a celibate life and becomes a follower of a local Swamiji. Jatin continues his affair with Julie. Radha and Sita live a lonely life. While Ashok, Radha and Sita runs a Punjabi food shop, Jatin has a video store. Loneliness of Radha and Sita bring them compassionately closer and their physical needs make them lovers. Their secret is known by Mundu one day and Ashok is informed. Both Radha and Sita leave their house and take refuge in temple, devastated but united.

Review : Deepa Mehta's *Fire* arrives advertised as the first Indian film about lesbianism. The film directed by a woman resent a social system in which many women have no rights. Neither is an angry polemic; the director cloak their anger in melodrama, in romance, in beautiful poetic photography, and in the sort of gentle sexuality that is often more erotic than explicit, if only because it allows the audience to watch the story without becoming distracted by the documentary details. It is only a matter of time until the two wives, Sita and Radha, are sharing their unhappiness while looking out over the city from a rooftop veranda. Radha is alienated from her husband--who, depressed by her sterility, follows the teachings of a swami who advises chastity. Sita is devastated that her husband does not love her. One day, simply and directly, she kisses the older woman, and the next day the older woman dresses her hair, and soon they are in each other's arms. It is of course the Indian context that gives this innocent story its resonance. Lesbianism is so outside the experience of these Hindus, we learn that their language even lacks a word for it. The men are not so much threatened as confused.[129] The film has direct reference to Hindu ritualism where it tries to take a critical view point. There is continuous reference in background to Hindu epic Ramayana and repetitive scenes of testing purity of woman epitomise here, the Sita through the Ramanand Sagar's Television serial Ramayana and folk drama Ramleela. The elder woman's husband is shown to be following one Swamiji who keeps lecturing him about controlling the desire. The story of Karvachauth is dramatised and shown where a female mythological character explains newly wedded bride the importance of being a dutiful, loving, tolerant and obedient wife.



Figure 51 Movie fire makes distinctive use of the traditional art theatre of Ram Leela.
Screen grab : Film Fire.

The film did run into controversy as discussed in **Chapter Six**, but gives a voice to woman's right to make her own sexual choice and be brave enough to stand by it. The film features upper castes Hindu women entering into a sexual relationship and seems to have hurt Hindu religious sentiments by naming the protagonists as Radha and Sita from Hindu epics. There are repetitive references from Hindu mythology elaborating on social conduct.

As for the actors, Shabana Azmi on playing this character though received support from her husband Javed Akhtar, but their daughter Zoya Akhtar was not comfortable with the whole thing.[130] The Fire questions Hindu codes of conduct and if spirit of individualism should be placed higher than the societal institutions such as religion and family. The film may be called the book of secret desires where the desires are ignored, controlled and at times crushed due to social and moral codes of conduct. However, these rules are different for man and for woman. Fire explored nuances in the Hindu traditions and their feasibility in post-modern world.

4.4.40 Chachi 420 (1997)

Director - Kamal Hasan

Production - Raajkamal Films International

Plot : Jaiprakash Paswan aka Jai and Janki Paswan are fighting a divorce case. Janki is the only daughter of Durgaprasad Bhardwaj, a staunch Brahmin businessman. Jaiprakash, a Dusad, belonging to lower caste is an assistant dance director in films. The duo falls in love and gets marry against the will of Durgaprasad. However, Janki buckles under the pressure of a middle-class life. Other differences crop up between the couple and Janki walks out. The court grants the divorce. Jai is allowed to meet

his beloved daughter Bharti once a week. But when he sneaks into the Bhardwaj house to steal Bharti, he loses visitation rights. Meanwhile, Durgaprasad puts advertisement in local newspapers for a nanny for Bharti. Jai sees this as an opportunity and calls Durgaprasad. Impersonating a female, he introduces himself as 'Mrs. Lakshmi Godbole' and applies for the position. With the help of a drunkard makeup artist Joseph, Jai undergoes a complete transformation into Lakshmi Godbole, a dignified elderly Marathi woman. He goes to the interview, where he is generally viewed as the last pick. But Bharti has an accident, and Lakshmi acts promptly to give first aid. Lakshmi gets the job and the respect of the Bhardwaj family. Later Jai runs into his old friend Shiraz, a Muslim restaurant chef who is now doing menial jobs as he lost his job trying to help Jai. Laxmi introduces Shiraz to the Bhardwaj household who is in dire need of a cook, as Pandit Shivraj Sharma, a mute Brahmin cook. After many twists and turns in the story, Jai reunites with his ex-wife and daughter and Lakshmi is pronounced death rather martyr while saving Durgaprasad's daughter Janaki.



Figure 52 A lower caste boy a Paswan gets married to a rich upper caste girl. They separate after marriage. The boy dress up like a woman and employs a Muslim as cook. The film shows caste preferences. Upper caste are vegetarians and lower caste are non-vegetarians. Courtesy: https://www.dvdplanetstore.pk/shop/comedy/chachi-420-1997/. Accessed 26 November 2016; Screen grab: Film Chachi 420.

Review: The protagonist Jai with last name as Paswan is shown to be belonging to Dusadh or Dosadh Caste in the film. Jai is shown to be associated with the art that is a dance choreographer and referred at one place as *Bhand*. Jai Prakash's father-in-law Durgaprasad is a Brahmin but ironically a businessman in leather works. Lakshmi the woman as whom Jai disguise himself identifies her as Godbole, Maharashtrian Chitpawan Brahmin and construct relations with Peshwa Bajirao and that her husband has gone to *Kashi*, the holy place for Hindus. Thus, as the story progress as

Durgaprasad develops martial intimacy towards Lakshmi. On other hand similar feelings are shown of one Babubhai another Brahmin widower wearing sacred thread who too finds wedding prospects in Lakshmi due to her personality and caste. He also questions her that Jai is a non-vegetarian and how will she prepare such food being a Brahmin. Lakshmi also comments that in her caste one cooks food only after taking bath. In another instance Lakshmi alias Jai appoints a Muslim as a Brahmin cook and he wears the sacred thread and wears vermillion on his forehead and serves Durgaprasad. When his true identity revealed Lakshmi explains Durgaprasad that he too is into slaughtering animals for his business just like the Muslim cook Siraz. Thus, a continuous impression of caste is carried throughout the movie.

4.4.41 Samar / The Conflict (1998)

Director - Shyam Benegal

Production – The Government of India, Doordarshan

Plot : In a small village in Madhya Pradesh, two different communities fight over a water pump installation. When a member of one of the communities, Nathu decides to protest against a decision he feels is unjust, he angers the local land owner, who decides to impose economic sanctions on the community in an effort to starve them out of the village. When Nathu's house is burned down in mysterious circumstances, Nathu seeks the comfort of a temple, and prays for a solution. Instead he finds himself abused and beaten by the land owner for breaking a rule that bans members of Nathu's community from entering the temple. It later emerges that the situation in the area is being used as a plot for a film made in Bombay, however characters featured in the film are misrepresented, which leads to tension on the set and eventually violence spills.[131]

Review : With Samar Benegal return to his prime concern of caste conflict. Using the film-within-film structure, Benegal is able to offer an incisive look into caste prejudice, not only among the rural populace, but also among educated middle-class city dwellers. Even after 70 years of independence in India, the reality of caste politics in rural India is still a theme which Benegal choose to examine. The National award-winning Samar questions the notion of progress and exposes deep-seated prejudices about caste and class that Indians still harbour.[132] Samar for the first time present two layers of caste discrimination, rural and urban. At one side Samar projects the Dalit

treated in village and then shows the urban discrimination through the urban actors coming to this village with their baggage of beliefs. This creates its own contradictions and gives one different kinds of insight into the nature of the problem.



Figure 53 Samar tells the story of revolt of Dalit Peasants. Courtesy: https://imagineindia2015eng.wordpress.com/2015/05/13/samar-shyam-benegal/; https://www.flickr.com/photos/imagineindia_film_festival/4891080861. Accessed : 26 November 2016.

Financed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Samar is based on a true incident drawn from a series of case studies on the caste system in rural Madhya Pradesh, recorded by an IAS office, Harsh Mandal. It is based on the experience of a Dalit peasant, Nathu Ahirwar, who suffered gross injustice and indignity at the hands of the village head. The story is of an upper caste village headman of Kull village, in Bundelkhand, who humiliated the Dalit community in 1991. Samar was shot in the very village where this incident took place. In the film, the installation of a hand pump in the Dalit settlement instead of in his own fields so enrages the headman that he lays off the low-caste peasants from the fields and set fire to their homes. The peasants approach a sympathetic state official and police officer who succeeds in restring the Dalit's lost dignity.

Benegal rejects the linear narrative and employs the cinematic device of film with in film. Samar thus marks a return to formative aesthetics as well. Samar relates two stories and explores the interaction between the villagers and the film unit. Seven years later of the incident a film unit from Mumbai arrives to film the incident. The Dalit villagers are not allowed to access drinking water from the village well. State officials who arrive to build a hand pump face the wrath of the landlord. Nathu's wife suffers from leprosy, but is afraid to treat herself, fearing further ostracism. Benegal's concern for women as doubly oppressed through class and gender receives a rather pragmatic treatment in this subplot. Benegal also put the woman issue as doubly

infested. As Meenakshi Shedde while reviewing the movie in the *Times of India* states, 'Equally, he lay bare the oppressive, vice-like connection between caste system and patriarchy. As a Dalit woman tells Rajeshwari Sachdev (who play onscreen wife of Nathu a Dalit) ... caste is a male concern'.[133]

City-bred actors who enact the parts of the villagers- many of whom enter the frame during the shoot – are forced to confront their own caste prejudices. The cast as well as the audience is shaken out of smug complacency that the issue of caste is a rural problem. Trouble brews in the film unit, as the Dalit actor playing the low-caste Nathu is humiliated by the upper caste actor who plays the landlord. Under the garb of liberal education and city sophistication, some of the crew harbour deep-seated animosity towards the Dalits. The conflict in the film crew offers a double-edged tool for the film-maker to explore deeply flawed attitudes in social behaviour. The poor Dalit villager whose life story is being told is in effect exploited by the unit – the director and actors intrude upon his privacy and take from his life what they want for the film. The re-enactment of the humiliation scene for the film stirs up violent sentiments between the actors. The reel Nathu refuses to enact a scene in which the landlord urinates on his head. The real Nathu tells him, 'When I had the real thing on my head, why should you have problem just acting it out?'.[134] Thus, the film is sophisticated in its self-reflexivity.

One of the unit members says, 'Nobody will see the film anyway, except for some highbrow critics. It will win a few prizes as film festivals abroad. That's all'. The ethical questions raised by the issue of art exploiting reality are thrown up as debate in the fabric of the film itself. A review in *Outlook* says on Benegal and Samar that, 'It's easy to write off his kind of films in these profit-driven times, but the very fact that Benegal, as active as he has ever been in his career continues to project his humanist, socially informed vision on the big-screen – and on his own terms at that – is cause enough for unstinted applause.[135]

Heavy polemics stall the scene in which the civil servant admits that he is a Dalit and sermonises to his son over dinner on self-esteem. It is limiting but unavoidable one when one considers that the film was sponsored by the state as an instrument for social change. Yet in the face of rapidly changing ideas about audience entertainment in the Bombay film industry, it is remarkable that film like Samar got to be made. It went on to win the National award – Golden Lotus, for best film – first for

Benegal. The jury lauded the work 'for the innovative and human manner in which the director structures and presents a continuing social evil'.[136]

Benegal's effort at generating debate about the caste issue remained unsuccessful as the film failed to receive distribution. A Delhi-based company picked it up after the National Awards, but subsequently let it lie unwatched in its cans due to governmental formalities. The usually polite and patient Benegal did show his impatience at this, particularly as there were other distributors in Bombay ready to market the film.[137]

4.4. 42 Bawandar / Sandstorm (2000)

Director - Jag Mohan Mundra **Production – Smriti Pictures**

Plot : Sand Storm deals both with gender issues, caste issues, and the relevance of tradition in the modern world. Saanwri Devi was of a lower caste. She made pots and her husband Sohan pedals a rickshaw in town. They are on the bottom of the caste system and dirt poor, and everybody knows this. In order to obtain more money, Saanwri stumbles into a government job that promotes equality for women. Her job is to tell women that by law, they have rights, and to protest injustices like child marriage. Her village elders, who are part of a higher caste, do not like what she is doing. At one point, five of them attack her husband, and rape her while he desperately tries to help. Although she is clearly the victim, she becomes an outcast in her own village.



Figure 54 A lower caste woman Saavri Devi is sexually abused by upper caste villagers. The standing stick indicates their authority. Courtesy : http://www.offoffoff.com/film/2001/bawandar.php. Accessed : 27 November 2016; Screen grab : Bhawandar.

The gross injustice comes in her attempts to find recourse. At every turn, somebody stymies her attempts. The local police are corrupt, refusing to take a complaint. The local government is corrupt, giving empty promises to help. The male doctor is corrupt. The women's jail she stays in for protection mocks her. As she makes her way up, political groups help her because it is opportunistic for them, and people use her to further their own careers and causes. Rape in this country is a mark

of shame. People are more likely to look down upon the victim than do anything to help. The only person out to help her is Shobha Devi, the woman who initially hired her.[138]

Review : The story is made on the incident happened with Bhanwari Devi from Rajasthan belonging to potter caste who is designated in other backward caste in the State. Bhanwari was raped by upper caste men and she awaits justice. The film certainly presents the most discussed case of present times that was not only about sexual assault vis-à-vis caste subjugation but the one that raised voice against important issue of sexual harassment at work. This was hardly discussed before especially in reference to rural woman who fought for justice. Bawandar a bio-pic thus stands as an important contribution to Indian Cinema not for its cinematic quality but the subject.

The film may be considered as a sordid tale of sexual abuse of a lower caste woman and a first attempt that exposes Indian societal and legal system where corruption is rampant. The lack of beauracratic social empathy towards female victim is realistically shown. The film targets both national and international viewership and is made and dubbed in four languages, namely, Hindi, English, French and German.[139] Newspaper Hindu reviewing the movie states that what makes movie Bhawandar important is the way it deals with post enquiry procedure about the gang rape where the victim is subject to deliberate revictimisation in the form of cross – examination.[140] This also has a strong caste angle where the victim belongs to the lower caste and the oppressor to the upper caste. The crime of sexual abuse itself is projected as a punishment for challenging traditional social order.



Figure 55 Saawari Devi working for Sathin in film. Courtesy : http://www.planetbollywood.com/displayReview.php?id=032906033201. Accessed : 28 November 2016.

4.4.43 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (2000)

Direction - Dr. Jabbar Patel

Production - National Film Division Corporation

Plot : The film is based on the life of great leader Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The film narrates struggle faced by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his various movements. The film showcase Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's stay in United States, at Baroda, meetings with Mahatma Gandhi, emancipator activities, Mahad Satyagraha, entry into temple, visit to United Kingdom for the Round Table conference, making of Indian Constitution and finally Dhamma Chakra Pravartan or acceptance of Buddhism at Nagpur.



Figure 56 Film begins with present problem where a Dalit is violently abused for entering a temple. This is followed by demonstrations where law authorities use force. Thus the victims are killed and justice is not done.

Screen grab : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Review : On the birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment under the V. P. Singh Government and the Maharashtra Government jointly produced film which talked about the life and contribution of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for the Dalit cause. The film project took almost nine years to complete and was claimed to be made after through research. The screen play writer team included Arun Sadhu a freelance journalist and Dagdu Daya Pawar an eminent Dalit writer.

The movie covers the most important events in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's life. His stint at New York's Columbia University, his tryst in London, his return to Bombay and Baroda, his plunge into reform activities, his epic battle with the Mahatma over separate electorates, and his appointment as Chairman of the Constitution drafting committee are all chronicled. The obstacles in his path and the conviction for his cause are well etched. While Ambedkar's battle with Gandhi over separate electorates is brought out well, his last battle with Hindu orthodoxy over the Hindu Code Bill leaves a viewer no wiser. All in all, *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar* is a film that is definitely worth viewing. Anyone who believes in 'Equality and Justice for All' --

whether in India or any other land -- this film is a must see. Mammootty, Jabbar Patel, Sonali Kulkarni and others are to be hailed for this epic movie.[141]

The film begins with explanation on who are Shudras and how were they maltreated in the past by the rest of the society and gives references of what was been said in *Purushsutras*. The narrator informs the audience about their permanent segregation and how in Peshwa period they were made to tie brooms and made to wear earthen pots around their neck so that their spit don't pollute the earth . The narrator states that conduct towards Shudras was worse than what happened with slaves in Roman empire, Negros in Unites States and with Jews. An incident in 1998 is shown where a Dalit is beaten almost to death who enters temple premises for taking refuge there due to heavy rains. This leads to riots and creates law and order situation which results in police firing. The film then goes back to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's period in history and began to narrate the past when this problem was brought forward and finally made a national question. The film at the beginning establishes the appalling condition of the Dalits and how it is still continued inspite of long struggle and various laws.



Figure 57 Film show important events from the Dalit movement led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's rise as a Dalit leader, purification of tank, satyagraha before Kala Ram temple for entry to all, offering Manusmriti to fire, Pune Pact and criticism faced regarding Hindu Code Bill. Screen grab : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

The film chronologically presents different issue relating to Dalits, the movement, the rise of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as a leader of Dalits and his emergence as a National leader.

The film gives different instances of discrimination faced by Dr B. R. Ambedkar and also who supported him in the fight against caste system. While presenting a paper in United States, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar makes a significant observation that takes it in urban or rural setup there is no difference in treatment to

lower castes. After his return to India Dr. B. R. Ambedkar faces humiliation when he try to have water from common pot. Whereas, he is later visited by Chattrapati Shahu Maharaj who has tea at his place and partially sponsor his further education in England. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar receives mixed response in England due to his supervisors carrying the weight of being colonial masters and whose policy almost has remained to be not to hurt or interfere in religious matters. However Dr. B. R. Ambedkar also finds an English friend who helps him with reference work and supports him in the times of distress. In the film, after returning to Hindustan, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar begins with his activities to awaken the Dalits and at a meeting at Dapoli, Maharashtra he advises Dalits to maintain cleanliness, educate, fight for their rights and unite. He also advised them not to eat rotten meat, not to eat leftover food, educate their children, fighst for justice, independence and for self-esteem.

The film on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar deals with two important issues of the time. One was water from the common water tank to all and another entry for Dalits in temples. One of the tanks is shown to be purified by Brahmin priests.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar prepares for Mahad Satyagraha. The film shows a Brahmin fellowman declares that all this discrimination has happened due to religious text of Hindu written by Manu and so the text should be burnt down. A bon fire is made and *Manusmriti* is offered to the fire. However, before this event, in actuality Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in reference to Vaikam Satyagraha had noted that the orthodox Brahmans used scriptures to justify their position to Mahatma Gandhi. He stated, 'This clearly indicates that either we should burn all these scriptures or verify and examine the validity of their rules regarding untouchability and if we are unable to prove their falseness or invalidity, we are to suffer untouchability till the end of time!... Truly these scriptures are an insult to people. The government should have confiscated them long ago.'[142]

The entry into the Kala Ram temple at Nashik results in violent riots. And as the movement begins to grow and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar become popular, Mahatma Gandhi invites him to meet. The film present a long debate between the two where one can notice a sharp contrast in methods and ideological differences between the two. Mahatma Gandhi informs that he has initiated the Dalit issue on Indian National Congress platform and given donation of Rupees twenty five lakhs for the cause of their upliftment. The film shows Dr. B. R. Ambedkar saying that there is no difference between how Indians are been treated by British and how lower castes are

treated by upper castes. He strongly put forth that Gandhiji should not make wearing Khadi compulsory for becoming a member of Congress but instead insist on following annihilating caste system. He says that 'he has no Motherland!'. After Dr. B. R. Ambedkar leaves the film informs viewers that Gandhiji is unaware of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's caste status and mistakes him for a scholarly Brahmin from Pune. This detail of film comes from the real event of Vaikam Satyagraha which Mahatma Gandhi had supported. In the Presidential address of Bombay Province Depressed Classes Conference in 1925, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar spoke on Mahatma Gandhi and said, 'Before Mahatma Gandhi, no politician in this country maintained that it is necessary to remove social injustice here in order to do away with tension and conflict… for he (M K Gandhi) does not insist on the removal of untouchability as much as he insists on the propagation of Khaddar or home-spun cloth or Hindu- Muslim unity'.[143]

Another issue highlighted in the film is of separate electorate. The history behind the signing of 'Pune Pact' and how agreement was reached is very well shown. Gandhiji resorts to fast until death for withdrawal of the bill. When the agreement is reached Gandhiji tells Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that he considers himself as untouchable and makes a promise to him that for that very moment his entire life is dedicated to eradicate practise of untouchability in India from its very roots. The film specifies on Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar having differences over their views on Varna system. While one considered it important for Hindu fold other considered it to be detrimental to lower castes in India. Mahatma Gandhi is known to have written a letter to P. N. Rajbhoj who belonged to Chambhar or cobbler caste from Poona where he specified, that his fast is in reference only to separate electorate. What he is aiming is understanding between the two, the greatest opportunity of repentance and reparation on the part of the suppressors. He finds that the movement is ripe for the change of heart among the higher castes. He, therefore, favours widest possible franchise for the suppressed and establishes a convention between two sections for securing proper elections of representatives of the suppressed.[144] Thus, M K Gandhi desired for social change developing into a political inclusion whereas, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar opined vice versa.

The film then reflects on the conversion of lower caste to other religion, like a fellow informs Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that on the instance of some Kahinur village where Dalits are converting to Islam. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar asks them to wait till he addresses Yeola Conference organised by *Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha* and there he

makes his historical announcement that 'he is born as a Hindu but will not die as Hindu'.

As a nationalist, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar speaks against the Partition of India. But finally when it happens and India becomes free, the film shows Mahatma Gandhi suggesting Jawaharlal Nehru that constitution work should be done by a depressed class person and there is no one better than Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar becomes the first Law Minister of the country.

Film shows Dr. B. R. Ambedkar playing sad tune on violin after hearing news of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. This is a new addition in profiling Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The Hindu Code Bill is criticized by fundamentalists including *Sanatanis* in India.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar finally decides to take Diksha of Buddhism that is to leave Hindu religion and accept Buddhism. The film ends with realistic depiction of *Dhamma Chakra Pravartan* or *Diksha* taking ceremony in Nagpur.

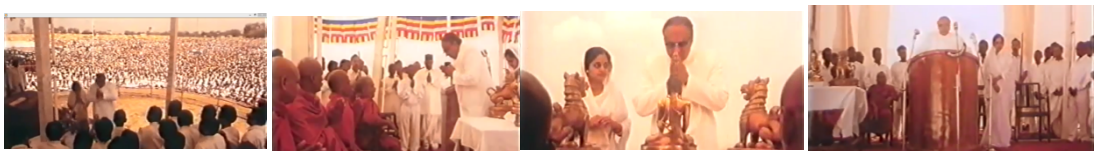


Figure 58 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at the occasion of Dhamma Chakra Pravatan ceremony at Nagpur. Screen grab : Film Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

The film makes artistic use of news papers in archives for reporting events and has super embossed the picture of actor Mammooty to make it look realistic. The film in its credit thanks the ministers who helped make this film possible. The film gives elaborations on Dalit movement led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and throws light on various facets of his life and personality.

Interestingly this movie was not released in Tamil Nadu for the reason of law and order. The release in Tamil was initiated again on public demand after a decade after court order. Newspaper 'The Hindu' reported that the First bench of the Madras High Court directed the National Film Development Corporation on 18th May 1998, to take all possible steps to release at an early date the Tamil version of its English film, Dr. Babasaheb *Ambedkar*, released in 1998. The Bench comprising of Acting Chief Justice Elipe Dharma and Justice K. K. Sasidharan also directed the State Government to "decide the issue regarding taxation concession as claimed by the distributor, of the Tamil version" within two weeks. [145] The advocates and students of Madurai Law College and social activists staged a demonstration in Madurai demoing

release of the film. The petitioner said in his affidavit "It is an undisputed fact that if the film on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is released in Tamil, it would certainly awaken and enlighten the toiling masses, the Dalits, towards working for an egalitarian and truly casteless society, which is the ideal of the Constitution, as dreamt of by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar".[146] The film has effectively used *powadas* or ballads on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Chatrapatti Shahu Maharaj in the background.

From Director's Desk

Jabbar Patel – In an interview with Pritish Nandy, Dr. Jabbar Patel talked about his film on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and what went into its making. Patel discussed on the historicity of the film and the cinematic projection of journey of Dr. Ambedkar from being a Dalit leader to a National leader. The main contention came with censor taking objection on scenes between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. To Nandy's question 'Did the censors give you grief over your interpretation of Gandhi and the scenes that showed the conflict between M K Gandhi and Dr. B R Ambedkar?' Patel answered, "We had to present all our research before the censors. Asha Parekh, who heads the Censor Board, was of great help. She said: 'Nothing will be cut if you can back it up with facts.' And that is what we did. Pages and pages of facts helped me restore every single cut that was proposed. Finally, the film was cleared as it is. We proved to the censors that everything - every point of confrontation, every dialogue - shown was historically accurate. After all, you must remember that this was the early Gandhi. He became a saint later. He was much more intolerant, much more difficult during this phase and that is why he made things so difficult for Dr. B R Ambedkar."[147] To this Nandy further questioned, 'But the Gandhi in your film is a cunning, selfish politician, always anxious to outwit Dr. B R Ambedkar and get his own way?' Patel replied, "But that was exactly the way he behaved and that is why Dr. B R Ambedkar felt so slighted. He tried his best to explain his point of view but Gandhi was not ready to listen. He did not want the Dalits to walk out of the Hindu fold."[148]

But Dr. B R Ambedkar took the decision to embrace new religion on which Patel commented, "Dr. Ambedkar did not want that. But he had no choice. Gandhi pushed him to the edge by refusing to listen to him. The Congress, too, was adamant. That comes out clearly if you look at the historical evidence."[149] Priteesh Nandy enquired about, 'Historians like Arun Shourie have questioned Dr. B R Ambedkar's

role in the freedom struggle. They saw him as unreliable, obstreperous, a hindrance to Swaraj' to which Patel replied that "But he was doing his duty by his people, the Dalits. I was careful to ensure that we were absolutely accurate in our representation of facts. Sooni Taraporevala, who wrote the script, was meticulous. We also had Arun Sadhu and Daya Pawar working side by side with her to ensure she got every single nuance right."[150] On asking if, this is a picture of the freedom struggle as seen through Dr. B R Ambedkar's eyes, Patel stated, "Maybe. But we have not strayed from history to be sympathetic towards him. We are factually accurate. But, yes, I wanted to restore to Dr. B R Ambedkar his rightful role in the freedom movement. The film hopefully does that."[151] During the interview Patel clarified that he has done extensive research and consulted various historians and activist for establishing accuracy and being able to defend everything said in the movie. This film on Dr. B R Ambedkar was not a small task and discussing the reason to make a film on Dr. B R Ambedkar, Jabbar Patel said, "I had made this short documentary on him which everyone seemed to like very much. I was showing the documentary to Sharad Pawar when I mentioned I would like to make a full length feature film on Dr. B R Ambedkar, so as to capture the larger picture of the Independence struggle and give it a more accurate historical perspective. Many people, it was my contention; had no idea of his actual role during the struggle and, what is worse, many saw it in the wrong light. A full-length feature film, I felt, could put his role in a proper context. He agreed. That is how the film began in the early nineties, with a small contribution from the Maharashtra government. Later, we got the rest of the money from the Government of India."[152] Thus, this Government funded film project became a successful attempt and gave newer dimension in looking at the Dalit movement in India, the movement as a part of mainstream Indian national movement, situation of Dalits and their road to emancipation. Dr. B R Ambedkar's work, mission and achievements were well defined by Patel as to give wider canvas of this multi-faceted personality to the viewers in India and abroad.

