



**NATION AND GENDER IN DIASPORIC HINDI
CINEMA: A STUDY**

Thesis submitted to Kuvempu University for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

English

By

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Shivamogga, Karnataka, India

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DECLARATION

I, **Naveena V.**, hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Nation and Gender in Diasporic Hindi Cinema: A Study** is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any diploma, degree, fellowship or other similar title. The work was carried out under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. S. Siraj Ahmed**, Professor and Head, Department of English, Sahyadri Arts College, Shivamogga, Karnataka State. I further declare that results presented in the thesis or any part thereof has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or diploma of similar title of any other University.

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This thesis being submitted to Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, is an original record of the work carried out by the candidate himself and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of this or any other university in India or abroad.

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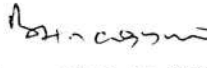
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Cinema in India is one of the major entertainment media for people. After theatre tripped from the reach of ordinary people, popular cinema has occupied the public consciousness. With the passage of time, the popular cinema has been a witness to several competitors including its own hybrid forms. Television soap opera is another. But, no such medium of entertainment has succeeded in dethroning cinema from its priced place of opulence. Cinema is an extravagant spectacle at the cost of a few rupees for Indian spectators. It facilitates them to push to oblivion the humdrum of their life for a short time. Within the mystifying darkness of theatre, the audience consume the stupefying lives of their onscreen demigods. They try to relive those narcotic moments even after coming out of cinema halls. The same act gets repeated at regular intervals in a layman's life whenever the person gets tired of the harsh realities of life.

India is a land of many kinds of cinema. Several names are used such as commercial cinema, mainstream cinema, art cinema, offbeat cinema, parallel cinema and so on. Even though names are many, there are chiefly two kinds of cinema in vogue; commercial and art. If art cinema is for educated, intellectual class, commercial cinema is for the ordinary populace that does not care to apply mind while watching a movie. There is a wrong belief among people that art cinema is made to receive awards as most of these films do not get theatrical release. Art cinema tries to be realistic in nature whereas commercial cinema tries not to speak of realities

of life. This is the chief reason why art cinema is not enjoyed by common people as they do not want to come to terms with realities of their life even after paying money.

It is vital to note that popular films do not reflect social realities. Instead, they visualize how a society should be. They try to create an imaginary utopian world, kind of *Ramarajya*, for the spectators. But, in reality, such a society does not exist. An honest police officer punishing a corrupt politician, an ordinary man standing against the powerful, an innocent woman thrashing the culprits are all the filmic representations of people's wishes. Such movies are watched and enjoyed by huge number of people. At times, such acts do not adhere to the law of the land. But ordinary people who are tired of their own 'meaningless' life, wish for such a society projected by the cinema. In addition, the song and dance sequences, the mesmerizing hero-villain fight scenes and the ideal romantic love enthrall the audience who deliberately push to oblivion their daily routine. Noted Hindi film director Subhash Ghai reflects on the role of Hindi cinema in the life of people. While comparing Hindi cinema with Hollywood films, he says:

Do not call it Bollywood. This is a very wrong thing to call it. We are not trying to copy Hollywood. We are making films for an audience of a billion people. Over 80% of these people do not have enough food in their bellies. Our country does not provide its people with pool halls, basketball courts and video parlours, so we make films for them that will let them forget their lives for three hours. We create total fantasy, not the polished reality that Hollywood portrays. Never forget that we are making films that allow people to believe for three hours that they are not poor and hungry (qtd. in Vasudevan 13).

Commercial cinema has different genres of its own whereas such genres do not exist in arts cinema. A few of the popular genres of commercial cinema are action, adventure, comedy, drama, horror, musical, period, political, real life, romance, romantic comedies, science fiction, sports, war and biography. Newer genres emerge with the passage of time. The present study pertains to Hindi cinema that deals with the lives of Non-resident Indians who are called NRIs. Popular cinema absorbs the essence of life quickly and brings new trends and facets of life soon on screen giving space for the emergence of new genres in cinema. Even though, art cinema portrays these changes of life, it does not attract more viewers due to its authentic portrayals. However, the very divide of arts and commercial genre is slowly merging these days as multiplex culture has given opportunity for producers to experiment with bold and newer themes at shoe string budget.

Emergence of NRI genre

In a major political paradigm shift, India opened itself up to the global economic treaties in the early 1990s. The country became part of the global economic liberalization. In the new scenario, a significant chunk of Indian population migrated to developed countries in search of greener pastures. As a researcher notes:

The South Asian diasporas existed in many nations prior to this development, the influx of new migrants and new technology reshaped older communities, formed new diasporas, and created new cultural processes and flows of cultural products...Able to take advantage of the extended distribution networks, films were able to reach wide audiences and they soon became central to processes of “imagining communities.” (Desai vi)

Indian politics was undergoing tremendous change post liberalization. If liberalization policies in 1991 brought a steady pace in the economic activities, the infamous demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 succeeded in polarizing Hindu votes for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The party stoked communal and nationalist feelings among the majority in an attempt of assume power at centre. These developments had their influence on Hindi cinema. Malhotra and Alagh argue that post 1990, the diversity, multiplicity and secular constructions of Indian identity being systematically narrowed into monolithic portrayals of rich, Hindu, and patriarchal cultural identity (20). Hindi cinema had always managed to have secular outlook in an attempt to be national cinema. But, post 1990s, it changed contours as it not only catered to the entertainment needs of resident Indians but also of non-resident Indians residing in different countries across the globe. Mehta argues that:

In retrospect, the ‘transition’ of the 1990s proved to be productive years for Bollywood (Hindi film industry), as it coordinated and re-arranged its various generic orientation to adapt to an increasingly neo-liberal attitude towards economic and culture. Besides ‘naturalizing’ the free-floating Non-resident Indian as an essentialist cultural signifier, Bollywood popularized various capital driven phenomena in India, including basketball (the game and the brand merchandise associated with it) and Valentine’s day, opening up the market for new ‘cultural’ merchandise. Interestingly, it was Bollywood again that popularized regional parochial Indian traditions like *karva chaut* and *dandiya* among pan-Indian audiences, and turned them into cultural capital.

(4-5)

In the globalized context, a whole new genre of films took birth titled Diasporic Hindi Cinema or NRI Hindi Cinema. These movies are produced by resident Indian directors and the themes revolve around non-resident Indian characters.

Sometimes, the term diasporic Hindi cinema is also used for films that are directed by non-resident Indians such as Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta, Manish Gupta, Nikhil Kaushik and Gurindar Chaddah. Through their movies, these directors have tried to take before the world changing facets of the Indian society in the globalized context. Their movies have both resident and non-resident Indian characters who speak both Hindi and English in the movies. The movies usually have titles in English so that they appeal even viewers from across the globe. *Monsoon Wedding* (2001 Meera Nair), *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002 Gurinder Chadha), *Bollywood Hollywood* (2002 Deepa Mehta), *Bride and Prejudice* (2004 Gurinder Chadha), *The Namesake* (2006 Meera Nair) are a few to name. Unlike the movies made by the resident Indian directors, these movies produced by NRI directors bring to fore different themes including the problems faced by the NRIs in an alien nation. They are not formulaic in nature. Of late, unable to resist the irresistible glitz and glamor of Hindi cinema and its potential for huge revenue, many creative persons, once settled in different parts of the world, are descending on Indian cities to make films, especially Hindi films. Nagesh Kukunoor, Raj Nidimoru, D K Krishna, Param Gill are a few to name.

Diasporic Hindi cinema was different from the movies made by NRI directors. As the movies emerged in the post globalization era, most of these movies tried to speak of the gulf that existed between the East and the West. The West was projected as selfish, uncultured, vice, devoid of values, materialist, hedonist, prosperous, etc. At

the same time, the East was projected as virtuous, spiritually and morally robust, full of life and vigour etc. Realistic portrayal of the nation or the characters was not taken care of. The movies fell into the category of commercial cinema and the genre, even in the past, had not paid attention to portray its themes realistically. Art cinema took the responsibility of presenting life in its different hues authentically.

Ideology of Hindi Cinema

The book *Ideology and the Image* throws light on the concept of ideology. It argues that:

Ideologies are the views that serve to rationalize the vested interests of a group. These views are usually thought of as arguments or stated beliefs but they may also be views. After all, seeing is believing and how we see ourselves and the world around us is often how we believe ourselves and the world to be. Images generally present views; films present particular kinds of views. These views are ideological and how we see them has everything to do with how we see ourselves, what we take of ourselves to be, and what we want ourselves to become. (Nichols 5)

However, at the higher level of argument, the same work explains ideology in the following words:

Ideology arises in association with processes of communication and exchange... It operates as a constraint limiting us to certain places or positions within these processes of communication and exchange. Ideology is how the existing ensemble of social relations represents itself to individuals; it is the image a society gives of itself in order to perpetuate itself... Ideology uses the

fabrication of images and the processes of representation to persuade us that how things are or how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to have. (Nichols 1)

For Nichols, all human activities that involve communication and exchange produce meaning. Cinema which comprises moving images is also a means of communication where the director wishes to communicate with the audience through his ideas or ideology. A director persuades us to believe that certain things remain in the society in a particular way or they ought to remain in a particular way. In this way, the ideological construction of vital concepts such as nation and gender happens in a cinema.

The website *What is Ideology in Film?* describes ideology in films in the following words:

Ideology in film is frequently referred to as the body of ideas which reflect the individual social needs of a group, class, culture or individual within the story. It represents a systematic world view in which we define the concepts of self and relations to self in regards to the collective state in which we live. Basically a film's ideology slant is based on what the director believes to be right and wrong. Therefore certain characters, institutions and cultures within the film are going to be privileged based on the director's view. ("What is Ideology")

Films cannot be underestimated or negated as merely a medium of entertainment. It is a major institution of social representation (Nichols 3). They share people's dreams, hopes, in addition to presenting socio-political scenario of the time

and reflecting the culture of the land. At the same time, no film is free of ideology. Every film is imbued with an intrinsic ideology. The ideology can be implicit or explicit, but it brings before the audience an ideology of the director or a political party, the ideology shared by the dominant section of masses or rarely by minority group of people.

In the YouTube lecture on ideology in cinema, Aysha describes the concept of ideology in the following manner:

Ideology is sometimes embedded within a film that appears very natural to the viewers. The ideology of a film maker may be conscious or unconscious. But, the ideology represents the time and place that we belong to. For instance, the American film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) directed by D W Griffith is said to be the most controversial film in the American history of films as it showcased the ideology of the Whites. All the White men were shown as virtuous whereas Black Americans were portrayed as vice people in the movie. The plot was centred around the murder of the former president of the US Abraham Lincoln. It also depicted the bloody and racist Ku Klux Klan as an army with humanitarian face whereas the reality was quite opposite. (Aysha 0:10-18:20)

Hence when a director wishes to present to ideology of a group of people, he/she brings it before the audience taking the artistic liberty while manipulating the facts, figures and sometimes, history too. In the post independent India, cinema, especially popular cinema, has been a commercial medium with the sole intention of earning more revenue for the producers. Hence, earning more and more revenue is the first and foremost ideology of any commercial movie. The parallel or offbeat cinema on the other hand, tries to educate masses on certain social issues. However, the

producers of such movies do wish to earn profits in different ways. In an informal chat, noted Kannada director B Suresh once revealed that his film crew used to tour different places screening their movies. They would screen the movie in an open space and place a box to collect whatever money people would donate. In these places people were not asked to buy tickets. For these offbeat films, people would not go to theatres instead movies would come to places of spectators. The intention was to educate people on certain social dogmas. But, at the same time, the producers would not want suffer loses. They take care of that part as well.

Ideology of diasporic Hindi movies

Each genre of film has its own ideology. For instance, the war movies have the ideology of masculinity and manliness portraying the nation in which they are made as invincible. The ideology behind a woman centric movie is to project her as virtuous at the same time potent. Similarly, the ideology of a diasporic Hindi film according to Mishra is,

The re-projection of a diaspora that Bollywood (Hindi cinema industry) manufactures in terms of its own laws-is curiously at odds with the struggle for self-legitimacy and justice that underpins diasporic lives generally. The ideology in question then is not one that examines social ruptures but one that reworks a number of diasporic fantasies. When these fantasies are reconfigured by the homeland as the “real” of diasporic lives, they have the curious role of actually becoming “truths” to which the diaspora aspires. (250)

Diasporic Hindi movies emerged in the era of 90s. The initial days of globalization had brought in new wave of modernity in the hitherto ‘traditional’ India.

Introduction of foreign TV channels, a spurt in the number of MNCs operating in India, organization of Miss World contest in Bangalore in 1996 changed the way Indians looked at the world. Young educated Indians moved to different countries in search of better opportunities and wealth. All these changes were caught on camera and brought before audience.

It was also the time when politically India was changing. The nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party with its right wing ideologies was gaining popularity sidelining the hitherto unshakable Congress. The new changes taking place across India due to globalization disturbed the BJP. It pressed hard for the preservation of culture and tradition which led to clash of tradition and modernity.

Diasporic Hindi cinema tried to project the hopes and aspirations of the ideas and ideals promoted by the right wing leaders. On the science and technology front, India was trying its best to progress as much as possible, but on screen, there was no sign of it. The movies tried to revive the age old customs and traditions in the movies. Grand festivals and rituals occupied a vital space in the story line. At a time, when the structure of joint family was at stake, the films equated family with nation. Any threat to the fabric of the family was treated as a threat to the nation. In all, the movies had an ideology of presenting the nation as the one immersed in age old customs and traditions that have been the hall mark and strength of it for centuries together. It is because cultural nationalism simply inverts the tradition/modernity binary in an indigenist direction so that tradition then is said to be always better than modernity (Silva 19). However, the later diasporic Hindi movies moved away from this idea and tried to be in sync with the time. Movies like *Salaam Namaste* and *Kabhi Alvida Na*

Kehna tried to take up issues of live-in and relationships outside marriage which were much ahead of their time.

Nation and Gender in diasporic Hindi cinema

The genre of diasporic Hindi cinema, in the post-globalized India, began with the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995). This movie and the few other movies discussed in the present study took the whole discussion of nation and gender to another level. It is because most of the Hindi films in general and diasporic Hindi films in particular establish an inseparable bond between the two concepts. According to Viridi, Hindi cinema's agenda is to imagine a unified nation (1). For her, the nation is constructed in Hindi cinema through a complex apparatus of metaphors, discourses and modes of address. It is imagined through a stock set of tropes, symbols, characters and narratives that are meant to first air and then resolve contemporary anxieties and difficulties (9). While most of the Hindi movies construct a nation on these lines, the diasporic Hindi cinema's construction of nation is imbued with certain ideologies. The nation constructed in these movies adheres to the idea nurtured by the right wing politics. Here the nation is portrayed as the one that accommodates all, no matter what faith one belongs to. The strength of the nation here is its moral and spiritual values that can uplift anyone from his/her catastrophe. It is a nation that is flawless.

The construction of gender in diasporic Hindi cinema is also done on the similar lines. Here nation and gender are interconnected. It is the responsibility of the women to guard the honour of the family which is symbolic of the nation. Mothers had a strong role in the early Hindi movies. But the responsibility got shifted to young women in diasporic Hindi cinema. Most mother figures in the diasporic Hindi cinema (*DDLJ*, *Pardes*, *Aa Ab Laut Chaley* etc.) are portrayed as docile who conform to the

family norms dictated by their husbands. It is the young women who are given the responsibility of carrying forward the customs and traditions of the family to future generations. Interestingly, even men share the responsibility in these movies.

Significance of Study

India is the largest producer of films in the world. Popular cinema is one of the major sources of entertainment for its people. It is not only adored but even worshipped by a large chunk of populace. At times, cinema's influence can be seen on the socio-political aspects of society in the subcontinent. The medium can engage people with various moods and can enable them to cry, laugh, enrage, hate, and even incite to kill fellow citizens. It can construct and alter opinions of people on vital issues. At times, the audience fail to differentiate between the on screen reality and the reality around them in the real world. Most of the times, audience get ready to trust the facts shown on screen in spite of there being a disclaimer that the film is only a work of fiction. Trust of viewers in the 'filmic reality' leads not only to chaotic incidents but also to progressive changes in the society. Among its myriad propositions, the Hindi cinema has functioned as a site for the production and exploration of national identities and ideologies in the popular imagination (Malhotra and Alagh 19). The present study is significant as it attempts to trace the trajectory of filmic construction of nation and gender in diasporic Hindi cinema.

The concepts of nation and gender are complimentary to each other. Nation across the globe is spoken in gendered terms. Most societies assign the qualities of feminine whereas a few of them appropriate masculine qualities for their nations. India is *Bharatmata*, mother India, for its citizens. The idea of personifying the nation was generated in the pre-independent India during the country's struggle against

colonizers. Bankimachandra Chatterjee introduced the concept in his novel *Anandmath* (1880). The idea mesmerized Indians so much that it brought them together to fight against the British. Even after India attained freedom, the practice is still in vogue. Indian states have continued the practice of personifying themselves as feminine deities as in the case of Karnataka. The state prides in signifying the land as *Kannada* or *Karunada Taayi* meaning mother Kannada or mother of Karnataka. If Kannada is the regional language, *Karunadu* stands for Karnataka.

Popular cinema plays a major role in keeping the patriotic and emotional aspects of nation and gender alive in the imagination of people. Hindi cinema that reaches the nook and corner of the nation because of its language has engaged in the construction of nation and gender since its inception. The present chapter tries to assess the role of Hindi cinema in constructing the aforementioned concepts in the popular imagination in the post Independent India, especially after globalization.

The study undertaken is significant for a few reasons;

- a. Construction of nation and gender in popular cinema is not uncommon in academic circles. There have been attempts to throw light on the concepts by a few scholars but such studies are restricted only for a few movies. The present study takes up a dozen movies so that the study remains a detailed one.
- b. Diasporic Hindi cinema is fairly a new concept and not much work is done on the area.
- c. A few scholars have worked without taking the name diasporic Hindi cinema but those studies have restricted themselves to articles where merely one or two movies are taken for consideration.

- d. The study concentrates on a dozen movies made in a span of fifteen years. The years mark both the ascendance and decline in the trend of taking up themes related to NRIs in Hindi cinema. In the history of Indian cinema, the trend is unprecedented. The study is vital for this reason too.
- e. As the present study concentrates on a dozen films made in a span of more than a decade, it is possible to look into different aspects of the politics involved in the construction of nation and gender in diasporic Hindi movies as the researcher believes that the way the two subjects are constructed involves a certain amount of politics. The study attempts to delve deep into the cultural or sociological politics involved in the making of the movies.
- f. The researcher believes that Hindi cinema is studied more in the universities of other nations than in the Indian subcontinent. Most books that are available in the market on Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular are authored by scholars, mostly NRIs, serving in foreign universities. The present work attempts to add a bit more to the already available body of knowledge on popular Hindi cinema. As the study is done in the place of origin of these movies, it could be more realistic than the other works done in the field by foreign nationals. The study assumes importance for the reason too.

Review of literature

Various scholars have worked on Hindi cinema in the recent years. Different aspects of the Hindi cinema are taken for study and a number of scholarly articles, research papers, theses and books have been published. Among the various topics studied by the scholars, nation and gender occupy a vital space. An attempt has been made in this section to evaluate a few works on the area.

Jyotika Viridi, in her seminal book *The Cinematic ImagiNation: Indian Popular Films as Social History* (2003) tries to study different aspects of Hindi cinema keeping nation at the centre of her arguments. She throws light on how nation is constructed in the popular imagination through Hindi cinema's variety of plots. Viridi attempts to assign Hindi cinema the qualities of a national cinema due to its reach within the Indian subcontinent. In addition to nation, the author explores different role women play in Hindi cinema and how these roles directly or indirectly affect the very idea of nation. Viridi assesses women's role in different shades. Whether a woman is docile or aggressive, she is brought to the discussion of national consciousness through the stereotypical women roles from myths. Viridi also comments on the role of women in the wellbeing of a family and thereby her contribution for the wellbeing of the nation. As a whole, the book theoretically analyses the intricacies in the treatment of the concepts of nation and gender in Hindi cinema. But, as it was published in the year 2003, interpretation of only a few films related to the subject of the thesis can be found.

Routledge Handbook of Indian Cinemas (2013) edited by K. Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake analyses Indian cinema in four parts. It speaks about the history, themes, business and cinema halls in India. The work is a culmination of major regional cinemas. It clearly tries to assert the dominance of southern cine industry when compared to other parts of the country. Among the many essays, Jigna Desai's *The Scale of Diasporic Cinema: Negotiating national and transnational cultural citizenship* (206-217) evaluates the genre itself. Commenting on the term, Desai affirms that diasporic cinema, like the concept of the diaspora itself, inherently evokes issues of spatiality and geopolitics (Desai 207). However, the whole essay speaks about movies like *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993)

films made by NRI directors and there is no mention of Hindi movies made by resident Indian directors. It is so because the term is understood only in relation to non-resident Indian film makers.

Tejaswini Ganti, in her book *Bollywood: A Guide Book to Popular Hindi Cinema* (2004) traces the history of Hindi cinema since its inception. Ganti treats parsi theatre as the antecedent for Hindi cinema. For cinema, the immediate source of talent was theatre as it could easily supply actors, dancers and singers. Curiously, the male and female dancers and singers had their antecedents in the rich history of courtesan tradition. Ganti notes that the World War II and partition of the country had their effects on cinema industry. The Nehruvian policy of considering cinema halls as non-essential buildings led to construction of less number of film theatres. Repercussions of the then policy are seen even today as India has very less number of screens per capita population, Ganti avers. In addition to these, the author speaks about the key personalities of Hindi cinema (includes directors, actors and music directors) which she calls as Bombay cinema apart from its production and distribution. She also lists out a few significant Hindi films of the post independent India. In the end, the book draws insights from significant people on Hindi cinema. In all, the book is of great help to those researchers who wish to study the history of Hindi cinema. The book does not throw any light on diasporic Hindi cinema.

