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## **Desertion of Rural theme from Hindi Cinema: A Study**

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### **Abstract**

*Hindi Cinema caters different themes from last 100 glorious years and in earlier phase it reflects the nation's conflict, difficulties and struggle of a common man in a true manner. In past era one of the major themes rural has been an integral part of Bollywood storytelling. However over the year's Hindi cinema has changed in terms of film making, content, representation of issues and technological changes. But during the transition of modern Cinema some of the popular themes have vanished. Cinema become bold and creative today and brings different genres with ample of independent filmmakers. The present paper deals with the study of films which depicted the village theme and also explore the causes of disappearance of village theme.*

***Keywords: village theme, Hindi Cinema, farmers, social issues, vanished***

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**I- Disappearance of village theme:** Indian Cinema acknowledged for the largest producer of films which caters the widest themes and genres from past 100 magnificent years. In every era Hindi cinema represents the social relevant issues in a very different narrative style. In the past six decades Hindi cinema has played a significant role in nation-building, constructing a national awareness, portraying an ideal family system, attacking terrorism, criticizing class prejudice and propagating various phenomena such as globalization, westernization, urbanization and modernization in India. The Academician state that meaningful cinema had been made in the early periods, as they acclaimed that the golden era is actually reflects the social issues and the problem of common man but now the several social issues are missing from the Cinema . If we talking about the farmers' issues which actually showed in the earlier cinema as significant one are now in the verge of vanish and the scenario is completely different today. **(Sagar, 2013)** According to figures from the **Ministry of Agriculture**, "the total of number of suicides committed by farmers for agrarian reasons in the last three years stands at 3313 which was appalling. Maharashtra the state in which the Hindi film Industry is placed has seen the maximum number of such suicides and yet the industry has not made even 10 films in which the farmer is either protagonist or an important supporting character since 2001".

In the early era the contribution of Bimal Roy “*Do Bigha Zameen*” and Mehboob Khan” *Mother India*”, were greatly valued and acclaimed within and outside India for their reflection of social exploitation. Both the films almost depict the image of broke India and address the problem and struggles of poor peasants to fix their fortune and to protect their little land from the Zamindars. *Do Bigha Zameen* is a story of the poor peasant Shambhu (Balraj Sahni) against the cruel Zamindar of the village. The film is a brilliant cinematic exposition of the atrocities faced by poor people in rural as well as urban India. Moreover, the film put down emphasis on the conflict between urban and rural India. It portrays the expansion of industrialization and urbanization at the cost of rural agricultural India. Bimal Roy’s “*Do Bigha Zamin*” which is one of the most realistic portraits of its times. (Dhareshwar, 2016) state that “One of the issues that the film talks in the first half of the film is the issue of property, a shadow of the Requisition and Acquisition of Immovable Property Act, 1952. “*Mother India*” too depicts the conflict between a poor peasant family and the rich money-lender or Zamindar of the village. The film is about the struggle for survival of Radha (Nargis), a poor village woman and her efforts to save her land from the moneylender Sukhilala. Despite being abandoned by her husband and despite suffering persistent blows of poverty and the sexual advances of the moneylender Sukhilala (Kanhaiyalal) Radha manages to survive and uphold morality and righteousness.



Stills from Bimal Roy “*Do Bigha Zameen*” and Mehboob Khan “*Mother India*”( Google Image Search)