4.4.44 Lajja (2001)

Director - Rajkumar Santoshi **Production - Santoshi Productions**

Plot : Vaidehi the protagonist of the movie is married to Raghuvir a Non residential Indian. Suffering the agony of an unhappy marriage and her husband's attitude of seeing woman only as an object of desire, she decides to run away from him when she

learns that she is pregnant and he wants to take the child way from her as in one of the accident he has lost his potency. In her pursuit for freedom, she meets Mythili a bride to be who becomes a victim to practise of dowry, Janaki a theatre artist who is exploited and considered available by her patrons and Ramdulari a village mid-wife who falls victim to gruesome caste system resulting in honour killing of her son and physical abuse. All of them are victims of male chauvinism and traditions that refuse to see woman as a human being with any opinion. All the female characters refuse to be put down and fight for their rights. The movie ends on a positive note where Raghuvir admits to his mistake asks for forgiveness and unite with his wife Vaidehi and they have a baby daughter and live happily.

Review : In Lajja two young characters, Shushma and Prakash are in love. Sushma is the daughter of Gajendra, a wealthy upper caste politician and Prakash is the son on a poor lower caste midwife Ramdulari. Ramdulari is not liked by Gajendra for her radical desire to educate the women of her rural village. When Gajendra finds out that his daughter Shushma is in love with Prakash, he orders for the murder of Prakash. However, Shushma manages to elope with Prakash and Ramdulari is caught. She is punished by being raped and burnt alive by Gajendra, his brother Vijendra. The caste and class difference comes crushing down on Ramdulari that ends her very existence.



Figure 59 Ram Dulari a lower caste woman and mid wife in the village is raped and burnt alive by the village head a Thakur when his daughter elopes with her son. Screen grab : Film Lajja.

4.4.45 Lagaan (2001)

Director - Ashutosh Gowarikar **Production – Amir Khan Production**

Plot : One of the most expensive films ever to come out of Bollywood, *Lagaan* tells the tale of the Indian village Champaner, beset by drought and British colonialism in the year 1893. Without a drop of rain in months, the worried villagers of Champaner

decide to ask the local authorities for a temporary repeal of their taxes -- the hated lagaan. Led by the heroic Bhuvan they bring their plight to the military governor, Captain Russell . But the sadistic Russell threatens to raise the lagaan threefold, unless the villagers can beat his men at a game of cricket, in which case he'll lift taxes on the entire province for a period of three years. Bhuvan accepts the challenge, but there's a problem -- no one in Champaner knows how to play cricket. A band of misfits come to the rescue, coached by Russell's soft-hearted sister Elizabeth, and the race is on to be ready in three months' time. An epic reworking of Victory with eye-popping song-and-dance routines, Lagaan was a major cinematic event in India upon its release.

Review : *Lagaan* is a story of desire and resistance of farmers in India to live a decent and dignified life. The film depicts fight of a few brave villagers against the colonial power in a game completely stranger to them but the underdogs win in the end. The story sets in a village Champaner in Central India which is highly dependent on rainwater for farming. The villagers had a rough season last year and this year was also looking very grim as there was no sign of rain. The British Cantonment was at the border of the village which was an authority for collecting tax on behalf of King of Champaner. The character of Antagonist Captain Andrew Russel is depicted as the oppressive force who was exploiting villagers. Though, interestingly, the king of Champaner was shown as someone completely dependent on Britishers and had no power to take decisions for his people. But the villagers had no hard feelings for him. Captain Andrew Russell allows and encourages the viewer to focus all their anger at him, and ignore gender issues and caste and religious complications, a system which is already economically hierarchal, and the complicated and implicit relationship between some colonizers and some Indians.[153]

The issue of caste in *Lagaan* is not the central theme but the highlights the problem of food. The decision to fight against British Force was not taken by the Mukhia but a young man Bhuvan, who, on behalf of the villagers, took the challenge of playing a cricket match. The caste of the most of the villagers in the film is not disclosed except Kachara the untouchable. In fact the meaning of Kachara in India is garbage which means of no use. When he tried to throw ball with his normal hand he is asked to use his disabled hand. The ball spins and this is the skill that is well appreciated by others for securing wickets. Though the film revolves around the

central theme of *Lagaan* or tax and cricket match, the issue of caste also come up. Entire five minutes are dedicated to Bhuvan's emancipating speech against the caste system followed and is a very significant addition in terms of understanding the position of various castes in the village system.[154]



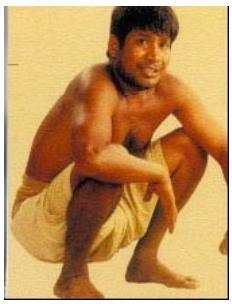


Figure 60 Kachra the untouchable in Lagan. He is shown lame as an indication of the caste he belongs. But that becomes his strength to fight the mighty British in the game of cricket. Courtesy: http://jameslintonblog.blogspot.com/2017/01/lagaan-once-upon-time-in-india-review.html, http://www.rediff.com/movies/2001/jun/27lag2.htm. Accessed : 28 March 2016.

Besides the character Kachra no other Dalits are shown in the village. However, the climax of the film has Kachra sharing the last partnership in the winning game. The feeling of disgust for lower castes or practice of untouchability vanishes in the last scene as everyone embraces Kachra to celebrate victory. It's interesting to know that Kachra is not a peasant and is not entitled to Lagan. But he participates, contributes and helps the cause of the villagers.

4.4.46 Pitaah (2002)

Director - Mahesh Manjrekar **Production - Aryaman Films.**

Plot : A small town in rural India gets to witness a confrontation between two fathers – one high caste, rich, powerful, influential and cruel zamindar or landlord Thakur Avadh Narayan Singh who wants the man who filed complaint against his sons to be killed immediately and other is Rudra, a low caste, poor employee of Thakur who wants justice when he finds that his nine years old daughter is beaten and brutally raped by the Landlor's two sons. Amidst this background is a corrupt doctor, who is willing to change his medical report and a Police inspector who is willing to drop any charges against Avadh's sons provided he gets his dues.[155]

Review : The film deals with the oppressive feudal system and issue of peasant repression. It also symbolises caste system through this social structure. The girl who

is raped by the landlord's son is a low caste peasant's daughter. This story revolves round the feudal exploitation and projects the 'taken for granted' subjugation of lower caste peasants. The justice is sought by resorting to violence and no law supports the poor victim though many provisions are available on paper. The life in rural part of India is shown to be dominated by rich and powerful feudal lord who has no worth of life, respect or humanity and is punished by a lower caste through killing him and his children. [156]

4.4.47 Swadesh / The Homeland (2004)

Director - Ashutosh Gowariker

Production - Ashutosh Gowarikar Production

Plot : Mohan Bhargava, a project manager working on a rainfall monitoring satellite known as Global Precipitation Measurement at NASA, is struck by the most acute form of guilt when he visits India to meet the nanny he considers as his mother. Faced with poverty, caste system, illiteracy, child labour, lack of electricity and a host of other ills that plague India, he decides to channelize his energies into doing his bit for Charanpur. Doing his bit translates to 'lighting a bulb,' as his superior John Stockton patronisingly calls it, for his village.[157]



Figure 61Left: Caste distinction clearly seen while watching movie in Swades. Right: Protagonist becomes aware of Caste and poverty in India. Screen grab : Film Swadesh.

Review : Mohan Bhargva's sojourn in the village introduces him to the gruesome and inhuman caste-system prevailing in contemporary India. The film portrays a true picture of Indian village society where Brahmins and other higher castes live at core of the village and own the farmlands. Other castes such as weavers, potters, blacksmiths and Shudras live on the outer layers of the village according to their status in village society. The film highlights how stringently and exploitatively the caste-system works in a village society. There are various instances in the film which explicate how religiously villagers follow casteism. [158]

One of the most significant scenes which explicate the caste prejudices and distinctions is the screening of an old Hindi film *Yadon ki Baraat* at the village ground. During the film screening upper and lower caste people of the village sit on the opposite sides of the screen. The 'film-screening' scene is a brilliant exemplar of caste-discrimination and the underprivileged condition of the lower caste.[159] Another scene which shows caste distinction is when village gathers to watch hindi film Yadon Ki Barraat. Higher caste community people and lower caste community people get seated on either sides of the screen. The lower caste community side watches film in reverse imagery.[160]

Similarly getting education is solution given by the film for lessening and finally eradication social and economic differences. Mohan attempts to convince those of the potter caste to educate their children, he uses the economic argument that they would not be exploited by urban clients if they were aware of the true value of their wares. Finally, at the celebration to welcome new students, many of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds or are Dalits to the primary school, when Mohan argues with the members of the *Panchayat* that it is precisely the age-old argument that India possesses a cultural and civilization superiority to the West that is holding back the country, he effectively undermines the idea that the village is the repository of spiritual and cultural dimension or difference. The exploration of Mohan of this Indian village is also compared to Nehru's *Discovery of India*.[161]

Thus, *Swadesh* not only portrays caste system in India but also denounces its practice and insists on the annihilation of caste-prejudices and abuses.

4.4.48 Water (2005)

Director - Deepa Mehta **Production - David Hamilton Production**

Plot : In 1938, Chuyia a child bride whose husband dies before their union is consummated is relegated to life in an ashram in Varanasi (Benares). Ashram has many such high caste widows abondened by their families. The place is also infected with these widows forced into prostitution for getting financial aid. One such young widow is Kalyani who meets a young man Narayan with Gandhian ideals. When Kalyani comes to know that Narayan is son of one of her wealthy clients, she commits suicide. Chuhiya is resued by a fellow and sent away from this system with Narayan who is shown to be following Mahatma Gandhi's path.[162]

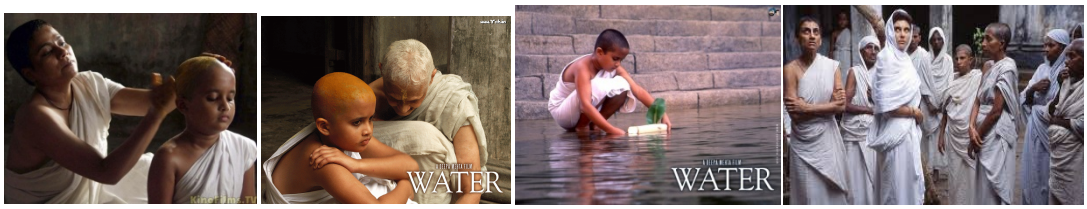


Figure 62 The deplorable state of widows. The story revolves around Chuyia a child widow. Courtesy: http://visualwide.blogspot.com/2010/11/lalithambigai-antharjanamkamala.html; http://wallpapers.yah.in/indian-movies/water/awesome-water-movie/1363/. Accessed : 27 March 2017.

Review : The film set on 1938 in a holy city on the Ganges in India. An eight year old girl, Chuyia is brought to the city by her family after the older man they had married her to dies. Chuyia is handed over to a widow's ashram – a home for Hindu widows, expected to live out their days in humble seclusion. The women are forced to beg outside the temples or turn to prostitution. The problem arises when one such widow indulged in prostitution falls in love with a young student Narayan with radical ideas of Gandhian idealism, wishes to marry her despite all stigmas. Narayan is an opponent of caste repression and rejects prevailing subjugation of widows when he asks Kalyani to marry him. Here two problems arise, one that the ashram's livelihood comes to a threat and other Narayan's father is Kalyani's prominent client. When Narayan's family is informed about the relationship and the couple's defiance of religion and cultural taboos it is an invitation to the tragedy. Esme Choonara writes that the film shows how, even indirectly, a mass movement for change can start to challenge long held ideas and expectations.[163] The film makes various comments on Hindu traditions and their treatment to upper caste widows. There are few notable things that question caste and tradition in India, such as the widow Kalyani who is into prostitution allowed to keep her hairs and not shaved off despite of the custom; unanswerable questions asked by little Chuyia that where is men's widow house?, widow women having upper caste Brahmin patrons; entire caste as widow who are treated like lower caste untouchables and whose shadow too is said to be polluting the passersby and this discrimination is accepted naturally; Narayan's mother informing him that marrying a widow is a sin; a woman in a coloured sari passes near Shakuntala a widow and run back to the Ganges to wash away any misfortune from the proximity with her; a man informing a widow that law has been passed favouring widow remarriage and she ask why don't they know about it; and he answers, 'we ignore laws that don't benefit us', and justification of Narayan's father that Kalyani

will be blessed if she sleeps with her patron Brahmin wherein he is actually satisfying his own sexual needs under religious cover .



Figure 63 The words on the screen read as 'Religious law her an outcast'. Screen grab : Film Water.

Jeannette Catsoulis reviewing movie for New York times writes, 'Water is an exquisite film about the institutionalized oppression of an entire class of women and the way patriarchal imperatives inform religious belief. Serene on the surface yet roiling underneath, the film neatly parallels the plight of widows under Hindu fundamentalism to that of India under British colonialism. Shifting between romantic melodrama and spiritual enquiry Water flows with the simplicity of a fairy tale. The awakening of a widow who releases Chuyia from the bond of widowhood is the soul of the film.'[164] The film ends with Chuyia handed over to Narayan by another widow on a train to join Gandhiji's journey.



Figure 64 Film ends with the freedom of the child widow from the custom on the path shown by Mahatma. Courtesy: https://moviemahal.net/2010/08/08/the-elements-trilogy-directed-by-deepa-mehta-fire-96-earth-98-water-05/. Accessed : 27 March 2017.

Deepa Mehta in her interview averred, "Water can flow or water can be stagnant. I set the film in the 1930s but the people in film live their lives as it was prescribed by a religious text more than 2000 years old. Even today, people follow these texts, which is one reason why there continues to be millions of widow. To me, that is a kind of stagnant water. I think traditions shouldn't be that rigid. They should flow like the replenishing kind of water..."[165]

4.4.49 Banaras (2006)

Director - Pankuj Parashar **Production - Setu Creations**

Plot : Shwetambari falls in love with Soham a boy from lower caste community. Her relationship is strongly opposed by her parents Mahendranath and Gayatri. However, they show ther agreement later but Shom gets murdered soon after the engagement. Shwetambari is depressed and distraught and leaves her home town Banaras, her parents and becomes an ascetic. She visits home after many years when is informed about her father's serious illness. She also gets one more revealation. Shwetambari's assumption that her father had facilitated Soham's murder is proved wrong and her mother confesses to the act of getting him killed due to caste difference. However, spiritually evolved Shwetambari forgives her mother's sin and transcends back into her incorporeal world.[166]

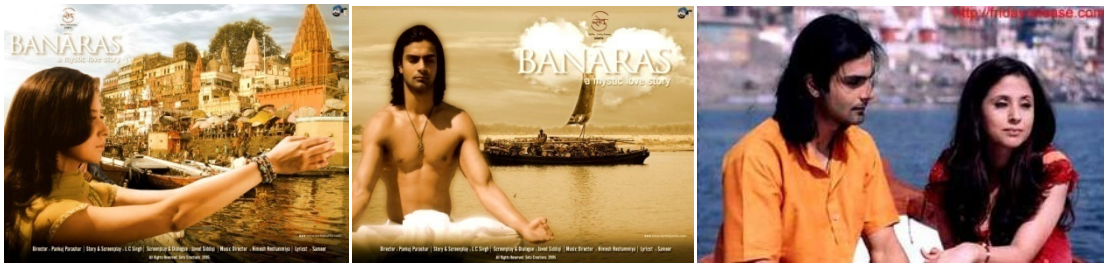


Figure 65 The film is about a Brahmin girl and Harijan boy in love. The boy is mysteriously killed by girl's family. However their love reaches the stage of tranquillity and aestheticism breaking the caste barriers. Courtesy: http://wallpapers.yah.in/indian-movies/banaras/urmila-matondkar-banaras-movie/890/; https://www.glamsham.com/wallpaper/banaras/images-8104.htm; http://www.filmigeek.com/2013/02/catch-up-three-mini-reviews-1.html. Accessed : 28 March 2017.

Review : Director Punkaj Parashar presents a lower caste boy and upper caste girl camaraderie around the backdrop of spirituality. The film takes a sneak at a love story between higher caste and lower caste. The parents of the girl who belongs to higher caste are very much against the alliance but later agree due to girl's insistence. However, she comes to know about his murder and blames her father for the mishap. The film takes a spiritual turn and the love seems to be transcending materialistic boundaries of caste, religion, life and death. There is characterization of a godly figure played by Nasseruddin Shah who is the preacher and conscience of the hero Soham. The film tries to give a message about the human experiences like love greater than its physical being. It takes into consideration the meta-physical view and gives importance solace in divinity. The film is called Banaras, the pilgrimage hub of

Hinduism, where a higher caste girl dares to fall in love with a lower caste boy and thus the fate that follows. But the meridian of spirituality is also reached here.

4.4.50 Omkara (2006)

Director - Vishal Bharadwaj **Production - Shemaroo Entertainment**

Plot : The movie is an Indianised Bollywood adaptation of Shakespeare's wok Othello. This story is of a half-caste gangster Omkara or in Shakespeare drama Othello who makes it big to become leader of the gangs in his district, comprising of a number of villages. He ends up marrying a rich woman Dolly aka Shakespearean Desdemona from a respectable high-caste family that opposes the match. Early on in the film, Dolly's father warns Omkara or Omi, "Jo ladki apne baap ko thag sakti hai, wo kisi aur ki sagi kya hogi" that is, She has deceived her father, and may thee. This line keeps reverberating in Omi's head.

The hierarchy of hoodlums has the local politico Bhaisaab alias Shakespearean Duke of Venice on top. Right under him is Omi. When Bhaisaab, literally 'elder brother,' wins the local elections and comes into power, Omi must choose a henchman. He chooses Keshu or Shakespearean Cassio, overlooking his long-time aide and brother-in-law, Langda Tyagi aka Shakespearean Iago. Wracked with envy, Langda, literally 'lame one,' plays on Omi's insecurities to destroy Keshu's reputation, Omi's marriage and, eventually, Omi himself. For his underhanded schemes, he enlists Raju, Shakespearean Rodrigo who was jilted at the altar by Dolly, as well as Omi's sister Indu alias Shakespearean Emilia, who helps him unknowingly. [167] The story ends in a tragedy where Omkara before killing himself carnage his lady love Dolly due to suspicion and inferiority complex.

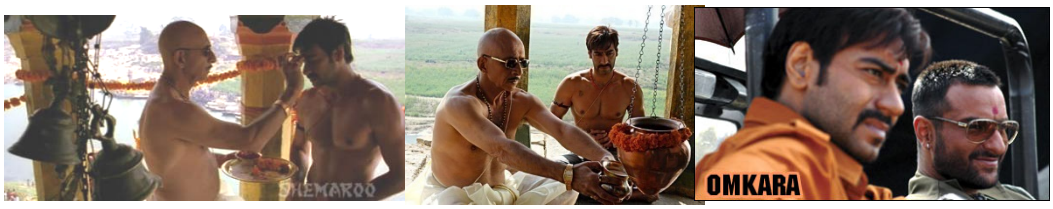


Figure 66 Movie Omkara a Hindi adaptation of Othello has a Dalit protagonist who is also a gangster. Courtesy: https://www.indiatoday.in/movies/gossip/story/when-ajay-devgn-s-prank-made-saif-ali-khan-run-shirtless-on-sets-of-omkara-1348592-2018-09-25; https://greenchilies.wordpress.com/2007/07/10/green-chilies-und-der-difc-prasentieren-omkara/. Accessed : 27 March 2016.

Review : Director Vishal Bhardwaj's transposition of the story of Shakespeare's *Othello* to the landscape and culture of contemporary eastern Uttar Pradesh in India

seem to be a triumph of commencement, cinematography, and acting. Though it enjoyed only humble success in its initial release, it was critically acclaimed nominated for eighteen Filmfare awards, it ultimately garnered half that number, as well as many other prizes. Exemplifying the ability of the occasional big-budget Bombay production to venture into unconventional terrain, it casts major stars in challenging and atypical roles, resulting in uniformly strong performances. The director assigned his characters locally suitable names that aurally suggest their Shakespearean archetypes. Although the film dispenses with the trope of race that is generally highlighted in stage productions of *Othello* (despite a lingering controversy over the actual 'blackness' of Moors—a term somewhat carelessly applied, in Elizabethan times, to people of varied permutations of North African, Arab, and Spanish descent), it substitutes other markers of difference that strongly resonate in everyday life in north India, and are capable of eliciting the powerful sense of alternation that the tale requires. The Director replaces 'racial discrepancy' with 'caste discrimination'. [168]

Most of the main characters' surnames are *Mishra, Shukla, Tiwari, Tyagi* identifying them as Brahmans or higher caste, as does their appearance and deportment of the politician Bhaisahab, meaning elder brother. Upper caste make up a relatively high percentage of the population of Uttar Pradesh, but the conventional understanding of the caste system remain to be by which traditional priest-scholars are routinely labelled as the 'highest' social group, does not account for the vast range of occupations and socio-economic levels of people who claim this designation, nor for their internecine and often impassioned negotiation of relative status based on alleged purity of bloodlines. In Bhardwaj's film, it is revealed early on that Omkara's Brahman father sired him on a lower-caste woman—a blemish on the son's character that his enemies regularly invoke, calling him a *adha-Baaman* meaning half-Brahman and *adha-jaat* literally meaning half-breed. Thus, he is shown to have experiencing the unusual mixture of respect and mockery to which Omkara alias Othello is subject.[169]

Actor Devgan who plays the character of Othello, has swarthy complexion and crude features contrast starkly with Kareena Kapoor who plays Dolly's ethereal looks and European-like fairness. There is a clear exhibition of social differences. Omkara the protagonist is a hero who resides in a rural extended family and has acquired power through his strength, flamboyance, and loyal service to Bhaisahib. Dolly is the

daughter of a prosperous urban lawyer and is college educated; indeed, the fact that she attended the same college as the student leader Kesu whom Omkara's gang members dub as *Firangi* or outsider/foreigner because of his urban background. Kesu is eventually used by Langda to nurture Omkara's suspicion that Dolly secretly loves Kesu, who is more her equal in education and social position to him. Thus, the story of love and betrayal follows where the higher caste heroine is shown to be chaste whereas half caste protagonist Omkara carry flaw about his ethnicity, inferiority complex and corporal looks.[170] Due to these prejudices Omkara easily falls for Langda's persuasion. Ambition turns into vengeance and social stratification results into end of romantic saga.

4.4.51 Dharma (2007)

Director - Bhavna Talwar **Production - The Friday Fund - WSG Pictures**

Plot : The film is set in Varanasi (Banaras), one of the holiest pilgrimage destinations for Hindus. The wife of a poor but very orthodox Brahmin priest finds a baby boy who has been abandoned by a Muslim woman. The wife decides to hide the religious origins of the baby and brings him home since they do not have a son. The priest showers his love on the boy, only later discovering the truth that his wife has tried to hide from him. He decides to undergo a very rigorous penance for the religious infraction of touching a Muslim. In the midst of his torturous penance, the boy returns to seek refuge from religious fanatics who are attempting to murder him. The events that follow lead the Brahmin priest to realize that devotion to his deity involves humanity and compassion towards all human beings.[171]



Figure 67 The movie encourages religion as humanism. Screen grab : Film Dharma.

Review : Times of India reviewed the film as 'Anyone who makes therapeutic cinema in choleric times deserves a kudos. *Dharma* is a film that needs to be made mandatory viewing in all schools across India if we really want to build a secular nation, without

giving up on our traditional heritage. More importantly, it needs to be screened — free public viewings — for each and every fanatic organisation that exists within our country and in every communally sensitive town, kasbah, colony. Finally, it should be made compulsory viewing for some of our political leaders — and we won't take names — who have made a killing out of orchestrated communal frenzy and caste violence. Anyone who makes therapeutic cinema in choleric times deserves a kudos. Set against the scenic backdrop of the Benares ghats, the film ends up equating *Dharma* with its true tenets: the world is one big family; any discrimination on the basis of colour, caste and community is anti-dharm.[172] There are instances shown where caste system is practised, such as when the Pandit has his bath and returning back, a sweeper accidently touches him. Other person of Brahmin caste calls the other lower caste people and gets this sweeper brutally beaten up. Meanwhile the Pandit has returned to take dip again and purifies himself chanting holy verses. A foreigner who is capturing this incident by his camera enquires that what's going on. He is replied by the other Brahmins that "they are Brahmins and Lord Brahma personally has given us this superior caste". Other fellow man who is also Brahmin by caste states, 'That Shudra, that untouchable knows that his shadow also should not fall on us Brahmins, how dare he touched Pandit Chaturvedi'. When the child is brought in Pandit Chaturvedi's house he enquires about the child's caste to his wife and daughter and the wife lies to him the child is a Brahmin. When the child's identity of being a Muslim is revealed the Pandit takes strict penance called *Chandrayan Vrat*. A Kshatriya or warrior caste woman married to a US citizen and journalist against the will of her family is shown to have become widow and also being pregnant. The sitting position while discussing the issue if she can be taken back indicates the importance of religion and caste in the social hierarchy and existence. The woman as per the *dharm* or religion is allowed to live in seclusion with her mobility strictly restricted to small dark room. The movie concludes on notes on humanism, peaceful co-existence and equality. Gandhiji's favourite *bhajan* or devotional song '*Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram'* is played in background as Pandit and the child walks towards a new dawn.

4.4. 52 Eklavya - The Royal Guard (2007)

Director - Vidhu Vinod Chopra Production - Vidhu Vinod Chopra Production

Plot : It has been chronicled in the Geeta that Eklavya wanted to be Sage Dronacharya's disciple in order to excel at bow and arrow shooting, but was refused because of his low caste. He decided to teach himself, and did excel to such an extent that Dronacharya felt threatened that he would beat his ace disciple , Arjun so he asked Eklavya for his fee – his right thumb, which Eklavya dutifully cut off and presented to his Guru. Now in modern India, Nishab whose father was Eklavya, who gave his life trying to protect his master, has now been renamed Eklavya himself, and has been entrusted to guard the live of Rana Jaywardhan, Ranimaa Suhasinidevi, and their children, Harsh and Nandini, will be called upon to pay the ultimate price, after he learns that his master, the Rana has been killed. Eklavya, who also carries a dark family secret, slay the two assailant of the Rana, but then in the process also find out that the one who hired them is his very own son.[173]



Figure 68 Left: Eklavya the Royal Guard played by Amitabh Bachchan. Right: The real life Royal Guard. Courtesy : https://alchetron.com/Eklavya:-The-Royal-Guard; https://www.amazon.com/DollsofIndia-Rajput-Royal-Guard-Rajasthan/dp/B01EGW5DHM. Accessed : 13 August 2017.

Review: Set in the early years of Indian Independence, the movie involves a casteist, jealous and ungrateful ruler of Devigarh Rana Jayawardhan, who will not let his wife die in peace because she is uttering the name of Eklavya. The scheming landlords set in motion a chain of events that brings a lower caste police officer into the story, whereby allowing the film to take up a populist stand against evil minded rulers who meet out terrible treatment to the lower caste denizens in their princely realms.[174] The film begins with the story of Eklavya tribal and low caste[175] character form Mahabharata who sacrifices his utmost important possession for the sake of his master. This story sets the tone of the story and the protagonist is called Eklavya, inferior in caste and completely devoted his master. The caste is that Eklavya belongs

is shown to be serving the royal family from generation. The King or as called Rana is impotent and so his mother the Rani Ma takes his wife Suhasini devi for performing *putrakameshti yagna*, ritual for having a son to northern India. Eklavya the most honest royal guard is asked to establish relations with Rana's wife. Suhasini gives birth to twins a girl and a boy where the boy Harsh becomes the royal heir of the entire estate. Thus, the film deals with the subject of royal honour and their convenience and gives royalty to the blood of a lower caste than that of the Rana. The protagonist who is a servant belongs to indeterminate touchable caste but there is a vast gap in hierarchy, status and social standing with that of Ranas.

The film continuously determines real meaning of dharma. Eklavya's son reminds him of Dharma that is the one born out of intellect and something one mind and heart feel correct to do. It not something that is laid down by someone from centuries or verdict of the texts.