Rachel Dwyer in her book *Bollywood's India: Hindi Cinema as a Guide to Contemporary India* (2014) claims that Hindi cinema is the most reliable guide to understanding dreams and hopes, fears and anxieties of the nation (7). The book asserts that cinema does not portray social reality. Instead, it imagines how a society should be. Through a few Hindi movies, the writer tries to document the social

imagining of India from 1991 to 2012. She calls Hindi cinema a significant part of Indian culture. The cinema through the historical genre guides the present through the narratives of past. The writer also opines that the historical has always been closely linked to ideas of nationalism and in India it has created new myths for the new nation by reinterpreting the past (40). Moving further, Dwyer calls India a global nation as India opened itself up to the globalization. She opines that now Indianness is no longer about being 'son of the soil' but is about a global category rather than a local category (64). The author argues that *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) marks the beginning of the Hindi cinema's journey with a new nomenclature of Bollywood as it began to take Hindi cinema to the world with a new kind of plot that cater to the interest of the Indian diaspora spread across the globe (67). The book also speaks about region, religion, politics, Hindu nationalism, Islamicate, emotions, and many other subjects that appear in Hindi films.

Even though the book speaks about vital issues including diasporic Hindi films, it does not elaborate on most movies that speak about Indian diaspora. Even though the work touches upon the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), it does not even gloss over other significant movies produced in the genre. The reason could be that the work has tried to include various other areas of study related to Hindi cinema. Still, the book assists the researcher to have an insight into a few subjects on diasporic Hindi cinema.

Jenny Sharpe in her essay *Gender, Nation and Globalization in Monsoon Wedding and Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* juxtaposes the two movies to bring out the cultural politics existing in them to portray two major aspects of Hindi cinema; nation and gender. The author studies the treatment of the two subjects in the era of

globalization. She asserts that if *Monsoon Wedding* presents India as a modern nation that has adapted to the challenges of globalization, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* tries to portray the country as one still living with its age old customs and traditions. The essay studies the characters, especially, women characters who struggle to cope with tradition and modernity in the age of globalization. According to the author, a huge difference is seen between the characters of Simran, the female protagonist of the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and Aditi of *Monsoon Wedding*. If Aditi, who is born and brought up in Delhi is modern to the core, Simran, who is born and brought up in London is shown as more traditional than modern. The stereotypical representation of nation and gender has been critically examined by the author.

Urvashi Bhutalia's essay *Women in Indian Cinema* concentrates chiefly on the way women are portrayed in Indian cinema since its inception. The author argues that women's question has always been taken up by the Indian cinema. However, the subject is given more importance in the recent times. Marriage, widowhood, dowry, rape are some of the subjects that are related to women's issues. But, for Bhutalia, the concern shown by most of the directors on these issues is only superficial rather than genuine. Presenting the example of *Insaaf Ka Tarazu* (1980), the writer asserts that in the name of a social film that wanted to present before the audience the social evil practice of rape, the movie attracted more and more male audience to become a huge box office hit. The irony of the movie was that it produced the issue in such a way that the sympathy of the audience was with the rapist than with the person who underwent such an excruciating experience. When the industry has ninety per cent men, the real position of women cannot be brought on screen. Women characters are cast in stereotypical mould. The author feels that in comparison to commercial cinema, art cinema brings before audience gender issues in a better way. In her

concluding remarks, Bhutalia opines that if more women enter the film industry, justice could be done to women's issues on screen. The essay presents the insignificant role women play in Indian cinema as a whole.

The essay *Indian Cinema and the Bourgeois Nation State* by Anirudh Deshpande attempts to map the trajectory Indian cinema has taken in the endeavour of nation building since its inception. The author explains that Hindi cinema took the safe route of treating themes of conventional heterosexual love, family and nation building (Deshpande 101). However, post globalization the ideology of Hindi films did change. For Deshpande, nation-building and globalized Hindi cinema glorified caste norms and patriarchy in the new scenario (102). He rues that the visibility of minorities and marginalized groups in Hindi cinema or Indian cinema is poor as the films always wish to uphold the values practiced by the upper caste and class of Indian society. Deshpande wishes to see Indian cinema free of these deformities.

The Ph.D. dissertation *Cinema and the Indian Nation* by U. K. Singh submitted to the University of Allahabad in the year 2014 attempts to trace the trajectory of Bombay Talkies (1934-1954) from its pre-history and birth through its productive years to its ultimate stasis and dismemberment in 1954 (Singh 1). The study concentrates on the efforts made by the studio to engage people in the nationalist discourse besides imagining and constructing a nation through the anti-colonial films. The very first chapter of the thesis concentrates on the early filmmakers, their themes in addition to treatment of women on screen. Other chapters of the thesis discuss about the emergence of studio system, Himansu Rai's penchant for film making, reformist cinema produced by Bombay Talkies, and the reasons for the decline of a grand era of Bombay Talkies.

The thesis studies the early films starting from silent era to talkies made by one particular studio. It offers a deep study into how Bombay Talkies tried to engage in the art of filmmaking with its passion for quality films as it picked up vital issues of nation and gender in addition to several other important issues plaguing the time. In all, the thesis studies the rise and fall of a great enterprise called Bombay Talkies.

Objectives of the study

Main objective

The study has been taken up to map the journey traversed by the Hindi cinema in the context of liberalization and globalization. Globalization altered the very way people used to think and live. Hindi films mirrored such changes quickly. Gender roles and the portrayal of the nation were also altered in the Hindi films after the onset of globalization. The main objective of the present research is to study how nation and gender are constructed in diasporic Hindi cinema. The objective is justified as the construction differs in the Hindi movies prior to globalization. The construction also differs in the movies made by non-resident Indian filmmakers. Hence, the objective of the study is to find reasons for such deliberate construction.

Other objectives

The study is taken up with a few other objectives as well. They are listed below:

- a. To find out whether commercial reasons prompted the makers of diasporic Hindi movies to produce the movies the way they are produced.

- b. To study how non-resident Indian filmmakers construct nation and gender in their movies.
- c. To study other major themes of diasporic Hindi cinema apart from nation and gender.
- d. To study the reasons for decline in the NRI movies on the themes of nation and gender.

Question of research

The whole research concentrates on one vital question. Why are nation and gender constructed the way they are constructed in diasporic Hindi cinema?

Hypothesis

As cinema is one of the powerful visual media in India, the influence that it wields on people is worthy of serious study. In the darkness of theatre, an audience often does not know whether to believe or disbelieve whatever happens on screen. Most viewers tend to trust the onscreen depictions of most insignificant issues as real. It is for this reason that the construction of nation and gender becomes a significant area of study. Diasporic Hindi cinema projects nation and gender in a particular way. The most important hypothesis of the study is that the onset of globalization is the reason for the particular kind of depiction. With globalization, Indians moved across the globe. Most first generation emigrants still had their roots attached with the home land. It is to attract these non-resident Indians that diasporic Hindi movies made. These movies attracted even resident Indians as they had strong dose of culture, tradition, nationalism, romantic love and so on. The political changes that were taking place at the time were also a reason for movies with such plots. The socio-political

and even economic changes brought a new genre of movies in the form of diasporic Hindi cinema.

Chapterization

Apart from introduction and conclusion, the thesis has four core chapters. Chapter one introduces the subject taken for study besides significance of the same. In addition to these, the chapter throws light on different technical aspects such as review of literature available in the field, objectives of the study, research question, hypothesis, content analysis, chapterization and a brief note on each movie.

The second chapter provides historical study of Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular. Indian cinema has a grand history of more than a century and the chapter attempts to study how it has been constructing the concepts of nation and gender throughout its glorious journey. The study attempts to assess Indian cinema of pre-independent era, the silent era, post independent Hindi cinema, its golden era, Hindi cinema in the globalized context, diasporic Hindi cinema, and the Hindi cinema of recent times. The assessment concentrates only on the construction of nation and gender in all the mentioned varieties of cinema.

Chapter three is devoted to theory part. In three parts, it attempts to study different theories of nation and gender, in addition to theorizing cinema. The origin and development of the concept of nation, vital theorists of the concepts of nation and nationalism, terms related to nation are studied in part one. The second division of the chapter concentrates on the very term gender, difference between gender and sex, need to understand the term in the present context, and major critics of gender studies.

The chapter also attempts to theorize cinema. In this part of the chapter, there are attempts to find reasons for popular cinema's entry into the field of film studies which was neglected for long time. The aim is to study popular cinema as part of popular culture and cultural studies.

Chapter four is devoted for the study of representation of nation in diasporic Hindi cinema. As Hindi cinema has engaged in the act of constructing nation since its inception, the study attempts to delve deep into the ways in which cinema has been achieving it. After concentrating on different film genres, the study takes up the particular genre of diasporic Hindi cinema to assess how the emergent genre succeeded in constructing the nation even though moving away from the traditional way. Major movies are analysed to find out the kind of representation found in them. A major movie made by a non-resident Indian is also taken for study so that contrast can be made between the two kinds of representation of nation in the two sets of movies; movies produced by resident Indians with the plot of Indian diaspora and the same by an NRI filmmaker.

Chapter five deals with the representation of gender in diasporic Hindi cinema. The pattern followed in chapter four is continued in this chapter as well. Hindi cinema had taken the question of gender since its early days. Gender roles, especially assigned to women, had been stereotypical in nature with a few alterations here and there. They were portrayed as the bearers and carriers of culture. The responsibility continued even in the diasporic Hindi cinema. Along with women, even the men share the responsibility of protecting the Indian culture in the movies in the era of globalization. Whether a person is resident Indian or non-resident Indian, the movies

try to show that one has to wear the tradition and culture of India on his/her sleeves. The chapter assesses such representation of both genders in diasporic Hindi movies.

Content analysis

The research has two kinds of texts: primary texts that are movies and the secondary texts in the form of books, articles, theses, interviews, reports that are available physically and also virtually. As the aim of the research is to study construction of nation and gender in diasporic Hindi cinema, such movies are selected for the purpose and different materials of all kinds are gathered. Using different theories of nation and gender, these movies, texts, articles and other materials are analysed.

Brief description of the movies undertaken for study

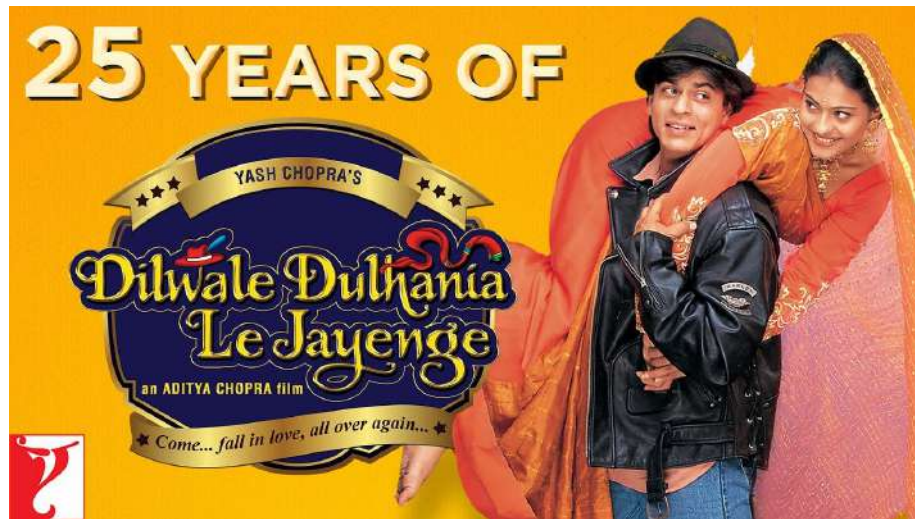
Thirteen movies are taken for study. Except one, all the other movies are released between 1995 and 2010, in the period of globalization. All these movies have the plot involving non-resident Indians. The first movie *Purab aur Pachhim* belongs to pre-globalized India and the last movie *Monsoon Wedding* is directed by the non-resident director Mira Nair. The other eleven movies are directed by resident Indian directors.

Purab aur Pachhim



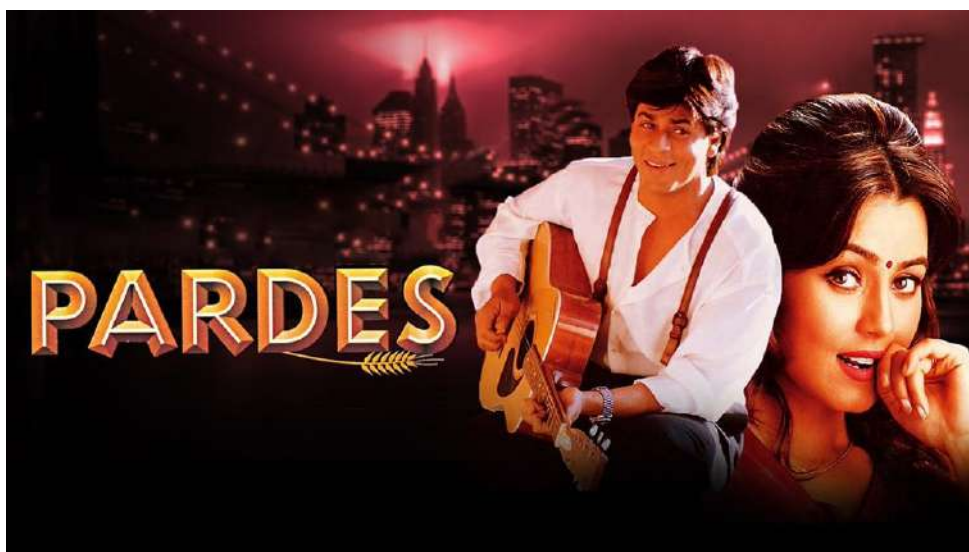
Name	<i>Purab aur Pachhim</i>
Genre	Drama
Plot	The plot of the movie revolves around Bharat, a nationalist who goes to England for higher studies. He meets the family of Sharmas who have been residing in London for long. Living in an alien country, the family has lost touch of Indian values. Bharat through his Indian ways changes the family members and brings them back to India who decide to settle in their home land. The dichotomy of East and West has been presented in a stereotypical way brilliantly by the director Manoj Kumar who is also the protagonist of the movie. With several twists and turns the movie is worth watching for its popular songs and locations.
Director	Manoj Kumar
Actors	Manoj Kumar, Saira Banu, Ashok Kumar, Pran
Year of Release	1970
Budget	Not Available
Box Office	Not Available

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge



Name	<i>Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge</i>
Genre	Musical Romance
Plot	One of the most popular and commercially hit Hindi cinemas of all times, <i>Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge</i> brought in a whole new genre in Hindi cinema. The movie altered the way NRIs were presented on screen previously. The NRIs who were portrayed as morally corrupt in the past now turned out to be bearers of Indian culture and tradition. The movie revolves around the plot of Raj and Simran, both from London, who fall in love and face daunting obstacles from the patriarch father of Simran, Chaudhary Baldev Singh who wants his daughter to marry an Indian. Plot of the movie takes place in London and Punjab. Raj ultimately wins his love much to the approval of Baldev Singh. The NRIs do not stay in India but return to England. The return was something new during its time.
Director	Aditya Chopra
Actors	Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Amrish Puri, Anupam Kher, and Farida Jalaal
Year of Release	1995
Budget	Rs 400 Million
Box Office	Rs 1.22 Billion

Pardes



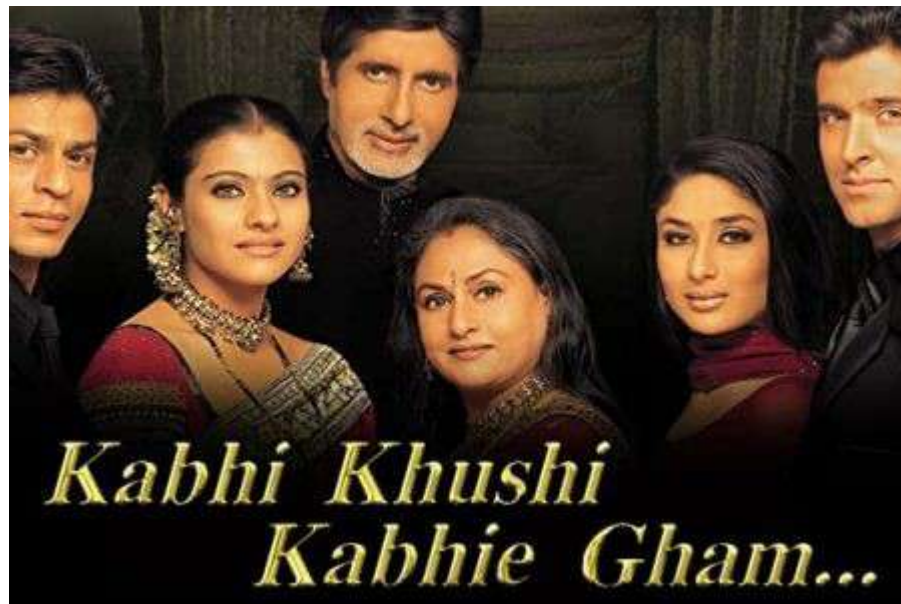
Name	<i>Pardes</i>
Genre	Musical Romance
Plot	The plot of <i>Pardes</i> takes place in America. Kishori Lal, a wealthy American believes that the West has demoralized the NRIs. To keep the Indian ethos, its way of life alive among the NRIs, he wants Ganga, a naïve Indian girl to marry his spoilt son. He believes that Ganga could save the NRIs from the moral degradation. But, Ganga finds out that Kishori Lal's son Rajeev is not worthy of her trust and love. In the meanwhile, Arjun, the foster son of Kishorilal develops interest in Ganga. After a few melodramatic events, Ganga accepts Arjun and they return to America to lead a happy married life.
Director	Subhash Ghai
Actors	Shah Rukh Khan, Mahima Chaudhary, Amrish Puri, Deena Pathak and Alok Nath
Year of Release	1997
Budget	Rs 10 crore
Box Office	Rs 34.83 crore

Aa Ab Laut Chale



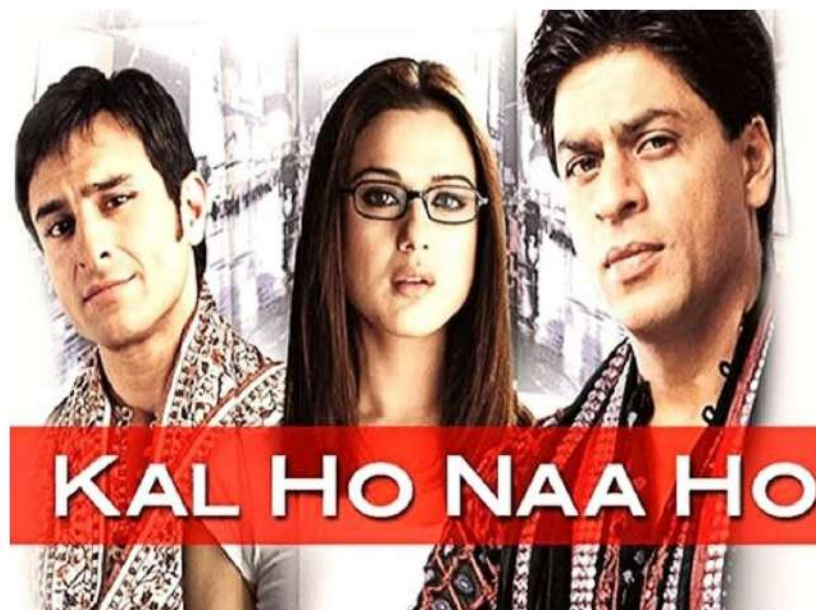
Name	<i>Aa Ab Laut Chale</i>
Genre	Musical Romance
Plot	The plot of the movie takes place in the US. The movie is similar to <i>Poorab aur Pachhim</i> . Rohan a frustrated, unemployed graduate goes to New York on his friend's advice. However, things do not happen as expected by him and he has tough days over there. He meets Pooja, an Indian who too has similar story to tell. They develop affinity towards each other. But, Rohan's meeting with Lovelyn, an NRI hedonist changes all. Rohan goes after her severing his relationship with all those who had helped him in his difficult times. Unable to cope with Lovelyn's western ways, he returns to Pooja realizing his mistakes. With the assistance of Pooja, he is united with his long lost father who is leading a desolate life in spite of being wealthy in New York. In the end, Rohan brings his father and step brother back home to India and marries Pooja for a happy life.
Director	Rishi Kapoor
Actors	Akshaye Khanna, Aishwarya Rai, Rajesh Khanna, and Suman Ranganath
Year of Release	1999
Budget	Rs 09 crore
Box Office	Rs 16.3 crore

Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham...