In 1978 Muzzafar Ali “*Gaman*”also depicts the pain and struggle of a man who move to urban city the song like “*Aankho me jalan seene mei toofan sa kyu hai is shehar ka har shaks pareshan sa kyu hai*” clearly epitomize the situation and struggle of common people .Till the era of 80’s the theme of village of survived Sunil Dutt “*Muje jeene do*”, “*Heera*” and “*Kache Dhaage*” was made on the village background. But after globalization the village was almost vanished from Hindi Cinema. In the contemporary cinema the film like “*Kisaan*” of Puneet Sira try to show the issues but somehow it failed to actually trigger the right thing , another story of exploited and helpless farmers of Ashutosh Gowarikar “*Lagaan*” is the modern way of depicting the issues in a dramatized way which is somehow hard to digest in the real scenario where as Anusha Rizvi “*Peepli live*” try to arrive at the

issue to some extent, the misery of a farmer Natha decides to commit suicide to get the farmers' compensation and how the media troll the issue but the film in some way get diverted from the track and unable to illustrate the actual reasons behind suicides of farmers. Another film "*Baromas*" by Dhiraj Meshram based on Marathi novel was an attempt to visit rural India by dealing with larger issues of corruption, unemployment, methods of farming, and farmers' suicides amidst the harsh socio-economic conditions through the story of one family. It portrays a multitude of issues faced by the farmers in an honest and unexaggerated manner.

Unlike the trend in the early '50s, Bollywood has almost eliminated the character of the farmer from Hindi films and village is vanished a long time ago from Hindi Cinema, probably after "*Do Bigha Zamin*". (Upadhyaya, 2016) Veteran filmmaker *Shyam Benegal*, who made the rural classics "*Ankur*" and "*Manthan*" in the 1970s, said "My films were the only rural films for a long time. There are few cinemas in rural India and urban people, by and large, don't seem to show any interest in rural India, particularly in the entertainment media. There are very few rural subjects, unless it's for an exotic effect. The subject matter is hardly ever rural as it used to be in the '40s, '50s, and '60s," Benegal, however, makes a distinction between Hindi cinema and other regional cinema. "Rural cinema has not yet vanished from regional cinema, especially in languages such as Tamil, Kannada and Telugu," he said". Marathi cinema, too, over the last decade, has seen a resurgence of films set in villages about the rural community with films like "*Deool*", "*Gabhricha Paus*" and "*Jhing Chik Jhing*" finding some success.

Hindi Cinema has also produced films like "*Swades*", "*Pardes*" and "*Gori Tere Pyaar Mein*", but the villages in these films either lack nuance or they serve as a redemption point for 'lost' urban characters. In that context, Ketan Mehta's *Manjhi: The Mountain Man* was a rare film in that it is able to humanize the villager by focusing on an aspect of his life that goes unnoticed romance. In the era of core commercialization no director is concerned in making such cinema and whosoever is making is not representing the actual reflection and struggle of farmers or the real issues of those suicidal attempt. The other factor is the audience inclination towards that kind of cinema, the kind of audience we have today is no more interested in core realistic films they called it Art Cinema though it's not but on the other hand the Directors too not giving priority to those issues. Now the village is almost disappearing from Hindi Cinema and the issues as well, the thematic trends has completely changed though the issues still exist in the society since 1990, but who cares. Being an agrarian nation number of farmer's suicides occurred in India though farmers' suicides in India have made headlines but Hindi Cinema doesn't bother to pay attention on this major issue in a serious manner and if it is the frequency is actual very less. Meanwhile, farmers in different parts of the country will continue to struggle and lament the lack of a newer generation of classics like "*Do Bigha Zamin*" for their depiction in popular culture.

**II- Cause:** The changing and disappearing themes from Cinema directly associated with the changing mindsets of the audience. In the early phases of the Indian cinema, the target audience was the poor people hailing from villages and the movies were made so that they