Another Dalit character in the movie is Panalal Chauhar, a Deputy Superintendent of Police who shows his arrogance against the feudal mentality of the Rajas. Panalal Chauhar goes to the king and sits in front of him without his permission. When king is about to call him Untouchable then Pannalal warns him by saying 'in our democracy, discrimination is crime' and you will be punished for it. He recalls about the suffering of his ancestors and states, 'We have suffered for 5000 years'. Pannalal makes the king aware about the rule of discrimination. He not only asserts his Dalit identity but also bristles against the caste based feudal oppression that still pervades part of Rajasthan. Pannalal mentions to his subordinate that his ancestor *Karwa Chauhar,* a Dalit was buried live inside a wall. The heads of lower caste people were smashed on walls like coconuts for avoiding any bad influence. He bows down and venerates to the status of *Karwa Chauhar* that is placed on the pillar of outer wall in the outer courtyard.



Figure 69 Police Inspector is proud of his lower caste status. He salutes his ancestor who was victim of upper caste atrocities. The lower caste were buried in wall to shoo away any negativity.

Screen grab : Film Eklavya - The Royal Guard.

The placement of statue was to stop the negative energy from entering the fortress, that is guarding the inner household and people living there. This is shown very relatively symbolic to the character of Eklavya.

4.4.53 Pairon Talle / Soul of Sand (2010)

Director - Sidharth Srinivasan **Production - Illusion Films**

Plot : A watchman with his wife lives in an abondened mine and is exploited by tyrannical landlord. Landlord's daughter is in love with a lower caste boy whom the landlord gets killed. His daughter commits suicide after knowing about her lover's death. The watchman rebel, who is trying to protect the couple. The film portrays modern day feudalism, sexual exploitation and caste discrimination through the plot.[176]



Figure 70 The story is set as of Caste, Custom, Commerce and Carnage. Courtesy : https://www.cinematerial.com/movies/pairon-talle-i1709731/p/dovhvxsp.

Accessed : 25 August 2016.

Review : *Pairon Talle: Soul of Sand* attempts to posit a change of the feudal order, which is its chief strength. Echoes, too, are evident of Shyam Benegal's *Ankur* (lord

and master exploiting his vassal's wife sexually), Dibakar Bannerjee's *Khosla ka Ghosla* (the venal corruption in the development of the National Capital Region), not to forget the stylistic nods to the Coen Brothers and Quentin Tarantino in the explosions of blood-splattering violence. The relationship between the watchman and his wife is at the core of the story. Guileless to the extent of being childish, apparently he doesn't have a clue about the fact that his master -- the proprietor of a barren silica mine -- demands sexual sessions from her, tossing her a crumpled Rupees five hundred note occasionally. The watchman's to servility born till the centuries-old exploitation spirals out of control. The master's plans to sell the mine backfire. His daughter elopes with a low-caste boyfriend. And the problem begins.

It's another eminently supportable, independent film which depends on its storyline and ideological fervour. The film's varnish-free, except for the over-coloured visuals in the post-production. The naturally photographed shots are by contrast, strikingly authentic.

Thus, Khalid Mohammad reviews in Deccan Chronicle, that those with a taste for socially concerned and hard-hitting cinema, should grab Pairon Talle. [177] The film Pairon Talle is considered to be a dark film that put forwards issue of class, caste, women exploitation and real estate predicaments.

4.4.54 Welcome to Sajjanpur (2008)

Director - Shyam Benegal Production - IX Faces Pictures, UTV Productions

Plot : It was Jawaharlal Nehru who changed the name of a small town Durjanpur to Sajjanpur. The town lacks adequate facilities such as electricity, safe drinking water, infrastructure etc. People own mobile phones but are illiterates. Only one resident fluent educated literate and knowing English is Mahadev Kuswah who lives with his mother. He help villagers correspond with letters for free. Amongst his clients are a snake charmer who is trying to make living with fake snakes and trying to locate his father, a eunuch Munnibai Mukhrani, Ram Kumar who is in love with a widow, Man Singh with a homicidal wife to stand for Municipal elections, Ramsakhi Pannawali who desperately wants to marry off her rebellious Manglik daughter Vindhya to a dog and Kamla whom Mahadev admires and whose husband is away for work. Mahadev realises his mistake on time and unite the couple. He ends up marry Vindhya and becomes a distinguished Hindi novel writer.

Review : The film projects modern day village and deals with political issue and social issues including caste system. Ms. Suparna Naresh and Dr. Jagadeesh Prakash in their article review that considering religion, the film maker has strong opinions on god men and men of cloth. A scene where the women are shown doing rituals to propitiate the gods for blessings on the event of the festival *Karva Chauth* (a ritual done in north India by womenfolk for the welfare of their husbands) is a case in point. The scene has the women offering money to the pundit or village priest for conducting the grand ritual or pooja as they call it. The pundit demands a great deal of money and is shown exploiting the simple women folk of the village. Through the eyes of the women we get to see their plight and those of millions of similar women in India. At another place superstitions related to religion are focused. Mahadev the protagonist often meets the only emancipated young woman of the village of Sajjanpur Vindhya, who is seen driving a Scooty (two wheeler) like any city bred woman, is gainfully employed and for all purpose has no care in the world. However this is not the only truth about her, being a *manglik* (born under questionable zodiac signs according to Indian society), she is considered unlucky by the villagers with the possible death of a husband if she were to marry. Her mother arranges for her wedding with a dog in order to get rid of the bad luck surrounding her.[178] The film explores caste system through the ritualism that is followed. Similarly caste is given importance and treated as a vote bank during election which too makes an important part of the storyline.

4.4.55 Teesri Azadi (2008)

Director - Anonymous **Production - Lord Communication Limited**

Plot : The film makes a journey from ancient to modern times to search answer for why are Shudras consider as low and untouchables. The narrator is a Shudra. The film begins with Aryan invasion where they destruct the abode of Shudras and began to narrate ten incarnations of Vishnu. Specific episodes are shown of Rama and rishi Shambhuk who is a Shudra and is later killed by him for he has learnt Holy Scriptures. This has resulted in the death of a Brahmin's son. Ram says Shudra can't acquire knowledge. This is followed by an incident from Mahabharata where Eklavya is prohibited from taking formal education in archery because he is an aborigine. However, Rishi takes his thumb to make Arjuna best archer.

This is followed by the rise of Buddhism against Brahmanical traditions. And to safe guard the religion Manu's Law codes are formed. Those were to authenticate punishments to be inflicted on lower caste on their defiance. Shankaracharya reemphasis on following the varana system and Manu's law meticulously.

The film then projects life of Shudra in Peshwa period where a low caste Tamasha woman is allowed the company of upper caste men but a Shudra is made to live in state of insult. The film takes a leap into modern period and reformist activities are highlighted especially of Mahatama Phule and his initiative for gaining education, Chhatrapati Shahu for reservation and special concessions to lower caste in Kolhapur and Dr. B R Ambedkar's movement at Mahad, Nasik and offering of *Manusmriti* to fire. The narrator appeals for becoming leader take control, establish own government to bring change that is required for annihilation of castes system.[179]



Figure 71 The film depicts injustice done to lower caste from ages and proposes to take government in their hand to bring desirable change. From above: Lord Rama following Dharma, story of Eklavya, Enlightenment of Lord Buddha, discourse on Hindusim by Shankarachrya, condition of Shudras in Peshwa period, Dalits unite, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Dalit movement, the narrator making an appeal. Sreen grab : Film Teesri Azadi.

Review : The movie doesn't have any credits. It gives an elaborate history of Shudras and untouchables. The film is set in episodes that begin with coming of Aryans, their propagation of Vedas and Puaranas. Likewise the story of Vishnu's avatars or incarnation is narrated and Director's view on hypocrite angles of Brahmanism behind it is explained. The story then leads into Ramayana and how Ram punishes a

Shudra Rishi Shabhuk with death for he learnt and discoursed on Vedas. The incident of Eklavya is further narrated to show injustice done by Kshatriya teacher. The film then show teaching of Buddhism and how people began to get attracted to that religion. The story takes a leap from ancient to medieval times and Brahmanism in Maharashtra is projected. This is followed by reformist activities of Mahatma Phule, Chattrapati Shahu and later the strong Dalit movement lead by Dr. Babasaheb Amebdkar.

The film makes a closing statement that first freedom was gained when British left India, second when Constitution of India was mad and now its times to gain third freedom that is by taking administration in hands and forming Government. The film has a victimised tone. It takes the audience through injustice done to Shudras from ancient times and gives a call to rise and empower. The movie created a lot of buzz at State and Central level and is discussed further in details in sub-chapter based on caste based film and controversies.

4.4.56 Ramchand Pakistani (2008)

Director - Mehereen Jabar **Production - Geo Films**

Plot : The story is situated in India- Pakistan border near Nagarparkar, Tharparkar where a lower caste Hindu family of Shankar lives. One day their son Ramchand gets angry at his parents and accidently crosses border. His father follows in search of him.

After being arrested by the border security personnel, they are sent to a prison in India and stay there for a long time. They get a release order soon, but later it turns out to be a mistake and they are sent back to the jail. Meanwhile, Ramchand's mother, Champa, leads a life of loneliness and although she takes a temporary job in a faraway place, she returns to her village. Finally, after a long, when Ramchand has grown a few years, he gets released. He returns home to his mother. His father, Shankar, also gets released soon after. They are united and there, the film ends. The singular theme of the film is how a child from Pakistan aged eight years learns to cope with the trauma of forced separation from his mother while being held prisoner, along with his father in the jail of a country (India), which is hostile to his own (Pakistan). Meanwhile, the wife-mother, devastated by their sudden disappearance builds a new chapter of her life, by her solitary struggle for sheer survival. [180]

Review : Inspired by an actual event, the narrative attempts to depict heavy irony that underlies relationship between Pakistan and India. Mr. Jabbar, the writer, notes that this story of difference ultimately seeks to convey a message of universality, but without compromising the inherent differences in identities of self, religion, or nationality. "While we are respecting the diversity and plurality of identities, we are trying to find the commonality of human values." [181] Commenting on Pakistan's ethnographic structure Jabbar "This is a country where 97 per cent of the population is Muslim. If one happens to be Muslim and poor, which is bad enough. But if you happen to be Hindu and come from the lowest caste, then you are completely at the bottom of the bottom. We wanted to show life from their perspective."[182] Reuters calls it a true-life Pakistan border drama and said that 'Ramchand Pakistani follows the young Hindu boy of the title, as he accidentally steps over the ill-defined border between old rivals India and Pakistan'.[183]

Thus, Ramchand Pakistani is derived from a true story concerning the accidental crossing of the Pakistan-Indian border during a period, June 2002 of extreme, war-like tension between the two countries by two members of a Pakistani Hindu family belonging to the 'untouchable' or a Dalit caste, and the extraordinary consequences of this unintended action upon the lives of a woman, a man, and their son. The singular theme of the film is how a child from Pakistan aged eight years learns to cope with the trauma of forced separation from his mother while being held prisoner, along with his father in the jail of a country that is, India which is hostile to his own, while on the other side of the border, the wife mother, devastated by their sudden disappearance builds a new chapter of her life, by her solitary struggle for sheer survival. Belonging to one of the lowest castes in Hinduism, the family is also part of a small minority of Hindus in a country, which is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The film portrays the lives of a family that is at the bottom of a discriminatory religious ladder and an insensitive social system, which is nevertheless tolerant, inclusive and pluralist. The irony is compounded by the fact that such a family becomes hostage to the acrimonious political relationship between two neighbour-states poised on the brink of war.[184]

The upper caste police officer when begins to develop affection for small Ramchand, she ask him to knot a thread on his hands for good omen. When he asks the officer to tie it on his wrist, she refuses and little Ramchand questions her that whether by touching him she will become dirty.



Figure 72 Film shows a sisterly relations developed between a lower caste boy and upper caste jail superintendent who initially believes in caste system. Being a lower caste he is given a menial work to do and later helped in studies and access to her room. She gives him a peck while leaving the job abandoning her earlier feeling of untouchability. Screen grab : Film Ramchand Pakistani.

Pakistani writer Muniba Kamal reviewing the film discussed caste system in film and stated, 'Kamla is a Hindu, very proper and strict, but a woman at heart. She meets the younger Ramchand and immediately gets clothes to fit him. But of course she doesn't like it when she discovers that he is Dalit an Untouchable. She gets him trained to sweep the floor, make tea and run errands like getting her video tapes of Bollywood films to watch in her office. But along with this, she educates him, teaches him to read and write and cares for him. He in turn becomes her eyes and ears in the prison and covers up for her when she is carrying on an affair with a policeman Deepak in her room. The most radical scene (in terms of Ramchand Pakistani being shown in India) is when she is leaving prison to marry Deepak. She gives Ramchand a kiss on the cheek and he smiles up at her. The relationship between them over a period of five years bridges the physical divide between Brahmin and Dalit. Mehreen Jabbar does it with ease, using the maternal instinct of a Brahmin woman for a Dalit child. I wonder if an Indian director would have done the same. It is nuances like this that make Ramchand Pakistani a landmark film'.[185]

4.4.57 Dilli 6 (2009)

Director - Rakesh Omprakash Mehra **Production - Sony Pictures**

Plot : Roshan Mehra visits city od Delhi to meet his grandmother. His mother is a Muslim. Roshan experiences politics in the name of religion and caste discrimination.



Figure 73 Jalebi the woman from sweeper caste. Courtesy: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0244890/. Accessed : 24 October 2016.

Review : The film echos the background of demolishing of babri Masjid. It shows communal tension. There is direct reference to caste distinction through the character of Jalebi who belongs to lower caste and is subject to repeated humiliations.

4.4.58 Mohan Das (2009)

Director - Mazhar Kamran **Production - Vertika Films.**

Plot : Mohan Das, a Dalit young man, is a topper in studies and is overjoyed when he is selected for a job in Oriental Coal Mines. But he is kept waiting and waiting to actually get the job. Long afterwards, when he has given up and somehow reconciled to it, he learns that someone else has assumed his name and has already taken his job. When he rushes to protest, he is beaten up and thrown out. The protagonist's identity, in fact, is stolen by an unscrupulous Brahmin character through a deep-rooted conspiracy involving the whole community, and this launches a heroic struggle for resistance. With many problems, politics and governmental-judicial flaws unfolding the fake Mohan Das is released, and the real Mohan Das loses his identity for good. The film ends with Meghna going back to Anupur in order to find Mohan Das. He has moved to a hill far from the village, lives in dire poverty, and when she knocks at the door calling for Mohan Das replies: "You are probably in the wrong place, there is no Mohan Das here!".[186]



Figure 74 Inspired from the name of Mahatma Gandhi, the movie caters to a new issue of Dalit identity and value related to it. Courtesy : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBnJmwbMOog ; https://www.amazon.com/Mohandas-Soundtrack-Bollywood-Movie-Songs/dp/B002NKSWWI. Accessed : 23 October 2016.

Review : The short story called 'Mohan Das' was published in *Hams magazine* in the Premchand anniversary issue in August 2005. It is a narrative of marginality, featuring a young Dalit resisting against the oppression of the hegemonic society, based on a real life story–that of Shobhalal of Gunwari in Madhya Pradesh.[187] The film begins with the note by Mahatma Gandhi and takes the audience sixty years later where with the issue of caste system, things have hardly changed.

Mohan Das, a Dalit young man, is a topper in studies and is overjoyed when he is selected for a job in Mohandas is a 2009 Hindi drama film directed by Mazhar Kamran, based on the story Mohan Das by noted Hindi writer Uday Prakash, who also wrote screenplay and dialogue for the film. Mazhar Kamran is at his debut film as director. The story is hard-hitting, and it has a willingness to engage; the film dares to raise uncomfortable questions that feel-good Bollywood generally prefers to ignore, and can be enjoyable for people who appreciate the parallel cinema of the 1980s. Di Alessandra Consolaro while reviewing the film introduces Mohandas as a counter-narrative on Dalitism, a multi-layered story of resistance and a critique of representational democracy. It is a story of marginality, featuring a young Dalit resisting against the oppression of the hegemonic society. Dalit oppression has been going on for ages but *Mohan Das's* story is the product of a distinct modernity (or post-modernity?). Uday Prakah constructs a sort of postcolonial version of M K Gandhi, as the Dalit hero shows a clear resemblance with the Mahatma. This is a choice going against the prevalent discourse in Dalit policy, based on Dr. B R Ambedkar and his emancipating Dalit iconography, especially if we consider the notorious contraposition between M K Gandhi and Dr. B R Ambedkar. In such a counter-narrative the meta-discourse of the Dalit unity is challenged by the

insurrection of little selves. This '*dalit avatār*' of Gandhi finds himself again and again in a helpless condition, but not even a single Gandhian activist or organisation is made available in the story to help him. Even while expressing a deep sympathy for Gandhian thought, this makes no allowance for any sympathetic argument about whatever is left of the Gandhian project in the contemporary world. The story portrays also a political and social change affecting contemporary Hindu society. In a rural and semi-urban setting a Brahmin usurps a constitutionally mediated scheduled caste identity, reserved for ex-untouchables, and while doing so neither he nor his all family show any hesitation for fear of ritualistic pollution. The movie ends with underline impression that there is absolutely no possibility of a redeeming future, as even the next generation is doomed: the conclusion states that Mohan Das's twelve years old son recently eloped and some say he's gone to Mumbai, others that he has joined the Naxalite groups in the forest. Mohandas raises uncomfortable questions that feel-good Bollywood generally prefers to ignore. It is not a film to be watched by people who are for entertainment only, but it can be thoroughly enjoyed by those who liked the great parallel cinema.[188]

4.4.59 Aakrosh (2010)

Director - Priyadarshan **Production - Big Screen Entertainer**

Plot : Three friends from Delhi go missing in a small village – Jhanjhar . It's two months and there is no clue about their disappearance. The media and students movement demand action from the authorities. It's then that the government orders a Central Bureau of Investigation enquiry with officers Siddhant Chaturvedi and Pratap Kumar to solve the case. Interestingly, the name Siddhant given to the police officer also reflects the character being the man of principles. They find it difficult to solve the case as the local police and other authorities are a part of *Shool Sena* aka Home Minister which is responsible for illicit activities. Siddhant and Pratap also face Superintendent of police Ajatshatru Singh IPS, a ruthless police officer who misuses his power. Not only that even the locals don't support the investigation. It's with the help of Roshni who is the daughter of the village head and also very wealthy, and Geeta, who is Ajatshatru's wife and Pratap's former love, that the investigation moves ahead. The suspense behind the missing three friends is revealed by Geeta who witnessed the killing of these boys by a local politician helped by her husband.[189]

This investigation is filled with many traps and thrills by Ajatshatru and his colleagues. They try to destroy the name of CBI in number of ways. Things get worse when Ajatshatru comes to know about her wife Geeta helping CBI. He then beats Geeta brutally with his belt behind closed doors and leaves her hospitalised. Pratap, filled with anger, traps each of the criminals by hacking their respective phone's databases and capturing their illicit activities on CCTV cameras. When it is Ajatshatru's turn, Pratap cuts him with a sharp razor and beats him brutally and mercilessly in a salon behind closed doors. The duo also manage to get one of the criminals to believe that the rest of the gang are behind him thinking he is rat, and that he had better become a government witness for their case. The criminal who intimidated was the one who actually was only guilty, in this case, only of disposing of and burying the bodies. After the trial we see him hiding behind a pillar and still being threatened by the guilty miscreants on their way to prison. The heaviest sentence received was ten years and the lightest was three years. Obviously justice is still blind because there was no sentence passed for the 300 villagers burned alive, the cruel beating of the wife, or the kidnap, abuse, and cutting of the tongue of Jhamunia.[190]

In the end all the criminals are sentenced to imprisonment. But the story does not end there. As everyone is leaving the court, Siddhant slips a revolver into village woman Jhamunia' hands, with which she manages to kill all the newly sentenced criminals. The film ends with Siddhant and Pratap bidding goodbye at the railway station, and Geeta running behind Pratap as he boards the train to leave, with Siddhant watching on.[191]

Review : The story deals with the issue of honour killing plot in the State of Uttar Pradesh and take the audience through the episodes of manhandling of the case and a revolt that takes a violent turn due to justice denied. The renowned film maker Priyadarshan made a serious thought provoking cinema Aakrosh. The film showcases how caste system in village is stronger than governmental structures where a Dalit CBI officer is hardly given his due recognition. The missing case of three medical students where one is an upper caste evolves into an intricate narrative of honour killings, corruption, political power and the eternal dynamics of good versus evil. To make story more interesting and reachable to masses it includes song dance sequence and some stunts. A Preeti Arora from rediff reviews, “What is commendable about

Aakrosh is the unpredictability of the tale. In times when audience are able to guess the outcome of the film it is refreshing to come across plot that keeps you speculating right till the end. It is everything a film of its genre should be. Realism: Bollywood style!"[192] The sights and scenes of rural Bihar are beautifully captured. Thus *Aakrosh* is a dark, violent, informative film packed with shock values which keep viewers at the edge of their seat. It makes comment on caste system in India where a Dalit is not allowed to marry an upper caste girl but is married off to a corrupt and notorious police officer who makes her life hell. Similarly, violent suppression of Dalits is shown which result in one of the women point blank shoot her tormentors who had cut off her tongue so that she doesn't give statement against them in court. It's difficult to see that this is happening in present day India and there are loopholes in court of justice which force the victim to take up arms. The film makes a strong commentary on upper caste community who resort to honour killing when they come to know that their daughter is romantically involved with a lower caste boy. The boy is shown to be pursuing medical studies and that doesn't give him any credit. His caste by birth makes him loose his life and investigating officers too are unable to grab real culprits. However justice is done by a lower caste woman who kills the killers and paves way for armed revolution which is also against the feudal setup.

4.4.60 Rajneeti (2010)

Director - Prakash Jha **Production - UTV Motion Pictures**

Plot : The film begins with the union of Sanyal a firebran leftist leader and renowned politician's daughter who gives birth to Sooraj who is left in a boat and found by a lower caste couple. The child gets abondened and is brought up by the family of lower caste. The city get grope in political power play where Sooraj gets involved on caste basis.[193]



Figure 75 The film explores caste and politics having its base in epic Mahabharata. The film represent rise of Dalit leadership. Courtesy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaBgMsJtDnQ ; http://bollywoodpal.blogspot.com/2010/05/rajneeti-2nd-look.html. Accessed : 25 January 2016.

Review : The film has strong casteist angle and has underline impression of the epic of Mahabharata. The character of Suraj is shown similar to Karna (simile) and his friendship and loyalty towards Veerendra Pratap as similar to that with Duryodhan. As Karna in the epic is always hinted for being low born, similarly Suraj found by a lower caste emerges as their leader in the film. Thus, *Rajneeti* explores caste and politics in India through epical lenses.[194]

4.4.61 Rakta Charitra (2010)

Director - Ram Gopal Verma

Production - Cloud Nine Movies, Vistaar Religare

Plot : The film meaning 'story of bloodshed'begins with a narration about politics and gangs in Ananthapur district, Andhra Pradesh. The opening scene of a murder in broad daylight, which the narrator calls 'rakta politics', sets the tone of the movie. Narasimha Reddy, a local politician, is a powerful man in the area. His close associate Veera Bhadra is his trustwothy ally for his political work, to the extent that Narasimha Reddy gives him freedom to contest Zilla Parishad polls with his men. Veera Bhadra champions the causes of the poor and oppressed class Dalits and they look up to him like their leader.[195]

Nagamuni Reddy, who is the local MLA of the district and close to Narasimha Reddy, becomes jealous of the budding trust between Veera Bhadra and Narasimha Reddy, and starts poisoning Narasimha Reddy against Veera Bhadra. Narasimha summons Veera Bhadra and asks him not to contest the polls with his contestants, but rather support Nagamuni Reddy's. Veera Bhadra lashes out at Narasimha Reddy for being unfair to the lower castes and storms out. Nagamuni Reddy calls for Manda, a close follower of Veera Bhadra, also of his own caste and manipulates him into

killing Veera Bhadra, giving him the assurance that if he does it, people will suspect the policies of Veera Bhadra as his own follower killed him and he will be the next in line as the leader of the poor people, else take his life. Manda reluctantly agrees to it. Veera Bhadra and his wife travel in a bus with 40 people to a wedding. Nagamuni's henchman Durga shoots at Veera Bhadra, making it look like Manda shot at him; prompting Manda about the deal he made with Nagamuni, he tells him to kill him in front of everyone. Manda takes a boulder and crushes Veera Bhadra's skull and kills him. This result in an agitation led by Shankar who wants to avenge his father's murder by killing all the men of Nagamuni and Narasimha Reddy. There enter Nagamuni's son Bukka Reddy, described as a ruthless man who enjoys raping women and killing men in brutal ways. Pratap Ravi, who is in college in the city, gets the news of his father's murder and rushes to the village. Nagamani Reddy orders local police inspector to kill Shankar in a fake encounter. When Pratap goes to the police station to ask about his brother, the inspector shows him Shankar's dead body and mocks him. Infuriated with this brother's murder, Pratap and Veera Bhadra's men kill all the police officers and the inspector. Pratap Ravi hides in the jungle with his father's associates and kills Narsimha Reddy, Manda and Nagamuni Reddy one after another.[196]

Shivaji Rao a film actor turned Politician and anti Bukka sends for Pratap and puts down a proposal of joining his party and ticket for contesting elections. On the other hand, Bukka Reddy makes his brother Puru Reddy contest for elections and tries to sabotage the voting process by stealing the ballots. Pratap starts his rampage by eliminating, one by one, every rival of his party. As Bukka's men fail in rigging the election process, Pratap wins by a majority. Immediately, Bukka Reddy is arrested. Puru Reddy seeks the help of opposition leader Sethji's help in influencing the release of Bukka on bail. As soon as Pratap learns of this news, he looks out for the location where Bukka is hiding. Bukka, inflamed with the desire to avenge his father's death, hides out in an apartment with his men, and plots to kill Pratap Ravi. Pratap comes to know about his hideout devises a plan to execute him. He immediately gathers his men and calls Babu Qadri, who had sought Pratap's help in avenging his sister, to lead the execution of Bukka Reddy. Babu shoots Bukka while h is escaping and hacks him repeatedly with his axe, venting his anger. Pratap Ravi, being at the peak of his power with Shivaji Rao's full support, invites all the gangsters of the state to his place for

lunch; after lunch he orders everyone to stop their illegal activities or face the music, emphasising the power that he has in the state now.[197]



Figure 76 Film project rise of Dalit leadership that includes enormous violence.

Screen grab: Rakta Charitra.

Review : *Rakta Charitra* is story of caste politics. However the director Ram Gopal Verma uses more naked violence and plot is presented as a dramatic war between lower castes and upper castes rather than presenting it as a social issue. Veerbhadra who belongs to lower caste and is deceived by his political mentor Shetty and his aid feels very cheated and deprived and call for his caste fellow to rise against this injustice. In his inspiring speech he says to his community fellowman. "Where is it written that we are born to serve them (upper caste)? And if any such literature is there then tear it off. Cut that tongue that calls you lower caste". He states that they can only show their power and get justice by contesting upcoming Zilla Parishad elections. The will have to snatch their right if not given. Veerbhadra calls for violent revolution and says that his community fellow had used sickle in farms now they should use this as weapon to kill opponents.

Meanwhile Reddy order to kill Veerbhadra and this is done by his Veerbhadra's own community man. The song in the background plays that say, "this is today's Mahabharat". In later time when Veerbhadra's second son enters politics the caste politics again begin. Pratap gets whole hearted support from his own caste people and mentor actor turned politician Shivaji and wins the election and becomes a minister. The lower caste man becomes enormously empowered by money, power and public support. The movie ends on a note that Pratap becomes the unprecedented power symbol. The movie sets to tell the story of justice through violence and gives solution of emancipation through constitutional means. The caste of the protagonist seems to become irrelevant as he progresses to become an eminent political figure.