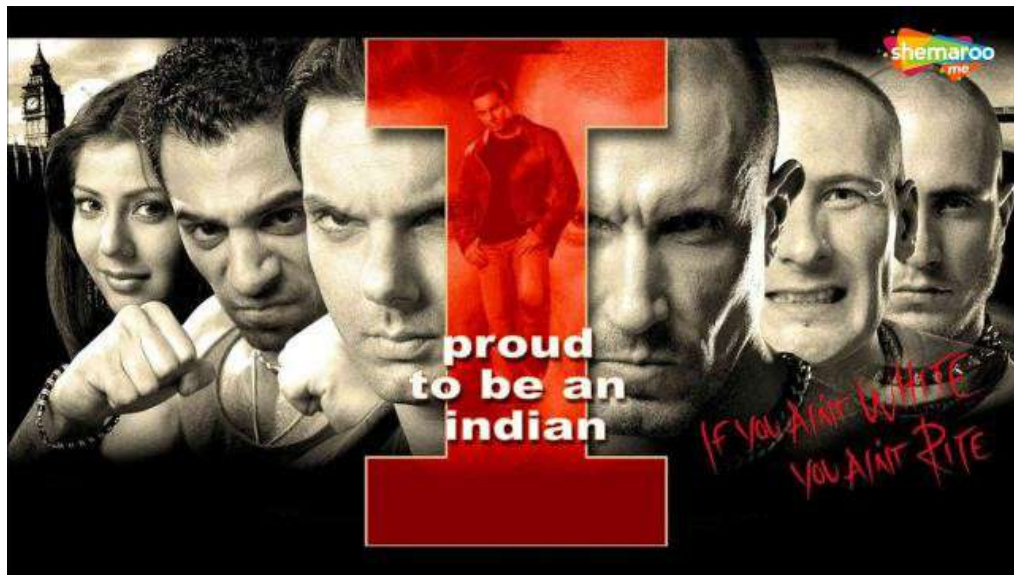
Name	<i>Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham...</i>
Genre	Melodrama
Plot	Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham... is a family melodrama starring bigwigs of Hindi cinema industry. The plot revolves around the members of the aristocratic Raichand family. Major part of the movie takes place in India whereas a minor but significant part happens in London. Raichand is a patriarch who believes that the honour of the family lies in adhering to the values fostered through generations. He throws a son out of family for not upholding the family values. The rest of the movie is devoted to the efforts made by Raichand's younger son to unite the family.
Director	Karan Johar
Actors	Amitabh Bacchan, Jaya Bacchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol , Hrithik Roshan and Kareena Kapoor
Year of Release	2001
Budget	Rs 400 Million
Box Office	Rs 1.36 Billion

Kal Ho Na Ho



Name	<i>Kal Ho Naa Ho</i>
Genre	Romantic – comedy – drama
Plot	The plot of <i>Kal Ho Na Ho</i> revolves around three characters Aman, Naina and Rohit in New York. Aman is a seriously ailed person who wants to see everyone around him in happiness. Naina’s family has personal and financial problems. These problems are solved by Aman, and Naina falls in love with him without knowing Aman’s health issues. But, Aman sees to it that she marries Rohit. The character of Aman is reminiscent of the character of Anand of the movie with the same title. The movie does not speak much about nation or gender.
Director	Nikhil Advani
Actors	Jaya Bacchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Preity Zinta and Saif Ali Khan
Year of Release	2003
Budget	Rs 220-300 million
Box Office	Rs 860.9 million

I Proud to be an Indian



Name	<i>I Proud to be an Indian</i>
Genre	Action – drama
Plot	The not so popular movie has the plot of racial discrimination faced by Indians in England. It is significant to note that the protagonist of the movie has no particular name and is called throughout as ‘I,’ the letter which stands for the word ‘Indian.’ The movie tries to assert that Indians or Asians living in England do have the right to lead a dignified life over there. I who is intolerant towards injustice sets things right when Asians were treated inhumanly by the racially blind members of Skinheads.
Director	Puneet Sira
Actors	Sohail Khan, Hina Tasleen, Kulbhushan Karbanda and Tim Lawrence
Year of Release	2004
Budget	Not Available
Box Office	Not Available

Ramji Londonwaley



Name	<i>Ramji Londonwaley</i>
Genre	Drama – Comedy
Plot	Even though the movie is categorized as a comedy, it has the underpinnings of nation and gender. Ramji, an innocent Indian cook travels to London in search of greener pasture. But, he gets stuck with several problems. In the end, he manages to solve all the problems. Even though Ramji gets a wonderful job offer of a chef in London, he decides against accepting it. He returns to India to fulfil his familial and personal obligations. Ramji believes that his loyalty should be towards his motherland India and his family.
Director	Sanjay Dayma
Actors	Madhavan, Samita Bangargi and Harsh Chhaya
Year of Release	2005
Budget	Not Available
Box Office	Not Available

Salaam Namaste



Name	<i>Salaam Namste</i>
Genre	Drama – Comedy
Plot	Much ahead of its time, <i>Salaam Namaste</i> has the plot of live-in relationship of two Indians who live in Australia. After having initial hiccups to accept the responsibility for a pre-marital pregnancy, the male protagonist buckles to his own emotions for the lady and the unborn baby in the end. Even though aspects of gender can be found in the movie, not much can be spoken about the construction of nation.
Director	Siddharth Anand
Actors	Saif Ali Khan, Preity Zinta, Arshad Warsi, Jugal Hansraj etc.
Year of Release	2005
Budget	Rs 110 Million
Box Office	Rs 572 Million

Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna



Name	<i>Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna</i>
Genre	Romance – Drama
Plot	The plot of <i>Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna</i> is also unconventional. It speaks about extramarital relationship openly which is not so common in Indian cinema. The plot revolves around the loveless marriage of two couples. With the passage of time, one unhappy individual falls in love with another such person. They marry in the end after a few trials and tribulations. The whole plot takes place in America as if to suggest that such things are not accepted in India easily.
Director	Karan Johan
Actors	Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukherji, Abhishek Bacchan, Preity Zinta and Kiron Kher
Year of Release	2006
Budget	Rs 50 Crore
Box Office	Rs 112-120 Crore

Namastey London



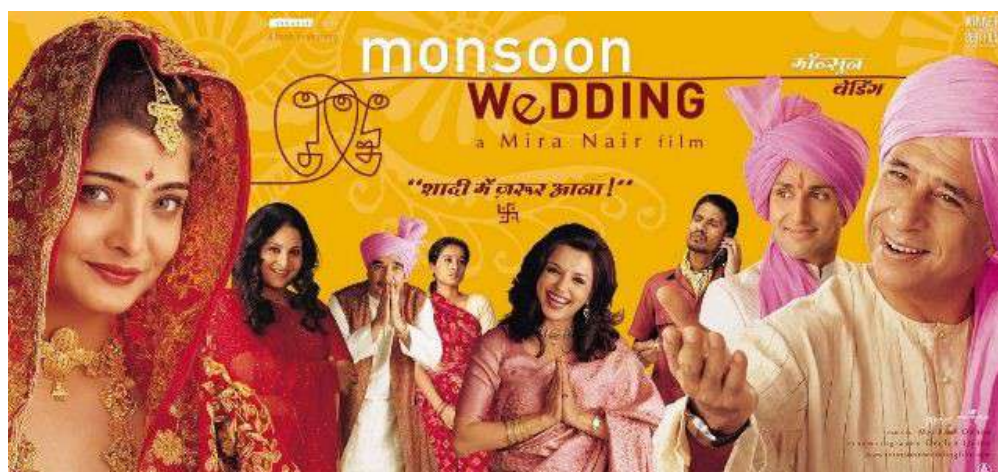
Name	<i>Namastey London</i>
Genre	Romance – Drama
Plot	The plot of the movie revolves around the marriage between Arjun and Jasmeet that takes place in India against the wishes of Jasmeet. Jasmeet calls herself a British as she is born and brought up in London. However, Arjun, a Punjabi, through his Indian ways, succeeds in changing Jasmeet and brings her back to India. Aspects of nation and gender are visible in the movie.
Director	Vipul Amrutlal Shah
Actors	Rishi Kapoor, Akshay Kumar and Katrina Kaif
Year of Release	2007
Budget	Rs 210 Million
Box Office	Rs 714 Million

London Dreams



Name	<i>London Dreams</i>
Genre	Musical Drama
Plot	<i>London Dreams</i> is the story of two childhood friends Arjun and Mannu. Arjun goes to London in search of success very early in his life and Mannu remains in India not having any particular goal in life. Arjun takes Mannu to London in an effort to help him. But, surprisingly, Mannu attains stardom very soon outwitting Arjun through sheer skills and passion for music. A jealous Arjun decides to destroy Mannu using his weaknesses and succeeds in doing so at the cost of his own career. The movie has a happy ending after Arjun realizes his mistake and manages to set things right.
Director	Vipul Amrutlal Shah
Actors	Ajay Devgan, Salmaan Khan, Asin and Om Puri
Year of Release	2009
Budget	Rs 50 Crore
Box Office	Rs 41 Crore

Monsoon Wedding



Name	<i>Monsoon Wedding</i>
Genre	Drama
Plot	The movie is included in the list as it is directed by Mira Nair, an NRI filmmaker. This is done to compare it with the diasporic Hindi cinema made by resident Indian filmmakers. The movie's plot revolves around the marriage of the female protagonist Aditi who is in a relationship with her married boss. Aditi's father has made all arrangements for the daughter's marriage with an NRI. Guests, especially many from abroad, are at home but Aditi still has interest in her boss. Truth dawns upon her that her employer can't desert his family when both of them get caught in a compromised position by police and the situation turns out to be awkward. Aditi decides to end the relationship and marry the NRI as per the parents' wishes. But, she does not want to hide anything from her fiancé and discloses everything about her affair. The boy gets upset initially, but he accepts her later appreciating her frankness. They marry happily.
Director	Meera Nair
Actors	Naseeruddin Shah, Vasundhara Das, Shefali Shah and Rajat Kapoor
Year of Release	2001
Budget	US \$ 1.2 Million
Box Office	US \$ 30.8 Million

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL STUDY OF HINDI CINEMA

Introduction

Indian cinema completed its glorious journey of a century in 2013. This journey of Indian cinema has been an interesting area of study for not only academicians but also film enthusiasts. The present chapter makes an attempt to study the grand history of Indian cinema that is filled with ups and downs. However, emphasis is made only to look at the elements of nation and gender in the long history of Indian cinema, chiefly concentrating on Hindi cinema.

The chapter also attempts to discuss, in detail, the very medium called cinema; its contribution, even though, in smaller measure, in the process of nation building; its entry into different parts of the world and its transformation from being a cultural medium to a commercial enterprise. There has also been an attempt to study the relationship between cinematic representation of nation and gender in its journey. However, theoretical moorings do not find a place here as a separate chapter is devoted for the purpose.

The present chapter concentrates on the below mentioned areas:

- Cinema in India
- Origin and growth of Indian cinema
- Hindi cinema as National cinema
- Historical study of Indian cinema: Silent era
- The era of talkies

- Post Independent Hindi Cinema
- Golden era of Hindi cinema
- Hindi cinema of 80s, 90s and the new millennium

The wonderful medium named cinema

Cinema in India is the chief mode of visual entertainment for people apart from television soap operas and reality shows. Different people have different opinions about this powerful medium in the country inhabited by different sets of people. If some abhor films negating them as inferior form of arts, some others detest them considering them to be a blot on the civil society. A few more do not take films seriously and treat them merely as a medium of entertainment, and only a small section of people, mostly from academia, consider cinema as a medium fit for study. Indian cinema, as the country itself, is unique in its qualities. It is also vital to note that there is no one cinema to be called Indian cinema and the many cinemas that the country has have shared common qualities. However, in the recent developments, quality movies are dubbed to other languages to attract more audience. Hence, the demarcation of regional movies and Hindi movies is slowly being erased within India. Actors are now calling themselves pan Indian actors than regional or Hindi language actors. To garner more revenue, Indian movies are being released in several countries across the globe as well. So the whole activity of movie making is undergoing a drastic change these days. Producers are keeping in mind not only local audience, but also global audience while producing a movie.

Indian cinema

“Indian cinemas need to be understood in their historical unfolding as well as their complex relationships to social, economic, cultural, political, ideological and institutional discourses” (Gokulsing and Dissanayake 2).

The year 2013 requires a special mention as Indian cinema celebrated its centenary in it. In a span of hundred plus years, Indian cinema has carved a niche in the world cinema. Today, India is the largest producer of movies in the world with close to 2000 movies a year (and the number is rising each year) in around twenty six languages. These movies are watched across the world in over 90 countries. If adjectives have to be used to describe Indian cinema, a few can be; irresistible, grand, unrealistic, masala and awesome. With each passing year, the influence of cinema is growing among people, even though several factors try to deter it. It is unstoppable as the celluloid world in India is glamorous and the film stars are treated as demigods. Craze for these demigods has gone to such an extent that people have built temples for them. It is rare to see in other countries.

It is notable that India ranks first in the number of cine goers. According to an article published in *The Hindu*, UNESCO notes that in 2015, India admitted 2016 million spectators to theatres whereas China, which has a greater population than India, admitted only 1260 million spectators whereas the USA admitted 1197 admissions (Ramachandran T). Statistics related to cinema theatres reveal that India had 11100 screens ranking third globally. The number is too small compared to the US and China which occupy the first two slots. If America had 40547 screens, China had 31627. Not only this, the per capita screen number is also very less in India. It comes to mere 0.9 to a lakh population whereas America stands tall with 14. If China

has 2.5 screens, even smaller countries like France, Ireland and New Zealand boast of more than 10 screens. India is in the 69th position for which the data is available. Hence there is a lot of scope for the development of cinema industry in India. In fact, it is the right time for it to grow and prosper.

However, the country lacks a decent study of the popular cultural medium. The case is not so with Hollywood or European film industry. There have also been serious allegations inside the academia, especially outside India that the film study is often Eurocentric. America dominates the film studies due to its immense reach and the money it earns in the industry. Indian academia has begun to take film studies seriously very recently. There have only been a very few persons who have contributed preciously to this domain; Satyajit Ray, Erik Barnouw, S Krishnaswamy, Sumita S Chakravarty, Dorothee Wenner, Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Paul Willemen, Ashis Nandy, Madhava Prasad, Ravi Vasudevan, M K Raghavendra, Bhawana Somaaya, Vijay Mishra, S V Srinivas, Jigna Kothari, Jyotika Viridi, Anupama Chopra, K Gokulsing, Wimal Dissanayake, Rachel Dwyer and others. However, it is to be noted that many of the listed are Indians who are presently working in the universities abroad. But, it is good to see that film study is slowly picking up pace in the Indian academia.

Length of the cinema

When writing about Indian cinema, it is imperative to mention its length. When compared to its western counterparts cinema in India is lengthier. If the western movies have a running time of around 90 minutes, Indian movies have approximately 150 minutes, the chief reason being disruptive narration. If the western movies have a linear narration, Indian movies have disruptions like sub plots, song and dance

sequences and comic scenes. Many a times, these are in no way connected to the main theme, but space is meant for them. Strangely, audience come to watch a movie for these elements; sometimes, a flop movie gets attention because of its song and dance sequences.

One can see the influence of strong theatrical tradition of India in movies through these elements. Unlike other movies, Indian movies have two halves. A short break is given in cinema halls for the spectators to relax as one cannot sit for 150 minutes continuously. But, recently, a small change is visible even in Indian cinema with respect to length. Songs and dance sequences are being omitted from many movies which are mostly crime thrillers. But, such examples are very few in number and Indian audience never bother about the length. There have also been rare examples where movies have exceeded the usual length and have reached more than 180 minutes too.

Genesis of Indian cinema

Study of the history of Hindi cinema is incomplete without evaluating the history of Indian cinema. It is curious to know that the genesis of cinema in India goes hand in hand with the genesis of India as a nation. It is often said that the history of Indian cinema is as colourful as the history of India itself. And if history can be called chronicle of past events, Indian cinema is a chronicle of the nation, its struggles, its hopes, its genesis and its rise from a pre-colonial and pre-modern society to a post-colonial and post-modern society. When it is said that it is such a charismatic history, cinema's emblematic role is also need to be stressed here. As film scholar Madhava Prasad points out in an essay titled *From Cultural Backwardness to the Age of Imitation*, Indian cinema has taken birth from the depths of Indian soil (7). Hence,

Indian cinema that includes regional language cinema in addition to Hindi cinema belongs to this very land. They are truly 'Indian' in their outlook.

Cinema in India, like in any other part of the world, does not merely serve as an escapist tool for the people. As observed by Vijay Mishra, Hindi cinema is often derided by film scholars and critics for its stringy and episodic nature, for its lack of an "organic consistency" (qtd. in Sheila Nayar 17). But critics also agree that any film serves also as a record keeper and a historian of its time and society. It will not be an exaggeration if it is said that the survival of the nation depends on its cinema. Vamsee Juluri notes that Ramachandra Guha echoes such a prophesy in his book *India after Gandhi: The history of the world's largest democracy* (2007), "India will survive as long as, among other things, its films are watched and songs sung" (qtd. in Juluri 55). Indian cinema shares such an indispensable status among its people.

But, how did leaders like Gandhi and Nehru perceive cinema before India got freedom? It is quite interesting to note that both of them did not approve cinema as an art form. When Gandhi was given a questionnaire on cinema by the cinematograph committee, he resisted the attempt saying he had never watched any movie. But then, he was of the opinion that cinema's influence could only be evil on people. For him, it was as evil as gambling, horse-racing and playing in the stock market. All the efforts made to change Gandhi's opinion were in vain. In 1939 when Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, the popular director of that time wrote Gandhi to reconsider his opinion and bless cinema, Gandhi reiterated his stand that it was one of the modern western evils which had to be eradicated from the country.

Gandhi was a deep rooted nationalist and traditionalist, hence such an opinion from him was not surprising. But, Nehru who had faith in the western modernity had

no better opinion on cinema. Though, he was not biased towards the medium, he felt that India was not producing quality movies. He was of the opinion that films should exhibit educational and social values. Nehru stuck to this opinion even after India gained independence as Shyam Benegal is quoted in the book *Bollywood: A History*:

None of our national leaders cared for films, not even Nehru. Our pre-independent national leaders always saw popular Indian films as culturally wanting. They thought they were culturally not good enough, not artistic enough, and did not help in the evolution and development of culture. They always thought it was a very inferior kind of work. This attitude also infected the upper and middle-classes. (Bose 162)

The phenomenal role of cinema is well explained in the book *Bollywood Nation*:

From their earliest years, the films of India have served not merely as entertainment or an escape, but also as a source of idealism for its audiences in the encounter with post-colonial modernity. In some ways, our films have welcomed the modern, celebrating the breakdown of old feudal barriers to communal mobility. In other ways, they have resisted it, if nothing else, at least by positing family ties and values like sacrifice over modern notions of individualism and self-interest. (Juluri 7)

Hindi cinema as the national cinema

Among the different cinemas of India, Hindi cinema boasts of the status of National cinema as these films are watched and enjoyed by people across the country and even abroad. If a regional cinema caters to the taste of a local audience, a national

cinema should take care of the cultural interest of the whole nation. According to Dissanayake, “a national cinema privileges ideas of coherence and unity and stable cultural meanings associated with the uniqueness of a given nation” (Dissanayake xiii). Noted film scholar Madhava Prasad argues that:

Hindi cinema has functioned as a site of production and exploration of national identity and ideology and depends on the talents and finances drawn into it from the other language cinemas. Hindi cinema has also assisted state policy by spreading knowledge of Hindi, the projected national language, across the country. As an industry with a national market (now even international market), it also attracted talent from all parts of the country, especially from non-Hindi speaking regions like Calcutta and Madras (now Chennai) giving Bombay (Hindi) cinema an undeniable national character. (*Ideology of the Hindi Film* 4)

Not only in its reach, even in terms of revenue, Hindi cinema stands tall compared to all the other cinemas of the country. In terms of number, the south Indian cinemas vie hard with Hindi cinema, but in terms of the money that they spend and earn, those cinemas have failed to surpass Hindi cinema. Hence Hindi cinema is ‘unquestionably nationally dominant’ as opined by Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti in the introductory part of their book, *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* (12).

Cinema has a strong grounding in South India than in other parts of the country. All the south Indian states; Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have a strong cinematic tradition from the beginning. Even though most major Indian languages have films in them, there are six major non-Hindi film industries in

the country. Among the six, four are situated in south India. Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam in addition to Marathi and Bengali. Similarly, Odiya, Gujarathi, Bhojpuri and Punjabi film industries are also expanding their base. Interestingly, some of the South Indian movies have outnumbered Hindi films recently. But, the fact remains that as Hindi movies cannot compete with Hollywood movies in terms of investment and revenue, so also the regional language cinemas of India cannot compete with Hindi. It is chiefly because of their reach. Hindi cinemas have overseas audience for long and it is also the prime reason for its swollen revenue, whereas the regional cinemas have only recently begun to export their movies abroad. Even within the country, as Hindi has a greater acceptance, Hindi cinemas have larger audience than their southern counterparts. Moreover, the very genre of Hindi cinema is different from other language cinemas as there is larger scope for experimentation to attract more audience.

Interestingly, Hindi cinema has received different opinions from different personalities. If Salman Rushdie, the well-known writer, in his novel *The Moor's Last Sigh*, sums up the characteristics of the Hindi cinema (Bombay cinema, for Rushdie) interestingly as “epico-mythico-tragico-comico-super-sexy-high-masala-art” (148-149), film scholar Rachel Dwyer in her book *Bollywood's India*, terms it as the best known and widely appreciated features of contemporary Indian culture (12). Even, the great director Satyajit Ray did not have a fair opinion about Hindi cinema. He was of the opinion that Hindi films are a “well-mixed potpourri of popular entertainment,” and the audience who watch them are of “tired untutored minds with underdeveloped tastes” (Ray 73). As the book *Reframing Bollywood: Theories of Popular Hindi Cinema* suggests,

“A Hindi film is a hybrid art form, blending theatrical and cinematic elements as well as First World and Third World cinema methodologies, plus an assortment of Western and indigenous genres such as the musical, dance drama and the melodrama, to name a few. Such a blending, also referred to as *masala* (a spicy mix), is precisely what has previously been belittled in the theorization of Hindi cinema.” (Gehlawat xiii)

Hindi cinema is fondly addressed as ‘Bollywood’ these days by the media and also several researchers working on it. The term itself has been a matter of contention. In the initial days of its usage, the term was negated by many as they felt that the term was only an ‘inferior double,’ ‘a cheap hybrid form’ or even a ‘low-grade epithet’ of the term Hollywood. It is a moniker that lacks the indigenous flavor.