could relate to the protagonist of the movies. As time shifted, and the urban class expanded, the target audience now became the upper middle class or upper class, who related more with a hero who had money and big bungalows and bikes. Hence, today in order to make a movie sell, a poor boy from a distant village would not be the formula. The youth is targeted who came from wealthy families and live a lavish lifestyle. **(Roy, 2011)** said that “the changing patterns in movies are basically a result of the changing mindsets of the audience as well the bid to attract international audience who have different perspective than the ones for whom movies were made in the 1950s”. The trend of making films for NRI continues from the era of 90’s from “*Dilwale Dulhaniya le jayenge*” and still going on. In fact many films Director used bilingual language to link with the Indian as well as International youth. Films like “*Monsoon wedding*” of Mira Nair, “*Hajaro Khwaishey aisi*” of Sudheer Mishra are the Indian films completely used bilingual language which directly hitting the NRI audience. **(IANS, 2010)** Karan Johar once said “We do not see NRIs as people who are separate from Indians. They are all Indians and in fact the NRIs are more Indian at heart than any of us in India”. The statement clearly depicts the level of interest of Film Directors towards NRI audiences these days. **(Chandra, 1995)**. The another cause would be the advancement of technology and Globalisation it has a great impact on the content and Scriptwriting of films as well and due to digital technology today we have different kind of genre films which gives different flavors’ to the youth specially. **(Verjee, 2009)** “Now one can use techniques of Western screenwriting to our stories and now stories are set in London, Prague and Paris”. Just as urban India’s film tastes are changing, so are those of its film-makers, having discovered that a market exists for cinema that challenges boundaries and pushes against conventions. The Emergence of Multiplex Culture also impact the content and audience especially the people who belongs to lower strata The poor people are not able to buy and afford tickets on big multiplexes cinema theatre unfortunately somehow a big chunk of those categories of audiences we are lacking behind .

The days of Famous Directors like *Satyajit Roy, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Goutam Ghosh, Shaym Benegal's* are gone. At present no one will invest a single penny to make a real life movie that they would once make. This era is the age of 'make believe' whatever you are told. Costly attired gentleman placing his hand round the waste of his pretty girl friend goes to a multiplex to enjoy and to laugh, not to shed tear drops. A real life movie will hardly make them happy, neither the poor, dirty creatures. Thus, the story of a common man's struggle for earning his daily lively hood has no place in film industry, no one is interested to know how one has achieved his success, instead they want to tell his own story to a nearest one and enter into a multiplex to buy some happiness in exchange of 200 Rs. **(Crabtree, 2015)** The rise of less orthodox Bollywood films is explained in part by the changing economics of Indian cinema, in particular the rise of multiplexes over the past decade. Old-style Indian films were made to appeal to children and grandparents alike, on the assumption they would be watched on family outings to the one, single-screen cinema in any Indian town or village. Bollywood has become

increasingly professional too. Once its films were made mostly by small independent production houses and funded haphazardly. Today the arrival of global film studios such as Viacom and Fox alongside larger local players like Eros has brought new discipline. India now has something akin to a Hollywood-style studio system, in which a smaller number of big producers churn out ever more films each year. The Globalisation, increased focus on the diaspora and all that it stands for, Urbanisation, Industrialisation and modernisation have been predominant features of big budget commercial films.

**III- Conclusion:** Though cinema represents in every era the issues and troubles of society in a different narratives style. Pre- and post independence era of Hindi Cinema was the struggle with the freedom and the problems of nations was perfectly depicted in Hindi Cinema. Though Hindi Cinema is a tool of social transformation and the mirror of society but this statement is far from contemporary Cinema today as major themes has vanished. The issues of rural area, poor, farmer's are almost disappeared from Hindi cinema and if exist then the frequency is very less and the actual problem has not been reflected. The different modern trends change the Cinema completely in its narrative, contents and themes as well. The obsession with rural themes is also limiting. Non-commercial film makers seem unable to move out of the far-reaching shadow of old films. The urban themes, it seems, are left for mainstream directors. But what was once original and attractive. One possible explanation is that directors seem preoccupied with choosing politically correct subjects rather than original themes. That is why they touch on subjects that are accepted. The phrase the films is the mirror of society is going to be change soon because of emergence of new Directors as films these made on any issues and most of them neither motivating nor informative and educative in fact one cannot watch those films with family. The only solution, perhaps, is to develop an indigenous method of film making-both in form and content and film makers must realize that 'realism' is not a synonym for "uninteresting".

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