4.4.62 Aarakshan (2011)

Director - Prakash Jha **Production - Prakash Jha Production**

Plot : This movie shot in the city of Bhopal, is set in the year 2008 when Supreme Court's Bill about reservation for the lower castes was passed. This bill gave special privileged to people of the lower caste for employment and education opportunities. It centres on the well reputed principal Prabhakar Anand of a renowned college STM. The film begins with Deepak Kumar a schedule caste turned down for a job in a private school because of his lower caste background. He is offered a job at STM who does not support such distinction. When Supreme Court ruling comes out in April 2008, it turns the upper caste student group against lower caste student group also turning Deepak Kumar's close ally Sushant Seth into upper caste student's group. The movies further take an overview of both the sides and ascertain its effects on everybody's life. Principal and Deepak Kumar finally set up a class with no caste distinction and see no point in fighting. Whereas Mithilesh Singh another teacher supporting casteism is seen exploiting the situation, extract money and rise to higher position. In the end all caste people unite against Singh's politics and system collectively. The movie ends on positive secular note.[198]



Figure 77 Left: Saif Ali Khan as a Dalit Professor. Right: Film discusses reservation in education system. Courtesy: https://www.quora.com/What-is-your-review-of-Aarakshan-2011-movie; https://www.koimoi.com/box-office/aarakshan-weekend-box-office-rs-18-crore/. Accessed 24 January 2016.

Review : The movie which features leading stars of Indian film industry created a ripple in the society on the issue of reservation. Jha who shot the film in Bhopal in a fifty five days schedule feels that it's important for youth to understand the subject for the betterment of their future. Jha states, "The film brings out all aspects of reservation and puts it in a way that the audience gets a better understanding on the subject. More than creating a debate, I think it would make people understand the realities and pain of both sides – the upper and backward classes and make them think of giving a new direction to our education system. The movie will entertain and go

but I hope people understand that it is a story of every child of our country. Everyone these days is worried about how their children will study, what the cost be going to be...and that is an important national, social worry that film is going to point out." Jha felt that youth will be the direct beneficiaries of this movie and Jha who failed to make big in the political scenario after losing two elections, also promises that his future cinematic projects, he will "continue dealing with social changes".[199]

Jha further opines, 'The film brings out all aspects of reservation and puts it in a way that the audience gets a better understanding on the subject. More than creating a debate, I think it would make people understand the realities and pain of both sides – the upper and backward classes and make them think of giving a new direction to our education system. The movie will entertain and go, but I hope people understand that it is a story of every child of our country. Everyone these days is worries about how their children will study, what the costs are going to be...and that is an important national, social worry that the film is going to point out at. Youth will be 'direct beneficiaries' of the film." With this the director promises to continue to make films dealing with social changes.[200]

4.4.63 Khap (2011)

Director - Ajai Sinha **Production - Anand Films**

Plot : Ria daughter of Madhur Chaudhary falls in love with other caste fellow Kush. They get married but after returning from their honeymoon are trapped into inhuman customs followed by villagers designated as Khap Panchayat. Madhur finds out that the area is dominated withthe members of Khap Panchayat who have their own dictated set of rules.[201]



Figure 78 Khap a film on honour killing due to different *gotra* sub-caste couple gets married. Courtesy: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1801521/; http://www.glamsham.com/wallpaper/khap/images-33778.htm. Accessed : 24 January 2016.

Review : Gaurav Malani from Times of India reviews Khap the movie as based on the theme of honour killings starts with a customary prologue where a couple is burnt to death by villagers for marrying within the same *gotra* or clan. He states that, 'Honour killing is a widespread issue in Northern India where several communities do not consent to marriages within the same clan and any couple who attempts so is brutally slaughtered by their kin. Several such cases have made newspaper headlines. The film fails to give an in-depth view of this belief. There seems to be absolute disregard in delving deep into the history, origin, logic or rural belief behind same-clan marriages and the film touches the theme of honour killings only on an external level with the intent to sensationalize.[202]

The movie doesn't make a strong impact on the audience and present the issue romanticised way. Also to put a pretence that the film doesn't get one-sided on the theme of same-clan marriages, you have an impromptu monologue by an abruptly introduced a character, who explains how marriages within the same kinship can lead to genetic disorder. But the entire scene seems like an excuse to appease the Khaps, village social units by giving them a clean-chit character certificate after abusing them throughout. The political association and aspirations of the Khaps is momentarily touched upon but never elucidated. There is no attempt to educate the illiterate villagers on the biological permissible limits of same-clan marriage. Neither is there any attempt to eradicate the practice of honour killings. The only utmost reformation that the film attempts is that the hero effortlessly gets an order from the Supreme Court in merely 2 days that legalizes his same-gotra marriage. [203]

Consequently, this movie may be reviewed in light of the documentary *Izzatnagar Ki Asabhya Betiyan*[204] a film by Nakul Singh Sawhney that gives an overview of the Khap Panchayat, their ideology and how they perform. Khap can either be of cluster of neighbouring villages or an association of people from the same clan. This membership can vary from 20 to 84 villages. As the movie Khap primarily deals with honour killing the researcher probed into its basics. The documentary also includes screening of movie *Khap* to members of Khap Panchayats and records their mixed reactions. The documentary informs that basically Khaps are known by their village names in Haryana such as Banwala Kahp, Kadyan Khap, Rohtak Khap, Benival Khap and etc. Hookah or tobacco pipe is most important part of their culture. Men share hookah as a mark of community living and belongingness and is a symbol of honour. Thus, a person going against community norms are devoid of this sharing

and excommunicated. This is called as *Hookah Pani band Karna* or not allowing to access the community pipe and water. In last decades the self-styled Panchayats such as Khap have primarily assembled to pass verdicts on 'contentious marriages'. While vehemently denying that khap panchayats have any role to play in honour killings, voices like those of khap ideologue Chander Singh Dalal clearly explain how Khaps perceive these issues. "Marry a Muslim if you must, marry a Christian, marry an old man, or a cripple of lame or even outside the village. But don't marry in the same village and the same *gotra*," he says in the film.[205] Khap follows a indiscreet norm of public gaze that says 'As long as people act discreetly no one will object to anything they do. It's when these acts are committed in the public gaze that people are considered guilty' by them.

A girl married in one family is considered to have connected to the family of her in laws for seven generations. And therefore no other girl in future will be married in there as they become brother and sister. However, the crux of the issue lies elsewhere. The documentary gives example of Gaurav Saini and Monika Dagar case where Khap strongly objected as marriage was between upper and lower caste. They viewed this as Dalit attempt to rise at par with the upper castes. There is another interesting perspective to this. The Khap panchayat members are land owners and aware of Government law of daughter's share in property. With her inter caste marriage especially to a lower caste would transfer the property to that community and the dweller would become owners which will change the societal age old structure, that is break caste hierarchy. So issue is about Landowners and Landless. Thus, ownership of land that is a matter of honour and prestige and property rights is a matter of strong concern with Khaps. This has thus mainly led to rise in the number of honour killings which is taking place not only to avenge defacing family honour but also to stop property claims if made.

Some Khaps have raised strong objection over co-educational institutions, watching of Television and Films and use of mobile by girls. Friendship with boys is considered to be bad. Khap in general considers marriage by choice as detrimental for their community.

Norms, customs, traditions and practise are usually enforced on women. Interestingly, majority of honour killings reported are of killing of girls by her Parents and community people and this is more prevalent if the boy belongs to lower caste community. The bench mark case of Manoj and Babli where girl's relatives brutally

killed the couple as 'honour killing' where sentenced to death for the first time. In her verdict, district judge Vani Gopal Sharma stated that, "This court has gone through sleepless nights and tried to put itself in the shoes of the offenders and think as to what might have prompted them to take such a step. Khap Panchayats have functioned contrary to the Constitution ridiculed it and have become a law unto themselves."[206]

After movie *Khap* was banned in Haryana a special screening was made for the members of Khap Panchayat and the documentary records following reaction from the embers of the Khap. One said , "This is to defame the Khaps" while others said 'Khaps have never passed a diktat to kill a person... what they have shown is completely wrong... While the Khaps are been defamed the entire country will be in ruins... The movie has defamed entire Haryana...' Some finally called it '*Bahut gandi movie hai* (Movie is very bad)... They don't know what Khap is... Khap provides justice. They give their children to protect the Nation'. *Khap* usually are seen quoting Manusmruti and other religious texts. Paradoxically, violation of *gotra* is not taken into consideration in the matter of crimes such as rape and murder. There in regards to offender, the matter of honour is not put to stake.[207]

Thus, movie *Khap* though not effectively put forth the serious issue of honour killing but atleast it attempted to bring the issue up. Marathi movie *Sairat* in 2016, based on caste discrimination and honour killing received huge box office response and national recognition.

4.4.64 Shudra - the Rising (2012)

Director - Sanjiv Jaiswal **Production - Rudraksha Productions**

Plot : *Shudra – The Rising* is a poignant tale of strenuous rule and regulations imposed on a group of people, who were condemned to sub-human existence. The film is based in feudal setup where Shudra's are treated very inhumanly. The landlord who is a higher caste man is a womaniser and an oppressor. He is calls for a Shudra woman who is pregnant and badly beats her husband to death when he tries to protect her. Another Shudra couple's child recites some hymns from Holy Scripture to which his tongue is cut as a punishment and the child dies. The oppression goes on increasing and some Shudra men resort to violence they revolt. They kill landlord's son and landlord avenge this by burning out the entire ghetto of Shudras, kill them

and brings total destruction. The film ends with remembering and paying tribute to Mahatma Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Martin Luther King Jr. for their extraordinary work for depressed classes and fight for justice.



Figure 79 Poster of Movie Shudra – The Revolt. Courtesy: https://www.scoop.it/t/govtgravpigschucu/p/4097825665/2018/05/18/shudra-the-rising-full-movie-in-hindi-watch-free; http://www.bollywoodhungama.com/movie/shudra-the-rising/. Accessed : 2 September 2016.

Review : Shudra is based on about 250 million people born outcaste in Hindu Varna system. They were treated as unclean & impure and averse being touched. Even their shadow was avoided to be fallen on the upper castes. They are called by different names Chandaal, Antyaja, black Caste, Harijan, Schedule caste & Shudras or the untouchables. The film shows different humiliations caused tp lower caste person and trouble they had to go through. Instances are shown such as an out caste man, a Shudra dies for want of a sip of water, a child publicly violated by cutting of tongue for uttering Hindu holy Mantras, a pregnant woman forced in the physical submission, a wounded man dies for the need of medical treatment, just because the person is born as a Shudra-The Untouchable. The film project the society's hypocrisy through a dialogue of a lower caste woman, that otherwise who are treated as 'untouchables' get allowed to be touched and violated when it comes to derive physical pleasure. The film explain the evolution of man and state a belief that nature took ages to make man out of animal, but it took moments for certain men to make their fellow human animal again. The film highlights the depth of evil human mind can succumb, to cling on to power and supremacy. The film aspires to be a historical reminder of the danger of division and segregation, issues which are as relevant today as it was then. The rebellion of few depressed class men is crushed by infliction of more violence on them by the upper caste landlord resulting in burning of their ghettos and execution.



Figure 80 Deplorable condition of Shudras shown in the movie.

Screen grab: Film Shudra – The Rising.

Sanjiv Jaiswal opines, "Casteism is a poison of the society - it catalyses discrimination, malignity and disparity. Our film has a motive to expose agonise of ancient times to extremists of present age who are still supporting and promoting this poison into the society. Our efforts will be successful even if few people take cognizance to it".[208] He further added that, "Shudra is a heartfelt dedication to warriors like Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jyotiba Phule, Shivaji Maharaj and other unsung heroes, who fought and are still fighting for justice, equality, freedom and respect of the oppressed classes. My aim is to make younger generation aware of the scourge".[209]

Observations :

Films based on the issue of caste discrimination in India represent the said issue in various perspectives. Films sometimes take a holistic view of the issue and comment on broader or wider arena, whereas sometimes situate the narration of the issue in a regional setup and represent discrepancies. Thus, the space varies from urban to rural set up , from region – specific to dynamism.

We may observe changing trends in Hindi cinema in post independence period and so does the representation of caste issue. The films presented the issue from socialist point of view, to feudal, to political to electoral to bio- pics. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru a socialist policy was adopted whose effect can be seen in movies. The concern appears to be dilution of caste system to form a classless

society. The films thus treat the caste issue as a national issue and cinematic treatment given to the subject tend to be comprehensive. Message to bring reformation is imparted through films such as *Char Dil, Char Rahein*.

With the influence socialist element and coming up of IPTA movement film makers not only did correspond to caste system alone but began to treat the subject with economic outlook. Caste system and feudal order, caste system urbanization, and migration, caste class and politics, formed the base of story line.

We may observe that trends in representation of caste system in Hindi cinema and reformist message it aspire to convey. Immediately after independence the approach became secular and emancipator. There was religious inclusion and the caste issue was romanticized under the influence of Nehruvian is ideology such as Bimal Roy 's *Sujata*. Films aspired to show dilution of caste system for creating a classless society with reaching social equilibrium, rather than casteless society. Later with feudalism and caste issue mass rebellion is propounded as a solution to autocracy.

Later to Nehruvian period, the films exhibited extension of similar ideas but in a more realistic manner. The films made by Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal and others were hard hitting and brought a new trend in film making in India, popularly called Indian New Wave Cinema. These films though were not commercial successes but are placed as India's finest movies and makers amongst internationally acclaimed film fraternity. The alternate cinema brought a new form of film making in India.

The films both commercial and art based were made. It is notable that prominent film directors and actors of commercial cinema made and acted as a member of depressed class in Hindi movies. Some movies explored old traditions and caste system in modern India such as Devdasi system lading into prostitution and lower caste status such as in *Giddh*, Bhavai tradition and caste system in *Bhavni Bhavai*, Sati system and caste in *Mahayatra* and called for reformation by representing the problem in utmost realistic manner. Some films also presented stories based on real life social movements such as milk revolution and caste system in Gujarat in *Manthan*, Swadhyay movement in *Antarnaad* and peasant movement and caste system in *Samar*. The commercial cinema such as *Chameli Ki Shaadi, Dilli 6,*

Welcome to Sajjanpur, Eklavya, Dharma, Swadesh, Lagaan, Lajja, Chach 420 dealt with issue of caste system and its discrimination and suggested reformation.

The film plots mostly represented feudal order and caste system vis-à-vis exploitation of women. There too were some Hindi commercial films made such as *Souten, Ganga Ki Saugandh, Prem Rog, Jag Utha Insaan*, starring super stars such as Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor, Rakesh Roshan on peak of their career acting in films based on caste system. From 1980s, films discussed caste and politics and placed the plots in a region-specific domain. Sometimes they derived their inferences from the epics Ramayan and Mahabharat. We get long range of films pertaining to caste and politics such as *Damul, Arakshan, Rakht Charitra, Rajneeti , Omkara* and so on. Post 1990s, films adapted real life incidents as their base stories and put forth the vagaries of caste system in Indian society as in the films *Bandit Queen* and *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Bhawandar*. Some film makers preferred colonial past to remind evils of caste discrimination and tried to suggest reformative ways. The film like *Water* re-approached caste system and plight of higher caste widows in colonial set up, still existing in places like Brindavan and Mathura, untouchability as in *Shudra* and so on.

Thus, films in post independence India show variations in representations and suggest reformation by giving profane elucidation.

Notes and References :

[1] Our Review, '"Pujari" – Boring And Unconvincing Stuff" Bipin Gupta Gives Good Performance!', *Filmindia*, February, 1948, p. 47.
[2] Ibid., p. 48.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Our Review, 'K. B Lal's "Samrat Ashok" is Mockery of History, Gorgeous and Spectacular Film Caricatures Indian History's Greatest Emperor', *Filmindia,* May, 1948, p. 54.
[6] 'Three Months of Censoring' , *Filmindia*, January, 1948, p. 15.
[7] Our Review, 'Shantaram Vindicates "Tamasha", Popular Maharashtrian Folk Music Is Starred in "Ram Joshi' *, Filmindia*, May, 1948, p. 40.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., p. 41.
[10] Kiran Shantaram with Sanjit Narwekar, *V. Shantaram, The legacy of the Royal Lotus*, New Delhi : Rupa & Co., 2003, p. 56.
[11] Ibid., p. 57.
[12] 'Three months of Censoring', *Filmindia,* January 1948, p. 13.
[13] Film Review, 'More "Neech" Than "OOnch"! Rise, Decline and Fall of The Once Mighty New Theatres', *Filmindia*, July, 1948, p. 51.

[14] Ibid., p. 52.
[15] Our Review, "Geet Govind" Turns Out a Boring Confusion! Poet Jaideo Becomes Miracle Monger!, *Filmindia*, March, 1948, p. 52.
[16] Ibid., p. 53.
[17] Our Review, ' "Paroo", Untouchable Trash on Untouchabilty! Picture Provides Killing boredom!', *Filmindia*, April , 1949, p. 55.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Firoze Rangoonwalla, *Bimal Roy A Monogram by Firoze Rangoonwalla*, Pune : National Film Archives of India, 2009, p. 93.
[20] Ibid., p. 94.
[21] Ibid., p. 10.
[22] Ibid., p. 33.
[23] Ibid., p. 12.
[24] Researcher has viewed the film and scribed the plot. Plot also available on https://memsabstory.com/2009/10/11/Char-dil-char-rahen-1959/. Accessed : 12 December 2016.
[25] http://memsabstory.com/2009/05/26/cha-cha-cha-1964/. Accessed : 28 December 2016.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Researcher has viewed the movie and scribed the plot. Plot also available on httptt://www.imdb.com/title/tt147855/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 12 December 2016.
[28] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Detailed plot summary available on https://www.arthousecinema.in/2014/03/ankur_1974/. Accessed : 22 February 2017.
[29] http://www.zeeclassic.com/gossip/shabana-azmi-shyam-benegal%E2%80%99s-landmark-film-%E2%80%98ankur%E2%80%99. Accessed : 8 March 2017.
[30] Sangeeta Dutta, *Shyam Benegal*, New Delhi : Roli Books, 2002, pp. 1-2.
[31] Ibid., p. 64.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Qurrantulain Hyder, Film Review, 'Ankur Is A First Rate', *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 14 July 1974, p. 49.
[34] Omar Ahmed, *Studying Indian Cinema*, London : Auteur Publishing, 2015, p. 138.
[35] Ibid., pp. 137 -38.
[36] John Wood, *The Essentail Mystery*, New Delhi : Orient Longman, 2000, pp. 188- 189.
[37] Ibid., p. 139.
[38] Ibid., p. 140.
[39] http://omarsfilmblog.blogspot.in/2009/03/nishant-nights-end-dir-shyam-benegal.html. Accessed : 22 Febrauary 2017.
[40] Sangeeta Dutta, op.cit., p. 86.
[41] Ranjit Guha in *On Some aspects of the Historigraphy of Colonial India*, states, 'What clearly is left out of this un-historical historiography is the politics of the people. For parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed another domain of Indian politics in which the principle actor were...the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and the inter-mediate strata in town and country- that is the people.'
[42] Sangeeta Dutta, op.cit., p. 88.
[43] Ibid., p. 86.
[44] http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Kondura. Accessed : 23 February 2017.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] http://www.letstalkaboutbollywood.com/article-kondura-religious-power-is-stronger-than-men-125530261.html. Accessed : 2 February 2017.
[48] Ibid.
[49] See - Merriam and Webster dictionary defines, 'The principles, ideals, or practice of producing fantastic or incongruous imagery or effects in art, literature, film, or theater by means of unnatural or irrational juxtapositions and combinations'.

[50] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077596/plotsummary?ref_tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 26 February 2017.
[51] Ibid., p. 91.
[52] Ibid., p. 92.
[53] Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (ed.), *Questions of Third Cinema*, London: British Film Institute publications, 1989, p. 2.
[54] The Nehruvian vision was one of modernising villages and of rapid industrialisation. This is reflected in his development proposal of first five year plan.
[55] A reference is made to the churning of sea by Gods and demons in Hindu mythology.
[56] Sangeeta Dutta, op. cit., p. 97.
[57] John Wood, op. cit., p. 197.
[58] Third cinema refers to films made in Third World countries that the countries whose views are not aligned with NATO and capitalism or the Soviet Union and communism. The term Third World started during the Cold War.
[59] Pines & Willemen (ed.), op. cit., p. 4.
[60] Teshome H.Gabriel, 'Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films', in film Quarterly, *Question of Third World Cinema*, Volume no. 45, no.2, University of California, Winter 1991-92, p. 35.
[61] Sangeeta Dutta, op. cit., p. 99.
[62] Sunday Review, *Times of India*, 2 August, 1998.
[63] Sangeeta Dutta, op. cit., pp. 94-95.
[64] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Also reference has been made to https://filmitalksblog.wordpress.com/page/21/; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BhavniBhavai. Accessed : 29 November 2016.
[65] The legend goes as, an office in the royal army once abducted Ganga, the daughter of a village headman. Asait went for her help and performed songs that so much pleased the office that he asked for a reward. Asait asked for Ganga's freedom stating that she is his daughter. The officer refused to believe and Asait to prove it by eating in the same plate with her. Though Asait succeeded in saving girl's honour the orthodox Brahmin community he belonged excommunicated his family as a punishment. Ganga's father provided Asait with land and he settled down among the peasants, strengthening his ties with the lower caste by eating with them and marrying members of his family into the community. The *targalas* born of this union, finally became the traditional performers of the Bhavai.
[66] Shampa Banerjee, *Bhavni Bhavai* (A Folk Tale), Calcutta : Seagull Books, 1986, p. v.
[67] Ibid., p.viii.
[68] Ketan Mehta has acknowledged the debt in the film credits.
[69] Ketan Mehta, 'Bhavni Bhavai', *Filmfare* Magazine, 1981.
[70] Shampa Banerjee, op. cit., p. ix.
[71] Udayan Gupta, 'Interview with Mrinal Sen, Girish Karnad and Ketan Mehta', *Cineaste*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1982), Cineaste publishers Inc., pp. 18 – 24. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41686086, Accessed : 13 October 2018.
[72] Ibid. p. 23.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid. p. 24.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Heidi R M Pauwel (edt.), *Indian Literature and Popular Cinema : Recasting Classics*, London: Routeledge, 2007, p. 64.
[77] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Plot summary also available on https://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/aakrosh-1980/article5894709.ece. Accessed : 7 August 2016.
[78] Shalini Pradhan, 'Nihalani establishes a realm of dread – dimly lit, tree-lined alleys, menacing faces...' *Filmfare* Magazine, November 16-30, 1980, p. 45.
[79] http://www.filmref.com/directors/dirpages/nihalani.html. Accessed : 20 March 2017.
[80] http://www.satyajitray.org/films/sadgati.htm. Accessed : 9 August 2016.

[81] Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray The Inner Eye*, New York : I.B.Tauris, 2004, p. 257.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Rupert Snell, *SADGATI - Deliverance*, screenplay by Satyajit Ray and Amrit Rai based on the short story by Premchand, London : SOAS publication, p. 41.
[84] Robinson, op. cit., p. 261.
[85] In his writing *Creative Unity* Rabindranath Tagore states that a Sudra is the name of which 'symbolises a man who has no margin around him beyond his bare utility'.
[86] John Wood, op. cit,. p. 94.
[87] Ibid.
[88] A Schedule Tribe community in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
[89] Robinson, op. cit., p. 262.
[90] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Plot also available on http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0348078/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 22 March 2016.
[91] Dailogue in Hindi – "Hum Harijan is apman kau hajaron saalo se odhte bichate aa rahe hai".
[92] 'Paar/The Crossing – The River as Life and Death', *Elipses- The Accent of Cinema, Social Realism*, (online), 13th November 2010, http://omarsfilmblog.blogspot.in /2010/11/ paar-crossing-dir-goutam-ghose-1984.html. Accessed: 25th June 2016.

[93] http://filumchillum.blogspot.in/2013/09/damul-1984.html, published on 24th September 2013. Accessed : 27th June 2016.
[94] 'Damul', *Sunday Observer*, March l0, I985.
[95] 'Damul', *The Telegraph*, Saturday, February 9, 1985.
[96] 'Damul', *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Friday, February 8, 1985.
[97] Researcher has viewed the film and scribed the plot. Detailed plot available on http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0260928/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 18 March 2017.
[98] www.musicnmovies.com/metromaaza/2016/01/giddh-the-vulture-1984.html#.WP_BPNFSKP8.. Accessed : 19 March 2017.
[99] Ibid.
[100] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghulami. Researcher has viewed movie and agrees with the plot summary.
[101] 'Raghubhai, An Underrated Movie', Jan 31, 2006, https://www.mouthshut.com/review/Vijay-Bollywood-review-outtsposu. Accessed: 19 March 2017.
[102] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamas_(film), Accessed: 23 September 2016.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Plot also available on https://en.wikipedia.org/Wiki/Jaag_Utha_Insan. Accessed : 28 February 2017.
[105] As mentioned in Hindu religious text *Manusmriti*.
[106] https://www.revolvy.com/page/Tera-Naam-Mera-Naam. Accessed : 26 September 2016.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Detailed plot available on http://www.imdb.com/title/tto214903/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 27 September 2016.
[109] https://www.arthousecinema.in/2014/06/antajali-jatra-1987/. Accessed : 27 September 2016.

[110] https://wiki.indiancine.ma/wiki/Antarjali%20Jatra/Mahayatra. Accessed : 27 September 2016.

[111] Priyanka Dasgupta, 'CBFC should be a monitoring agency: Ghose', *Times of India,* (online), 2 January 2016, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/CBFC-should-be-a-monitoring-agency-Ghose/articleshow/50421764.cms. Accessed: 28 September 2016.
[112] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Reference has been made to http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0155499/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 23 February 2017.
[113] http://sociologyspace.blogspot.in/2012/02/movie-review-diksha1991.html. Accessed : 28 June 2016.