As Gehlawat points out:

“The term Bollywood is seen as a condescending or trivializing term and also an ‘epithet,’ a mimicry that is ‘both a response and a dismissal.’ If it is an ‘affectionate domestic shorthand’ for the popular film industry, others see it as hybrid element ‘mock(ing) the thing it names and celebrat(ing) its difference.’ Suffice to say, the question of whether this term is ‘a pejorative or subversive description... remains unsolved.” (xii)

The use of such hybrid terms does not stop with Hindi cinema. Such discussions are still going on about the use and non-use of such hybrid forms as a few of the regional cinemas in India have already started identifying themselves with such terms. A few among them are; Sandalwood for Kannada film industry, Mollywood for Malayalam cinema, Kollywood for Tamil cinema, Tollywood for Telugu and even

Bengali cinema etc. Not only within India, even outside India, the Lahore film industry calls itself Lollywood and the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood. However, there is no denying the fact that all these words are fashioned similar to Hollywood.

It is imperative to mark the different stages of Hindi cinema when we deal with its history. Different film historians have identified different eras in it. For the convenience of this study, the following stages are identified:

- a. Early Stirrings and the Silent era (1896-1930)
- b. Talkies and the Colour Motion Pictures (1931-1950)
- c. The Golden Era (1951-1960)
- d. Masala Movies and the Rise of Parallel Cinema (1961-1980)
- e. Big Budget Films and Studio Monopoly (1981-2000)
- f. Contemporary Hindi Cinema (2001 onwards to present)

Early stirrings and the Silent era (1896-1930)

India welcomed cinema very early, during its nascent stage in the world scenario. Even as a British colony, India was the third largest producer of films in the world. The nation received cinema (motion picture technology) on July 7, 1896 at the Watson's Hotel in Bombay (Now Mumbai) when Marius Sestier, a representative of the Paris-based Lumiere brothers presented the first Cinematographe show. Far away, on the same day, a special show was organized for the czar of Russia at St. Petersburg. Here in India, the show was priced at rupees one, and six 'living photographic pictures' were screened in it that included 'Entry of Cinematographe,' 'Arrival of a Train,' 'Leaving the Factory' and others. The elite of the city, both Indian and the European attended the event. This show was advertised in the Times of

India newspaper as ‘The Marvel of the Century’ and ‘The wonder of the world.’ Thus cinema arrived in India, within six months after it was first launched at the Salon Indien of the Grand Café in Paris. In the subsequent week, the show with several additions, was shifted to a regular theatre with separate sections for both men and women and a range of ticket prices.

The city of Bombay provided a firm ground for flourishing of films. Bombay, which was already a city of prominence in the pre-Independent India, had all the qualities to nurture film activities. Being a commercial hub, it had the necessary financiers to fund film productions. It was also the cultural capital of the period. The megacity had many Parsi theatre groups which were involved in the cinematic activities. These theater groups provided the early performers and writers as most of them entered the celluloid world later. Film scholars Garga, Rajadhyaksha and Willemen observe:

With its assimilation of diverse influences – Shakespeare, Persian lyric poetry, Indian folk traditions, and Sanskrit drama; an operatic structure integrating songs into the narrative; dominant genres being the historical, mythological, and romantic melodrama; and use of the Urdu language, Parsi Theater was the immediate aesthetic and cultural antecedent of popular Hindi cinema. (qtd. in Ganti 8)

The early pioneers of Cinema in India were no doubt Parsis, but the first person to show interest in the medium was from the dominant Hindu community called Harischandra Sakharam Bhatvadekar, also known as Save Dada. Bhatvadekar was a still-photographer by profession and when he watched the initial screenings of Lumiere Brothers’ Cinematographe, he saw the potential it had and ordered a motion

picture camera from London. This was, probably, the first imported camera to have arrived in India to ignite the flames of cinematic interest in Indians. The maverick produced the first film in the year 1899.

Bhatvadekar can also be termed as a nationalist in the arena of celluloid world. In 1902, he filmed the return of an Indian from Cambridge called Raghunath Paranjpye. This film filled Indians with nationalistic pride as Paranjpye had earned the distinction of becoming a Senior Wrangler, a very special distinction in Mathematics, at Cambridge. Paranjpye earned the love and honour of Indians immediately as he had proved that if given right education and training, an Indian too could fare well in academics. This lost film is commonly accepted as the first Indian newsreel, as documented in the book *The Light of Asia* (Chabria 20).

A year before, Bhatvadekar had also filmed the return of Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree, the second Indian to be elected to the British Parliament. The victory of Bhownagree, a Parsi, in the election was termed by his rival, a trade unionist, as the 'kick out by a black man, a stranger.' Unfortunately, the same election saw the defeat of Dadabhai Navroji, the first Indian to have won a place in British Parliament. However, Bhatvadekar's efforts to film these personalities seemed to ignite the flames of nationalistic pride in the hearts of Indians, to prove that they were not illiterate, ignorant Indians.

On the other hand, there were a few more competitors for Bhatvadekar in other parts of the nation who also engineered cinematic aspirations of people of the nation. Chief among them were F B Thanawala of Bombay and Hiralal Sen and Motilal Sen of Calcutta. In the history of Indian cinema Hiralal is as important as Bhatvadekar. Unfortunately, not much source is available about his films and film

historians in India often do not recognize his contribution. This is evident in the fact that the only feature film made by Hiralal, *Alibaba and Forty Thieves* (1903) does not attract the attention of film historians as no one is sure about even the length of the film. Hiralal should also be regarded as a pioneer as he was probably the first one to shoot advertisements in India. He made C. K. Sen's Jabakusum Hair Oil targeted at women and also Edward's Tonic, manufactured by the well-known Calcutta drug dealers, Batto Kesto Paul.

Hiralal's films show an interesting mix of homage to the Raj and the first stirrings of nationalism (Bose 45). He made a film in 1912 that portrayed the arrival of King George V and Queen Mary to India and the Indian kings and princes honouring him. But, couple of years before the event, he had also made a film on the partition of Bengal. The film had successfully narrated the story of how Lord Curzon engineered the act of Bengal partition and how such a decision kindled the first sparks of nationalist agitation in India.

It is notable here that India was already recognized as a market for films as they could garner gold. Many non-Indian filmmakers tried to take advantage of this new mode of entertainment and one of the most prominent personalities was an American called Charles Urban. He stayed sometime in Britain and took permission from the British government to film *The Delhi Durbar* (an event to recognize newly-crowned George V as emperor of India) in a novel process he had invented called Kinemacolor. This new film was a great success and the film could make Charles Urban richer by 3.5 lakh dollars even at that time.

Contributions of Phalke

The history of Indian cinema would remain incomplete if not deliberated on the contributions made by the Father of Indian Cinema Dunderaj Govind Phalke. According to Rajadhyaksha, if Phalke is considered the pioneer of Indian cinema, it is not only because he made the 'first' Indian film, but because he conceived of film-making as a nationalist, specifically 'swadeshi' enterprise, and produced Indian images to occupy the screens (qtd. in Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film* 2). His interests were chiefly painting, acting and magic. He developed interest in photography after he studied at Sir J. J. School of Arts. For a small stint, he engaged himself in printing too.

But, the goals of his life changed after he watched the movie *The Life of Christ* (1910) in the then Bombay at a Christmas cinema show. While watching the images of Christ, he mentally visualized images of Hindu deities. After spending a sleepless night troubled by an urge to bring them on screen, he took his wife to watch the same movie again. Saraswathibhai Phalke, Phalke's wife recounts the events of that evening later in 1970 in the Phalke Centenary Souvenir:

“We both went to see the ‘cinema’ in an illuminated tent on Sandhurst Road where a band was playing. It was called the America-India Cinematograph. The first-class tickets were priced at eight *annas*. It was Christmas 1911 and the hall was crowded with Christians and Europeans. The lights were then switched off and there appeared the picture of a cock moving on the screen. This was the trade mark of the Pathe Company. Then, a comic picture started, featuring an actor called Foolshead. After every part of the film the lights were switched on and stage items of magic or physical feats, were performed. The

main picture of that day was *The Life of Christ*. People were weeping on seeing the sufferings of Christ and the crucifixion. The film was colored in the Kinemacolour process. On the way back, Dadasaheb said, 'Like the life of Christ, we shall make pictures about Rama and Krishna.' I was not at all happy to hear that and kept quiet." (Bose 48-49)

Saraswathibhai Phalke did not like Phalke's idea of producing films. But, she assisted her husband in pursuing his dreams, against her own wishes. In doing so, she behaved like most of the Indian wives who assume that their ultimate marital bliss is in following the footsteps of their husbands. It is said that she pledged her jewels to raise money for Phalke to go abroad, buy cameras so as to materialize his dream.

After initial hiccups of raising money, Phalke indeed had a tough job of finding suitable female actors for his films. In spite of India having a long tradition of theatre, women in Phalke's time were not ready to act before cameras. Hence, Phalke had to bring in a young male actor Anna Salunke to act in the role of Queen Taramati for his first film *Raja Harischandra* (1913). Salunke is considered as the first Indian film superstar. He had another feat of acting in the roles of both male and female in a film titled *Lanka Dahan* (1917) which was made four years later after *Raja Harischandra* was made. In the movie Salunke played roles of both Rama and Sita, a rare achievement at that time. But, the never-to-die attitude of Phalke ultimately succeeded in bringing women on stage. He first brought his own daughter Mandakini and then a woman from Maharashtra by name Kamalabia Gokhale.

Phalke produced over hundred films in a decade after *Raja Harischandra*. He tried to involve most of his family members in the very act of film production. He reached scores of people with his films during the period but he could not attract

around two percent of the population who knew English. The miniscule population still adored Western films that were shown in the best of the cinema houses in cities whereas Indian cinemas were given space only in substandard cinema houses of small towns. Interestingly, such gap existed in India even after Independence until 1980s.

The great Indian filmmaker, Satyajit Ray shares his opinion of the time:

..... all stood clustered in the heart of Calcutta Film land, exuded swank and boasted an elite clientele. On the other hand, the cinemas showing Indian films, such as the *Albion*, were dank and seedy. One pinched one's nose as one hurried past the toilet in the lobby into the auditorium and sat on hard, creaky, wooden seats. The films they showed, as told by our elders, were not suitable for us. Since the elders always decided what we should see, the choice fell, inevitably, on foreign films, usually American. We thus grew up on a wholesome diet of Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd, Firbanks, Tom Mix and Tarzan, with an occasional drama-with-a moral like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, thrown in. (qtd. in Bose 52)

Phalke's socio-political context was significantly shaped by anti-colonial struggles against the British. He himself had very nationalistic intentions as evident in his concerns for an indigenous film industry (Ganti 9). He was of the opinion that India was unfit to claim the Home Rule if its political leadership and corporate houses did not encourage film making. At the end of his tenure as a film maker, Phalke was disillusioned with the art of film making as he felt that Indians were not making quality films. In fact, he opined that they failed to understand the very art itself. He once stated, "Almost all productions now in India are lacking in technique and artistic merit. The acting is not good. The photography, specially, is of the worst class.

Nobody knows anything about the art” (qtd. in Bose 55). He also asserted that there was a need to set up a school to teach cinematic techniques. Unfortunately, the maverick filmmaker Phalke, who introduced magical movies to Indians, died in 1944 almost penniless and forgotten. The golden era of Phalke came to an end with his sad demise at the age of 74 in Nasik.

If Phalke was the first great director of Indian cinema, Jamsetji Framji Madan is often recognized as the first Movie Mogul of Indian cinema as the credit of starting a dominant studio system in the country belongs to him. If Phalke wanted an indigenous film industry Madan did not have such nationalistic emotions. Being a shrewd businessman, his intention was only to expand his empire of theatres and to earn more profit. He was leasing cinema houses in the areas where Europeans lived as he could charge more money for the tickets. He also started importing American movies as they dominated the world of cinema at that time. Such was the dominance that in 1926-27 among the total percentage of movies shown only 15 percent were Indian and the rest were films of other countries, mostly American.

At a significant stage, Madan decided to produce films and began to concentrate on Indian mythologies which were the choice of filmmakers. But, unlike Phalke, he did not beg Indian women to act in his films. He went on to bring actresses from abroad and provided chances to women of Anglo Indian origin. Patience Cooper, the first Anglo Indian female star, was the gift of Madan to film fraternity of the time. In addition to these experiments, Madan chose to shoot his films abroad. He produced a movie based on the mythological character Savitri for which he went to Rome in 1924 and it is quite interesting to note that the lead roles of Satyavana and Savitri were played by two Italian actors Rina De Liguoro and Angelo Ferrari. As

wisely calculated by Madan, the film did well in India. If Phalke tried always to be a nationalist, craving for indigenous productions, Madan was a calculative producer who did not bother whether his movies were made in India or abroad, or even whether his actors were Indian or from abroad. In a sense, he was an internationalist.

However, it is also said that Madan used women to meet his selfish ends. It is alleged that Madan used mythologies only as a pretext to showcase the beauty of scantily clad women to attract more audience. It is unfortunate that the practice of treating women as objects of male gaze started from such an early period.

Dhiren Ganguly also known as Dhirendranath Gangopadhyae or D.G. Ganguly is another name worth recalling in the history of Indian cinema. His mention is essential as his stint with films open up a few vital issues. One of them is Ganguly's creative way of film production. He produced films under the patronage of Nizam of Hyderabad. But, when he produced *Razia Begum*, a film based on the historical chronicle of the only queen who had ruled Delhi, he had to face the wrath of Nizam. The Nizam did not like the communally sensitive plot and ordered Ganguly to leave his place in twenty four hours.

Another vital detail worth mentioning here is about a movie titled *Belat Pherot* (1921). Before Ganguly commenced his career as a film producer, he was trying his luck as a writer. One of his stories was made into the movie, *Belat Pherot* which meant 'England Returned'. It was a slapstick comedy cast in the mold of Hollywood genre, sarcastically lampooning the mannerisms of Indians who went to England and came back aping British in their life style. The Bombay Chronicle described the plot as "of a young Indian who returns with foreign training that, at his parental home, he startled everybody with his quixotic notions of love and matrimony" (Bose 68).

Ganguly himself had acted in the lead role of the movie. The role was successfully and he was hailed as the Indian Charlie Chaplin immediately. The movie can be termed as the first movie to speak about non-resident Indians.

At times Indian movie makers had problems when they dealt with national issues in their movies. One such movie that ran into cold waters was *Bhakta Vidur* (1921) produced by Chandulal J Shah and directed by Kanjibhai Rathod under the banner of Kohinoor Film Company. Many film historians argue that Indian film fraternity wanted to be truly nationalist at that time. Indian mythologies had the power to bind people together. So, most filmmakers concentrated on them. The mythologies would create an 'Imagined Community' to use Benedict Anderson's phrase, where people would begin to feel that they were a part of larger audience who lived very far from them, whom they would not have met or seen while consuming those films. It is interesting to note that these mythologies, in fact, did not serve any nationalistic agenda, but they sincerely shared Gandhi's philosophy that only truth and non-violence can win. Many a times, the censor board did not have problems with them. But, *Bhakta Vidur* drew the attention of the board and the film's shows were immediately restricted. It was banned as the chief character resembled Gandhiji in the popular Gandhi Cap and *khaddar* shirt and Dhritarastra appeared like King George. Above all, it was the time of Gandhi's civil disobedience movement and the character of Vidur was also shown as the man who had withstood tortures inflicted upon him. Even though the film was a great success in Bombay, it had to face the wrath of the magistrate of Karachi who ultimately banned it. He observed that "the movie is likely to excite disaffection against the Government and incite people to non-cooperation" (Bose 82).

Hence, any movie which expressed the idea of freedom to Indians, directly or even indirectly was not issued censor certificate. The censor board used to have Indian members besides English, but they were helpless in these matters. These strict objections were not only pertaining to the idea of freedom, but also to the issues on communalism, disrespect to British society, its women, and visual ‘vulgarity’ on screen like nudity or kissing scenes. This kind of censorship was applied on all kinds of films, indigenous or imported; American or other European films. The traditional Indian society was not ready to allow any of the Western influences on its Indian viewers, even though, very few of their own films did cross the limit of ‘decency’ rarely.

Other notable film of Silent era is *Savkari Pash* (Indian Shylock) produced in the year 1925. The film was directed by Baburao Painter and actors V. Shantaram and Kamladevi were in lead roles. This movie is said to be a milestone in Indian cinema as it is considered to be one of the earliest Parallel cinema. The theme revolves around the story of a peasant whose farming land is grabbed by a greedy money lender and who is forced to work as a labourer in a mill. The harsh realities of the farming community and feudal society of pre independent India are depicted in the movie. The movie was remade as a talkie in 1936. Inspired by its theme, an actor who worked in the movie and who later became a director, V. Shantaram, created another magical movie titled *Do Bhiga Zameen* in 1953. The movie is still considered to be one of the finest movies in the history of Indian cinema.

The colourful history of the silent era of Indian cinema comes to an end with these few vital details. It is estimated that around 1300 silent movies were made in India of which only a few have survived and all the others have perished with the

passage of time, chiefly, because of lack of technology that could have assisted to preserve them.

The leading ladies: Women in early cinema

Although the nation got into the world of films at an early stage, it had its own problems such as lack of technology, availability of raw materials and experts etc. But, when it came to actors, India had no dearth of artists as the country had a strong tradition of theatre. However, lack of female actors was a great problem for filmmakers of the period.

Arrival of female actors in Indian cinema is an interesting area of study. The very first Indian feature film *Raja Harischandra* of 1913 did not have a single woman actor. Anna Salunke, a young actor, played the role of queen Taramati in the film. The film director Phalke had approached many women, including a few women from red light areas, to play the role. But, no one had accepted the offer as those were the days when acting was considered a disreputable career for women, which was treated worse than prostitution. As Mihir Bose in his book *Bollywood: A History* records, even the first hero of Hindi cinema Ashok Kumar, had such a mindset; that film career was fit neither for women nor for men. When he was offered a role in the movie *Jeevan Naiya* (1936), Ashok Kumar, who was afraid of acting, said that he would not choose acting as a career as he felt that those who chose acting only “belonged to the lower strata of society” (112). Ashok Kumar was afraid of becoming an actor as he thought that acting could prove disastrous to his marriage prospects. When men had such thoughts, it was no surprise that women were hesitant of acting.

Two theatre artists Durgabai Kamat and Kamaladevi Gokhale emerged as the first female actors to have acted in an Indian feature film. Even afterwards, only women of Jewish origin and Anglo-Indians acted in films masquerading their original names for a few years. Prominent actors of 1920s were Ruby Meyers aka Sulochana, Esther Abrams aka Pramila, Renee Smith aka Sita Devi, Iris Gasper aka Sabita Devi, Suson Soloman aka Firoza Begum, Effie Hippolet aka Indira Devi, Bonnie Bird aka Lalita Devi, Beryl Claessen aka Madhuri and Winnie Stewart aka Manorama. According to Kathryn Hansen, audience, chiefly men, accepted these ‘Gori Miss’ as they could possess the “English” Beauty, and in doing so enact a reversal of power relations that prevailed in British dominated colonial society (2297).

It was only after the arrival of Durga Kote in 1932, an educated English speaking Brahmin woman, on screen that many Indian women started choosing acting as a profession. Shantha Apte and Shobana Samarth were prominent among them. But, it was unfortunate that women in films were always denied significant roles. They were given limited, secondary and marginal roles. Even now, things are not so different. The so called ‘heroine’ roles are mere glamour-doll roles and there is nothing special about them. They are used only as objects of male gaze. They are fitted in films as bearing the burden of sexual objectification. Hence, they become the ‘bearer and not the maker of meaning’ (Mulvey 15). Even though women are inevitable in commercial movies, they are ‘used’ for supplementary and stereotypical roles; that of hero’s paramour, villain’s moll, ill-fated mother, wise grandma, heroine’s friend, bubbly sister etc.

Analyzing reasons for such ill representation, Jyotika Viridi, in her seminal work, *The Cinematic ImagiNation* claims that even after a century, women are still

doubly vitiated and subordinated by a nationalist patriarchy and a sexist film industry (61). Quoting Partha Chatterji, she says that in the nineteenth century a popular version of womanhood was created by the nationalists in response to colonial rule. The fight for freedom was termed by the nationalists as the struggle between insiders and the outsiders, between the spiritual and the material, between inner and outer, *ghar/bahir* (qtd. in Virdi 65). It was argued that when men fought with the material aspects of the west, it was the women's duty to keep the spiritual aspects of the home intact, thereby serving the interest of the nation. It was always believed that if the west was at its best in terms of arts, science and technology, it was never anywhere near in the spiritual qualities of India which resided in the inner sanctum of homes. The traditional woman kept these qualities intact and this role of women was perpetuated in the minds of people not only by literature but different media as well, cinema not being an exception.

Talkies and colour motion pictures (1931-1950)

Sound entered Indian cinema with *Alam Ara* (Beauty of the World) on March 14, 1931. The movie directed by Ardeshir Irani was released in the Majestic Theatre in Bombay. The movie had seven songs and a few dance sequences which were welcomed open heartedly by people and the popularity led to the inclusion of song and dance sequences in the future movies. The popularity grew so much that *Indrasabha*, a 1932 film included 70 songs in it. Commenting on such a development, N R Desai, a well-known distributor of that period remarked that “with the arrival of talkies, Indian motion picture came to its own as a definite and distinctive piece of creation. This was achieved by music.... It gives us musical entertainment which even the best of Hollywood movies cannot” (Garga 80).

As well-known director Shyama Bengal remarked in a speech, from the beginning, Indian films had to compete with British and American films and hence they had seen themselves as engaged in a nationalistic project (Bengal). But, the scenario changed after the arrival of sound. The import of foreign films was reduced to less than 10 per cent as people began to prefer Indian films over alien films. Indian films were accepted to be 'one's own' whereas imported films were seen as 'others.' People did not bother even if the quality and technology used by the American and British films were superior than that of Indian movies. The charged emotions of 'ours' and 'theirs' worked among people who saw Indian movies as a nationalist project engaged in the process of ousting the outsiders called British.

However, introduction of language in films had its own problems. Silent films had national acceptance. But when language had to be used, the question of which language cropped up as the nation was a land of many languages. Ultimately, it was felt that Hindi should be used to gain pan Indian acceptance. But, Hindi had many variants. In the end, producers banked upon a spoken variety of Hindi called Hindustani which was a mixture of Hindi and Urdu and which was used in bazaars and trading centers. Moreover, it also served as a lingua-franca across central and northern India (Ganti 12). Researchers like Harish Trivedi note that the language employed in Hindi cinema has been 'all kinds of Hindi,' inflected by numerous other dialects and languages including Urdu, Bhojpuri, Punjabi and 'Hinglish' (202). As Tejaswini Ghanti in her work *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* observes, Hindi cinema developed in a city where it was not spoken; Marathi and Gujarathi were the languages spoken by people over there in the city of Bombay (12). The very fact assisted Hindi cinema to develop a national character as it was free from any regional influences. It is also to be mentioned that the extensive use of song and

dance in films also favored the use of Urdu which was the language of ‘*shairi*,’ and ‘*nautch*’ in Northern India (Gooptu).

Introduction of sound also brought changes in the selection of actors. Earlier, as acting was considered a stigma, women were not ready to act in films and as it is already mentioned, due to this fact, Phalke had to bring in his own family members to act in films. Those were the times, when women bore the burden of safeguarding the honour of the family which was connected with one of the notions that women should have restrictions on their movement. They should remain indoors and should not mingle with unknown men. But, women did share screen space with men from 1920s but those who acted were chiefly Anglo-Indians who had a mixed European or British and Indian parentage and who did not bother much about these social restrictions or taboos as they were kept outside the common social space (Ganti 13). But, as it was still the age of recording, the actors voiced live during the acting itself, and as music had a greater role to play in movies, producers had to have actors who could speak the language in which the movie was made. Hence, Anglo-Indian actors who could not speak acceptable Hindi lost opportunities and in a short span disappeared from the screen space.

The forgotten tradition of courtesans

The introduction of sound also brought in talents from the courtesan culture. Men as accompanying musicians and women as dancers got opportunities in films. Ruth Vanita, the author of the book *Courtesans in Bombay Cinema* recalls the contribution made by courtesans in an interview with Alaka Sahani published in the daily *The Indian Express*. She calls cinema as the most modern art form and courtesans as the modern urban women who shaped this art form (Vanita, Courtesans

brought). Terming the courtesan tradition as the ‘voice of indigenous modernity,’ she disagrees with the idea that modernity was a product of colonialism. She affirms that pre-colonial Indian cities such as Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad and Banaras had many markers of modernity like flourishing markets, proto-consumerist cultures, sophisticated ideas about gender, relationships, and above all hybridity of many kinds - regional, religious, linguistic and international (Vanita, *Courtesans* brought). In another similar article, Vanita evaluates a few courtesan characters from several Hindi films across many decades to call them as the shape-shifters who have turned out to be an erotic ideal for the new generation (Vanita, *Courtesans in Bollywood*).

Vanita echoes the idea expressed by Ganti that the unique indigenous tradition of courtesans which had a golden past became the victim of colonizers who trampled it to death. Ganti, in the already mentioned work *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* recalls that the courtesans had manners and etiquettes par excellence and many a times, children of their patrons who happened to be kings or ruling nobility, were sent to them to be educated in dignified manners and etiquettes (13). Unlike prostitutes, courtesans had enormous control over their body and sexual activity and used to have a monogamous relationship with their patrons. As Oldenburg observes, the British confiscated the property owned by courtesans. They were forced to be the sexual partners of British soldiers. These two acts not only reduced the cultural role of courtesans but also exposed them to sexually transmitted diseases (qtd. in Ganti 14).

But, Vanita holds even educated Indians of that era responsible for the dismal affairs of courtesans. When English declared courtesan tradition as decadent and immoral, the educated Indians believed it partly because they had begun to internalize

Victorian norms. They shunned the erotic and playful literature of the period declared as 'obscene' by the British. The rich courtesan tradition too appeared a tradition of debauchery to them. Hence, the courtesans who gradually found themselves with no patronage began to move towards theatre, music and cinema (Vanita, *Courtesans in Bollywood*). It was unfortunate that a few of them were forced to take up work in red light areas. Hindi cinema did capture a shade of their lives on screen in the movies such as *Aadmi* (1939), *Raj Nartaki* (1941), *Kala Paani* (1958), *Bank Manager* (1959), *Benazir* (1964), *Sangharsh* (1968), *Dream Girl* (1970), *Salma* (1985), *Pati Patni aur Tawaif* (1990) and many others. Films like *Sadhna* (1958), *Chitrlekha* (1964), *Mamta* (1966), *Khilona* (1970) had courtesans as major characters. The courtesan characters of movies like *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), *Pakeeza* (1972), *Umrao Jaan* (1981), and *Devdas* (2002) remain perennially in a spectator's mind because of the grace that they exhibited in those movies.

Nation in the era of Talkies

As it is already observed, the talkie era began with the movie *Alam Ara* in 1931. This was already the time when films were getting more attention from native people as well as colonizers. As the Indian freedom struggle was at its peak, even film producers were trying to use the medium to instill the idea of patriotism and to portray India as an Independent Nation. In addition, film makers were moving away from their hitherto tried genre of mythologies to socials. It was also the time when the industry was opened to new faces, both male and female; producers were happy as the stigma attached with the industry was slowly losing its grip in terms of acting for women. Many women, especially from the highly orthodox Hindu and Muslim communities began to take up acting as a career. However, many Muslim aspirants

had to change their names to take Hindu names as it was believed that their original names would not suit the screen. A few popular such actors were Muhammad Yousuf Khan (Dilip Kumar), Hamid Ali Khan (Ajit), Zakaria Khan (Jayant), Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Jaffrey (Jagdeep), Shah Abbas Khan (Sanjay), Mumtaz Jehan Dehlavi (Madhubala), Mahjabeen Bano (Meena Kumari), Nawab Banoo (Nimmi), Khurshid Akhtar (Shyama). Rarely a Muslim actor would take a Christian name as in the case of Badruddin Jamaluddin Kazi who became popular as Johny Walker. Most of these changes happened post-independence as producers or the actors themselves felt that a Hindu name would have more acceptance than the original one. It was also the time when the scars of partition were still haunting the majority of population in India and a Muslim name for an actor would not be suitable. But, such thoughts were mere presumptions as these things never mattered to movie buffs. They did not care whether an actor was Hindu or a Muslim. They enjoyed the acting and the movie.

To deliberate on the idea of nation again, a movie titled *Janmabhoomi* was made in 1936 by Franz Osten. The movie was produced by Himansu Rai and had Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani in lead roles. The movie is documented as the first one to have the theme of patriotism. A social movie titled *Bandhan* (1940) directed by N R Acharya with Ashok Kumar and Leela Chitnis in the lead roles too had shades of patriotism in it. Yet another movie that dealt directly with the theme of patriotism was *Sikander* (1941). The movie was directed by Sohrab Modi and had Prithvi Raj Kapoor, Sohrab Modi, Vanmala, Meena Shorey and others in the lead roles. Its plot was about the valour shown by Porus or Puru when Alexander tried to invade India. By appreciating the bravery of Porus, the movie covertly tried to hint that each Indian should be able to fight against the foreign invaders like him.

Kismet (1943) was made under the banner of Bombay Talkies. The movie dealt with the story of a petty pickpocket. It was criticized heavily for glorifying a criminal. In spite of such criticism, the movie was shown continuously for 187 weeks at Roxy cinema in Calcutta and earned 10 million rupees, the first Indian movie to do so. It was ahead of its time as it also dealt with the pregnancy outside the wedlock. More than these things, the movie is best known to this day for a song with wordings *Aaj Himalay ke choti se phir humne lalkara hai/Door hato yeh duniyawalo Hindustan hamaara hai* which meant ‘today we have challenged from the top of Mount Everest. Let the foreigners go away as India belongs to us’ (Dutta). The continued song also has the lines, *Shuru hua hai jung tumhara jaag uto Hindustani/tum na kisi ke aage jhukna, German ya Jaapani* meaning ‘As your battle has begun, oh Indians, do not subdue before anyone, whether they are Germans or Japanese.’ It was the time of Second World War and India was on the Allied side. There was apprehension of Japanese aggression on India. At the outset, the song appeared to be hinting at these threats. Nonetheless, the shrewd British got the implied meaning where the words aliens, Japanese and Germans, just pointed at them. It was the time around Quit India Movement and the English could not tolerate such dastardly acts of Indians. Even though the movie sailed through easily at the Censor Board, the writer of the song Ramachandra Narayanji Dwivedi aka Kavi Pradeep had to face the wrath of colonizers. An arrest warrant was issued against him for penning the inflammatory song. He had to go underground to evade the arrest. Such were the critical moments for nationalists who expressed patriotic feelings openly those days.

Apart from the mentioned three movies on patriotism and nationalism, it is imperative here to mention a vital movie titled *Achhut Kanya* (1936). The path-breaking movie took up the issue of caste when such practices were very much in

vogue then. Not only the plot but even the title was a bold choice. The movie was directed by Franz Osten, the German director with whom Himanshu Rai had worked for a few years. It had Rai's wife Devika Rani and Ashok Kumar in lead roles. The plot had a tragic love story of an untouchable girl and a Brahmin boy. The untouchable girl attains the status of martyr in the end. The movie was received well in spite of the unique plot. As the movie visualized a better India sans caste barriers, Himansu made efforts to show it to the then leading politicians. His efforts to bring Gandhi to the cinema hall went in vain as Mahatma was not interested in the Western medium. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indira and Sarojini Naidu, then a minister attended the show. But, she fell asleep very soon and got up only when she heard a song. Nehru watched and liked the movie for its theme. *Achhut Kanya* was a welcome beginning in the history of Hindi cinema that dreamt of social reformation which was the dream of Indian freedom fighters. As a powerful medium, it served the cause in the best possible way.

V. Shantaram's *Duniya Na Maane* (1937) requires a special mention as it is often hailed as a feminist movie. The movie was much ahead of its time and took up a subject that was not only revolutionary but also unacceptable at that time. The film portrayed the condition of women who had no say in their marriages at a time when young brides were married to old men in exchange for money. Even though, the producers were apprehensive about the fate of the film, the director boldly went on with the shooting of the film and was criticized to take up such a theme where a woman disapproves her marriage. However, the movie was critically acclaimed and it was shown in the Venice International Festival (Nevile).

Another notable movie that took up the scourge of caste and class issue in the pre independent India was *Neecha Nagar* (1946). The movie was directed by Chetan Anand with a star cast of Uma Anand, Rafiq Ahmed, Rafi Peer and Zohra Sehgal. The theme echoed the general perception that was prevalent in the minds of upper caste and class people that people from lower caste do not deserve a dignified life. The movie could not be released in India and got an opening at the Canne International Film Festival of 1946. It won the Grand Prix du Festival International du Film award.

Post independent Hindi cinema

India attained freedom in 1947 and the whole country witnessed political upheaval. The country experienced the indelible scars of partition and a significant number of Muslims who had involved themselves in cinematic activities moved to Pakistan. Along with people, even a few studios became part of the new nation. As partition had inflicted greater wounds on the mind and soul of the citizens, it appeared as if people were not bothered to watch movies. But, the exhibition of films continued unchecked even during such a perilous time. If at all there was some slowdown in these activities, it was during the Second World War. Numerous films were released even in 1947 and people watched them casually.

The period between 1940 and 1960 is termed as the Golden Era of Indian cinema. The common cinematic genres of that period were musical, social, drama, romantic, mythological, action, suspense, costume drama etc. Among the many, there were also films with patriotic and nationalistic themes. A few of the film makers wanted the people to unite in those troubled times by reminding them of the sacrifices made by their fellow countrymen. These films also tried to portray dreams and hopes of the people of new India. The list of such films include, *Shaheed* (1948), a movie

directed by Ramesh Saigal and included the actors Dileep Kumar, Kamini Kaushal, Chandra Mohan and Leela Chitnis. The movie depicted India's freedom struggle. The song *Watan ki raah me watan ke naujawaan shaheed ho* (Let the youth of the nation martyr themselves to attain freedom) from the movie aptly recalls the mindset of the then freedom fighters who were ready to sacrifice themselves for freedom.

The film *Samadhi* (1950) too dealt with India's struggle for freedom. The plot of the movie had the character of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. It was directed by Ramesh Saigal and had Ashok Kumar and Nalini Jaywant in the lead roles. The movie was based on true events that happened in the Indian National Army (INA) steered by Netaji. It was categorized as a patriotic spy thriller by *The Hindu*, a popular daily. The plot was about Bose's clarion call to the youth of the nation to join his Indian National Army so that they could together drive away British from India. The movie turned out to be the biggest grosser of the year (Kohli).

Another film of the same year *Pehla Aadmi*, also took up the theme of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's INA. The movie was directed by the legendary director Bimal Roy and had a star crew of Smriti Biswas, Pahari Sanyal, Balraj and Ashita Bose. The movie revolves around a love story set in the pre-independent India. As the call for freedom grows and when Netaji asks the youth to give him blood and he would provide them Freedom, a boy who at first dithers then decides to join INA sacrificing his love. The heart broken girl too accepts the decision for the sake of the nation. Bimal Roy used the live clippings and inspiring speeches of Bose which gave an extra edge to the movie.

Then, there was *Anandmath* (1952), based on the Bengali novel with the same title written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1882. The plot of the movie was set on

the events of the Sanyasi Rebellion that took place in Bengal in the 18th century. The movie was directed by Hemen Gupta and had a star cast of Bharat Bhushan, Pradeep Kumar and Geeta Bali. The popular song '*Vande Mataram*' which was accepted as the National Song by the Congress Working Committee in 1937 and which was given the same status even in Independent India was adopted in the film. The song was sung by Lata Mangeswar in the glory of Mother India. In a poll conducted by the BBC in 2003 across 165 countries, *Vande Mataram* secured the second place in the World's Top 10 songs of all times (Wikipedia). Equating the nation with mother and extolling her pristine qualities was the theme of the song. The song had created a revolution in the pre-independent India and British had banned the song as it was enough to instill the feelings of patriotism among the colonized Indians.

A few more movies need mention here which aspired for an India that will be inclusive, rich and content besides advocating social change. *Naya Daur* (1957) was directed by B R Chopra and had Dileep Kumar, Vyjayanthimala, Ajit and Jeevan in the lead roles. The film advocated agrarian and Gandhian values of Machine versus Man idea in which the protagonist tries to challenge the bus service to the village to save the service of carts being operated by poor for their livelihood. He even takes on the machine in a race and wins in it so as to keep its service away from his village. The movie also exhibits Nehruvian idea of an inclusive nation where people of different faiths live in peace and harmony with each other. The song *Saathi haath badaana, ek akela thak jaayega, milkar bhoj utaana* (oh companion, let us help each other in works as labour by a single man could prove tedious to him/her) portrays a vision where everyone is involved in the construction work, the construction being an allegory to the construction of Nation with much of élan and camaraderie.

In the same year of 1957 another phenomenal movie that hit the screens was *Mother India*. Directed by Mehboob Khan and having Nargis, Sunil Dutt, Raj Kumar and Rajendra Kumar in the lead roles, *Mother India* is still considered a land mark in the Indian cinema. The movie was a remake of *Aurat*, a 1940 film directed by Mehboob Khan himself. The title of the movie was taken from a book written in 1927 by Katherine Mayo who had put India in poor light and which was attacked even by Gandhi as “a report of a drain inspector sent out with the one purpose of opening and examining the drains of the country to be reported upon.” The movie was also inspired by Pearl S Buck’s books *The Good Earth* (1931) and *The Mother* (1934). The movie was one of the most expensive films and the one which was the highest grosser of its time. The movie reinforced the very idea of equating the image of mother with that of nation. It also dealt with the themes of construction of nation, promotion of nationalism and building a robust modern India. Nehruvian idea of considering dams as temples of modern India is also represented in the movie through a scene where the protagonist inaugurates a dam at the end of it. *Mother India* is credited with the honour of being the first Indian film to be nominated for the Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

A casteless India was the dream of many freedom fighters including Gandhi, Nehru and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Their effort was to remove this scourge from the society inhabited mostly by Hindus. They were of the opinion that it was a blot on the very idea of secular India. Bimal Roy who shared this idea directed a movie titled *Sujata* (1959) based on a Bengali short story written by Subodh Ghosh with the same title. The movie dealt with the story of a Dalit girl who was liked by a Brahmin boy. Even though the girl who was orphaned at an early age was raised by Brahmins, she was made to feel at crucial point of her life that she was not one of them and that she

was an untouchable. The doubly vitiated Sujata (ironically her name means that she is of a graceful origin), because of her gender and also of her caste, had to undergo so many trials and tribulations before being accepted as a ‘human being.’ Her perpetrators realize at the end that the colour of the blood is common in all human beings and that is what matters more than anything else.

If *Sujata* dealt with the problem of caste, another movie titled *Dhool Ka Phool* (1959) ponders on the topic on religion. It was directed by B. R. Chopra and starred Rajendra Kumar, Mala Sinha, Nanda and Ashok Kumar. The story revolves around a Muslim upbringing an illegitimate Hindu boy, teaching him the lesson of being a human being without having the tag of either a Hindu or a Muslim. The classic song of the movie *Tu Hindu banega na Musalman banega, insaan ki aulaad hai, insaan banega* (You won’t be either a Hindu or a Muslim. As you are the offspring of a human couple, you will be a human being first) preaches the same. The song also visualizes a new India which can boast of a caste or creedless society. Without stopping there, the song even aspires for a universe sans borders and which upholds universal brotherhood. It demands every citizen of the nation to don the role of a crusader to fight against the artificial walls erected between human beings in the name of caste, creed and religion.

Another movie *Hum Hindustani* (1960), in which Sanjeev Kumar was a debutant, was directed by Ram Mukherjee. The star cast was more for those days that included Sunil Dutt, Asha Parekh, Leela Chitnis, Prem Chopra and others. The movie talked about Nehruvian ideals for a better tomorrow with adoption of modernity. The very title suggested that people of India should be proud of their legacy and country. As proud citizens of this country, people could call themselves Indians. The identity

can only be with the name of the country and not of anything else. One cannot call himself/herself as a Hindu or a Muslim, a Bengali or as a Madrasi. Each one in this great nation can only be an Indian and nothing else. As filmmaker Yash Chopra recalls, “Nehru and his policies were always part of our sub-consciousness. He used to project big dams and industries as the temples of modern India and we had internalized his words” (qtd. in Ghosh). Many film makers of the era literally considered movies as agents for nation building and they strove hard to materialize the dreams of freedom fighters for a healthy and robust India.

Quite interestingly, the Chopra brothers who had made *Dhool Ka Phool* in 1959 recreated a similar movie in 1962 titled *Dharmputra*. The plot revolves around an illegitimate Muslim boy who is reared in a Hindu family. Not knowing his antecedents, the boy grows up to become a religious fanatic and orchestrates a large scale violence against Muslims in the aftermath of Partition. But, at a later stage when he comes to know who he is, a sense of remorse haunts him. He begins to feel that nothing belongs to him, not the mother or not even the motherland. Religion, in the name of which he has committed so many evil deeds, appears to him meaningless. Gandhi and Nehru’s call for a united India found its voice in this movie.

Attempts were also made to remind the fellow countrymen the value of freedom that was attained after invaluable sacrifices made by scores of freedom fighters. Many a times, this was done effectively through songs when the themes of the movie did not communicate it directly. The song *Hum laaye hain toofan se kishti nikaal ke, is desh ko rakhna mere bachho samhaalke* (we have safeguarded a boat from the perils of storm, and it is your responsibility you young to take it forward safely) from the movie *Jagruti* (1954) echoes the responsibility that lies on the

shoulders of the young to understand the meaning of the word 'freedom' and to take the country towards progress. The same movie has also dedicated a song in memory of the services rendered by Mahatma Gandhi. The song *De di hame azaad bina khadg bina dhal, saabarmati ke sant tu ne kar diya kamaal* (Oh saint of the Saabarmati ashram you did wonder by giving us freedom without using swords or armor) extols the non-violent path adopted by Gandhi to attain freedom for the country. It also recalls the services of Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose whose portraits can be seen on the wall. If Gandhi is shown respect through a statue, Nehru and a few more freedom fighters with portraits. The bust and photos are garlanded which shows that the great people are respected and revered on par with Gods (In India only dead persons' portraits are garlanded. Nehru was still alive then). The Rafi's number, *Hum laye hain toofano se kishti nikaal ke*, zooms in on Nehru's photograph, as if it is a cinematic address to the nation by him (Vardhan). Many films of this decade fondly paid tribute to nation's freedom fighters in one or the other way.

The golden era and the growth of Parallel cinema (1951-1970)

The golden era was marked with a few unique, landmark details for the Hindi cinema. Quite a few memorable movies were made during this period by acclaimed film makers. Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, Gurudutt, Raj Kapoor, M S Satyu and many others left their imprints through their enchanting films. It is also during this time that the Hindi films began to find audience outside the country. Raj Kapoor was appreciated and accepted in Russia and elsewhere. Mehboob Khan's *Mother India* was dubbed in many European languages and found engaging audience in countries like Latin America, North Africa and South East Asia. It was Hindi cinema music's

golden era as many versatile music directors and singers were accepted and given the status on par with actors.

During the period, a few themes got repeated in Hindi films. The theme of brothers getting lost and found was very popular among the producers as around 50 films were made on it. The trope of lost and found was started with *Kismet* of 1943 and continued to 80s in movies like *Waqt* (1965), *Johny Mera Naam* (1970), *Zameer* (1975), *Khel Khilari Ka* (1977), *Sanam Teri Kasam* (1982), *Manzil Manzil* (1984) etc. The Robin Hood kind of dacoit movies were found in *Ganga Jamuna* (1961), *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behati Hai* (1961), *Mujhe Jeene Do* (1963). Similarly, movies based on the issue of caste were made in *Chandidas* (1934), *Dharmatma* (1935), and *Achut Kanya, Sujata* (1936).