[114] Sangeeta Dutta, *Shyam Benegal*, New Delhi : Roli Books, 2002, p. 168-173.
[115]Mahuya Bhaumik, 'Rudali The Mourner : The Cry of Marginal', *Episteme: an online interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary & multi-cultural Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, June 2015, Mumbai, p. 81-82.
[116] Ibid., p. 80.
[117] Mahuya Bhaumik, op. cit., pp. 83-85.
[118] Ibid.
[119] https://www.filmfare.com/features/know-your-actor-dimple-kapadia-18438-3.html. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[120] Plot also available on http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108001/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl. Accessed : 5 April 2017.
[121] http://www.fandango.com/banditqueen_42490/plotsummary. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[122] http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/bandit-queen-1995. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[123] https://www.theguardian.com/film/2008/apr/25/drama.worldcinema. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[124] http://www.imdb.com/reviews/36/3601.html. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[125] Kevin Thomas, 'Bandit Queen' and Explosive Epic Tale, 30 June 1995, http://articles.latimes.com/1995-06-30/entertainment/ca-18732_1_bandit-queen. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[126] http://shekharkapur.com/blog/2011/01/bandit-queen-shoot-and-the-caste-system/. Posted on blog on 24th January 2011 by Shekhar Kapoor. Accessed : 10 April 2017.
[127]http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/arrogance-of-intellectual-club-oppressive-says-shekhar-kapur/. Accessed : 12 April 2017.
[128] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0278761/. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[129] http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/fire-1997. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[130] Ibid.
[131] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samar_(1999_film). Accessed : 16 August 2016.
[132] Sangeeta Dutta, op. cit., p. 173.
[133] Meenakshi Shedde, 'A Tale with a Twist', *Times of India*, 9 May 1999, p. 12.
[134] Sangeeta Dutt, op. cit., p. 174.
[135] Saibal Chatterjee, 'An Indian Samar', *Outlook Magazine*, 23 August 1999, p. 58.
[136] Sangeeta Dutt,, op. cit., p. 177.
[137] Ibid.
[138] http://www.haro-online.com/movies/sand_storm.html. Accessed : 30 March 2017.
[139] http://www.lokvani.com/lokvani/article.php?article_id=46. Accessed : 31 March 2017.
[140] https://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/2001/03/04/stories/130406/l.html. Accessed : 31 March 2017.
[141] Ambarish K Diwanji, 'Classic Epic', December 21, 2000, http://www.rediff.com /entertain/2000 /dec/21ambed.htm. Accessed : 21 March 2017.
[142] C.B. Kairmode, *Dr. Bhimrav Ramji Ambedkar : Vol II*, Bombay : Bauddhjan Panchayat Samiti Publication, 1958, pp. 117-18.
[143] Eleanor Zelliot, 'Gandhi and Ambedkar- A study of Leadership' in Ishita Banerjee- Dube (ed.) *Themes in Indian History,* New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 199.
[144] Ibid., p. 203.
[145] S. Viswanatha, 'Ambedkar Film: better late than Never', *The Hindu*, 24 May 2010, p. 14.
[146] Ibid.
[147] 'Gandhi pushed Ambedkar to the edge', Film Director Jabbar Patel interviewed by Pritish Nandy, http://www.rediff.com/entertai/2000/jun/27jabb.htm. Accessed: 10 April 2017.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

[153]https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263132368_Portrayal_of_cast_in_hindi_cinema. Accessed : 14 April 2017.
[154] Ibid.
[155] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0305455/plotsummary. Accessed : 21 March 2017.
[156] http://www.india-forums.com/movie/1541/pitaah/story/. Accessed : 21 March 2017.
[157] http://www.rediff.com/movies/2004/dec/17swades1.htm. ; https://uiowa.edu/indiancinema/swadesh. Accessed : 26 April 2017.
[158]https://aliberatarian.wordpress.com/2015/03/21/why-swades-is-the-best-indian-film-on-social-issues/. Accessed : 26th April 2017.
[159] http://vle.du.ac.in/mod/book/print.php?id=8575&chapterid=11449. Accessed : 26 April 2017.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Richard Delacy, 'A Homeland Imagined and Consumed', *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 2 & 3 Spring/Summer 2009, p. 45.
[162] Researcher has viewed the movie and written plot. Reference is also made to http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0240200/plotsummary. Accessed : 23 September 2016.
[163] Esme Choonara, 'Water', Review section, *Socialist Magazine*, Issue June 2007 (315), http://socialistreview.org.uk/315/water, Accessed : 28 June 2018.
[164]Jeannette Catsoulis, 'Under the heel of Britain and the Thumb of Hindu Law in 'Water', *New York Times,* 28 April 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/28/movies/under-the-heel-of-britain-and-the-thumb-of-hindu-law-in-water.html. Accessed : 28 June 2018.
[165]https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/15543/water, http://unifiedtheorynothingmuch.blogspot.com/2005/11/movie-review-water.html Accessed : 28 June 2018.
[166] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Plot also available on https://www.searchindia.com/search/bollywood-movies/banaras.html. Accessed : 2 July 2016.
[167] http://www.staythirstymedia.com/1206media/HTML/1206asianfilm.html. Accessed : 2 July 2016.
[168]http://rubinmuseum.org/blog/hamlet-in-the-himalayas-top-five-shakespeare-adaptations-for-the-silver-scr. Accessed : 2 July 2016.
[169] http://waxenhearts.blogspot.in/2012/05/omkara-shakespeare-without-those_words.html#!_/2012/05/omkara-shakespeare-without-those-words.html. Accessed : 12 July 2016.
[170] https://uiowa.edu/indiancinema/omkara. Accessed : 12 July 2016.
[171] Gowri Parameswaram, 'Teaching India with Popular Feature Films-A Guide for High School and College Teachers ' , *Multicultural Education Magazine*, Winter 2010, p. 53.
[172]http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/movie-reviews/dharm/movie-review/2110775.cms. Accessed : 12 July 2016.
[173] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0459605/plotsummary. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[174] http://www.rediff.com/movies/2007/feb/14ek.htm. Accessed : 3 May 2017.
[175] As mentioned in the film.
[176] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Plot is also available on http://thecoachellavelleyartscene.com/2011/06/30/get-outta-town-india/. Accessed : 20 May 2017.
[177] Khalid Mohammed, *Pairon talle: Soul of Sand review – Quite hard- hitting*, http://archives.deccanchronicle .com/121005/entertainment-movie-reviews/article/pairon-talle-soul-sand-review-quite-hard-hitting. Accessed : 20 May 2017.
[178] Suparna Naresh and Jagadeesh Prakash, 'Marketing films through Social Realities: Shyam Benegal's 'Welcome to Sajjanpur'- A Case Study', *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 5, Issue 2, February 2015, p. 7.
[179] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot.
[180] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramchand_Pakistani. Accessed: 20 May 2017. The researcher has viewed the movie and agrees with the written content.
[181]http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/ramchand-pakistani-a-film-with-a-difference/article1877490. Accessed : 20 May 2017.
[182] Ibid.

[183] https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan/pakistan-films-tackle-issues-with-childrens-tales-idUSL1969278920080219. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[184] Movie Preview has been added by Bollywood Hungama News Network, September 29, 2008. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[185] Muniba Kamal, 'Films are not always what they seem', 27 July 2008. https://jang.com.pk/thenews/jul2008-weekly/nos-27-07-2008/instep/mainissue.htm. Accessed : 3 May 2017.
[186] di Alessandra Consolaro, 'The Other India in Literature and Film, Mohan Das in Uday Prakas's story and in Mazhar Kamran's Film', *Kervan – Rivista Internazionale di studii afroasiatici*, n. 15 – gennaio, 2012, pp. 65- 69.
[187] http://greenchannel.blogspot.com/search?q=soni. Accessed : 5 May 2017.
[188] di Alessandra Consolaro, op. cit., pp. 65- 69.
[189] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aakrosh_(2010_film). Accessed : 5 April 2016. The researcher has watched the movie and agrees with the writing.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.
[192] http://www.rediff.com / movies/report/review-aakrosh /20101015.htm. Accessed : 9 April 2017.
[193] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot.
[194] Mukulika Banerjee, 'Rajneeti or Politics', *Outlook Magazine*, 25 June 2010. http://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/rajneeti-or-politics/265993. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[195] https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raktacharitra_(film). Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Researcher has seen the movie.
[199] Radhika Bhirani, 'Jha: Focus on Social Issues', *Magazine Asian Lite - Cinema*, 1 July 2011, p. 25.
[200] Radhika Bhirani, 'Jha: Focus on Social Issues', *Asian Life Magazine*, July 2011, p. 27.
[201] Researcher has viewed the movie and written the plot. Plot also available on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/khap_(film). Accessed : 19 April 2017.
[202] Gaurav Malani, 'Khap : Movie review', *Times of India*, 28 July 2011, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/bollywood/news/Khap-Movie-Review/articleshow/9393486.cms. Accessed : 19th April 2017.
[203] Ibid.
[204] *Izzatnagar Ki Asabhya Betiyan* is the documentary made by Nakul Singh Sawhney made in 2012. The title of the film comes from a remark made by one Jai Singh Ahlawat of the Ahlawat Khap. "Those who threaten our traditional code are the educated youngsters, the Harijan officers who want everything to be equal. And our *asabhya betiyan* or immoral daughters, who want to live like animals and want our traditions to be quashed so that there are no restrictions on them," Ahlawat says in the film.
[205] Raghvendra Rao, 'Izzatnagar ki Asabhya Betiyan : A reel take on real honour killings', *The Indian Express*, 25 February 2012. http://archive. indianexpress.com/news/izzatnagari-ki- asabhya-betiyan-a-reel- take-on-real-honour-killings/ 917139/. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[206] 'India sentences five to death for honour killing - A court in northern India has sentenced to death five men for murdering a young couple who married in defiance of caste traditions.' *The Telegraph*, 31 March 2010. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ news/worldnews /asia/india /7540025/ India-sentences-five-men-to-death-for-honour-killings.html . Accessed : 31 March 2017.
207 As seen in documentary Izzatnagar Ki Asabhya Betiyan available on Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JK3zmer_z4A. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
208 'Shudra : A film on evils of caste system', https://www.news18.com/news/india/shudra-a-film-on-evils-of-the-caste-system-465109.html. Accessed : 2 April 2017.
[209] Ibid.

4.5 HINDI FILMS BASED ON CASTE SYSTEM AND RETORTS

Film based on caste related issues have given rise to controversies, either due to it's content or the issue projected. Various organisations and groups have come forward to express their discontent. Many times this has taken a violent turn and the film has suffered financial and moral loss. The governmental approach is pro-masses as they are the consumers of these films. Government has specified that the film is meant to be for secular viewing and the content inappropriate for general viewing and that may create social disharmony is censored or banned. Evidently, in post independent period in India the defiance came in one or some states but never a national protest. This is particularly because film tells a story of a particular community of a particular state and that has sometimes resulted in 'hurting the sentiments' of the oppressor group shown in the movie. There is mixed reaction at most of the times and thus, the controversy has its own interesting interpretations to give about the censor decisions, government approach and public reactions to social issue like caste discrimination.

In 1954 a petition was sent to the prime minister claiming that films threatened 'the moral health of the country'; apparently, they were a major factor in incitement to crime and general unsettlement of society. The petition was signed by 13000 housewives whose cause was taken up in Parliament by Lilavati Munshi, wife of politician K M Munshi. Speaking in Rajya Sabha in November 1954, Mrs. Munshi argued that the cinema can make or mar the whole generation and the entire nation. She though the latter more likely, since the celebration of crime and sex was encouraging young Indians to repeat these acts in real life. She was answered in the House by the veteran actor Prithviraj Kapoor, who insisted that in a free society art could not be throttled. From the artist's point of view, he added that sunshine and shadow went hand in hand. One feature of the film industry has been its capacious cosmopolitanism. Hindi film industry is socially inclusive.[1]

4.5.1 Dharmatama (1935)

By the end of September 1935 the film was rejected for release. It is difficult to believe today but one of the sequences in which Prabhat Film Company voluntarily offered to make a change, where they showed the colony of untouchables in the town of Paithan being cleaned in the presence of Saint Eknath. For some reason the censors thought that the Brahmin Saint's presence would instigate dissatisfaction among filmgoers. Prabhat therefore did offer to delete all shots showing Saint Eknath on the spot while the cleaning of slum going on. *Dharmatma* is passed without any cuts outside Bombay Presidency.[2]

As was the case for Prabhat's other early films, *Dharmatma* was shot twice, in Marathi and Hindi. This resulted in two separate films that were each needed to pass through the censors' certification.[3] The Hindi version faced prohibited on similar grounds by the Board of Censors in Bombay. Earlier, each state in India had its own Board of Censor, and the original Hindi version of *Dharmatma,* with its original name, *Mahatma* was immediately approved by the Board of Film Censor in Bengal.[4] The film was first shown in Bombay on December 7, 1935, after months of anticipation. Principal Hamill came down heavily on the religious and social liberalism of the film. He said that there would be riots if the film is screened in its eternity.[5]

4.5.2 Tamas (1986)

Halfway through its telecast, *Tamas* was almost pulled off the air. On Jan 21, 1988, the Bombay High Court passed a stay order at the request of local businessman, Javed Siddiqui, claims that the film would 'poison the minds of the people'. There is fear that *Tamas* would reignite hatred between communities by reopening wounds that had not healed. On January 23, 1986 Bombay High Court revoke the stay order and permitted the telecast to continue. Doordarshan's Director- General, Bhaskar Ghosh, stood by the filmmakers, countering that, as a secular narrative, *Tamas* did not identify particular perpetrator of communal violence.[6] Finally, film was approved and braodcasted on national television.

4.5.3 Bandit Queen (1994)

It all starts with Phoolan Devi, increasingly angry that she is, despite requests, not being shown the film on her life. The screenings for invited audiences began on August 9, 1993, initially at Siri Fort barely a stone's throw from her home. On

September 6, 1993, Phoolan moved to the Delhi High Court seeking a ban on the screening of the film. In three days, the court restrained the producers from screening the film, even in private, and asked them to deposit an unexpurgated version in court and also show it to Phoolan Devi. The film's real-life subject, Phoolan Devi, and Indian Censor Board, both objected to the 1.4 million dollars production, which along with heavy doses of sex and violence, bare in a brutally graphic manner the inequalities of the Hindu caste system. On September 9, 1993, the Delhi High Court issued a nationwide stay against showing the 120-minute film in public or private.[7]

Meanwhile, the Censor Board ordered cuts that included four letter words, rape sequences, the scene showing Phoolan being paraded naked in Behmai, allusions to policemen raping her and also the title legend. Film Director Shekhar Kapur and his team went on defending film and saving it from the censor board cuts. In their interviews to foreign press the film makers alleged that they are being persecuted in India for their supposed courage in showing the brutal reality of caste oppression and they are victims of *Khomeinivad*.[8] The Producer, S.S. Bedi added that: 'The depiction of the Behmai massacre is not based on Phoolan's admission but on newspaper reports which appeared afterwards. We will also say the film is based on Mala Sen's book and does not purport to be an authentic version of Phoolan's life'.[9] Bedi appealed to the Appellate Tribunal of the Censor Board.

However while comparing the book and the film, there are some interesting findings. The film deviates from the book in that it lays greater emphasis on the animosity between high-caste Thakurs and low-caste Mallahs, which is also Phoolan's caste. A critical omission is Maiyadeen, Phoolan's cousin who according to her, and the book, was responsible for most of her troubles. "He is still threatening my family," said Phoolan.[10] The book mentions that Maiyadeen and his father - took away Phoolan's family's land, humiliated her mother, had Phoolan repeatedly beaten up, and handed her over to police custody, where she was apparently raped. Her feisty, rebellious personality is largely the result of her cousin's machinations. On the contrary, the film showed Phoolan's character largely in terms of what the Thakurs did to her, such as the youth who tries to molest her in the fields and later humiliates her in front of the village *Panchayat* is shown to be a Thakur. Phoolan claimed it wasn't the case. Director Kapur justified by saying, 'If I left out Maiyadeen, I also left out many other things that could have gone against her. I wanted to create social empathy for her.'[11] The other controversial scene of the film is the gang-rape by the

Thakur community. In the diaries Phoolan never uses the word rape but euphemisms like *mazaak* (mockery) or *beizzati* meaning dishonour. The rape scenes angered Phoolan and she strongly objected by stating, "How can they show a woman like this, *baarbaar* meaning repeatedly? This is all a *vyapar* meaning business".[12] Phoolan was equally angry about the deliberate falsification in presenting her family. The film show that her father sells Phoolan to her first husband in return for a bicycle and a cow. He is shown as a hard hearted, greedy fellow who has no sympathy for the suffering of his daughter. In the film when she runs away from her husband's house, he wants to get rid of her. Phoolan has different version to state where she claims her father was a caring person and called him *devtaa samaan* that is like God and provided her with the expected dowry. Even in Mala Sen's book there is no mention of bride sale.[13]

What bothered Phoolan the most about the film is the Behmai scene. Phoolan still had about fifty three cases pending against her in four District courts in Uttar Pradesh, according to Kamini Jaiswal, the lawyer responsible for getting her out of jail. In fact, after her release, some Thakurs had filed two cases in Kanpur, objecting to her release. "The (State) Government went to court for withdrawal of the Behmai case and they refused," said Jaiswal.[14] Moreover Phoolan Devi, than newly wedded and back in family fold and aspiring for a prospective political career showed concern about her respectability. "Does anybody have the right to show me being raped even if I were? If they show this film in my village what will people say?"[15]

And, if they concur with the Censor Board's suggestions, he will not show the film. Dhondy says that "the cuts will emasculate the film and we don't want to show it in that state".[16] Some remarked that Phoolan married a Thakur after her release from prison, and therefore she is denouncing the film. Political ambitions are another. After seeing the movie Phoolan Devi approved for screening of the movie in India and worldwide and only commented “My Life was much harder”.[17]

Another contention was put forth by the Gujjar caste community. On 27th January, 1996, the first respondent filed the writ petition before the Delhi High Court seeking to quash the certificate granted to the film and to restrain its exhibition in India. The first respondent stated in the writ petition that he is a Hindu and Gujjar by caste. He was the president of the *Gujjar Gaurav Sansthan* and involved in the welfare of the Gujjar community. He had seen the film when it was exhibited at the International Film Festival and he felt aggrieved and his fundamental rights are being

violated. The petitioner and his community had been depicted in a most depraved way especially in the scene of rape by Babu Gujjar, which scene was suggestive of the moral depravity of the Gujjar community as rapists and the use of the name Babu Gujjar for the principal villain lowered the reputation of the Gujjar community and the petitioner. It lowered the respect of the petitioner in the eyes of society and his friends. The scene of rape was obscene and horrendous and cast a slur on the face of the Gujjar community. The film went beyond the limits of decency and lowered the prestige and position of the woman in general and the community of Mahallas in particular. The first respondent had been discriminated against and Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution had been violated. Thus, the petition spoke for both Gujjar and Mahalla community. The Supreme Court judgment stated that, 'In the present case, apart from the Chairman, three members of the Tribunal were women. It is that three women would permit a film be screened which denigrates women, insults India womanhood or is obscene or pornographic. [18]

The film raised a furious debate when Arundhati Roy called the entire episode as exploitation of Phoolan Devi and taking advantage of her ignorance in her article, *The Great India Rape- Trick 1*.[19] She confronted Shekhar Kapur and wrote, that at the premiere screening of *Bandit Queen* in Delhi, Shekhar Kapur introduced the film with these words: "I had a choice between Truth and Aesthetics. I chose Truth, because Truth is Pure."[20] Roy questioned "what was the real truth? and who should be telling it?"[21]

This is replied by the author of the book Mala Sen in her article 'Right to Reply' presenting some clarification.[22] Mala Sen defends, 'Arundhati Roy gives the impression that Phoolan Devi did not give consent for the film. This could not be further from the truth. I have known Phoolan and members of her family for many years (far longer than Roy has). When I first met Phoolan, while she was a prisoner in Gwalior Central Jail in 1986, she felt she had been abandoned and was bitter about how the government had treated her after Indira Gandhi's death. She wanted to tell 'the whole world' about her life and the events that had shaped her. [23] I set out to do just that. Roy says of the film: 'For its success, it relies on the ignorance of the audience,' and makes a dig at the importers of 'Third World' cultures. This sounds like good, down-to-earth nationalism in a world that is fast becoming more culturally mixed; it's the kind of fundamentalism I have ceased to agree with. The film has been shown both in India, before the ban was imposed, and to Indian audiences abroad, and

many have supported what it tries to achieve. To imply that only uninformed Westerners will respond is an outright distortion. It is an insult to ordinary people, world-wide and in India, who happen to disagree with Roy's point of view. You can like or dislike the film but allow people to judge it for themselves. I am not in favour of censorship. Roy goes on to say Bandit Queen just transforms Phoolan Devi from being India's best-known bandit into history's most famous victim of rape'. This is simply not true. She is shown, in many scenes, as being the protagonist. A woman enraged by injustice, in control of her aspirations. That she feels victimised in between is a fact of life. It is the way all women feel from time to time, however tough they may act. I know this from my own experience'.[24]

'All the contracts Phoolan signed with Channel 4 were explained to her in detail in the presence of members of her family. Roy says she was exploited because the contracts were in English. It wouldn't have mattered if the contracts had been in Hindi or Chinese because she does not read or write any language. The details had to be explained verbally, in Hindi, and I did this many times over. To protect myself, I got members of her family to counter-sign the contracts'.[25]

'The implication that she was made to sign what she did not understand is not only untrue but potentially libellous. Still, I have no passion for suing people, so I will leave it to the Delhi High Court to reach its own conclusions. Meanwhile, I hope the fervour shown by Ms Roy will see Phoolan through in the future'.[26]

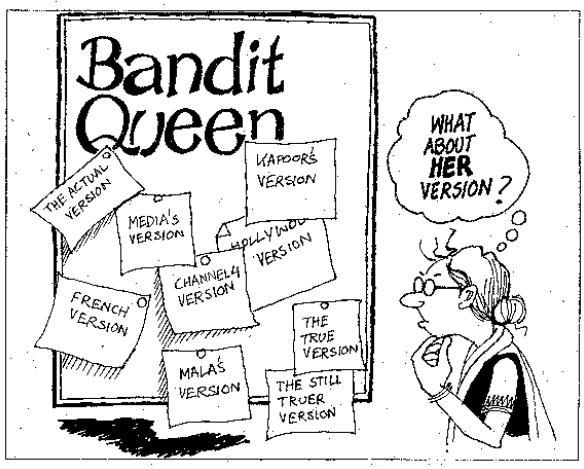


Figure 1 The story was told to be 'true' but Phoolan Devi's opinion was initially not taken into consideration. Photo Courtesy : *Manushi*, Sept. – Oct. 1994, no. 84. p. 36.

'I have nothing against Phoolan Devi, despite all that has happened. I have told her I will try to minimise the potential damage. I am resisting pressure to reveal all that has passed between us. Ms Roy and her supporters fail to understand this. The

case before the Delhi High Court (Phoolan Devi v/s Shekhar Kapur, Channel 4 Television Corporation and others), which began with an affidavit signed by Ms Roy, is only about a film. Do they really know what they are doing to Phoolan Devi? Is it just an ideological debate? The consequences for Phoolan may be serious. That is what I am concerned about.' [27] The debate was more on the 'showing of truth' that the film claims and what should be considered as the truth. The cinematic adaptation of the book is said to be understandable but the fact remained that the film is a biography of an existing living being who is very much there to tell the truth. So her version should technically be non challengeable. If these rights are violated or any episodes defied for making it cinematically presentable this action would be less appropriate for film being a biography. Thus the movie Bandit Queen again let Phoolan Devi go through confrontations, allegations and regression both off screen and on screen and she rightly says, "Whatever you and Shekhar Kapur do, you will not be able to show how much I have really suffered."[28], the film becomes finally available for public viewing.

4.5.4 Fire (1996)



Figure 2 Fire poster been torn and cinema hall ransack. Courtesy: https://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/keeping-the-flame-alive-what-made-deepa-mehtas-fire-such-a-pathbreaking-film/; https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/society-the-arts/films/story/19981221-controversial-film-fire-is-sent-back-to-censor-board-matter-taken-to-court-827561-1998-12-21. Accessed : 12 April 2017.

Fire film was strongly opposed by political parties. Film was banned from being screened in theatre. Shiv Sena Chief Bala Saheb Thackeray in his first statement on the film, attempted to turn the debate into a Hindu Muslim issue, a territory quite familiar to him. He objected to the principle characters of the film having the same name as Hindu goddesses and took objection on some adverse references to Indians in the film. Shiv Sena Chief insisted that the film screening should only be allowed only

after the changes are made. The Shiv Sena chief also accused the intellectuals of having one set of rules for the Hindus and another for Muslims and said there were protests when Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses was banned by the Indian government. [29]

The Indian Supreme Court was to hear a petition filed by leading Indian film personalities who demanded that members of the Shiv Sena be censured and the government be asked to guarantee the uninterrupted screening of the film.[30] The controversy doomed down with popularity and acceptability of film goers.[31]

4.5.5 Bawandar (2000)

"It's highly unethical to make a film about her without her consent," said Kavita Srivastava, a Jaipur based activist who had suggested that film director Jagmohan Mundhra made a collage of various rape cases. [32] Bhanwari Devi on whose real life incident the film was inspired said that the film reminds her of *Bandit Queen*. It's the only film she had seen and she couldn't bear to watch the explicit rape scene in it. During the release of the movie Bhanwari Devi was still coming to terms with losing the case and wondered, "Why make a film on defeat?". [33] The Activists were also concerned with the film may end up annoying the Gurjars, the community to which the accused belong.[34]

The portrayal of a Rajasthani woman raped by high-caste men in her village for propagating family planning values has got itself into a controversy. Another fear was about the screening of the film when an appeal was pending before the Rajasthan High Court against the acquittal of the accused and may affect Bhanwari's case. The state Government of Rajasthan was also apprehensive. "The way the film refers to certain castes may lead to tension," said Bina Kak, Minister of State for Tourism, Rajasthan.[35] Meanwhile Ramsukh Gurjar, one of the accused who had mockingly remarked, "I will certainly go to see that drama", changed his mind on realising the film could convince an audience of his guilt. He later stated, “actually, why should a film be made on something which never took place?".[36] Mundhra explained that the movie emphasised on caste to show each character's roots. But the balance was met, where if the rapists are shown from Gurjar caste, the advocate who takes up the victim's case too is shown as Gurjar. He said his film is inspired by Bhanwari's case but is not a biography and that "you have to make certain amendments to add drama to a film".[37] So Bhanwari's consent became immaterial and the script incorporated

elements such as Delhi socialites taking up her cause and policemen tampering evidence.[38] Several women's organisations and human rights groups assailed Jagmohan Mundra's film, *Bawandar* for commercialising a rape victim's life. The film aroused the ire of women's groups, the Gujjar community and the police in Rajasthan alike. In a joint press release various activist groups based in Rajasthan, including the People's Union for Civil Liberties, the National Federation of Indian Women, the Rajasthan University Women's Association and the National Muslim women's Welfare Society stated that they ``disagree with the film because it is a commercialisation of a woman's life and one that can create more problems for Bhanwari, on whose true- life experience Bawandar has been made. The media reports about the role of women's groups in the controversy over the film, they said that such reports could provoke further atrocities on the victim."[39] They also said their organisations were facing a ``moral dilemma'' because although they opposed the film, they did not wish to demand a ban on it as they were ``committed to the right of expression, even of our opponents".[40]

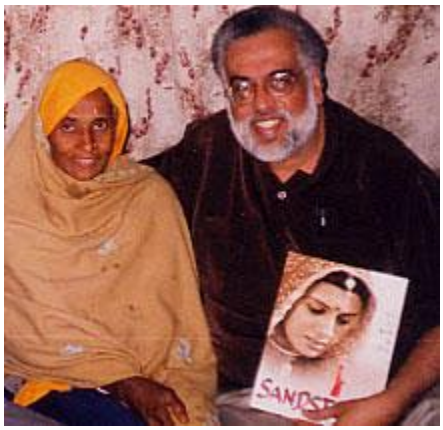


Figure 3 Bhanwari Devi with film Director Jagmohan Mundra carrying poster of his film Bawandar and bringing end to the controversy. Courtesy : http://parallelcinema.blogspot.com/2005/08/bawander-sand-storm.html. Accessed : 12 April 2017.

Bhanwari Devi, who works as a `saathin' with the Rajasthan women's development programme to create awareness among rural people about social evils, was advised to file objections before the censor board against the film-maker for filming her life, using her name in the publicity of the film and to seek compensation for violation of her privacy by them. A concern was raised that the film, may also adversely affect the case pending in the high court regarding Bhanwari's rape by upper-caste men for her crusade against child marriage.[41] The film was resubmitted and issued 'Adult' certificate for viewing. The film was finally released for public viewing.

4.5.6 Water (2005)

Film *Water* is a poignant and moving as the other two controversial films of Deepa Mehta, namely *Fire* and *Earth*. Set in 1938 in the holy city of the Benaras, India, it focuses on the deprivation experienced by the Hindu widows, which is still an issue today engulfing almost thirty three million widows. When shooting for *Water* started in Banaras, a Hindu mob with members from *Raksha Sangharsh Samiti* destroyed the set and threw it into the Ganges arguing that the film showed India and Hinduism in poor light. In a statement to *The Week magazine* they told, "Breaking up the sets was far too mild an act; the people involved should have been beaten black and blue". [42] Deepa Mehta described this as "pre-production censorship imposed by thugs".[43] When the crew attempted to restart filming, they had to be escorted by riot squads with water cannons and hundreds of police. The protest however continued, accompanied by death threats, bomb scares and burning effigies of the director Deepa Mehta. Filming was finally abandoned when the local authorities banned filming and threatened to arrest the crew if they continued. The state government ordered Mehta and her international crew to stop the production and leave immediately. It was another four years until Mehta restarted filming, this time in Sri Lanka and with a false name for the film. Mehta in an interview said, "In retrospect, *Water* reflected what was taking place in India in some form or other; rise of Hindu fundamentalism and high tolerance for anything or anybody that views it with scepticism; therefore we were a soft and highly visible targets".[44] She further added, "Books were being rewritten, paintings were being burned, and the Hindu fundamentalists were flexing their muscles and projecting themselves as the guardians of the faith. And *Water* was casualty of that".[45] Water is indeed damning of the attitude and practices of some high caste Hindus towards widows, but also hints at more complex debates about the nature of tradition, religious practices and economic compulsion.[46]



Figure 4 Demonstartions against Deepa mehta's film Water. Courtesy: https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/fire-on-the-water/208871. Accessed: 12 May 2017.