The 1950s also saw the growth of Parallel cinema movement. The movement took birth in West Bengal and was engineered by the auteur Satyajit Ray who predominantly produced movies in Bengali language. Parallel cinema was a reply to the very genre of mainstream or commercial cinema, especially, films made in Hindi. Over the years, the genre has assumed various forms starting from the Neo-realism-influenced by Nehruvian India, through the more politically radical films of the seventies and the liberal humanist films that are called independent cinema (Srinivasan). The mainstream Hindi cinema's aim was to provide mere entertainment to spectators with plots concentrating on melodrama, song and dance sequences, comic elements, unrealistic storyline and also happy endings. But, parallel cinema was realistic in nature, devoid of all these characteristics. It aimed to bring life in its true colours. A few of the notable personalities associated with parallel cinema are Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Rituparno Ghosh, Buddadeb Dasgupta, Goutam Ghose,

Tapan Sinha, Shyam Benegal, M S Sathyu, Adooru Gopalakrishnan, Girish Karnad, Girish Kasaravalli, P Sheshadri, B Suresh and G Aravindan.

The Hindi cinema did engage with this kind of genre from the pre independent period, the earliest examples being *Savkari Pash* (Indian Shylock, 1925) and *Dharti Ke Lal* (1946). Even though most of these films received critical appreciations, they were not altogether hailed as unique agents of social change. They were sometimes critiqued as ‘complaint box cinema’ for paying too much attention to social issues and these film makers were also at the receiving end as they were called ‘opportunists’ by even a seasoned artist like Naseeruddin Shah as many of them switched over to commercial cinemas as well.

However, with the passage of time, the line between the commercial and parallel cinema began to wean as new directors began to experiment with newer themes that were quite close to the themes represented by the Parallel cinema. Hence, the very genre lost its sheen and now it has been relegated to the periphery and only the historical remnants greet us today, that too when a researcher tries to study them.

Hindi cinema post Golden era (1971-80)

Thematically, Hindi cinema changed abundantly post 1960s. Hindi cinema of the 1970s is a product of the period that was sans any ideals. The people, especially youth, who found themselves in a country which failed to meet their expectation for a decent life, were now ready to rebel against the system unable to contain the simmering anger that was growing from within.

The nation as a whole was witnessing many turbulent events that left it scarred perennially. There was peasant uprising in Naxalbari of Andrapradesh in 1967 that

spread to West Bengal where students and intellectuals supported it. The movement, that had many sympathizers, became violent and the government resorted to violent means to suppress it.

These disturbing developments have been documented in the book *Mother Maiden Mistress*. According to its authors, in such an incident, students of the L. D. College of Engineering in 1973 revolted against the hostel authorities when there was a steep hike in their mess bill (Somaaya et al. 71). The protest took the form of a movement not only against hostel bill but also against corruption, large scale hoarding, inflation and black marketeering. The high headedness shown by the government on the chain of events has been recorded in Anand Patawardhan's documentary *Waves of Revolution* (1975). The movie was shot secretly and even circulated so as to avoid the government's notice as mentioned by the authors in the same book.

The nation witnessed several other movements like Women's Liberation Movement, Chipko Movement, Dalit Panther Movement, and Shahada Movement. Most of these movements saw involvement of not only students and intellectuals but also civilians including women. The movements were for civil rights and an improved lifestyle that was the dream aspired for in the post independent India.

It was also the age of experimentation. The USA that was spreading its influence as a super power did find takers among Indian youth. The Disco music, considered to be irrelevant and devil's, attracted Indian youth. They were also fascinated by the cheap drugs that could take them to an altogether a different narcotic world.

If lower and middle classes were fighting for their basic amenities, the rich had engaged in the pursuit of finding spiritual happiness. In her memoir *Timepass*, Protima Bedi describes the decade as the age ‘to defy society, to walk around practically naked, to practice free love’ (qtd. in Somaaya et al. 73). The beaches of Goa as well as Rajneesh’s ashram filled with such youth not only from within India but also from the West in search of peace, solace and newer experiments. Dev Anand’s *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (1971) dealt with the influence of Hippism and drugs.

Gender roles in seventies were mostly stereotypical. If men had all the attention, women had all the attraction. As it is described in the book *Mother, Maiden, Mistress*, ‘it was only in art-house films that a realistic feminist perspective was present, showing the woman as the dispossessed, the perennial ‘other.’ While the urban woman was battling her family and moral oppression, her rural counterpart was facing grosser injustice (Somaaya et al. 78). As the same book reveals, to seek a distinctive feminist or even a progressive representation of women characters in mainstream cinema in the seventies would be futile (79). However, it is also to be noted that it is the decade which gave hints that feminine roles would change in future and that they would get attention too. Films like *Abhinetri* (1970), *Kati Patang* (1970), *Aan Milo Sajna* (1970), *Guddi* (1971), *Paraaya Dhan* (1971), *Upkaar* (1971), *Caravan* (1971), *Anamika* (1973), *Abhiman* (1973), *Nishant* (1975), *Ankur* (1976), *Balika Badhu* (1976), *Bhumika* (1977), *Swami* (1977), *Trishul* (1978), are a few among many which have significant female portrayals. Films such as *Seetha aur Geetha* and *Sholay* (1975) changed the Dream Girl image of Hema Malini. These films depicted her as a loudmouth who could fight with villains. Such depiction of female character was something new in Hindi cinema.

The other notable milestones of 70s were war with Pakistan in 1971, and the declaration of Emergency in 1975. The war and patriotic movies which often hit Indian cine halls at regular intervals had the objective of recalling the great sacrifices Indians made during and after Indian independence. They did succeed in arousing the patriotic feelings among the audience. India's war with Pakistan in 1971 had its own responses in Hindi movies. The notable war movies of the time were *Prem Pujari* (1970), *Lalkar* (1972), *Hindustan Ki Kasam* (1973), and *Aakraman* (1975). War movies had always been there even before India attained freedom. But, in the post-independent era, they were produced not only as agents of patriotism, but also as entertaining medium as people relished action scenes and fiery dialogues.

The government's imposition of Emergency in 1975 is often termed as Dark era in the history of Indian democracy by historians. The period was marked by prohibition on freedom of expression among many other restrictions. A few who wanted to bring the dark phases of life were caught red handed and penalized. *Kissa Kursi Ka* (1975) was made during Emergency lampooning the autocratic attitude of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay Gandhi. The film by Amrit Nahata immediately faced the wrath of Sanjay Gandhi and his associates. The prints of the movie were confiscated and destroyed completely by them. Sanjay Gandhi was found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment later in the courtroom trial. The movie was remade again and released in 1978 but it could not attract many audiences and remained a flop. Similarly, the movie *Aandhi* (1975), said to be based on the life of Indira Gandhi ran into trouble as it was banned by the government. Once, the government lost the next election, the movie was premiered on the State-run television channel. The movie *Indu Sarkar* (2017) by Madhur Bhandarkar still proves that the dark era of Emergency cannot be forgotten so easily. Before its release, even

this movie had to face the wrath of a political party. The director even got life threat for producing a movie on one of the strong leaders of the great country. But, in the recent times, movies do serve as political ploys to garner political mileage by political parties and an art form has not just remained so is unfortunate.

Hindi cinema of 1980s

If seventy was the decade of rebellion, the 80s saw a kind of reconciliation. If there was political unrest then, a few progressive reforms were undertaken now. It was the time when communication became easier and cheaper. There was revolution in IT sector, and brain drain was very common those days. Those were also the days when televisions began to occupy domestic space and people were united by their popular soap operas and movies. It was also the time when voices were heard loud for separate country/state status. Khalistan movement demanded a separate country status to Punjab while United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was crying hard for independent Assam. A chain of unfortunate events occurred during the Khalistan movement. First it led to large scale killing of innocent people; then the death of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, its leader, in the hands of Indian Army; then the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister; and in the end death of around 2000 Sikhs in retaliation. The notorious Bhopal Gas tragedy did occur during 80s.

As if to reflect the hopeless times of its age, mainstream Hindi cinema of 1980s is termed as the Dark Age as it lacked freshness and originality. The cinema of the time restricted itself to family socials, unreal song and comic sequences and exaggerated performances. However, the art and offbeat films did well giving hopes for film fraternity and cine lovers. The era is also the time when the three Khans of Hindi cinema got entry and raised to fame with back to back hits. It is significant to

note that Shah Rukh Khan, often termed as the King of Bollywood (Hindi cinema) gained entry to the cinema in the early 90s accidentally whereas the other two; Salman Khan and Aamir Khan began their acting career in the late 80s. Many of the prominent actors of yester years moved to backseat and new faces entered the industry in the decade.

The anger and cynicism expressed in the movies of 70s continued even in 80s but in a small measure. There it was the wicked system as a whole against which the protagonist fought, but here it was against the wicked people with whom he had problems. Movies like *Ardh Satya* (1983), *Arjun* (1985), *Shiva* (1989) and *Tezaab* (1988) belong to this category of films. These films had urban centric plots. In contrast, the art cinema had both rural and urban locales in its plots. Unlike the mainstream cinema where the protagonist succeeded against the system braving all odds, the art cinema showed the helplessness of the chief character. *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai* (1980), *Aakrosh* (1980) and *Party* (1984) revolve around such plots.

However, the anger and tensed moments expressed in these movies were eased by the love story genre which not only had fresh faces but even mind soothing plots. *Love Story* (1981), *Ek Dooje Ke Liye* (1981), *Quayamat Se Quayamat Tak* (1988), *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989) brought scores of audience to cinema halls to watch these new tales of love. As the decade put aside the stereotypical plots and experimented with new and fresh story lines, variety was found even among love stories, thrillers, revenge dramas and other popular genres.

As in the previous decades, even the 80s had a few movies with strong women characters. There were avenging women who stood against their perpetrators of crime

as in movies like *Insaaf Ka Taraazu* (1980), *Khoon Bhari Maang* (1988) and *Chaalbaaz* (1989). *Insaaf Ka Taraazu* deals with rape as the main theme. How law can be unfair to a woman who has undergone physical abuse is also shown in the movie. This is one of the early movies which treats rape as a tool to tame the 'mischievous butterflies' or the 'innocent yet beautiful belles' known as women.

A few other movies such as *Prem Rog* (1982), *Chandni* (1989), *Mirch Masala* (1987), *Arth* (1982), *Umrao Jaan* (1981), *Mandi* (1983) and *Sadma* (1983) had significant women characters. The movie *Chaalbaaz* (1989) featuring the versatile actor Sridevi was a remake of *Seetha aur Geetha* (1972) and brought in the same story in new *avatar* to attract the new audience of the new age. Sreedevi is more of masculine and vampish unlike the earlier Hemamalini of *Seetha aur Geetha*. If, *Umrao Jaan* and *Mandi* dealt with brothel stories with strong women characters, movies like *Prathigat* (1988) and *Zakhmi Aurat* (1988) had women who took revenge against the men who had violated and abused them mentally and physically.

The movies *Thodi si Bewafaii* (1980) and *Ek Hi Bhool* (1981) picked up the themes of extramarital affairs where the wives suspecting the infidelity of their husbands desert their homes never to come back, a la *Doll's House's* (1879) Nora kind of women. The same theme was found even in films *Saajan Ki Saheli* (1981), *Silsila* (1981), *Souten* (1983) *Aakhir Kyon?* (1985) and *Southern Ki Beti* (1989). A large number of movies on the theme in the 80s proved that such tabooed themes were acceptable with newer audiences of a 'progressive' period.

As the theme of extramarital affairs was accepted by the audience, an even more path breaking theme that revolved around prostitutes or call girls was also encouraged by the viewers. Films such as *Dayaawan* (1988) and *Mitti aur Sona*

(1989) fall under the category. Here these women are accepted as companions for the male protagonists even in the traditional Hindu society.

It is quite interesting to note that unlike mainstream cinema, it is the offbeat cinema that experimented with newer plots and broke several traditional images of women on screen to pay way for an altogether new image of women. Films like *Chakra* (1981), *Katha* (1982), *Doosri Dulhan* (1983), *Bhavna* (1984), *Raakh* (1989) narrated unique stories to unveil the novel characteristics of women. As the book *Mother, Maiden, Mistress* mentions *Doosri Dulhan* was probably the first film to deal with surrogate motherhood (Somaaya et al. 115).

Similarly, films *Ek Baar Phir* (1980), *Paroma* (1984), *Rihaaee* (1988) and *Main Zinda Hoon* (1988) dealt with the themes of women who transgress the 'sacred' institution of marriage consciously for different reasons to create an identity for themselves. There are other movies such as *Thodi si Bewafaii* (1980), *Arth* (1982), *Masoom* (1983), *Aakhir Kyon* (1985) and *Ijaazat* (1987) which deal with women who have husbands having extramarital affairs dumping whom women find their unique identity. *Baseraa* (1981) narrates the tale of a woman who finds herself in a strange marriage where she has her sister as competitor and *Ek Chadar Maili Si* (1986) revolves around a woman who has to marry her husband's brother whom she has brought up like a son. There are movies like *Yeh Kaisa Insaaf* (1980), *Jeevan Dhara* (1982) and *Subah* (1982) which have plots that deal with working women who have to manage their problematic families too. The plot of *Jeevan Dhara* was so appealing that it was also made in Telugu, Kannada and Bengali languages. However, it is significant to note that *Jeevan Dhara* itself was the remake of *Aval Oru Thodar Kathai* (1974), a Tamil movie.

In brief, the 80s saw quite a few women centric films but it is significant to know that only parallel cinema gave ample space for these roles whereas the commercial cinema stuck to its traditional portrayal of women in the same old appendage-of-the-hero roles. The characters of the parallel cinema, in contrast, were fresh, novel and unique with varied qualities and colors.

However, it is quite strange that Nation, one of the most sought after themes, did not find enough space in Hindi movies of the decade. Not many films with patriotic or jingoistic themes were found in the decade. *Kranti* (1981) was the most significant movie of the decade that instilled a sense of patriotism or nationalism among the audience. No other movie is worth mentioning here.

Hindi cinema of the 90s

The decade of 90s is very significant in the history of Hindi cinema. Vital changes were visible not only in filmic arena but also in the global affairs. The most significant of them all is that the world opened up to globalization. In India, politics stood on shaky ground which resulted in the seven Prime Ministers with six governments in the decade. Other vital political and social details worth mentioning here are the L K Advani-led *rathayatra*, the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi, demolition of Babri Masjid, Renaming of Bombay as Mumbai, economic reforms under the tenure of P V Narasimha Rao with able Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, IT boom because of liberalization, urbanization, popularization of internet, popularization of satellite television, launch of private airlines, introduction of mall culture, re-entry of Coca Cola and Pepsi, the unethical nexus between underworld and the celluloid world etc.

The 90s also saw the Kargil war known as Operation Vijay between Indian and Pakistani military forces. Patriotic movies, that were absent in the previous decade made a comeback in the decade, even though, in small numbers. But, the numbers grew significantly in the new millennium due to the Kargil war that was fought at the end of 90s.

The important movies that attracted audiences in the beginning of the decade were centered on the wounded hero who was hell bent on taking revenge against wrong doers. These movies had in them the reminiscences of the ‘angry hero’ kind of characters of the 1970s (Somaaya et al. 153). Noticeable movies of the period were *Ghayal* (1990), *Narasimha* (1991), *Gardish* (1993), *Aag* (1994), *Vijaypath* (1994), and *Arjun Pandit* (1999). Strangely, it was also the decade which saw anti-heroes who had all the negative characters, paid for their sins, and yet succeeded in earning the sympathy of viewers. *Darr* (1993), *Baazigar* (1993) and *Anjam* (1994) all of which had Shah Rukh Khan in the lead role fit into this genre. It is vital to note that these movies were huge commercial hits.

The 90s also saw a new breed of directors with fresh plots and family entertaining movies with appealing love stories. *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994), *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaayenge* (1995), and *Hum Saath Saath Hain* (1999) are the best examples for this genre.

With *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaayenge* started a new genre of movies that chiefly concentrated on Non Resident Indians (NRIs). Notable movies falling under the new category of movies apart from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaayenge* are *Pardes* (1996) and *Aa Ab Laut Chale* (1999). The decade and the following decades also saw

influx of NRI movies made by both resident and non-resident Indian directors. Prominent NRI directors include Meera Nair, Gurinder Chaddah and Deepa Mehta.

Many movies of the decade portrayed women in the traditional, stereotypical roles. *Amiri Garibi* (1990), *Ghar Ho To Aisa* (1990), *Mera Pati Sirf Mera Hai* (1990), *Pati Parameshwar* (1990), *Bhabhi* (1991), *Laadla* (1994), *Raja Hindustani* (1996), *Judaai* (1997) portrayed women in the usual timid, traditional Indian wife or daughter-in-law roles. They were punished if ever they digressed from their duties towards their husband or in-laws. There were also series of comic films in which roles of women were sidelined. The roles were limited to not more than glamour dolls or sidekicks. *Saajan Chale Sasural* (1996), *Gharwali Baaharwali* (1998), *Biwi No. 1* (1999) are a few to name.

Films like *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Khoobsurat* (1999) and *Thoda sa Roomani Ho Jaaye* (1990), though deal with different themes, have one thing in common, feminizing the heroine. The theme was not altogether new in Hindi cinema. Preeti of *Purab aur Pachhim* (1970) mimics the West in her dress and life style. She cannot be an *Aadarsh Nari* because of such qualities. The male protagonist Bharat influences her with his 'Indian-ness' so much that she transforms herself to be an ideal Indian woman in the end. The above mentioned movies deal with such female characters who alter themselves to be 'True Indians.'

A few film makers tried with the idea of challenging the gender equations and became successful as well. Notable movies of this category are *Rudaali* (1993), *Daayra* (1997) and *Hyderabad Blues* (1998). The movies had independent and strong women characters. *Fire* (1996) and *Aastha* (1997) had the theme of sex that raised the eye brows of common audience. *Fire*, based on Ismat Chughthai's story *Quilt*, dealt

with homo sexuality and lesbian relationship. It ran into controversy and protesters in different parts of the country aborted its screening, vandalizing theatres in many places. The movie had two female protagonists Sita and Radha, the names carrying significant meaning in them. On the other hand, *Aastha* dealt with the theme of sex, marital relationships and consumerism but not much noise was seen.

Even this decade had avenging women characters like its predecessor. *Bandit Queen* (1994) was a biographical film based on the real life of the former Member of Parliament, Phoolan Devi. It narrated her tale of growing into a much dreaded dacoit from a very ordinary, helpless person. Phoolan Devi avenges her rape once she becomes a dacoit. She kills all those who had abused her physically. However, it is sad that in real life she was murdered by unknown assailants even though she was enjoying the power of being a Member of Parliament.

Anjaam (1994) had the theme of a stalker spoiling the marital bliss of a couple by killing the husband and her kid. The wife, assuming the *Kali* avatar, avenges the death of the husband by killing the stalker and even killing herself in the process. The film belongs to the anti-hero tradition started by Shah Rukh Khan where the audiences' sympathy goes with him even though they know that the anti-hero is not worthy of it as he is cruel and merciless.

Movies *Beta* (1992), *Khalnayak* (1993), *Damini* (1993), *Mruthyudand* (1997) and *God Mother* (1999) do have strong women characters. These women are either daughters-in-law or paramours whose sole aim is to educate the family members especially the husband and mother-in-law who are coarse, merciless and/or too naïve. The female characters of *Tamanna* (1997) and *Woh Chhokri* (1994) are deserted by their own fathers and live a life of outcastes in the society. Tamanna is thrown in a bin

for being a girl. Similarly, Tunni of *Woh Chhokri* is deserted for the father's political ambitions. If Tamanna's father does not accept her to keep the political goals intact, Tunni is killed by her own father's machinations for the same political reasons. Human relationships, especially, between a father and daughter are given a cruel face that is hard to accept by audience as the relationship between a father and daughter is always seen and believed to be emotionally strong.

The decade also saw many movies that dealt with patriotic themes. Either armed forces or police force was used to narrate stories not necessarily dealt with these themes. Even though, the title of the movie carried words associated with these forces, the themes were not always related to issues of importance. Important movies that fall under this category are *Sainik* (1993), *Army* (1996), *Border* (1997), *Chinagate* (1998), *Major Saab* (1998) and *Soldier* (1998). The same decade saw a few more movies which got the attention of the nation with themes of national importance and won appreciation from critics as well as general audience. *Train to Pakistan* (1998), based on a novel by Khushwant Singh of the same title dealt with Partition of 1947, *Dil Se* (1998) dealt with the theme of terrorism, *Samar* (1999) directed by the renowned film director Shyam Benegal and produced by the National Film Development Corporation, a government agency, had the issue of Indian caste system, and *Sarfarosh* (1999) dealt with cross border terrorism.

Hindi Cinema in the New Millenium: 2000 to 2020

Hindi cinema underwent a complete transformation in the new millennium. The world was also undergoing sea change so also the nation. Hindi cinema captured the changes taking place in the society. The nation had accepted globalization and liberalization which brought in several significant changes in the lives of people.

There was Information Technology (IT) and Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) boom and young people began to earn more money at a very early age. For the young professionals savings came later. Enjoying life with modern gadgets and acquiring whatever they wanted with the money lying at their disposal became the first priority.

Unlike the past, money began to be accumulated in the hands of those who were very ordinary, poor and lower middle class people due to the well-paying IT sector. Their lives changed because of education, especially science education. Migration was the order of the day and cities like Bengaluru acquired the status of a cosmopolis due to the influential sector. Multiplexes sprang up in large cities and the single screen movie halls began to lose their sheen. With limited seats and cosmopolitan aura, multiplexes began to house many theatre halls inside the gorgeous looking malls. The new breed of young professions never bothered to shell out more money to watch their favourite movies in such halls. Unlike the past, the ticket prices of multiplexes were never constant. They were dynamic and changed on the basis of demand and supply. However, the fact remained that even the lowest ticket price in those halls seemed exorbitant to an ordinary movie buff.

Due to the multiplex culture, the art of film production too changed. Many young movie makers entered into the scene. They began to make movies with limited budget so that they could release the movies in multiplexes to get safe return on their investment. Sometimes these movies were made only for the young, educated, urban professions with themes related to their lives. This was also the period when film production came out of the clutches of underworld money. Banks and big corporations began to invest money in film production. Hence, there was also scope

for experiment. Many talented movie makers did use this opportunity to work on novel and refreshing themes.

In the globalized context, movement of people not only grew within a nation but also outside. People began to reside outside their ancestral places. New cities, states and even countries became their new abode. Instances of brain drain grew more in number. Hence there was also a new breed of Indians abroad called Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). The first generation of NRIs, who though moved to different countries in search of greener pastures, still had their memories firmly rooted in India. Physically they were away but emotionally they were still well connected with the land in which they were born and grew up.

As the number of NRIs grew in different parts of the world and as the new context allowed film producers to release their movies in those regions, Indian, especially, Hindi films were made with NRI themes. Apart from English, Hindi connected the expatriate Indians residing in alien countries. These NRIs were found mostly in developed countries and the currencies of such countries stood better against Indian Rupee. The Hindi film producers saw an opportunity in the currency calculation. Several movies were made keeping in mind only the NRI communities. Once, the much-hated NRI for his/her disloyalty towards the nation, now became the darling of film producers. Themes and even locales were chosen keeping in mind the cash rich NRIs. Popular actors too began to promote their films abroad.

In the new millennium, portrayal of women changed on screen in Hindi films. The woman thus portrayed was not only the scrupulous *sari* and *bindi* clad, shy *Bharath Naari*, but she was also well-educated, modern lady with lot of confidence to face the unscrupulous new world. However, when there were movies belonging to the

NRI genre, the Indian woman still was Indian in the real sense. She might be modern, but she was deep rooted in the nation's culture and tradition. She might be residing in a faraway country but she had all those qualities by default that could be truly called Indian. She was emotional, trustworthy, chaste, innocent, naïve etc. Such stereotypical roles were assigned to catch the attention of the NRI community that was still emotionally connected to India, the land once they lived and adored. However, there are a few movies like *Kabir Singh* (2019) which depict women in poor light. The mindset of the new directors entering the industry needs a thorough musing. The director of the movie, Sandeep Reddy Vanga comments on how women to be treated on screen like this, "If you can't slap, if you can't touch your woman wherever you want, if you can't kiss, I don't see any emotion there" (qtd. in Hannah). When a female actor is made to act according to these thoughts of a director, she has to undergo a lot of mental stress. But, the male dominant industry does not care for such 'trivial' issues and that is the tragedy.

Kaveree Bamzai quotes Rajinder Dudrah in her article *When Hindi Cinema Does Its National Duty*:

Bollywood's dominant representation of the diaspora is most often a colourful and rich one. In it, middle and upper class Indians live an ideal existence in which attachments to the homeland are overly celebrated. There is also sometimes a thin line that exists between patriotism and nationalism in this depiction, as often the main characters very rarely challenge or question nationalist interpretations of India. (qtd. in Bamzai)

Gender roles in the new millennium did not see any significant changes. Male presence dominated the screen space. Men were all powerful whereas women were

mere beauty dolls who could only be an appendage to the roles played by men. However, very rarely, women were offered vital roles. The change was there as a new breed of young and educated women entered the industry. According to popular film critic Anupama Chopra, “a new generation of educated, savvy, and sassy women are demanding better roles” (Childers 1). With new educated actors also came young directors with bold and newer plots for cinema. The millennium saw many such movies that can be termed path-breaking. These movies altered the very equation of writing film scripts and dismantled the gender stereotypes giving way for many more such endeavors.

Astitva (2000) is a movie which tries to expose the patriarchal hypocrisy when it is related to carnal desires. It declares that physical needs are common for both man and woman and when a woman satisfies the desires going out of the wedlock due to unavoidable circumstances, it cannot be called debauchery. The protagonist Aditi (Tabu) commits a ‘mistake’ and explains the same to her husband and son in a humiliated circumstance. When both of them chide her and try to punish her for the ‘grave error,’ she does not succumb. Instead, she gets ready to desert the home in which she had lived for nearly three decades leaving behind her husband and son, looking at a new future about which she is not so sure.

Similar to *Astitva* films like *Chandni Bar* (2001), *Lajja* (2001), *Matrubhoomi: A Nation without Women* (2003), *Swades* (2004), *Salaam Namaste* (2005), *Page 3* (2005), *Paheli* (2005), *Corporate* (2006), *Fanaa* (2006), *Fashion* (2008) and *Love Aaj Kal* (2009) provided strong women characters who stood their ground for their beliefs in the first decade of the new millennium. On the other hand, movies such as *No One Killed Jessika* (2011), *The Dirty Picture* (2011), *Kahaani* (2012), *English Vinglish*

(2012), *Queen* (2014), *Mardaani* (2014), *Mary Kom* (2014), *Neerja* (2016), *Pink* (2016), *Kahaani 2* (2016), *Dangal* (2016), *Mom* (2017), *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2017), *Veere di Wedding* (2018), *Manikarnika* (2018), *Raazi* (2018), *Padmavat* (2018), *Hichki* (2018) *Mardaani 2* (2019), *Saand ki Aankh* (2019), *Ek Ladki ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga* (2019), *Chhapak* (2020), *Shakuntala Devi* (2020), *Gunjan Saxena* (2020), *Panga* (2020) *Thalaivi* (2020), *Thappad* (2020) offered the audience even better female roles. However, unlike women characters of the past, characters of the new age are modern, well-educated and want to lead their lives as they wish to. But, when the circumstances do not allow them to do so, they struggle with the unseen, unheard phases of life and emerge as strong characters.

It is also to be noted that among the above mentioned movies, a few are biopics and two are sequels. All the listed movies are made in the second decade of the new millennium. It is a welcome sign that the male dominated film industry with its patriarchal mindset allowed equal space to female biopics as given to male counterparts. The biopics were about a few proud women of the nation who had left an indelible mark in the minds of the countrymen. They were best in a certain field. Through their valor and selfless life, they rose to a great height. They had made their country proud and the biopics paid a glorious tribute to them.

The new millennium offered the audience a few more movies which succeeded in instilling the notions of patriotism and nationalism. *Lagaan* (2001), *Gadar* (2001), *Shaheed-E-Azam* (2002), *23rd March 1931 – Shaheed* (2002), *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002), *Veer Zara* (2004), *Swades* (2004), *Lakshya* (2004), *Bose: The Forgotten Hero* (2005), *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* (2005), *Rang de Basanti* (2006), *Chak de India* (2007), *1971* (2007), *My Name is Khan* (2010),

Chittagong (2012), *The Ghazi Attack* (2017), *Paltan* (2018), *Hamara Tiranga* (2018), *Uri – The Surgical Strike* (2019), *Gold* (2019) are a few to name. Most of the mentioned movies dealt with the theme of India's freedom struggle with English through its heroes in the pre-independent era or India's war with China or Pakistan in the post Independent scenario. It is significant to note that in the year 2002 alone three movies were made on the life of Bhagat Singh, country's proud freedom fighter. Apart from realistic themes, imaginary themes of love, sports, and even science were used to instill the sense of patriotism among the audience, not only within India, but also outside.

Another vital development observed in the new millennium, especially in the second decade of it, was that Hindi cinema produced a few movies that tried to improve nation's relationship with its ever-hostile neighbor Pakistan. Earlier, Hindi movies had usually tried to present Pakistan in poor light, but the new movies began to have a soft corner towards it. They managed to portray Pakistan as no different from India. *Veer Zara* (2004), *Bhaag Milka Bhaag* (2013), *Total Siyapaa* (2014), *Bhajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015), *Happy Bhaag Jayegi* (2016), *PK* (2014), *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017), *Raazi* (2018) can be listed under this category. Why did film producers choose to treat Pakistan in such a manner is a matter to be reflected. It may be for financial reasons or with a genuine concern for better international relationship. In spite of such congenial developments, Hindi movies were banned in Pakistan since 2019 for political reasons.

Future of Hindi cinema

Hindi cinema is growing unchecked in the recent years. The traditional ideas are giving way to newer and bolder ideas. Young, tech-savvy, well-educated actors

and directors are entering the industry with a mindset of experimenting with novel and innovative plots. As cinema has become an industry, investing and earning profit has become the primary aim of producers. In this direction, they do their level best to succeed in the attempt. In the meantime, as Hindi cinema is going places, often films are made keeping in mind NRI communities who could spend better to watch their homeland getting transformed into a technologically advanced nation from an impoverished land of 'snake charmers.'

At times, Hindi movies are released first in the West and then they are released in India. However, Hindi cinema is now finding competitors from within India, especially from the Southern film Industry. It is vital to acknowledge that Kannada film industry produced highest number of films in the country for 2018. *Bahubali 2* (2017), a film made in Telugu and Tamil is still ranked second in its earning in the history of Indian cinema. Emergence of Over the Top (OTT) platform and the corona pandemic have indeed posed a tough challenge to the very art of film making. The future of cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular has so many challenges in the present scenario. But, the fact remains that cinema is still one of the chief modes of entertainment for people. The trajectory in which the film industry is going at present could change in the near future with the ever changing speedy technology. Future may not require people to visit a theatre to watch films as they could get them inside their homes themselves. If the quality and entertainment are assured, Hindi cinema could indeed rule the Indian cinema without any doubts.

Conclusion

The dominant discourse of Nation and Gender has been intrinsic to the Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular since their inception. Indian cinema

assisted the project of nation building in the pre and post independent India. Even now the attempt is to re-construct, a robust India in the minds of people living within and outside India through its various cinemas. Hindi cinema is one of them that has assumed the role of national cinema.

Hindi cinema's engagement with the two key concepts has been an interesting area of study in the last few decades. With the passage of time, there have been several changes in the depiction and portrayal of Nation and Gender in the Hindi cinema. The unique country, through its unique cinema has been successfully projecting the two in different shades with the key intention of entertaining its masses. With the passage of each decade, one can observe the vibrant, changing hues of Nation and Gender, the depiction which can be termed even as the phases of history. It would not be wrong if Hindi cinema's role is equated with that of a chronicler of its time.

At the same time, Hindi cinema is rightly being termed as the cultural icon of the nation. It is so because the industry is successfully spreading the country's core values and life in different parts of the world. With the onset of globalization and liberalization, the cinema's reach has been wide as the population of Indian people is growing significantly across the globe. Cinema is a mode of reconnecting expatriates with their motherland. As Indian films are enjoyed not only by NRI audiences but even by the natives, India is slowly emerging as a dominant soft power.

Currently, Hollywood cinemas are ruling the world. But, the future may belong to Hindi cinema, being termed fondly as Bollywood. The sheer song and dance sequences, unique and terse plots, the 'masala' ingredients, the comic elements, the socially responsible and relevant themes make the movies adorable everywhere.

However, if Indian cinema has to compete with Hollywood cinema, it still needs to bring in various changes. It may have to reduce the time slot of movies and to do away with unrealistic song and dance sequences in addition to the best use of technology. Such experiments are being done by a few film makers, but most film makers still want their movies to be 'Indian.' Only future can tell whether Indian cinema would completely transform or remains core Indian.

CHAPTER III

THEORIZING NATION, GENDER AND CINEMA

Part A

Origin of the idea of Nation

The Cambridge Dictionary defines nation as “a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people living in one area with their own government, language, traditions, etc” (“Nation”). Similarly, the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary defines the same word as “a country considered as a group of people with the same language, culture and history, who live in a particular area under one government” (“Nation”). Gist of the two definitions can be concluded as, “a nation is a group of people who share common antecedents of history, tradition and language.” However, when studied deeper, the definition and meaning of a nation do not seem to be so simple.

It is a general opinion among scholars of nation and nationalism that the word nation is difficult to define. There are many reasons for this conclusion. The first moot point in this assessment is to decide whether nations are a modern phenomenon or whether they have been there for centuries. Many theorists including well known scholars on nationalism like Benedict Anderson argue that nations are a modern European phenomenon. On the other hand, a theorist like Steven Grosby in his book, *A Brief History of Nationalism* (2005), explains that several factors like tribe, city-state, or kingdom have to be taken into consideration when probed into the construction of a nation from a historical perspective (8).

Several questions need to be answered while dealing with this historical probe. How did nations evolve? Where were human beings 'living' before the concept of nation evolved? What was the role of concepts like space, language, memory in the construction of a nation? How did human society develop into a nation? Do people need nations in the present era?

Gellner in his book, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), opines that mankind has passed through three fundamental stages in its history: pre-agrarian, agrarian and industrial (5). In the pre-agrarian societies, people lived in groups with bare necessities, moving from one place to another in search of food and shelter. They belonged to that phase of time when living for food was the first and foremost priority of human beings. Primarily, people were hunters and gatherers and their life was nomadic and tribal in nature. The life of such people, estimated to be there before around 12,000 years, was adopted by approximately 90 per cent of the human world. People of the time used to be simple, healthy and sturdy. They were not greedy in nature and were gathering food that was just needed for them. In addition to these, people had enough leisure which they used in activities of art and craft. However, with the passage of time, these people began to aspire for a better life style and turned towards agrarian life style where they could avoid moving constantly from one place to another and could grow food that was required for them.

In the second category of agrarian societies, people involved themselves in the activities of agriculture and farming. It is believed that people shifted to this kind of life style as population increased and it was difficult for the populace to roam around constantly. Agrarian societies gave birth to economic concepts like wealth, economy

and division of labour. Before agrarian societies were located in the Indian subcontinent, they were found in Mesopotamia, Egypt and China.

The third category of industrial societies took shape in the middle of eighteenth century after the onset of industrial revolution. With the advancement of science and technology, different industries began to mushroom across the world starting with England. Industries evolved as manufacturers had begun to look for new ways to increase the production of their goods and they succeeded in the attempt too. In addition to this, industries generated large scale job opportunities for people and people began to reside in large number close to such industrial hubs. This development gave birth to the concept of towns and cities. Even though, industries fed a large population, they did bring in lot of miseries. Natural environment lost its pristine pure qualities as pollution from the industries contaminated natural forces like air and water. Mass exodus from villages to cities in search of job opportunities was a matter of grave concern. At the same time, education that was offered in these towns, along with print medium began to instill among people a sense of oneness with their fellow members of society. Many theorists argue that these feelings eventually led to the concepts of nation and nationalism.

Other concepts related to Nation

Kingdom

Apart from the above explained ideas of pre-agrarian, agrarian and industrial societies, different other concepts like kingdom, city-state, and state also need a thorough enquiry while dealing with the idea of nation. Accordingly, a kingdom is a piece of land that is ruled by a king and queen as explained by the website National

Geographic Society (“Kingdom”). The same website also informs that kingdoms are one of the earliest kinds of societies on earth which can either be huge like United Kingdom or very small such as the kingdom of Brunei.

In addition, a kingdom was usually not ruled by a single monarch or king. The kingdom would be divided into several territories or states which were ruled by minor officials or representatives of the monarch who would be loyal to him. Even in the modern era, most of the kings and queens do not rule over countries but elected representatives do so whereas the kings and queens remain the head of the state. However, there are a few monarchies which are ruled absolutely by the Kings. Vatican City, which is a city-state, is governed by neither a king nor a queen whereas by the religious head Pope. Other examples being, British Monarchy is well known as constitutional monarchy. Here the Queen is the head of the state whereas the legislative powers lie with the elected parliament. Similarly, the kingdom of Brunei is ruled over by a king who has all the powers to decide about his monarchy as used to be the concept in the olden days prior to French Revolution. The monarchies lost their importance paving way for elected governments since then.

City State

The cities which are given the status of a State are called city states. City states have their own government and usually depend on trade and tourism for their survival. Once numerous, now their number is reduced to mere three. Monaco, Vatican City and Singapore are termed as the modern city states in the real sense. Athens, Carthage, Rome and Sparta are considered as the examples for ancient city states.

State

In his phenomenal work *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner quotes Max Weber's celebrated definition of the word State to analyze the word brilliantly (3). Weber says that State is an agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence. Gellner uses the words simple and seductive to support the idea expressed by Weber. For him, only State possesses the power to legitimize violence which is otherwise illegitimate. This is so because in a well-organized society, conflicts that are common among human beings are resolved by authorities using force that has sanction from the State.

Another vital quality of the State is that it constitutes highly distinctive and elaboration of the social division of labour. For Gellner, a State cannot be called a State if it does not constitute such division of labour (Nations 4). Finally, he is of the opinion that the idea of nationalism cannot exist in a Stateless society. It can exist only where enforcement authorities exist such as police, court and others. Hence, nationalism and State go hand in hand.

Nation-State

Another vital concept in the discussion of origin of the word nation is Nation-State. The website Encyclopedia Britannica defines a Nation State as a "territorially bounded polity – i.e., a state – that is ruled in the name of a community of citizens who identify themselves as a nation" (Feinstein). Not all the people who inhabit a state may belong to the same territory. But, the core group among the people considers the state as its homeland. It certainly belongs to them as they have been residing in it for generations and are a part of its history and tradition. Although

France, after the French Revolution (1787-99), is often cited as the first nation-state, some scholars consider the establishment of the English Commonwealth in 1649 as the earliest instance of nation-state creation (Feinstein).

Nation: Historical findings

The word nation is enough to evoke different emotions in the mind and hearts of people everywhere across the world. It is something that people are ready to offer their lives. Why is it so important? How did the word come into fashion? What is the history behind it? Curious factors are unearthed, when one tries to find answers to these questions. Several concepts get unleashed in the process. An attempt is made below to explain a few of such concepts.

Idea of Nation

Anthony D Smith, in the introductory part of the book *Asian Nationalism* tries to ponder on the concepts of state, nation and nationalism. According to Smith:

The world is divided into territorial *states*. These can be defined as sets of autonomous, public institutions with a legitimate monopoly of coercion and extraction in a given territory, and sovereignty in relation to those outside the borders. The contemporary world is similarly divided into *nations*; that is, named populations possessing an historic territory, shared myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members, which are legitimized by the principles of nationalism.

(1)

Going further he defines nationalism as an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation.' Smith opines that there is lot of turbulence, conflicts and disturbance in the world over these issues as states, nations and nationalism do not coexist. However, the aim of nationalists everywhere is always to establish a greater congruence between these three and this is the reason why nationalism is very much alive in each corner of the world, even in smallest of the nations, says Smith.

There is a great controversy about what constitutes a nation and the extent to which it is a particularly modern or even western phenomenon (Anthias, et al. 16). Primordialists (Shils 1957, Geertz 1963, Van den Berghe 1979), Modernists (Michel Foucault Louis Althusser 1969, Eric Hobsbawm 1990) and Marxists (Otto Bauer 1940, Tom Nairn 1977, Samir Amin 1978) and even well-known scholars like Benedict Anderson (1983), Ernest Gellner (1983), and George Orwell (1945) have shared their ideas on the concept. Apart from the listed non-Indian scholars, Indian scholars such as Tagore and Gandhi have also shared their views on the concepts of nation and nationalism.

Well known English novelist George Orwell's thoughts on Nation and Nationalism are worth pondering upon. Orwell wrote an essay titled *Notes on Nationalism* during the final stages of the World War II in 1945. In the essay, he defines nation as a single race or geographical area. However his thoughts on nationalism are quite different. He says:

By 'nationalism' I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions of people can

be confidently labeled ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ But, secondly – and this is much more important – I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests. (Orwell)

Orwell equates nationalism to blind faith towards one’s nation without critically assessing its qualities of good or evil. He cautions readers against confusing nationalism with that of patriotism. For their convenience, he himself differentiates between the two. Patriotism is the devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. It is by nature defensive, both culturally and militarily. But, nationalism is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality, Orwell opines.

Theories of Nation and Nationalism

The concept of nation has shifted dramatically, from the proto-jingoist conservatism of the ‘primordial nation’ of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried Herder and the German nationalist school of thought they represent to the constructivist ‘imagined community’ of Benedict Anderson and the ‘congruence principle’ of Ernest Gellner to the militant anti-nationalism of Thongchai Winichakul’s notion of the artifice ‘geo-body’ and the Marxist ‘bottom-up’ nation of Eric Hobsbawm (Finkel). In the process, a question often raised is why do the concepts of nation and nationalism so vital in the present world? Including the above mentioned theorists, several other theorists have attempted to find answer to this engaging question.

Anthony Smith in the book *Asian Nationalism* has attempted to find an answer to the intriguing question by looking at different theories that have evolved over a period of time (2).

The first theory is primordialism which believes that a nation is a primordial category, or one founded upon primordial attachments (2). The attachments may be genetic or they may be cultural. Primordialism also believes that the historic and inherent social practices as the sources on which roots of a nation are found. Similarly, the theory argues that nations are natural and ancient. Chief proponents of primordialism as already mentioned include Edward Shills and Clifford Geertz. Shills was of the opinion that kinship relationship as the primary root of a nation. On the other hand, Geertz proposed that nations were created based on blood, language, race and habitat, and this was the feature which erected the borders between self and others. Ethnicity played a greater role in the construction of a nation (Anbarani 64). As Smith mentions, primordialist approach inquires why it is that so many people are prepared to risk their lives defending 'kith and kin,' 'hearth and home' and why millions of people are ready to lay down their lives for the sake of 'their' nation and primordialism cannot furnish an explanation for the widespread appeal of nations and nationalism, but it does highlight the nature and size of the problem (Smith 2).