4.5.7 Teesri Azadi (2008)

Teesri Azadi is a movie in Hindi showing the extremes of caste system in India. The film provoked strong reactions from all sides including the Government, Members of Rajya Sabha, activists and general public. The synopsis of debate in Rajya Sabha included the statements made by than Rajya Sabha member Amar Singh that 'a venomous Compact Disk or a C.D. namely *Teesri Azadi* is being shown that has derogatory remarks about Lord Ram, Lord Krishna and Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. A Member of Parliament from Basti in Uttar Pradesh has accepted this ad it's likely that this C.D. will create disturbance in various parts of the country. It is an attack on Indian culture and a Central Bureau of Investigation inquiry should be conducted to apprehend persons trying to disturb the communal harmony of the country'.[47] Amar Singh was joined by other members such as Eknath Thakur, Jaya Bachchan, Brinda Karat. Kalraj Mishra in putting forth this dictation. Kalraj Mishra later proposed to ban this C.D. immediately and stated, '*Teesri Azadi* C.D. is being circulated in various states of the country by a Member of Parliament of Bahujan Samaj Party supported by 'Bhimrao Samaj Sudhar Samiti'. This C.D. contains derogatory remarks about Lord Rama, Krishna and other God-Goddesses. It also contains caste related remarks. It is very unfortunate that this C.D. has not been banned by the Ministry of Broadcasting. For last two days it has been continuously being displayed in various news-channels like IBN-CNN, Times channel and so on. It may result in communal conflict. Particularly, Rajput and Brahmin words have been used. It is being said that they have tortured the Dalits. Why the circulation of this C.D. on various news channels was not banned immediately. Derogatory remarks about Lord Rama and Sita cannot be tolerated. It is an attack on Indian culture. Stern action must be taken against the culprits'.[48]

Taking a serious view on the name of her party Members of Parliament from Basti, Lalmani Prasad being implicated in the case of the circulation of a C.D., which contained derogatory remarks against Hindu gods and upper castes, Chief Minister Mayawati today handed over the investigation of the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation. An First Information Report was registered not only against those responsible for the distribution of the C.D. *Teesri Azadi*, but also against the Television channel, which first broadcast a report that brought the matter out in open. Three people were arrested from Haraiya town of Basti district in eastern Uttar Pradesh and copies of the C.D. were seized.[49]

Mayawati released a press statement stating that, she had asked the District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police across the state to treat the matter very seriously, seize the remaining copies of the C.D. and ensure that it was not circulated anywhere in the state. Addressing the media, Mayawati claimed that she had personally spoken to Basti Bahujan Samaj Party Member of Parliament Prasad, when she learnt that the name of a Non-Governmental Organisation Ambedkar Samaj Sudhar Samiti was involved in the distribution of the C.D. in Basti. She further stated that, "According to information received by me the C.D. had been produced in Maharashtra sometime ago and has been in circulation for a while in different parts of the country. In fact it was made available on the Internet in 2006". Mayawati squarely blamed the Congress, Bharatiya Janta Party, Shiv Sena and Samajwadi Party for not doing anything to stop its distribution, despite being in power in these states during the period. The CD matter came up in the Vidhan Sabha. When Parliamentary affairs minister Lalji Verma announced the arrests of three persons in Basti in connection of the distribution of the controversial CD.[50]

Soon began national campaign to 'Save Bahujan Movement' against Mayawati. A leaflet was released called "Charge- Sheet" of Bahujan Samaj on Mayawati (*Treatise* on Black deeds of Mayawati against Bahujan Movement). It had matter like, (a) Just after taking over the charge of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 2007 Mayawati got the book "Real Ramayana" (*Sachchi Ramayan*) banned in Uttar Pradesh, which was written by Periyar attacking & exposing brahminism, (b) Mayawati, during her rule as CM of Uttar Pradesh in 2008, not only banned the film *Teesri Azadi* but also recommended CBI enquiry against the people associated with this film. This film creates social and revolutionary consciousness among the Bahujan Samaj against oppressive brahminical social system and also educates Bahujan Samaj about their glorious history.[51]

Politics began to take its turn. Intrestingly, Mayawati who found this film very *dirty* and *poisonous* in 2008 re-released it on 26 March, 1995 in Kanpur town of Uttar Pradesh. Profusely praising the film, Mayawati called it an effective medium of spreading consciousness among Bahujan Samaj. A detailed information about the 'need' and 'significance' of this film *Teesri Azadi* for Bahujan Samaj was given by Mayawati in her so called *Safarnama,* travelogue of her so called struggle.[52] However, this film was used during the election campaign against Mayawati and proved detrimental to her win.

4.5.8 Delhi 6 (2009)

The Delhi High Court had quashed a First Information Report against the Hindi film *Delhi 6* which had alleged that a character in the film enacting the role of a lady sweeper played by Divya Dutta had been insulted and thereby the entire Balmiki Samaj has been insulted. The Court observed that the film seen in its entirety generated empathy for the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes. The First Information Report was filed by Delhi MLA Jai Kishan against film director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra and others. It was lodged under the under The Schedule Caste and The Schedule Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act and The Protection of Civil Right Act in 2009. In its judgement on the petition by Mehra and others, Justice Manmohan stated: "The present film seen in its entirety generates empathy for Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes. No intention to insult the members of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes community can be attributed to the petitioners in the present case. The present film in no manner supports the practice of untouchability in any manner. The act attribute to the petitioners do not amount to preaching and practicing untouchability".[53] This Court has the power to quash a First Information Report under investigation at the initial stage itself". The counsel of petitioners submitted that the film conveyed a strong message to the public at large against the caste system and was not intended to hurt the sentiments of any section or society. The petitioners were attempting to create awareness about the condition of the Schedule Castes community. The film was inspired from the real life incident.[54] The film was allowed for release.

4.5.9 Khap - A story of Honour Killing (2011)

With movie *Khap* creating quite a stir in Haryana owing to the sensitivity of the plot, the director of the movie looked for reconciliation with the enraged members of these traditional courts. A special contingent of Khap members were invited to watch the film in Delhi in a bid to ease the ongoing tension. The screening, held for 120 Khap members at Films Division on Mahadev road, generated a mixed response, with some of them staging a walkout while criticizing the movie. Prior to the start of movie, tempers ran high. The invitees raised slogans and called the movie an attempt to malign the image of Khaps. "The title is such. And even the movie puts us in the bad light," said Kul Deep, a member of the delegation. [55] After the screening, the Khap members deferred their decision on whether they approve the movie or not.

They said there would be another hearing at Mahapanchayat on August 28, 2011, where they will decide the movie's fate. Since its release on July 29, 2011, *Khap* was not being screened in Haryana's cinema halls, owing to widespread and fierce protests by the All India Jat Mahasabha.[56]



Figure 5 Agitated members of Khap community. The members of Khap were to decide the fate of the movie named Khap. Its Director Ajai Sinha had to wait for August 28 when the Khap Panchayat was to held for taking some decision on the movie. Courtesy: https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/khap-panchayats-can-t-stop-adults-from-marrying-supreme-court.

Haryana Police stopped the screening saying that it could spark violence in the area", said the film's Haryana distributor Manoharlal.[57] Haryana Director General of Police B S Sandhu denied any such interference and claimed that they infect deployed police personnel to avoid untoward incident, but owners of the theatres decided not to screen the movie. [58] Nevertheless, movie *Khap* was released in other states in India and though not a big box-office hit, it certainly was successful in diverting attention to the issue of honour killing in the state of Haryana.

4.5.10 Aarakshan (August 2011)

Film *Aarakshan* created quite a ripple during its release. Three big states Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh banned *Aarakshan* from opening on scheduled date over fears it could stir up caste tensions. Film Director Prakash Jha filed an urgent appeal to India's Supreme Court seeking to overturn the bans. The film stars were given police bodyguards, and police guarded theatres that screened film. Moviegoers were frisked and barred from bringing bags inside. The movie's title meaning reservation, was a comment on reservation policy of the government in jobs and education. The film was considered to have belittled Schedule Caste community and put them in negative light. Jha though disputed their interpretation of his movie, but agreed to edit out parts was found offensive. The edited version was also released late.



Figure 6 Violent demonstrations against film Aarakshan. India's Super Star of the Millennium Amitabh Bachchan's legacy at stake due to caste based movie controversy. Courtesy: https://www.iol.co.za/entertainment/movies-theatre/film-about-caste-sparks-controversy-in-india-1117436; https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/banned-bollywood-film-touches-a-social-nerve/article590286/. Accessed : 23 April 2017.

The film's actor Amitabh Bachchan did sound with anguish on his twitter account, who claim that people condemn the film without even watching it and tweets, "Have cried at our helplessness in not making people understand that this art needs to be seen not banned!"[59] On his blog Amitabh Bachchan writes "Two Indias reside in this country... and in truth, if we have seen any progress in our society, then the distance between these two Indias must be erased."[60] Another objection raised by some lower caste groups is the casting of Khan as a Dalit protagonist, who belongs to one of the royal families that previous, ruled a part of India. Jha objects and says, "This objection is unfair. By this logic, are they saying a Dalit cannot play the role of a king in a film?"[61] In another interview when asked that how did he settle this issue Jha states, " He hopes that he has convinced them (the protestors) with his stance and they have understood the situation.".[62]

A government panel for the welfare of lower castes asked the country's film authorities to review the clearance given to the film. Likewise, P.L. Punia Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes heading the panel submit, "We have written to the Censor Board to review the film and remove at least five objectionable dialogues from the movie. These changes can be made without affecting the narrative of the film." [63] Hari Narke, Professor of the Mahatma Phule Chair at the University of Pune stated, "Prakash Jha's movie will further vitiate the atmosphere as there are already a lot of misunderstandings about Dalits among students. Jha should have been more careful about not inciting or inflaming public opinion".[64] Meanwhile fraternity from industry supported the film including actor Ajay Devgan who had played the role of Dalit in his earlier films. Actor Ajay Devgan comment that, "There is nothing objectionable in the film. When people see it they will realize there is

nothing controversial".[65] Thus after suggested edition film is released for public viewing.



Figure 7 Saif Ali Khan playing a role of a Dalit teacher became the matter of objection. Screen grab: Film Aarakshan; Courtesy: https://www.deccanherald.com/content/183181/after-threat-aarakshan-caste.html. Accessed : 12 June 2017.

Further rejecting the Uttar Pradesh government's plea that the film's controversial subject of reservation was a sensitive issue, the judgement added that 'reservation is a social issue and in a vibrant democracy like ours, public discussion is necessary. Such discussion on social issues brings about awareness for effective working of the democracy. Once the Central Board for Film Certification has cleared the film for public viewing, the screening cannot be prohibited in a manner as has been done by the Uttar Pradesh government'.[66] Writing on his blog, Amitabh Bachchan welcomes the order "reassuring all of us and the people in general that the rule of law prevails in this country." He adds, "Will those that opposed the film and stopped its distribution and exhibition now compensate the producer for deliberate and illegal procedures used for harming the financials of the product? I guess not." [67] The film however did not create stir on box office and have modest reception.



Figure 8 Protest against the release of the movie Aarakshan. Effigy of Director burnt, posters burnt, cinema halls attacked and movie show closed down. Courtesy: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/8698025/Bollywood-banned-over-fears-of-inter-caste-violence.html. Accessed : 12 April 2017.

4.5.11 Shudra - The Rising (2012)

Bajrang Dal, a hard-line Hindu organisation, threatened to stall screening of Hindi film *Shudra* before its release alleging its release that it could create chasm in Hindu society. "From the trailers of the film, it seems may cause hatred and differences in Hindu society. We urge the Censor Board and also the Uttar Pradesh government not to allow its screening or else the Bajrang Dal will stage demonstrations to stall film's release" said Bajrang Dal leader Rakesh Verma.[68] The Dal also showed its readiness to approach court in this regard.



Figure 9 Protest against movie Shudra for showing upper castes in bad light. Courtesy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocTf8Rn6gRk. Accessed : 23 September 2016.

Simultaneously, an online campaign is ran by the Director and it is supported by many including from outside India. The director Sanjeev Jaiswal write, 'Dear Friends, We have always cherished your sapient association & support to our efforts so far. Once again we need your patronage & solicit your commitment to *Mission Itihaas* in order to save the film *Shudra - The Rising* from a Censor Ban. Through our mission we have to prove the social acceptance of our subject for Censor Board Clearance by accumulating One lakh SMS (Short Message Service) from all across the nation. We have to prove, this is not just another film but an exposure of a dark truth of history to the society as well as common people which was hidden so far. We seek your support to SMS in maximum possible no. to show our strength and solidarity to the 'so called' civilized society and the people who want to stop us to reveal our poignant tale of misery, hopelessness & doom in the past. PLEASE SMS <SHUDRA> <NAME> <CITY> TO 575758 (National), PLEASE SMS <SHUDRA> <NAME> <CITY> TO +919892403666 (International) We also want you to encourage your friends and acquaintances to strike out any mischievous attempt of stopping this film from release by sending more & more SMS as well as spreading

'Mission Itihaas' to their maximum reach. Sincere Regards, Sanjiv Jaiswal, (Shudra Website, Shudra Facebook, Shudra Twitter) Posted on May 19, 2012.[69]



Figure 10 Movie Shudra in controversy over Sanjeev Jaiswal's statement. Courtesy: Sahara Samay Channel. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaBLQS05KJE. Accessed :3 May 2017.

4.5.12 Other responses

Movies other than referred above, raised concern in public either because of the lyrics of song in the film, controversial dialogue exchange or use of words that are considered otherwise unsuitable, or comments on caste and Hindu religion. Musical film *Aaja Nach Le* meaning 'Come Dance With Me' was banned by Mayawati's Uttar Pradesh government in 2007 until the producers apologised for an alleged derogatory reference to the Dalits in a song have run into trouble even after being cleared by the censor board. Then Chief Minister Mayawati also sent letter to the Prime Minister regarding ban of this movie in the whole of India. People abandoned the show in Lucknow.[70] The objectionable lyric *'Muhalle mein kaisi mara maar hey, bole mochi bhi khud ko sonaar hai',* meaning, 'What kind of rucksack is in the area? even the cobbler calls himself goldsmith' was considered as caste discriminatory remark and insulting for mocha or cobbler caste. Yash Chopra, Chairman of Yash Raj Films apologised by saying, "It was not our intention to hurt the feelings of any individual or community of our great nation. If we have inadvertently hurt the sentiments of anybody, I apologise for the same."[71] After the assurance from Yash Raj Films, Uttar Pradesh government did lift ban on the screening of the movie in their state. At the same time, the question was raised in

Parliament and taken cognisance by the government of Punjab and Haryana and the National Commission for Schedule Caste.[72]



Figure 11 Rajdeep Sardesai coordinating a panel talk on the National TV on the controversy related to movie Aaja Nachle. Courtesy: Screengrab Channel INDIA TV.

In another instance, Hindutva groups started outraging against the *PK* maker and actor Rajkumar Hirani and Amir Khan respectively for allegedly hurting their religious sentiments. The groups accused that there were multiple scenes in the film which are extremely hurtful to Hindus and their religious sentiments. According to the religious groups, the entire imagery of Aamir running around Lord Shiva in the film has offended them. Rajkumar Hirani, who directed the movie stated that, "We have not done anything for which people can tell we have deliberately hurt anyone's religious sentiments. The core idea of the film is just that we are not born with a birthmark proclaiming we are Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs or Christians. It is just that like a baby is born without any pre-conceived notions and is made to follow a certain lifestyle and perform certain rituals. We decided to have Aamir as an alien which meant he too did not have any idea or notions about what religion is here on Earth. A newborn baby is taught to follow certain rules and act according to one's religious traditions. When they grow up and have their own set of ideologies, they think their ways or methods are right and others are wrong. To a Hindu, some ritual might be done in a certain manner or something might be considered sacred. But for Muslims, it might be something else. That is what we tried to portray that our ways are different, not by choice, but our faith remains the same".[73] Although many have gone onto Twitter in support of Hindu organisations and sparked an online protest with hash tags like #BoycottPK trending nationwide, there have also been fractions of the audience who have come out in full support for the actor and his film. As a result, along with #BoycottPK, #WeSupportPK also started trending on the social networking site.[74] The movie had critical comments on ritualism and beliefs and proposed humanism as the foremost religion.



Figure 12 Violent protest against movie PK. The film was considered to be an insult of Hindu religion and its connected philosophy. Courtesy: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2890680/Amir-s-PK-sparks-right-wing-hysteria-Bajrang-Dal-activists-vandalise-cinemas.html. Accessed : 2 June 2017.

Observations : The controversy for some film has raised the interest of social groups and society's members in the incident and resulted in reformation. Like in the case of Bhanwari Devi that attracted the ire of her rapists solely on the basis of her work prompted several women's groups to file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court of India, under the collective platform of Vishakha. The petition, filed by Vishakha and four other women's organizations in Rajasthan against the State of Rajasthan and the Union of India, resulted in what are popularly known as the Vishakha Guidelines. The judgment of August 1997 provided the basic definitions of sexual harassment at the workplace and provided guidelines to deal with it. It is seen as a significant victory for Bhanwari Devi's fight for justice. The Bhanwari Devi case was the threshold in the discourse of Indian judiciary. The case brought into light the corrupt attitude of the police forces and the reluctance of the judicial authority to go against the power arrangement of the society to avail justice for a victim. The case reflects how this nexus of power which operated on the social factors of caste, class and gender oppressed the least privileged in the existing social system. *Bawandar* as a film depicts these realities of Indian socio-political arrangement. The film gave a new lease of life and a wider following to the Bhanwari Devi case.[75]

Thus, reaction upraise by films based on caste system in different forms and various fractions of the society. The films that were based on real life person sometimes did not consider the person on whom the film was made. This led to the

real life persons taking objection over the content of bio-pics based on their lives. Unfortunately for achieving cinematic excellence and to create mass appeal the reality was compromised. However, the achievement was that the effect brought the awareness amongst the masses about the problem, their suffering and their struggle for getting justice. At times, the controversies on caste based film certainly created a ripple and affected the box office collection. This discouraged the production of further films on similar theme and so spirit of raising concern about a particular issue could die a natural death.

Some films made controversial cinematic statements and seem to directly, indirectly hurt sentiments of particular community. Some films very boldly put forward issues that were tabooed in public discussion and so were not well received. Thus, for curtailing both financial and societal loss, there can be strict and effective Government resolutions. It may be insisted that once a film is passed through Censor Board in India, it should not face any trouble further for release. Similarly cinematic independence should not be explored at cost of any person or community by the film makers and handling of any social issue should be a responsible affair.

Notes and References :

[1] Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi – The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, Picador : Pan Macmillan Ltd., 2008, pp. 721 – 728.

[2] Ibid., p. 114.

[3] The actors in both films remained mostly the same. Only the main antagonist in the film, the *mahant* Saccidānanda, was played by two different actors. In this way, although Prabhat produced and wrote mainly Marathi films, their translators helped them transform the material immediately into Hindi, thus giving them access to the pan-Indian film market as well. Śāntārām Āṭhavaḷe, "Prabhātcā Dharmātmā," in *Śrīeknāth Darśan* (ed.). Aravind Doḍe, Sudarśan Prakāśan, Mumbaī, 2006, pp. 230 - 232.

[4] Ibid., p. 107.

[5] Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni, *Balgandharva and the Marathi Theatre*, Bombay : Roopak Books, 1988, p. 113.

[6] Purnima Mankekar, *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Post Colonial India*, Durham : Duke University Press, 1999, p. 295 ; http://8ate.blogspot.in/2008/12/revisiting-tamas-om-puri-and-that-first.html#!/2008/12/revisiting-. Accessed : 28 April 2017.

[7] http://articles.latimes.com/1994-10-20/entertainment/ca-52584_1_bandit-queen. Accessed: 1 May 2017.

[8] Madhi Kishwar, 'The Bandit Queen', *Manushi*, Sept – Oct 1994, No. 84, pp. 34 – 37. http://www.people.virginia.edu/~pm9k/gifs/ZoForth/Pholan/bqManu.html. Accessed : 3 May 2017.

[9] Ibid.

[10] http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/shekhar-kapur-bandit-queen-raises-moral-questions-on-individual-right-to-privacy/1/294276.html. Accessed: 3 May 2017.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Madhu Kishwar, op. cit., p. 36.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Madhu Jain, 'Shekhar Kapur's 'Bandit Queen' raises moral questions on individual's right to privacy', https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/special-report/story/19941015-shekhar-kapur-bandit-queen-raises-moral-questions-on-individual-right-to-privacy-809819-1994-10-15. Accessed: 24 February 2017.
[15] Ibid.
[16] http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/shekhar-kapur-bandit-queen-raises-moral-questions-on-individual-right-to-privacy/1/294276.html. Accessed : 1 May 2017.
[17] https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1994/08/29/a-ban-for-bandit-subject-of-indian-film-opposes-its-release/424ea437-096c-47cd-83a9-9881a9aa3c23/?utm_term =.d0299a52 eef8. Accessed : 1 May 2017.
[18] Supreme Court Judgement. CIVIL APPEAL NOS. 7523, 7525-27 AND 7524 (Arising out of SLP(Civil) No. 8211/96, SLP(Civil) No. 10519-21/96 (CC No. 1828-1830/96 & SLP(C) No. 9363/96) J U D G M E N T BHARUCHA, J. .Date of Judgment - 01/05/1996., pp. 3 - 4.
[19] Arundhati Roy, 'Great India Rape – Trick 1', http://www.rarre.org/documents/ roy/ Arundhati%20Roy%20on%20Shekhar%20Kapur%27s%20Bandit%20Queen.pdf. Accessed : 14 April 2016.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Mala Sen, 'Right to Reply: 'Bandit Queen' gives to you straight', *Independent* magazine, London, 2 March, 1995, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/right-of-reply-bandit-queen-gives-it-to-you-straight-1609660.html. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/235098.stm. Accessed : 22nd April 2017.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/bollywood/news/Nandita-Bawandar-caught-in-rough-weather/articleshow/20558174.cms. Accessed : 23 May 2017.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Rohit Parihar, 'Desert storm', India today, December 10, 2001. http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/bawandar-jagmohan-mundhras- film-based-on-rape-victim -bhanwari-devi-runs-into-controversy/1/231995.html . Accessed : 24 May 2017.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/bollywood/news/Nandita-Bawandar-caught-in-rough-weather/articleshow/20558174.cms. op. cit.
[40] Ibid.
[41] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/Bawandar-draws-flak-from-women-rights-groups/articleshow/422890210.cms?from=mdr. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[42] Esme Choonara, Socialist Review, Issue June 2007 (315). http://socialistrevivew.org.uk/315/water. Accessed : 28th June 2016.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Elisabeth Bumiller, 'Film ignites the wrath of Hindu fundamentalists', https://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/03/movies/03wate.html. Accessed : 12 March 2016.

[45] Ibid.
[46] Rashmi Kumari, 'Flow from oppression towards hope and Beyond : An exploration of widowhood in Deepa Mehta's film 'Water', *International Journal of English language*, Vol.6, Issue 6, June 2018, p. 1025.
[47] RAJYA SABHA, SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE, Proceedings other than Questions and Answers, Wednesday, March 12, 2008/ Phalguna 22, 1929 (Saka), p. 182 - 183.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Shahira Naim, 'CD CASE Maya orders CBI probe into 'Teesri Azadi'', THE TRIBUNE, Lucknow, 12 March 2008.
[50] Ibid.
[51] "Charge- Sheet" of Bahujan Samaj on Mayawati (*Treatise* on Black deeds of Mayawati against Bahujan Movement), Friday, 22 February 2013. The flyer had an address as Head Office: A - 796, Bhalswa Dairy Delhi – 110042.
[52] Mayawati, *Safarnama*, Vol. 1 (in Hindi). p. 251-252.
[53] http://www.indiantelevision.com/aac/y2k13/aac9.php. Accessed : 24 March 2017.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ankur Batra, 'Puttin "Khap" on Controversy', *Times of India*, Aug 9, 2011. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/bollywood/news/Putting-khap-on-the-controversy/articleshow/9539348.cms?null . Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[56] Ibid.
[57] http://khap-honorkilling.blogspot.in/2011_07_01_archive.html . Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[58] Ibid.; http://khap-honourkilling.blogspot.in/2011_07_01_archives.html. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[59] https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/indian-states-ban-bollywood-caste-system-film-1.1064841. Accessed: 19 June 2017.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] http://www.bollywoodlife.com/youtube-2/prakash-jha-the-caste-system-exists-in-india-2/. Accessed : 24 March 2017.
[63] Annie Benerji, 'Bachchan starrer 'Aarakshan' sparks caste controversy', Reuters, New Delhi, August 11, 2011. http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-58741420110811. Accessed : 24 March 2017.
[64] https://www.telegraphindia.com/1110807/jsp/7days/story. 14347548.jsp . Accessed : 1 May 2017.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] 'Bajrang Dal threatens hindi film's screening', October 13, 2012, The Indian Express, *http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/bajrang-dal-threatens-hindi-films-screening/1016353/,* The Indian Express, , Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[69] 'CSF backs film on evils of caste system', *Ministries* magazine (online), 16 October 2012, http://www.christiantoday.co.in/article/csf.backs.film.on.evils.of.caste.system/7667.htm. Accessed : 2 May 2017.
[70] http://etalkindia.com/talk/showthread.php?848-Aaja-Nachle-Controversy-BAnned-in-Uttar-Pradesh-by-Mayawati-on-Racial-Lyrics. Accessed : 1 May 2017.
[71] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Controversial-lyrics-in-Aaja-Nachle-song-removed/articleshow/2587542.cms. Accessed : 1 May 2017.
[72] https://indiequill.wordpress.com/2007/12/01/aaja-nachle-so-bad-its-banned/. Accessed : 1 May 2017
[73] http://www.dnaindia.com/entertainment/report-pk-controversy-aamir-khan-and-rajkumar-hirani-defend-film-say-treatment-is-sensitive-and-not-sensational-2046211 . Accessed : 1 May 2017.
[74] Ibid.
[75] https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2012/0bawandar. Accessed : 2 May 2017.

Conclusion

Research writing and critical thinking happens all the times but milestone dates validate the convergence of foci of interest as well as enable the gathering of resources that might be spent in special ways and magnitude towards facilitating such a convergence. They provide a moment for the issuing of clarion calls to set new agendas for future research and writing once the dust of reviews has settled on the critical landscape. In India for a very long, consideration of cinema was split across a huge gulf between informal historical writings, usually of short length written by industry observers, cinephiles and journalists, and semi-academic writings that in the main considered the relationship between India's cultural history and popular cinema. Cinematic texts once disregarded as puerile and facile are now semantically being deconstructed, reinterpreted, and re-evaluated. A period of almost ten decades is an efficacious canvas to scrutinize a particular concept, a phenomenon, a social issue (especially if it persists for a century and more) and pattern of change. The present research is an historical analysis of representation of caste system as a social issue and its reformist role in Hindi films for a period of hundred years.

Present research, 'Caste System and Reformist Role of Hindi Cinema: Historical Analysis' (1913-2013) is an interdisciplinary study including historical, sociological, cultural studies by applying film methodology. It is not sufficient to use historical methodology alone and therefore researcher has acclimatized other perspectives for comprehensive understanding. The study is not possible in isolation and therefore application of film historiography is been implemented. However, different methodology is used for different films as per its make and treatment. Different methods are applied and combined that makes the study falls into interdisciplinary arena.

Films have power to represent concepts and therefore compliments and aggrandize written texts. Lately academic scholarship in History has recognized that cinema and television can powerfully project influential visions from the past. Thus, there is an acknowledgement and acceptance for incorporating study of moving images in classroom instruction.

Studies in Film history is expected to embrace the interdisciplinary openness. As films do not exist in isolation they are usually related to the wider cultural output of any period. Similarly for holistic understanding of the subject, it becomes

important to understand the relations between sponsorship authorities and production, film as a finished product and its reception at different historical times. It is well known that with cinema, particularly when it happens to be the only major entertainment medium, life starts to imitate films. Thus, the film study could be viewed as a window to observe a particular society at a particular time.

This brings one to make an important evaluation that, why the study of films does matter? It may be inferred that, the study of films matters because films is about the society. Films are used as a form to tell stories about the past, who are the people and about the society. The film study that aims to comprehend societal traits use films as a record to understand what makes and keeps one as a human and what concerns one as a member of the society. In spite of coming of numerous new media technologies, films very much remain a part of media landscape and rather have entered their domains, thus creating a special platform for itself. The film forms, their narratives, their style do influence the viewer's own narration and perception reflecting somewhere in his or her own reactions. Films is certainly a phenomenon that allows all to understand culture and people, transcending national, racial, economic, social and class boundaries. The film conveys and embodies the beliefs and values of the culture within which and for which it is made. Thus, films based on caste system in India, certainly occupy an important place for study as it represent the caste system at different times, in different situations, in different context and producing different responses. In order, to understand the change in social attitude towards caste system, films are one of the significant tools. These films in their specific time of creation usually are a maker's dialogue with the then present structure and therefore analysing them through the century can give one a definite pattern of both change and invariability signifies what stood as important at a certain time and not at other, and if caste system in India has become feeble or remained strong in its own capacity. Caste based films usually; exhibit progression within narrative which can be viewed as a dialectical process. Dialectics from Plato to Hegel and Marx is a method of explaining and creating change. It can be summed up by the idea of thesis which is challenged by an antithesis and the result of this conflict of ideas or situation is the synthesis, a new concept or situation. These films usually demonstrate two opposite groups segregated on the basis of class, caste, gender, religion or race.

Historically, film making in India has gone through ideological transitions. Initially films drew upon the crude elements of the 'Company natak', not the glorious

of classic Sanskrit drama or the vital forms of the folk theatre. Films mainly resorted to story material delving deep into the spiritual meaning underlying the Hindu epics rather than using their most obvious, ritualistic and superficial level namely, the magical, the miraculous and the spectacular in the exploits of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The nationalist bourgeoisie when took control of Bombay film industry around 1930s, did its utmost to bring this cinema in line with the purist ideational agenda of controlling the modern through domesticity and traditionalism. They were followed by the film makers like J.B.H. Wadia with communist inclinations who dedicated his entire film making career to making of stunt films, with explicitly taking his cue from the European avant-garde. Later, the real forces concerning film making aligned against the colonial government and the public demand for nationalist sort of material could not be long avoided as profit was the main concern but in colonial setup. The colonial period films therefore opted for a middle path more and became more inclined towards socially conscious cinema. So cinema didn't remain a mere entrainment but a modern tool to bring social awareness. In post-colonial period the concern remained to be transformation of India from a land of have nots with its concomitant evils that exist in social, economic and cultural spheres into the land of abundance with secular milieu.

Through the ages two registers of mass populism namely politics and media in co-adjutancy brought cinema into the forefront of public imagination as a significant cultural and historical players to reckon where India was headed. This was followed by promoting ideas of socialism and later post-modernism. Here, Film makers concern became the urban dilemma and pressure and the process of getting away from rooted traditionalism to accepting modernisation. The development of progressive film culture in India produced an important cultural effects that it became possible to see the distinction between popular entertainment film and the film made by an artist as a serious personal expression in the language of cinema on some aspect of the human condition – a distinction which had been established for long in the earlier arts of literature, painting and theatre. Nevertheless, the projection of the issue of caste discrimination in films remained consistent.

Caste issue based films particularly dwelling between art and commercial forms has important consideration that on one hand an attempt is made to make a serious statement on Indian way of life, society and related issues whereas on the other hand has to simultaneously provide subliminal entertainment to mass audience,

through usual cinematic device such as song, dance, melodrama, humour and chase. Thus, while handling a serious issue of caste discrimination and to present it through popular style remains a challenge. Caste issue based films represent impact of modernisation on the settled values of a traditional society which still remain in a process to evolve the new values integrating the vital elements in the traditional with the vital elements in the modern. The functioning of caste system in India is usually shown particular to rural area. As for the distributors of the films who have an important role to play in the business of these films and in future production define film as those meant for the masses, other for the classes and art films that attract selective and limited audience.

As for the cine-goers, even as mindless absorbed in entertainment a moviegoer is subtly and unconsciously washed with layers of cultural values, idealistic aspirations, an understanding of good and evil, the transformation of the everyday into the heroic and the mythic, the redemption of the past mistakes, the finding and loosing of love, their reasons, the acknowledgment of hidden desires and secret pain and at last the discovery of the meaning of our lives. In India, a commercial Hindi film offers to a filmgoer an enjoyment of the 'good life' vicariously, something he or she can never hope to have, the escape route which is complete with the cream on the top. On the other hand films based on serious social issues may, force attitude of social responsibility, make people conscious stricken, demand action of some kind, admonish people to think on problems in a harsh and disturbing manner that are either difficult to comprehend or difficult to tackle. This affects the production of alternate or semi-commercial films.

While analysing long range of films it is observed that there are only few exceptions that made it big on the box office collection. Considering this as a windfall there are no many efforts taken to pursue films on the same social issues. Also, the maker would want to handle another social issue. Hence, the films on caste issue in India are observed to be made in regular intervals, in different styles and with different perspective. Conspicuously, there has been consistency in making of films based on caste system in India or the ones with a strong statement on the same, as the issue of caste distinction, caste abomination and caste based detestation continues to prevail through many centuries.

Thus, films based on caste system in India can be categorised as follows:

1. Films based on real life story, biopic those are cinematically adapted. For example, *Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar – The Untold story* based on the life and work of Dr. Ambedkar. Whereas films like *Bandit Queen, Bhawandar, Nishant* are based on real life people and incidents those are acute victims of caste discrimination.
2. Films story derived from literature, short story based on caste system. For example, *Achhut Kanya, Sadgati, Omkara* and so on.
3. Films showing love relationship between a couple belonging to two different castes. This is strongly objected by their family. This is shown resulting in honour-killing at times. For example, *Banaras, Pairo Talle, Khap, Chameli Ki Shaadi*, and so on.
4. Films based on the life of Saints and Great souls who gave the message to end caste discrimination. For example, *Dharmatama, Shirdi Ke Sai Baba, Narsi Bhagat, Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan* and so on.
5. Films those are based on caste and politics. For example, *Damul, Arakshan* and so on.
6. Films particularly showing economic and social oppression of lower castes. For example, *Tarpan, Paar, Ankur, Manthan* so on.
7. Films showing exploitation of higher caste women. For example, *Diksha*, *Mahayatra, Water* and so on.
8. Films discussing life and condition of lower caste women. For example, *Achhut*, *Sujata*, *Rudaali* and so on.
9. Films through the gaze of the oppressed, a lower caste in particular. For example, *Tamas*, *Bhavani Bhavai*.
10. Films those are not entirely based on caste system but have significant reference to the same. For example, *Lagaan*, *Hum Panch*, *Souten*, *Ramchandra Pakistani*, *Yeh Mera India* and so on.

Chapter Analysis:

The research provided an analysis of representation of caste system in Hindi films for the period of one hundred years. The **Introduction** is a comment on selection of the topic, historical background, what researches are been undertaken on the subject, stated the hypothesis, presented research questions, elaborated on the research methodologies and briefly discussed chapter scheme.

Chapter Two consist of Review of Literature. The review is made from various perspectives as the present study includes history, films, caste system in India and social studies. The availability of sources on Indian cinema is mainly found on films as a part of popular culture. Only historical films in particular are considered as significant for study in History. Further, there has been independent literature available on Production house, Directors of the films, individual actors and on particular film. There has been writings on gender perspective or more recently conceptualisation of Bollywood and its related nuances. The significant consideration are films and art based magazines such as Filmindia, Motherland, Filmfare, Marg, Outlook and so on, The researcher has made considerable review of literature related to film historiography., film catalogues, film festival issues and newspapers. There is no direct reference found on caste system and contribution of Hindi cinema as an agent to bring social reform. The research attempt to explore this aspect of Hindi cinema and the social effects.

Chapter Three discusses Research Methodology used in the present thesis. The present study analyze caste discrimination in India through the study of films in Hindi language for the period from 1913 – 2013. This research is a new approach in the domain of historical studies and therefore inclusively adapts other approaches mainly from film studies and its historiography. The established conventional approach and methodology is not adequate and sufficient to derive conclusion. The research methodology used do assimilate multiple approaches for analysisng films and to interpret its historical significance . The research has made us of literary texts in book forms, magazines and newspapers; audio – visual sources such as films, documentaries; and internet database. A detailed study is also conducted on art based research methodology, caste system in India, history and development of cinema in general and on film personalities related to research theme.

In **Chapter Four** a discussion is made on caste system in India that includes contemplated views of western and Indian thinkers. A brief review of casteism in colonial India is taken into consideration; the period in which first Indian film was born. As the early cinema adapted religious themes for its native viewers it became imperative to understand than existing religious convention. Similarly, an attempt is made to establish an interrelation between caste system and art forms in India and its adaptation in Indian cinema. It is observed that this correlation is found throughout the Indian subcontinent. Correspondingly, it is seen that art forms are also subject to

caste distinction and diverge into classical and folk art form thus allocating social status of the artist. The roots of this distinction can be traced back to ancient text of drama *Natyashastra*.

The temple performances developed into sophisticated classical dance forms, limited to certain community and considered dignified. Whereas, folk art which was performed for masses outside the temple periphery of religious places was considered somewhat despicable and performed by lower castes communities. Indian cinema however repudiated this distinction and the art was performed and disseminated in social sphere without any caste consideration. The art and its performance became highlighted whereas the lower caste status of the performer got exalted by bringing in profanity. For example, cine performance of Lavani, the folk theatre from Maharashtra on the screen is bestowed honour prominently by bringing in the angle of Bhakti Movement like in the films *Matwala, Shahir Ram Joshi* and *Shirdi Ke Saibaba*. Some films made use of the art form itself to narrate evils of casteism such as *Bhavni Bhavai, Tarpan, Vanaprastham* and so on. So it can be inferred that development and continuation of art traditions in India through the ages is profoundly related to each other and it reflects directly or indirectly in films and its industry too. Thus, art forms when reached the cinema screen transcended the religion and caste boundaries, broke open formidability of accession only by limited group, and entered into public realm for mass appreciation. This can be called the 'power of cinema'.

Present research further explore reformist role of Hindi cinema in the political, social, educational and religious context. An analysis is made to ascertain the role of cinema in bringing awareness about the social issue and encourage attitudinal change. Hindi cinema can be considered among the initial mechanical tools in India proliferating 'national culture' whose 'technical miracles', low cost availability made it easily accessible and with no social constraints. The audio-visual property of the medium generated great impact on its viewers. And consequently, the importance of this mass media was recognised by the national leaders and they hoped to use it for spreading nationalist and social reform ideas.

Cinema role as an educationist, a reformers and contributor to nation building remained a concern with political activists. Thus arise the first question is cinema for art or education? There have been various theories on what could be the function of cinema in Indian social domain. While analysing the Hindi films through reformist perspective it became important to understand its significance and effects and also to

determine if this art form should be constraint only to the purpose of entertainment or possess an educational value.

Going back to the ancient theories of art, where with unerring judgment it is emphasised that art's main function is 'recreation'. Art essentially deals with life vibrant in its myriad forms. It is artist's sensitivity that interprets and casts these fleeting experiences into mould of flawless expressions. The pressure of modern society leaves little leisure to the millions to lead a full life of sweetness and light. In here their film experience recreated through music, dance and drama envisions something which lie deep buried in their sub conscious and gives expressions to the desires.

Secondly, in reference to educational role, a question arises who are the educators, the film maker, the policy maker or the government. The films began to be recognised as a valuable supplement to the textual studies. Popular feature films representing a social issue produces a greater impact and its effect remains in public memory for a long time. Cinemas with strong social message are encouraged by funding from financial assistance from the government or are made tax free to increase viewer affordability. Thus, cinema as a reformist agent is recognised by the governmental administration.

A corpus is prepared of the Hindi films based on caste system in India in colonial period. Thirteen films are enlisted with elaboration on plot of the film and its review. It is observed that British government began to take cognisance of the industry as it began to earn profits and it became important to bring it under their control. Another concern was the subjects that films handled and increasing influence of nationalist political propaganda to which film media was no exception. The government introduced censorship. Any direct or indirect reference to Indian leadership or their political agenda was undermined. Thus, directors and specially the producer who were the main investors resorted to representation of social issues which was unproblematic to be passed through the censor board and were also of interest to general masses due to added melodrama. Caste system and its distinction was one of the core social issues that interested the film makers. This issue was represented as a part of romantic theme or under saint genre. With the beginning of Gandhi era and Gandhi's non-preference for cinema came as a big blow to the industry. The films and their magazines stride to bring an attitudinal change in Gandhi by writing editorials. As Mahatma Gandhi began the campaign against untouchability

and condemned practice of caste discrimination films quickly picked the issue. It suited both British government policy of social emancipation and also worked as a response to Gandhi's call. The films in the period have direct mention of caste discrimination and made reference to teaching Gautama Buddha on which basic principles of Gandhi was based.

There is continuation and incorporation of corpus of films based on caste system in India or has a significant reference to the same from post independent India. As the period under consideration is extensive the chapter is divided into two phases, particularly from 1947 to 1990 and 1991 to 2013. The 1990s era is considered a period of media explosion and great shift took place within the film making and film industry as a whole. Government policies were reoriented towards the relations of films and its industry with the global diasporas. Initially the post-independence cinema was based on socialist constructive pattern of New India. Nehruvian period did look forward to having a classless society and promoted reducing the gap of caste distinction. This was considered very important for national development. With the emergence of art cinema social subjects in films were represented more realistically. Thus, the first phase pre 1990s has different type of cinematic representations of caste system such as poetic and subtle as in *Sujata*, socialist *Char Dil Char Rahein*, ever popular saint genre *Kan Kan mein hai Bhagwan*, feudalistic such as *Ankur* or *Nishant*, realist such as *Sadgati, Paar, Giddh*, activist *Manthan* and commercials such as *Ganga Ki Saugandh, Hum Panch, Prem Rog, Soutan* or *Chameli Ki Shaadi.*

The films portrayed malevolence of caste system with sometimes showing protagonist being wronged and turning into a bandit, sometimes dominant feudalism versus caste system, and sexual exploitation of lower caste women by higher caste men including *Devdasi* system and sometimes through the language of silence. The period witnessed the emergence of new talents such as V. Shantaram, Bimal Roy, Satyajit Ray, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Shyam Benegal, Ketan Mehta, Govind Nahlani and Goutam Ghose who gave recognition to Indian cinema on the world platform. All the mentioned film directors made film on discrepancies of caste system in their own unique styles and through different perspectives.

Thus, the period began with subtle representation to hard hitting and vehement depiction of the caste system in India. The cinematic rendition in 1960s onwards was a powerful message conveyed to its viewers that did not resort to romanticising of the issue. Some of the films such as *Ankur, Nishant, Hum Panch* and *Jag Utha Insan*

proposed violent subaltern uprising as solution. In *Jag Utha Insaan* , the film directly refers to the reformation films tend to bring. The lead actor questions the society that when natural resources such as tress, water, air, sky, rain do not make distinction why society and its members make such distinction. Why people are discriminated on basis of caste, religion, gender and class. However, all the movements shown in the movies are invariably based in rural setup. So caste system in Hindi films is identified as a rural phenomenon. Thus the films consciously or unconsciously considered urban India as progressive and modern whereas rural India as infected with caste incongruity and politics.

Post 1990s films based on caste system adapted both traditional and modern approach. This include biographical films based on real life incidences such as *Bandit Queen, Samar* and *Bhawandar*, some woman centric films such as *Rudali* and *Fire*, films based in colonial times and explored practices than commonly prevalent such as *Diksha* and *Water*, films corresponding to northern feudalistic or noble setup such as *Tarpan, Pitaah, Banaras, Eklavya* and so on. Consequently, films began to dwell in urban sphere and commented on policy of reservations and caste politics. For example, *Aarakshan*, *Rajneeti* and *Rakta Charitra*. The influence of caste system on Hindi films has been so profound that film director Vishal Bharadwaj made his film *Omkara*, on Shakespearean adaptation of Othello on caste base. A significant release in this period was the biopic on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar that effectively showed the Ambedkarite movement against caste discrimination in India till the final stage of *Dhamma Chakra Pravartan*, the ceremony of mass religious conversion.

The commercial feature films too presented issue of caste system such as in *Chachi 420*, false caste identity taken by higher caste for acquiring governmental benefits such as *Mohan Das*, caste system and transcending political boundaries also affecting people's mindset such as *Swadesh* and *Ramchandra Pakistani* and a strong treatise on issue of caste system and honour killing in *Khap*. There were few films which vigorously depicted vagaries of caste system in India through one of its character and were significantly depicted in main storyline such as 'Kachra' in *Lagan*, 'Ramdulari' in *Lajja* and 'Jalebi' in *Dilli 6*. Some films such as *Shudra – The Rising* and Teesri *Azadi* were direct critic of higher caste atrocities on other castes and denounced Aryan culture.

Thus, post 1990s film have large arena of representation of caste system in India covering ancient to contemporary times. The holistic view of the period

signifies how caste difference remained and only changed in its form. The sexual exploitation of lower caste women was subject to inflicting punishments on them or victimisation due to her both lower caste and financial status. Similarly, films also presented plight of higher caste widows and abused by her community people. However, with few exceptions the films based on caste system in its entirety generated more controversy than funds.

Hindi films based on Caste system and Retorts is an attempt to establish a nexus between reality to films and films to reality, an interconnection in reference to public reactions they generated. Caste system as being an integral part of Indian society is been incessant subject in films. However, when the issue is represented one community, usually higher caste and dominant is shown in bad light. This has triggered disagreements and feeling of being offended. In some cases, matter is taken to judicial courts, cognizance is taken by the government and with holding basic principles of 'not hurting the sentiments of any community' decisions are usually made which is detrimental to freedom of cinematic expressions. The films do generate reactions and such incidences reflect the social maturity and mentality of the society. When one looks back through the films the need for a positive change is constantly aspired.

Suggestions and Recommendations :

Films can play an important role in reconstruction programme of the country, particularly when illiteracy and ignorance still stalk the land. The films can prove a unifying force not only within the geographical domain but also inter-continentally. Hindi feature films speak one language and epitome a singular Indian that any person can inertly identify with.

Generally in films apart from the escapist mode, social attitude becomes ritualistic rather than real and more important whatever the film showed and said, the status quo was not to be disturbed and controversy is to be studiously avoided. Due to this the commercial film fraternity tend to reinforce the worst prejudices of the audience and encourage the development of the most superficial values. This hinders a deep focus on real problem, limit freedom of expression that could have been hard hitting and actually impactful and sometimes the real essence of the issue is lost. Thus, films based on caste based issues tend to dangle between making a serious significant statement and following commercial cinema traits for achieving box office

success. Ultimately the results are unfavourable. It so becomes important and challenging for the film directors to situate the issue in most appealing way, thus persuading all, the producers and the audience alike.

Similarly, the producers of the films who basically are businessmen must be able to realise certain social obligations and responsibilities. Rather than exploiting the weakness of the audience by pondering to its baser instinct and giving cheap and even obscene entertainment should try to finance project that will elevate its taste by appealing to its finer aesthetic sense of exquisiteness and truth.

The films based on social issues are more strongly reflected in art cinema. It may be comprehended that film makers usually are unable to balance between the art and attaining a commercial success and this results limited number of audiences viewing it which is basically meant for mass awareness. Art cinemas in particular are subject to this predicament.

Hindi films in particular right from its origin has developed its formats from the than existing theatrical forms. The songs, dances, the main plot and its comic parody, have all been absorbed by the cinema. The alternate cinema especially the ones depicting social issues such as caste system if has to grow they cannot ignore these factors. An extension of these forms is needed rather than unfamiliar ones and a far truer depiction of social realities. Only then will it be able to seriously compete for audiences or the new cinema will remain guilty of producing films for the sake of small cineaste elite. It is important to remember that motion picture is both art and industry. The enormous success of film *Sairat* (also made as *Dhadak* in Hindi) and commercial formula it used along with realism is a welcoming endeavour and a hope for making films on caste based themes.

The new or alternate cinema, known in the business as an 'art film' has to be seen in the context of producer and distribution concern for making profit or at least have a 'breakeven point'. Even when a film is produced by the funding from the governmental agencies such as Film Finance Corporation or National Film Archives of India, a co-producer or film director still has very little chance of selling his or her films to the distributors. So if there is seriousness about developing an alternate cinema representing social issues like caste in a realistic or non-realistic manner, government requires to develop a distribution circuit that is able to compete for audiences with the regular commercial films. This also includes publicity of the film, definite programmes for rural outreach, so that these films can make it to larger

audience bringing higher awareness as desired. Otherwise the films will only end up in festivals and on getting national awards but no viewers. It is also important to realise that the television do not have single channel as *Doordarshan* like before that would show government funded movies and viewers had no options. It now flaunt hundreds of channels and so selling them the rights and opening up international market should also be a concern.

There is a side of popular notion which believes that films should only be for entertainment and it is neither duty nor responsibility of the film makers to enlighten the movie goers or to educate them. They are not educationists and that is the job left to schools, colleges and Universities and there is no business to transform cinema houses into classrooms. However, it is important to understand that any film that is made is bound to produce certain reactions on its viewers. It is this reaction that is subject to judgement and analysis by its consumers. Films become a bridge between governmental agenda and society and perform dual role of an entertainer and an educator. For better understanding essence of Bhakti movement movie *Sant Tukaram* is a desirable option, for exploring caste system and bandit life *Bandit Queen* is a preferred option, for understanding feudal order and caste system *Ankur* and *Nishant* is a preferred and understanding caste system and politics like *Damul*, *Samar* are apt suggestions. These films effectively supplement classroom teaching and significantly contribute to academics. As most of these films are government funded they carry social message given by existing ruling party and are of 'no offence' kind.

Like cinema the cinema theatre too can be a place of recreation, social equality and medium for disseminating social message.

The present research has focused on how cinema functions as an institution for the production and distribution of social knowledge and entertainment, the very specific ways in which film images and sounds generate meaning, and the relationship between audience and cinema as social institution, as film, as texts. The research work emphasised on providing a critical and informed sense of contexts in which films based on caste system in India are produced, disseminated and consumed, within both mainstream and alternative cinema. The present research has tried to develop a critically informed sense of history and development of film conventions in reference to social discrimination in Indian society. It has examined the reformist role of Hindi films in social context within which the virtual world of cinema operates and

comments on the interrelation between the industry and the audience in the handling of the social subjects like caste system in India.

Films are everywhere but cinematic films at their best are still extraordinary and necessary to be preserved and reproached.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources :

Films : Annexure 1 and Annexure 2

Documentaries :

Kurup, Stalin, *India Untouched : Stories of a People apart*, British Broadcasting Corporation, Language : Hindi, 2007. Documentary is based on caste system and discrimination practised in various parts of India and how it still strongly exists in both rural and urban regions in its own specific form.

Sawhney, Nakul Singh, *Izzatnagar Ki Asabhya Betiyan*, documentary based on Honour Killing in India, including Khap community and its response on film *Khap*. Language : Hindi, 2013.

Film Scripts :

Banerjee Shampa*, Bhavni Bhavai,* Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1986.

Shantaram V.*, Dharmatma*, V. Shantaram Foundation, Rajkamal Studio , Parel, Mumbai.

Snell Rupert, *SADGATI – Deliverance*, screenplay by Satyjit Ray and Amrit Rai based on short story by Premchand, SOAS, London.

File Records :

Bharat, Muni, *The Natyasastra – A Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy and Histrionics*, by Manmohan Ghosh (transl.), Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1950.

File No. IOR: L/PJ/8/126, Coll 105/A Pt I, Films offensive to Indian public opinion: general policy, October 1935- May 1940, India Office Library, London, United Kingdom.

File No. IOR: L/PJ/8/127, Coll 105/A Pts II-XII, Films offensive to Indian public opinion: general policy, India Office Library, London, United Kingdom.

File No. IOR: L/PJ/8/130, Coll 105/C, Financial subsidies to British film industry in India, October 1937 – July 1938. India Office Library, London, United Kingdom.

Books :

Ananthamurthy, U . R. , *Ghatshraadh*, New Delhi : Radha Krishna publication , 2008.

Basu, Samaresh and Banerjee, Sumanta, *Selected Stories of Samaresh Basu*, Vol. 1 and 2, Calcutta : Thema Publication, 2003.

Devi, Mahashweta, and Ganguli, Usha, *Rudali* , London : Seagull Books, 1993.

Muzumdar, Kamal Kumar, *Uponnyas Samgra – Mahayatra (Antarjali Jatra – The Voyage Beyound)*, New Delhi : Penguin Books , (edition) 2015.

Premchand, Munshi, *Sadgati*, Bhartiya Sahitya Sangrah, New Delhi : Pustak Mahal , 1978 (edition).

Sahani Bhisham and Rockwell Daisy, *Tamas* , London : Penguin publication edition 2016.

Shakespeare, William, *Othello*, London : Unique publishers, (edition) 2014.

Sen Mala, *India's Bandit Queen : True story of Phoolan Devi* , London : The Harvill Press, 1991.

Email Correspondence – Email exchanged between Film Director Ketan Mehta and the Researcher. **Annexure 3**

Secondary Sources :

Books :

Abbas, K. A., *The Mad Mad World of Indian Cinema*, Delhi : Hind Pocket Books, 1977.

Abbas, K. A., (Kohli Suresh ed.), *I am not an Island*, New Delhi : Imprint One, 2010.

Ahmed, Omar, *Studying Indian Cinema*, London: Leighton Buzzard, Auteur publication, 2015.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G, *Imagined Communities : reflection on the origin and spread of nationalism*, New York : Verso publication, 1991.

Banerjee- Dube, Ishita, (ed.), *Themes in Indian History*, (Oxford in India Readings series), New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2008.

Banerjee, Shampa and Srivastav, Anil, One *Hundred Indian Feature Films- An Annotated Filmography*, London : Garland Publishing, 1988.

Baber, Sian, *Using Film as Sources*, London : Manchester University Press, 2015.

Barnouw, Erik and Krishnaswamy, S., *Indian Film*, rev. ed., New York : Oxford University Press, 1980.

Basham, A. L., *The Wonder that was India*, New Delhi: Picador, 1982.

Bashin, Kamla, *What is Patriarchy*, New Delhi : Kali for Women publication, 1998.

Bazin, Andre, *What is Cinema*, Hugh Gray (tr.) Volume 1 and 2, California : University of California, 2005.

Beatrix, Pfliederer, and Lutze, Lothar (eds.), *The Hindi film: agent and re-agent of cultural change*, New Delhi : Manohar, 1985.

Benyahia, Sarah, Gaffney, Freddie, and White, John (eds.), *As Film Studies – The Essential introduction*, London : Routledge, 2006.

Bhaba, Homi, (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, London : Routledge, 1990.

Bhatkal, Satyajit, *The Spirit of Lagaan,* Mumbai : Popular Prakashan, 2002.

Bhatacharya, Indranil, *Vision of Splendour – Himansu Rai and Indian Cinema*, Pune : National Film Archives of India, 2009.

Bhaumik, Kaushik, *The Emergence of the Bombay Film Industry, 1913 – 1936*, unpublished D. Phil thesis, Oxford University, 2001.

Bhowmik, Someswar, *Behind the Glitz, Exploring an enigma Called Indian Film Industry*, Kolkatta : Thema , 2008.

Bose, Mihir, *Bollywood – A History*, New Delhi : Roli Books, 2008.

Burra, Rani (ed.), *Indian Cinema 1980-1985*, coordinating editor, Mangala Chandran, New Delhi : Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Development Corporation, 1985.

Carr, E. H., *What is History*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1961.

Chabria, Suresh and Usai Paolo Cherchi (eds.), *Light of Asia: Indian Silent Cinema 1912 – 1935*, New Delhi : Wiley Eastern, 1994.

Chakraborty, Ujjal, *The Director's Mind*, New Delhi : Alchemy Publishers, 2008.

Chakravarty, Sumita S., *National identity in Indian Popular Cinema – 1947-1987*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1998.

Chatterjee, Gayatri, *Awara*, New Delhi : Wiley Eastern, 1992.

Chatterjee, Partha, *The Nation and its Fragments : Colonial and post colonial Histories*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1993.

Chatterjee, S. A., *Cinema Object : Women : A Study of the Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema*, Calcutta : Parumita publication, 1998.

Cherian, V. K., *India's Film Society Movement : The journey and its impact*, New Delhi : Sage publication Limited, (edition) 2016.

Collingwood, R.G., *The Idea of History*, New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1994.

Cooper, Darius, *The cinema of Satyajit Ray: between tradition and modernity*, New York : Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Da Cunha, Uma, (ed.), *Film India : The New Generation 1960 – 1980*, New Delhi : Directorate of Film Festivals, 1981.

Das Gupta, Chidanand, *Seeing is Believing*, New Delhi : Penguin Publication, 2008.

Das Gupta, Chidanand, *Talking about Films*, New Delhi : Orient Blackswan, 1981.

Deshpande, Anirudh, *Class, Power and Consciousness in Indian Cinema and Television*, Delhi : Primus, 2014.

Dharampal-Frick, Gita, Kirloskar-Steinbach, Dawyer, Rachel,Phalkey, Jahanavi (eds.), *Key Concepts in Modern Indian Studies*, New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2015.

Dissanayake, Wimal (ed.), *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, London : BFI publishing, 1989.

Donald, James, and Renov, Michael, *The Sage Handbook of Film Studies*, Ist edition, London : Sage publication, 2008.

Dudrah, Rajinder, *Bollywood : Sociology goes to the Movies*, New Delhi : Sage publication, 2006.

Dwyer, Rachel, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : Routledge, 2006.

Dwyer, Rachel and Divia, Patel, *Cinema India: The Visual Culture of Hindi India Film*, London: Reaktion Books, Brunswick, New Jersey : Rutgers University Press, 2002.

Ferro, Marc and Greene, *Cinema and History*, Wayne State : Wayne State University Press, 1988.

Ghatak, Ritwik, *Cinema and I* , Calcutta : Dhyanbindu, (edition), 2015.

Gokulsing, Moti, K., and Dissanayake, Wimal, *Indian Popular Cinema – A Narrative of Cultural Change*, Hyderabad : Orient Longmann, 1998.

Gomery, Douglas, *The Coming of Sound*, New York : Routledge, 2005.

Gopinath, Gayatri, *Impossible Desires : Queer Diaspora and South Asian Public Culture*, Cambridge : Duke University Press, 2005.

Govil, Nitin and Eric, Hoyat, *Thieves of Bombay : United Artists, Colonial Copyrights, and Film Piracy in the 1920s*, Bioscope South Asian Screen Studies, London : University of Westminister, 2014.

Guha, Ramchandra, *India after Gandhi – The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, Picador : Pan Macmillan Ltd., 2008.

Gulazar, Nihalani, Govind, Chatterjee, Saibal, *Encyclopaedia of Hindi Cinema*, New Delhi : Encyclopaedia Britannica Pvt. Limited, 2003.

Habib, Irfan, *Essay in Indian History Towards a Marxist perception*, New Delhi: Tulik Publication, , 1997.

Hasan, Mushirul, (ed.), *India's Partition : Process, Strategy and Mobilization*, New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1993.

Hjort, Mette, and Mackenzie, Scott, *Cinema and Nation*, London : Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2000.

Hogan, Patrick Colm, *Understanding Indian movies: culture, cognition, and cinematic imagination*, Texas : University of Texas Press, 2008.

Hood, John W., *The Essential Mystery – The Major Film makers of Indian Art Cinema*, New Delhi : Orient Longmann, 2000.

Indian cinema: a visual voyage, National Film Development Corporation of India, New Delhi : Publication division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1998.

Jain, Manju (ed.), *Narratives of Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : Primus, 2009.

Jall, Hutokshi, *Raj Kapoor and Hindi films: catalysts of political socialisation in India*, Calcutta : Statesman, 1995.

Jha, Bandana, *100 Years of Cinema – Crisis and Resilience*, New Delhi : Regency publication, 2017.

Joseph, Sarah, *Interrogating Culture –Critical perspectives to contemporary Social theory*, New Delhi : Sage Publication, 1998.

Juluri, Vamsee, *Bollywood Nation*, New Delhi : Penguin India, 2013.

Kapur, Geeta, *When was Modernism : Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practise in India*, Delhi : Tullika Books, 2000.

Kapur, Ratna, *Post colonial Economies of Desires : Legal representations of the sexual subaltern*, Denver Colorado : Denver University Press, 2001.

Kaul, Gautam, *Cinema & the Indian Freedom struggle*, New Delhi : Sterling publisher Pvt. Ltd, 1998.

Kaur, Raminder and Sinha, Ajay, (eds.), *Bollyworld - Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens,* London : Sage publication, 2005.

Kazmi, Fareed, *The Politics of India's conventional Cinema : Imagining a Universe, Subverting a Multiverse*, New Delhi : Sage Publication, 1999.

Kumar, Priya, *Limiting Secularism – The Ethics of Coexistence in Indian Literature and Film*, Ranikhet : Permanent Black publication, 2008.

Kurian, Verghese and Salvi Gauri, *I too Had a Dream – The Father of White Revolution*, New Delhi : Roli publication, 2005.

Lal, Ananda, & Dasgupta, Chidananda (eds.), *Rasa: Vol. II, Theatre and cinema / the Indian performing arts in the last twenty-five years*, Calcutta : Anamika Kala Sangam, 1995.

Lal, Vinay, and Nandy, Ashish (eds.), *Finger printing Popular Culture: The Mythic and the Iconic in Indian Cinema*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2006.

Manto, Sadat Hasan, *Stars from Another Sky: The Bombay Film World of the 1940s*, Khalid Hasan (trans.), New Delhi : Penguin Books, 1998.

Marx, Karl, *Theories of Surplus Value (1951)*, Vol. III, English translation, Moscow : Progress publisher, 1971.

Mazumdar, Rajani, *Bombay Cinema : An Archive of the City*, 1st Edition, Minnesota : University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Mishra, Vijay, *Bollywood Cinema : Temples of Desire*, London : Routledge, 2002.

Mitra, Ananda, *India through the Western Lens : Creating National Images in Film*, New Delhi : Thousand Oak publication, 1999.

Mujawar, Isak, *Prabhat Chitre*, Pune : Navchaitanya Prakashan, 2008.

Mukherjee, Madhuja, *New Theatres Ltd.: The Emblem of Art, the Picture of Success*, Pune : National Film Archives, 2009.

Mukherjee, Madhuja, *Voices of the Talking Stars Women of Indian Cinema and Beyond*, London : Sage publication, 2017.

Mukerjee, Radha Kamal, *Inter-caste tension - Caste tension studies*, Lucknow: University of Lucknow publication, 1951 .

Mulay, Vijaya, *From Rajahs and Yogis to Gandhi and Beyond : Images of India in International Films of the 20th Century*, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Nandy, Ashis, *The intimate Enemy : Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1983.

Nandy, Ashis, (ed.), *The Savage Freud and Other essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1995.

Nandy, Ashis, (ed.), *The Secret Politics of Our Desires - Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1998.

Narwekar, Sanjit, *Directory of Indian film-makers and films*, Trowbridge : Flicks publication, 1994.

Needham, Anuradha, *New Indian Cinema in Post – Independence India – The Cultural work of Shyam Benegal's Films*, London : Routledge, 2013.

Nowell – Smith, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, London : Oxford University Press, 1996.

Pai, Sudha, *Dalit Assertion*, (Oxford India Short Introductions series) New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2013.

Pendharkar, M., *Indian Popular Cinema : Industry, ideology and consciousness*, New York : Hampton Press, 2003.

Phalke-Summanwar, Sharayu, *The Silent Film: DadasahebPhalke 1870-1944*, Pune : India Connect, 2012.

Prasad, M. Madhava, *Ideology of the Hindi Films: A Historical Construction*, New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1998.

Rai, Amit, *Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India's New Media Assemblage*, London: Duke University Press, 2009.

Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, *Indian Cinema in the time of Celluloid : From Bollywood to the Emergency*, New Delhi : Tulika Books, 2009.

Rajadhyaksha, Ashish and Willemen, Paul, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*, London : British Film Institute in association with the National Film Archive of India, 1999.

Rajeshwari, Sunder Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women*, London : Routledge, 1993.

Ramachandran, T.M. and Rukmini, S. (eds.), *70 years of Indian cinema: 1913 – 1983*, Bombay - Cinema India-International, London : Sangam Books, 1985.

Rangoonwalla, Firoze, *Indian cinema: past and present*, New Delhi : Clarion books, 1982.

Rangoonwalla, Firoze, *75 Years of Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : Indian Book Company, 1988.

Rangoonwalla, Firoze, *Bimal Roy – A Monograph*, Pune : National Film Archives of India, 2009.

Rao, Maithili, *Smita Patil – A brief Incandescence*, Delhi : Harper Collins, 2015.

Ray, Satyajit, *Our Films, Their Films*, Calcutta : Orient Longman, 1976.

Ray Satyajit, *Deep Focus*, London : Harper publication, 2013.

Ray, R. M. (ed.), *Indian Cinema in Retrospect*, Sangeet Natak Akadami, New Delhi: Hope India publication, 2009.

Risley, Herbert, *The People of India (1915),* Calcutta: Spink & Co., New edition 1999.

Saari, Anil, *Indian Cinema : The Faces Behind the Mask*, London : Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sahi, Jyoti, *The Child and the Serpent : Reflections on Popular Indian symbols*, London : Penguin Books, 1990.

Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, London : Penguin, 1995.

Sarkar, Tanika, *Hindu Wife, Hindu National : Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism,* Delhi : Permanent Black publication, 2001.

Sarkar, Bhaskar, *Mourning the Nation – Indian Cinema at the wake of Partition*, London : Orient Black Swan, 2010.

Saran, Renu, *History of Indian Cinema*, Delhi : Diamond Books, 2012.

Sen, Mrinal, *Views on Cinema*, Calcutta : Ishan publishers, 1977.

Sharma, R.S., *Shudras in Ancient India – A social history of the lower order down to circa A.D. 600*, Bangalore : Motilal Banarsidass publication, 1982.

Shrivastav, Manoj, *Wide Angle - History of Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : Notion Press, 2016.

Srinivas, N., *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*, Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1962.

Singh, Indubala, *Gender Relations and Cultural Ideology in Indian Cinema*, Delhi : Deep and Deep publication, 2007.

Smith, Paul, (ed.), *The Historian and the Film*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Somaaya, Bhawana, *Fragmented Frames – Reflection of a Critic*, New Delhi : Pustak Mahal, 2008.

Stam, Robert, *Film Theory an Introduction*, Oxford : Blackwell publication, 2000.

Thapar, Romilla, *A History of India*, Vol. 1, London: Penguin books, 1990.

The Cinematograph Act 1948, 1952-1983, Delhi : Commercial Law Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 2008.

Thompson, Kristin, and Bordwell, David, *Film History – An Introduction*, New York : McGraw – Hill Higher education publication, 2003.

Turner, Graeme, *Film as Social Practise*, London : Routledge, 1993.

Usha, K. R., *"Reflections": Image of Women in Hindi Films*, Pune : National Film Archives, 2010.

Vaidyanathan, T.G., *Hours in Darkness*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1996.

Valicha, K., The Moving Images : A Study of Indian Cinema, New Delhi : Orient BlackSwan, 1980.

Vansina, Jan, *The Oral Tradition as History*, Oxford : Harmondsworth, 1965.

Vasudev, Aruna, *The New Indian Cinema*, New Delhi : Macmillan India, 1986.

Vasudevan, Ravi, (ed.), Making Meaning in Indian Cinema, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2000.

Virdi, Jyotika, *The Cinematic Imagination – Indian Popular Films as Social History*, Ranikhet : Permanent Black publication, 2004.

Warrington, Marine Hughes, *History Goes to Movies: Studying History on Films*, New York : Routledge, 2007.

Watve, Bapu, *V. Damle and S. Fatelal – A Monograph*, Pune : National Film Archives, 1985.

Willemen, Paul and Gandhy, Behroze, (eds.), *Indian Cinema*, London : British Film Institute, 1982.

Zutshi, S, *Women, Nation and the Outsider in Contemporary Indian Cinema – Interrogating Modernity,* Calcutta : Seagull Books, 1993.

Articles in Journals :

Chatterjee, Partha, 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness', Occasional Paper no. 111, *Journal of Centre for Studies in Social Science*, Calcutta, February, 1989.

Cohn, Bernard, 'A notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture' in *An anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi, 1987.

Inden, Ronald, 'Oriental Constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1986.

Iordanova, Dina, 'Indian Cinema abroad : Historiography of Transnational Cinematic Exchanges, *South Asian Popular Culture*, Vol. 4, Issue No. 2, October 2006, pp. 101 - 105.

Gabriel, Teshome H., 'Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films', in film Quarterly, *Question of Third World Cinema*, Volume no. 45, no.2, University of California, Winter 1991-92, p. 35.

Madhu Kishwar, 'The Bandit Queen', *Manushi*, Sept – Oct 1994, No. 84, pp. 34 – 37.

Nandy Ashis, 'Hindi Cinema and Half Forgotten Dialects : An interview with Ashis Nandy', *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 11 , No. 2 , Fall 1995.

Pandian, M.S.S, 'One Step Outside Modernity: Caste, Identity Politics and Public Sphere', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 37, No. 18, May 4 - 10, 2002.

Shah, A . M, 'Mirage of a Caste-less Society in India'*, Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 52, Issue No. 9, 04 March, 2017.

Toplin, Robert and Endy Jason, 'The Historian Encounters Film : A Historiography', *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Film and History, Summer 2002, pp. 7 – 12.

Vitali, Valentina, 'Film Historiography as Theory of the Film Subject : A Case Study', Cinema Journal, Vol. 50, No. 1, Fall 2010, University of Texas Press.

Magazines :

Filmindia, 1937-38, 1938, 1940, 194, 1942, 1943, 1945, 1946, 1948, 1949.

Filmfare Magazine, 1981.

Newspapers :

'Film News', *Kiran Weekly*, 2 November, 1935.

Qurrantulain Hyder, Film Review, 'Ankur Is A First Rate', *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 14 July 1974

'Damul', *Sunday Observer*, March 10, 1985.

'Damul', *The Telegraph*, Saturday, February 8, 1985.

'Damul', *Amrit Bazar*, Friday, February 8, 1985.

Shahira Naim, 'CD CASE Maya orders CBI probe into 'Teesri Azadi'', *THE TRIBUNE*, Lucknow, 12 March 2008.

Ankur Batra, 'Puttin "Khap" on Controversy', *Times of India*, Aug 9, 2011.

Websites and Blogs :

Ashutosh Gowarikar - http://www.agppl.com/

Deepa Mehta - http://www.hamiltonmehta.com/

Dipti Naval - http://www.deeptinaval.com/actor-damul.htm

Doordarshan - http://prasarbharati.gov.in/DD/index.php

Govind Nahlani - http://www.chaosmag.in/nihalani.html

National Film Archives - https://www.nfai.gov.in/

National Film Development Corporation - https://www.nfdcindia.com/

Prakash Jha - http://www.prakashjhaproductions.com/

Priyadarshan - http://www.directorpriyadarshan.com/

Rakesh Omprakash Mehra - http://romppictures.in/

Satyajit Ray Foundation- http://satyajitrayworld.org/ray_foundation.html

Shekhar Kapur - http://shekharkapur.com/blog/

Shyam Benegal - www.shyambenegalonline.com/contact.php

Vidu Vinod Chopra - http://www.vinodchopra.com/

https://archive.org/details/filmindia193905unse - Online digital archives for Filmindia and Filmland magazine.

Annexure - 1

FILMS LIST PRE INDEPENDENCE

Sr No	Year of Release	Movie	Director	Production House	Repository / Reference Literature
1	1934	Chandidas	Nitin Bose	New Theatres Ltd.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05bveXPTMSQ Last Accessed : 5 August 2016
2	1935	Dharmatama (The Holy Soul)	V Shantaram	Prabhat Film Company	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjN5sWd0s7Q Last Accessed : 2 March 2019 Everest and Eros Collector New edition DVD – Remastered. Prabhat Chitre
3	1936	Achhut Kanya (Untouchable Girl)	Franz Osten	Bombay Talkies	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GIECFwR82g Last Accessed : 18 August 2016
4	1937	Jeevan Prabhat	Franz Osten	Bombay Talkies	*Filmindia*, Vol.3, No. 8, December 1937
5	1937	Hurricane Hansa	R N Vaidya	Wadia Movietone	*Indian Current* Magazine, Vol. 25, No. 8, November 2011 *Bombay Before*

					Bollywood by Rosie Thomas, 2014, p.100-101
6	1939	Sach Hai (It's True)	R Chowdhary	Saraswati Cineton	*Filmindia*, April 1939
7	1939	Achhut (Untouchable)	Chandulal Shah	Ranjit Movietone	*Filmindia* January 1940
8	1940	Sant Dnyaneshwar	V Damle & S Fatehlal	Prabhat Film Company	Everest and Eros Collector New edition DVD – Remastered. Prabhat chitre
9	1940	Narsi Bhagat	Vijay Bhatt	Ever Green Pictures	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSGcZ6DIY28 Last Accessed : 3 March 2019
10	1941	Raj Nartaki (The Court Dancer)	Modhu Bose	Wadia Movietone	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSGcZ6DIY28 Last Accessed : 3 March 2019
11	1941	Doctor	Subodh Mitter	New Theatres Ltd.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkZ3eMz396I Last Accessed : 3 August 2016
12	1944	Mali	V Shantaram	Rajakamal Kalamadir	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9OC6UgQC3c 2 March 2019
13	1945	Lakharani	Vishram Bedekar	Prabhat Film Company	*Filmindia,* November 1945

Annexure - 2

FILMS LIST POST INDEPENDENCE

Sr No	Year of Release	Movie	Director	Production House	Repository
1	1947	Pujari	Aspi Irani	Ardeshir M Irani	*Filmindia*, February , 1948
2	1948	Samrat Ashok	K B Lal	Bombay Cineton Ltd.	*Filmindia*, May 1948
3	1948	Matwala Shayar Ram Joshi	V Shantaram	Rajkamal Kala Mandir	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kT0nNvFHlBo Last Accessed : 22 September 2016
4	1948	Onch Neech	Hem Chunder	New Theatre Ltd.	*Filmindia*, July 1948
5	1948	Geet Govind	Ramchandra Thakur	Shree Kanu Desai Production	*Filmindia*, August 1948
6	1949	Paroo	Shorey Daultalvi	Peerless Pictures	*Filmindia*, April 1949
7	1959	Sujata	Bimal Roy	Bimal Roy Productions	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrGSQvRKGNg Last Accessed : 3 November 2016
8	1959	Char Dil Char Rahein	K A Abbas	Naya Sansar Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lRkEViw2eCY Last Accessed :
9	1963	Kan Kan Mein Hai Bhagwan	Babubhai Mistri	Roopkala Pictures	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tSIjNJWpKk Last Accessed : 3 March 2019
10	1964	Punarmilan	Ravindra Dave	Nagina Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gv5hrVcBWo Last Accessed : 2 March 2019
11	1964	Cha Cha Cha	Chandrashekhar	Bhavdeep Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl1jeGiD5FM Last Accessed : 12 December 2016
12	1965	Sant	Rajesh	Ashok Films	Private Collection

		Tukaram	Nanda	production	
13	1968	Ashirwad	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Motion Pictures / Shemaroo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acbd3K_MlxU Last Accessed : 22 February 2017
14	1974	Ankur	Shyam Benegal	Blaze Film Enterprises	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlURxHM0cm4 Last Accessed : 7 March 2017
15	1975	Nishant (Night's End)	Shyam Benegal	Blaze Film Enterprises	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEZMvixYP7w Last Accessed : 22 February 2017
16	1977	Kondura	Shyam Benegal	Raviraj International	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty3qKRyNPas Last Accessed : 23 February 2017
17	1978	Ganga Ki Saugandh	Sultan Ahmed	Sultan Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2WLa9O881Y Last Accessed : 4 March 2019
18	1978	Manthan	Shyam Benegal	Gujarat Co - operative Marketing Federation, Sahyadri Films.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91qliAxU1pA Last Accessed : 4 March 2019
19	1980	Bhavni Bhavai/ Andher Nagari	Ketan Mehta	Sanchar Film Cooperative society limited	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcvUc1Jva5U Last Accessed : 29 November 2016
20	1980	Hum Panch	Bapu	S K Films Enterprise	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6NsCZXm6xk Last Accessed : 16 April 2017
21	1980	Akrosh	Govind Nahlani	Krishna Movies Enterprise	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe0iRHo8eMM&t=18s Last Accessed : 7 August 2016
22	1981	Sadgati	Satyajit Ray	Doordarshan	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRpaPV3QayY

					Last Accessed : 9 August 2016
23	1982	Prem Rog	Raj Kapoor	R K Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz0UAPwsvzs Last Accessed : 15 May 2017
24	1983	Souten	Saawan Kumar	Mercury Production International	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEo_rbdgA9g&t=4845s Last Accessed : 24 May 2017
25	1984	Paar	Goutam Ghosh	Swapan Sarkar	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3DHIJ6qu6k Last Accessed : 25 June 2016
26	1984	Damul	Prakash Jha	Prakash Jha Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czPSj1hSJkM Last Accessed : 27 June 2016
27	1984	Giddh	T S Ranga	Darpan Chitra	Private collection Accessed : 19 March 2017
28	1985	Gulami	J P Dutta	Nadiadwala Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3FsItAT0r0 Last Accessed : 4 March 2019
29	1986	Chameli Ki Shaadi	Basu Chaterjee	Prakash Mehra Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFZeyPnDxkY Last Accessed : October 2017
30	1988	Tamas	Govind Nahlani	Doordarshan	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmC8q5NnNuM Last Accessed : 23 September 2016
31	1988	Tera Naam Mera Naam	Ramesh Talwar	Talwar Films	Mouthshut.com and imdb.com https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2731270/ Last Accessed : 3 March 2019
32	1989	Jag Utha Insan	K Vishwanath	Film Kraft	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqcol2

					A_On4 Last Accessed : 28 February 2019
33	1989	Mahayatra /Antaryali Yatra	Gautam Ghosh	Angel Digital	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiRVPTC1l5A Last Accessed : 27 September 2016
34	1991	Diksha	Arun Kaul	National Film Development Corporation	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9STD9sq0-I Last Accessed : 28 June 2016
35	1991	Antarnad	Shyam Benegal	Suhetu Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPc_rpcyNHk Last Accessed : 5 April 2017
36	1993	Rudaali	Kalpana Lajmi	National Film Development Corporation	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4KyUir9Zx8 Last Accessed : 2 May 2017
37	1994	Bandit Queen	Shekhar Kapur	Channel Four Films and Ka. Lei. Do. Scope	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a76TLjgvCB8 Last Accessed : 2 May 2017
38	1995	Tarpan	K Bikram Singh	National Film Development Corporation	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlsfB0YVvOQ Last Accessed : 5 June 2017
39	1996	Fire	Deepa Mehta	Fire Film Inc.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GK7p5rkP8s Last Accessed : 2 May 2017
40	1997	Chachi 420	Kamal Hasan	Raajkamal Films international	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olG_ZS7vZKI Last Accessed : 8 October 2017
41	1998	Samar	Shyam Benegal	National Film Development Corporation / Doordarshan	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyZsA1t2JHM Last Accessed : 16 August 2016

42	2000	Bhawandar	Jag Mohan Mundra	Gourang Doshi productions	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EPAiQl68dw Last Accessed : 31 March 2017
43	2000	Dr . Babasaheb Ambedkar - The untold Truth.	Jabbar Patel	National Film Development Corporation	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CB_6zNHgbs Last Accessed : 14 April 2017
44	2001	Lajja	Rajkumar Santoshi	Santoshi Productions	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l17FRlUEITY Last Accessed : 21 March 2017
45	2001	Lagan	Ashutosh Gowariker	Amir Khan Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPiUZRQXees Last Accessed : 27 February 2019
46	2002	Pitaah	Mahesh Manjrekar	Aryaman Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26pqIl5m2Xs Last Accessed : 21 March 2017
47	2004	Swadesh	Ashutosh Gowariker	Ashutosh Gowariker Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v07PLlIPgo Last Accessed : 26 April 2017
48	2005	Water	Deepa Mehta	David Hamilton Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP35Okfv0m8 Last Accessed : 28 June 2018
49	2006	Banaras	Pankuj Parashar	Setu Creations	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOdx7Z4n5dk Last Accessed : 2 July 2016
50	2006	Omkara	Vishal Bharadwaj	Shemaroo Entertainment	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4iy-EJ2fgI Last Accessed : 2 July 2016
51	2007	Dharma	Bhavna Talwar	The Friday Fund-WSG Pictures	Private Collection Accessed : 12 July 2016

52	2007	Eklavya - The Royal Gaurd	Vidhu Vinod Chopra	Vidhu Vinod Chopra Productions	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN35jMMxRWI Last Accessed : 3 May 2017
53	2008	Pairon Talle	Siddharth Srinivasan	Illusion Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFF18Ylh-Ag Last Accessed : 20 May 2017
54	2008	Welcome to Sajjanpur	Shyam Benegal	IX Faces Pictures, UTV Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQYeCYUhRdw Last Accessed : 6 June 2017
55	2008	Teesri Azadi	Anonymous	Lord Communication Limited	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6AmQW7esVI Last Accessed : 5 January 2018
56	2008	Ramchandra Pakistani	Mehereen Jabar	Geo Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExeG8swAyjc Last Accessed : 20 May 2017
57	2009	Dilli 6	Rakesh Omprakash Mehra	Sony Pictures	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC2UlJ_85Ak Last Accessed : 20 February 2017
58	2009	Mohandas	Mazhar Kamran	Vertika Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdbJw2fjOKg Last Accessed : 20 February 2017
59	2010	Aakrosh	Priyadarshan	Big Screen Entertainer	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CI9g3QjxiDU Last Accessed : 5 April 2016
60	2010	Rajneeti	Prakash Jha	UTV Motion Pictures	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9NX3cpqLWU Last Accessed : 2 May 2017
61	2010	Rakt Charitra	Ram Gopal Verma	Cloud Nine Movies - Vistaar Religare	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7vA4l_XzR0

					Last Accessed : 4 May 2018
62	2011	Aarakshan	Prakash Jha	Prakash Jha Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEm8yMXwIis Last Accessed : 6 September 2018
63	2011	Khap	Ajai Sinha	Anand Films	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-H5XqXDVIOc Last Accessed : 2 May 2017
64	2012	Shudra the Rising	Sanjiv Jaiswal	Rudraksha Production	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_01PwSPQOs Last Accessed : 2 April 2017