The second paradigm mentioned by Smith is Perennialism. He described perennialism in the following words: "By this I simply mean that for many scholars, as well as participants, nations are seen as immemorial and/or perennial; and therefore nationalism is simply the ideology and movement for an already existing nation" (2). Perennialism has two forms. One is continuous or immemorial and the other is recurrent. Continuous perennialism recognizes that some nations have long

continuous histories that trace their origin back to the middle ages or occasionally to antiquity, whereas recurrent perennialism views nations as appearing in every period of history and throughout the world. Nations emerge and decline, they come and go but they will be there always, in all the ages.

The third paradigm mentioned by Smith is the Modernist. For him, all three – nationalism, nation, and the international order of national states – are the product of specifically modern conditions; namely capitalism, bureaucracy, industrialism, urbanization, secularism and the like. This is what makes them qualitatively distinct from any form of community or belief system in pre-modern epochs (4). In addition, Smith lists out a few common ideas expressed by modernist exponents. Among them, the first one says that nationalism is an explicitly modern ideology and movement. It is both novel and relatively recent which has taken shape from eighteenth century onwards. Similarly, as a social structure and cultural system, the nation is likewise both novel and relatively recent, dating from the eighteenth century or slightly earlier. In the same vein, as a system, the international order of national states is both novel and relatively recent, dating from the nineteenth century, though with intimations going back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (4).

The fourth paradigm related to nation and nationalism proposed by Anthony Smith is the Historical Ethno-Symbolism. Interestingly, this theory is propounded by Smith himself along with John Armstrong. Smith suggests a two-fold starting point for the analysis of nation formation: first, the importance of historical clusters, or heritages, of myths, memories, values and symbols for cultural community formation; and second, the vital role of ethnic ties and ethnic communities, or *ethnies*, in providing a basis for the emergence and persistence of nations (12). Smith identifies

these *ethnies* as a group of people having, among other characteristics, a common word for themselves or their group, common historical memories, and a common historical homeland (qtd. in Tomzelvin). For Smith, most nations are like the movement of nationalism, modern in the sense of being recent, though not wholly novel; but most nations are at the same time formed over long time-spans and are based on pre-existing ethnic ties and sentiments in the same area (Smith 12). He believes that even though there have been instances of trying to create modern nations with pre-existing ethnic groups as in the case of certain African countries, the result has not been so fruitful as internal bickering and civil war like situations have hindered the very process.

Gellner and Anderson

Continuing with the modernist approach, it is to be noted that Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson are the two important theorists whose ideas are worth pondering over. Gellner's first major and influential statement on Nationalism came in chapter seven of his 1964 book *Thought and Change*. He emphasized in it that nationalism could only be understood in the context of the impact of industrialization, of the competition between classes in the newly created industrial stratification and of the integrating effects of language and education (qtd. in Llobera 17).

Gellner also claims that nations are a direct result of particular historical developments and that their beginnings can be located to no earlier than the eighteenth-century Europe (Anthias 17). His overall purpose was to demonstrate the sociological necessity of nations and nationalism in the modern world (Smith 4). It is so because the modern world is also an industrial and growth-oriented society. Gellner puts forth the idea that the nation is only a socially conceived 'construct,' an

artificially created entity with the possibility of continued existence contingent upon the continuation of the perpetuation of the concept by the nation's elites (Finkel 2).

According to Gellner, in the pre-modern, agro-literate societies there was no need for the concepts of a nation or nationalism. In such societies, three kinds of people lived. The first group had a large mass of peasants whose chief duty was to produce food. The second group consisted of the aristocratic and clerical elites who led their own life not bothering about other things. The last group was of clergies who too were not bothered about other things other than their spiritual activities. They usually lived in one particular place and there was no need for them to gel together as they had segregated themselves to different categories.

But, things are not so in the modern, technologically-advanced, fluid, literate and mobile societies where people move from one place to another for different reasons. Here to bind the ordinary and the elites, a single literate culture is required. Nation and nationalism cement these two classes successfully everywhere in the world. Hence, for Gellner, it is not nations that engender nationalism; rather it is nationalism that invents nations where they do not exist (Smith 5).

Benedict Anderson, one of the foremost proponents of the constructivist views of Nationalism, defines the nation as a fabrication, a bond between people that did not exist prior to its own recognition (Finkel 1). In his celebrated book "*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*," Anderson defines nation as an 'imagined political community.' It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. He anchors the development of nationalism on the development of

printing, which popularized culture. Printing allowed for the establishment of 'imagined communities' which came under capitalism to occupy the place religions used to play (Anthias 17). Even language plays a vital role here. With the arrival of printing, local languages got importance and the standard or classic languages were relegated to the periphery. The capitalists who printed books and newspapers in the vernacular languages succeeded in creating a reader pockets which understood them and imagined themselves as belonging to a particular community.

For Anderson, nations and nationalisms are modern phenomena; hence they stand in need of other, more historical, explanatory motors. For nations to emerge, other kinds of community had to recede; the decline of the powerful sacred monarchies and the great religious language communities that had dominated human thought and existence for so long provided the social space in which nations could emerge (Smith 8). Hence, he argues that languages indeed were responsible for the genesis of nations and nationalism. Going further he also coined the term "print capitalism" to put forth his argument (Okun). Apart from these, Anderson believed that nations originated more or less in the same fashion as other primitive collective identities as race, religion, tribe, sect and so forth with the only difference and the most remarkable one, that nation unlike other primitive identities was able, in the aftermath of industrial revolution, to forcefully reincarnate itself to the effect of reigning supreme throughout the modern ages (Preetam).

Marxist theories

The theories of Marxism and Nationalism are contradictory to each other. If Marxist thinkers propose that class consciousness could divide societies, nationalist thinkers advocate that it is the devotion towards one's nation that stands tall above all.

However, Marxist thinkers assign economic process and capitalism for the genesis of nationalism. Classical Marxists such as Lenin and Stalin were of the opinion that middle class shaped the concepts of nation and nationalism. Stalin defined nation as a historically formed community that is neither racial nor tribal. On the other hand, Marx and Engels noted that creation of modern nation-state was the result of replacement of feudal system with that of capital mode of production. Many Marxists of the twentieth century such as Otto Bauer, Tom Nairn, and Samir Amin have developed different theories on Nationalism. Most of them believe that Nationalism is a social phenomenon rather than a natural one with the exception of Samir Amin who opines that in a country like ancient Egypt which had centralized states, nationalism was natural rather than social. There is an attempt to throw light on individual Marxists' opinion on nationalism in the following lines.

Tom Nairn

Belonging to the Marxist school of thoughts, Tom Nairn, a Scottish political theorist, believed that Nationalism could be understood in the backdrop of uneven development of capitalism that is steered by the basic mechanism of imperialism. Anthony Smith explains Nairn's ideas from chapter 2 of his book *The Breakup of Britain* (1977) in the following manner:

Nairn accepts the existence of ethnic groups and nationalities before 1800, but, like Gellner, he believes that nations and nationalism are phenomena peculiar to the modern world. They are products of the jagged and uneven spread of capitalism resulting from the activities of imperialism in the 'periphery' as it incorporated successive areas of the world, often with great violence, into the capitalist world-system. (Smith 6)

Eric Hobsbawm

In his famous book *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* Eric Hobsbawm has shed light on the modern genesis of nation and nationalism. In his 1983 edited book *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm notes that,

Invented traditions are highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the 'nation,' with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest. All these rest on exercises in social engineering which are often deliberate and always innovative, if only because historical novelty implies innovation. (13)

Besides, Hobsbawm is also of the opinion that the foundations of Nation are cultural and not biological. In addition to these, like most of the modernist theorists, Hobsbawm too believes that Nations and nationalism are not ancient but modern phenomena.

Indian theorists on Nation and Nationalism

India has a few theorists on Nation and Nationalism. Starting from the pre-independent India's Dayananda Saraswathi, Swamy Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Rajaram Mohanroy, Mahatma Gandhi to Partha Chatterji and Ashis Nandy, there have been several scholars who have theorized nation and nationalism. Earliest philosophy on Indian nationalism can be traced back in the writings of Dayananda Saraswathi in the last quarter of 19th century. Expressing pride in the ancient Indian cultural lineage, Saraswathi considers Vedas as the ultimate source of knowledge for the whole of humankind. However, he also has reservations against primordial practices which are unacceptable in a civil society and hence, calls for reformation for

a new Indian identity. In addition, Saraswathi proposes Swadesi - everything Indian, and Hindustani language as common language for self-reliance and sustenance.

Swamy Vivekananda

Nationalism expounded by Swamy Vivekananda is firmly rooted in Indian spirituality, religion, morality and patriotism. Nationalists like Tagore and Gandhi were influenced by Vivekananda's ideas of spiritual supremacy and selfless service for the downtrodden. Vivekananda believed that an empty stomach was no good for religion and there could not be nationalism without the upliftment of poor. Deep chasms within the society due to caste and class pained Vivekananda and he wanted those social evil practices to be mitigated for a better India. The monk who was a great scholar on *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Geetha* besides many other spiritual works advocated the principle of not only nationalism but also internationalism.

Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was a patriot, but not a nationalist, claims Ashis Nandy in one of his articles (Nandy, Nationalism, Genuine and Spurious 3). Michael Collins quotes Tagore's idea of nation as 'a nation is understood 'in the sense of the political and economic union of a people' and 'that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose' (Collins 5). Tagore was critical of nationalism. He famously dubbed nationalism as 'carnivorous and cannibalistic.' As Aniruddha Ghosal's article published on website by the Indian Express explains, Tagore had written a letter to one of his friends A M Bose in 1908 in which he had mentioned that "Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter. I will not buy glass for

the price of diamonds and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live” (Ghosal).

As the web magazine, EPW engage mentions, Tagore was aware of the dangers of a nationalism that was rooted in the Western concept of a nation state. He had observed European forms of nationalism and concluded that the West had turned chauvinistic. In Europe, nationalism was a sentiment that was being promoted in order for a nation to become more powerful, especially commercially (EPW engage). Tagore’s idea of nationalism was deep rooted in humanism. He believed that Indian tradition was secular, inclusive and accommodative. But, the European nationalism was against it. Hence, according to him, there can’t be any space for nationalism which is anti-human in India. Tagore was shocked to see the kind of aggressive nationalism that had grown in Japan. It was imperialistic in nature as found in many European countries. Tagore believed that Japan’s progress technologically and economically were the reasons for it. After Tagore won Nobel Prize for literature, he visited Japan three times. In one such instance, it is said that thousands of Japanese welcomed him in the railway station as he had become very popular because of his writings. But, after he delivered a few lectures over there, some of which included the nation’s aggressive nationalism, he was treated as a hostile guest. When Tagore left Japan, he was seen off only by the host at the railway station. Tagore had proved himself to be a foe from a friend in a span of few days.

Tagore also opined that roots of Indian unity did not lie in Indian classical texts like Vedas, Upanishadas and Gita. As Ashis Nandy points out, they lie on the basis of the thoughts and practices of the medieval scholars. Nandy elaborates:

Unlike many others in his and our times, Tagore believes that the canonical texts of India the Vedas, the Upanishadas and the Gita might be at the center of India's classical culture but they do not constitute the heart of Indian unity or provide the basis of it. Here he differs radically from the likes of Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and an array of eminent 19th century thinkers who believed that the canonical texts of Hinduism defined the basis of Indianness. Indian unity, Tagore insists, is built on the thoughts and the practices of the medieval mystics, poets and religious and spiritual figures. In such a country, importing the Western concept of nationalism was like Switzerland trying to build a navy. (EPW engage)

Tagore was critical of aggressive kind of Indian nationalism too. As Ashis Nandy points out, Tagore had antagonized hard-boiled Indian nationalists by rejecting the idea of nationalist violence (Nandy, Nationalism, Genuine and Spurious 3). As the argument continues, three of his novels – *Gora* (1909), *Ghare Baire* (1916), and *Char Adhyay* (1934) - were seen as direct attacks on hard-edged, masculine nationalism. However, it was paradoxically true that even though Tagore was a critique of aggressive nationalism, he was also the reason behind numerous patriotic songs that instilled confidence among Indians to fight against British, ranging from the likes of Gandhi to humble volunteers, notes Nandy.

In conclusion, one can say that Tagore vehemently rejected the very idea of nationalism as he considered it to be a threat to the nature of inclusiveness of a nation. Instilling confidence among the fellow countrymen to combat the colonizers confidently, Tagore visualized a nation that is free of all dogmas and orthodox practices. The poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear* (1912) sums up Tagore's dream

of not only India but the world. He states, 'where the world has not been broken up into fragments – by narrow domestic walls' (Tagore, line 3). The great Nobel laureate wanted the whole world to live peacefully without fighting against each other for silly reasons and Tagore apprehended that the sense of nationalism among people would lead to unrest in the world, unfortunately, which has become a reality in the present world.

Mahatma Gandhi

Among the few theorists of pre-independent India who critiqued nation and nationalism, Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi assumes a greater role. A close look into Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1909) gives readers his deep insights on the concepts. In the twin roles of a reader and an editor, Gandhi himself questions and answers in the book on myriad topics that range from *swaraj*, that is self-rule to relationship between Hindu-Muslim to the role of professionals such as doctors and lawyers in India. Among these vital issues, he also ponders on the concepts of nation and nationalism.

Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* rues the fact that several people claim that India was not a nation before the arrival of British. According to Gandhi, India has been a nation for ages together which is evident from two inherent attributes of Indian civilization – one is its accommodative capacity and the other is existence of certain places of pilgrimages scattered throughout India (Rai). Here Gandhi shares Benedict Anderson's concept of nation where Anderson explains that a nation if it is to be called by that word should have citizens who feel oneness with their fellow beings.

Gandhi differs from Tagore in his interpretation of nationalism. If Tagore terms nationalism as banal, Gandhi says that it is not the nationalism that is evil but

the contradictory concepts or ideas like exclusiveness, selfishness or narrow-mindedness that some people adopt in the name of nationalism are. Gandhi pitches for mutual love and respect among the citizens of the nation, especially between Hindus and Muslims who had shared animosity against each other at that point of history, which unfortunately is found even to this day. Vehemently proclaiming himself a Hindu, Gandhi always advised other Hindus to inculcate the qualities of self-restraint, compassion, respect for people of other religion because these qualities are the hall mark of Hinduism and thereby the Indians.

Gandhi also asserts the role of Indian National Congress in developing India as a nation. According to him, it was Congress that bound India together for the freedom struggle through its able leaders. Gandhi names three Congress nationalists Dadabai Navroji, Gopala Krishna Gokhale and Taiyebji – a Parsi, Hindu and Muslim to show that India accommodated people from all religions.

In addition to these, Gandhi also speaks against the ill effects of technology and modern professions like medicine and law. He considers all these as against humanity. Mechanical inventions like Railway were the curse of technology, opined Gandhi. According to Mahatma, wandering ascetics had travelled across the length and breadth of country on foot or on bullock carts and established pilgrimage centers. This slow journey of theirs had given them the opportunity to meet different kinds of people everywhere and establish bond between them. The pilgrimage centers were also visited by people from different parts of the country and these people too while travelling, met people of other places. These meetings were crucial as they developed a sense of community among each other. Gandhi attributes 'slowness' of journey for all this 'success.' However, introduction of railway destroyed this kinship as people

lost the opportunity to meet and exchange their ideas, culture and traditional heritage among one another. The intention behind establishing pilgrimage centers was lost as they merely turned to tourist centers. In a sense, the idea of constructing a unique, homogeneous, fluid India was 'derailed' because of railways and Gandhi holds British as chief culprits for this set back.

Gandhi does not completely blame British for India's woes. He argues that people's greed for silver allowed British to enter and establish their rule. British opposed freedom to India arguing that they were not modern or progressive enough to rule themselves. But Gandhi felt that the concepts of 'modernity' and unbridled 'progress' were a menace to human civilization as they would in turn lead to large scale of unemployment, poverty, exploitation and friction among people. Gandhi was of the opinion that India could regain its past glory by being morally strong and self-sufficient. He opined also that Indians should not be swayed by the modern concept of progress. It would enable them to be morally corrupt and India would still have 'English rule without Englishman' (Gandhi 29).

In all, Gandhi's idea of nation was unique. He equated violent nationalism to imperialism and called it a curse. Gandhi proposed for a non-violent nationalism and called it a necessary condition of corporate or civilized life (qtd. in Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* 8). At a time when the ideas of caste, religion were deep rooted among the people of colonial India, he tried to visualize a nation that is free of all the exclusivist concepts. His concept was to build a nation that was truly accommodative and inclusive. He even held the view that India had been such a nation for generations together. Gandhi could indeed be called an internationalist for developing such ideas.

Apart of Gandhi, even Nehru and Ambedkar tried to visualize a post-colonial nation that is secular, inclusive and accommodative. Both the personalities, who were educated abroad had developed an idea of nation that is free of narrow, domestic barriers of class, caste and religious intolerance. But, can India emerge such a nation even after these many decades of attaining freedom is the moot point?

Partha Chatterjee

The well-known Indian intellectual Partha Chatterjee has critically examined the concept of Indian nationalism in couple of books. In his book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, quoting John Plamenatz's article, Chatterjee says that there are two kinds of nationalisms. One is Western and the other Eastern (1). The Western was found in Western Europe while the Eastern was found in Eastern Europe, Asian, Africa and Latin America. A new set of global standards for measuring the progress of a country were set by countries like France and Britain, The countries in the West, even though, they felt that they had not progressed enough according to the global standards, never felt that those standards were set by someone outside and their national culture would not be affected in any way. There was no feeling that they were culturally insufficient to meet those standards. However, in the East, when the countries opened themselves up to nationalism, they were aware of the fact that the set global standards of progress were not their own and they had come from the West. They had to take their country forward but not at the cost of their indigenous culture. They were sure that they had to meet the global standards of progress, at the same time, they must retain their national culture intact.

Critiquing the works of Hans Kohn in the same book, Chatterjee argues that nationalism could be detrimental to world peace. He asserts that in its essential

aspects, nationalism represents the attempt to actualize in political terms the universal urge for liberty and progress. And yet there is undeniable evidence that it could lead to mindless chauvinism and xenophobia and serve as justification for organized violence and tyranny (2).

Chatterjee even critiques the arguments of Elie Kedourie on nationalism. According to Kedourie the very idea of nationalism being a rational and self-conscious attempt by the weak and poor peoples of the world to achieve autonomy and liberty is demonstrably false. It is wholly a European export to the rest of the world. It is also one of Europe's most pernicious exports, for it is not a child of reason or liberty, but of their opposite: of fervent romanticism, of political messianism whose inevitable consequence is the annihilation of freedom (Chatterjee 2).

According to Kedourie, the idea that nations should have a history is also a European invention. Hence, every nationalism has invented a past for the nation. It is common among most of the nations that this past should be better than the pasts of the other nations. The past, that is found or invented or created through myths and legends, becomes a tool in the hands of the nationalists to claim that their nation is the best among other nations. So there will be vying among different nations to have a past that is not only pure but also advanced as this past even decides the future of the nation.

However, Chatterjee tries to study both the faces of nationalism. He calls the critics of nationalism as conservatives and the supporters of nationalism as liberals. Persons like Anthony Smith, Dvorak, Chopin, Ceasire, Senghor, Abduh and Tagore are included in the list of liberals. Chatterjee brings in the argument of Anthony Smith to counter Kedourie. Smith, in his book *Theories of Nationalism*, calls the

interpretation of Kedourie on nationalism as one-sided and misrepresentation (12-24). Liberals can object quite justifiably, the characterization of nationalism as something essentially irrational and illiberal as unwarranted (Chatterjee 10). A liberal would argue that most of the nationalist movements aimed to achieve the universally accepted ideals of enlightenment and progress and many succeeded in their attempts also. Hence, they can't be debunked as irrational. Liberal would even counter the colonial claim that the colonized people cannot rule themselves in the modern context. They argue that these 'backward' people are culturally capable of ruling themselves and to take themselves forward and become modern on the parameters set by the Western world by retaining their cultural identity intact. Hence, they conclude that nationalism is not a menace.

Women's question and Nationalism

It is a well-known fact that the condition of women was pathetic in the colonial India. Women were treated merely as servants to complete domestic chores and to fulfill carnal desires of men. Their life was filled with degradation and wretchedness. Self-respect for them was miles away. In addition to the above woes, the society was also orthodox. There were evil social practices like *sati*, *purdah* and child marriage. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy called for the reform in the condition of women by abolishing these ill practices. Annie Besant urged women to have education. She considered it as a patriotic necessity (Seth 278). On women's education, she said:

Indian women are the torch-bearers of Hindu identity. Hinduism definitely needs the support of educated Hindu women, reproducing in modern days the *Brahma Vadinis* of ancient India and saving English-educated men from the

skepticism which they imbibe from their secular or missionary education. The future of Hinduism depends largely on women. (qtd. in Seth 279)

Indian womanhood assumed a privileged status in nationalist discourse (Seth 278). The writer cites Tanika Sarkar who argues that “woman” was produced as a potent signifier in the course of the elaboration of the national discourse:

An icon was constructed of the patriotic subject, the good Hindu woman with her simple dress, her ritually pure conchshell bangles and red vermilion mark, her happy surrender and self-immersion in the *sansar* (domesticity), and her endless bounty and nurture expressed by cooking and feeding. She was charged with an immense aesthetic, cultural and religious load in nationalist writing. (qtd. in Seth 278)

Partha Chatterjee’s arguments on nationalism and women are worth mentioning here. He argues that Indian nationalism separated the domain of culture into two—the material and the spiritual (119). He notes:

The material is the domain of the ‘outside,’ of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an ‘inner’ domain, bearing the ‘essential’ marks of cultural identity. The greater one’s success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one’s spiritual culture. (Chatterjee 6)

Chatterjee further calls the distinction as the dichotomy of inner/outer, *ghar/bahir*, the home and the world (120). The world is a treacherous terrain whereas the home is the spiritual space. Man is the caretaker of the world and woman is the representative of the home. It is her revered duty to preserve the sanctity of the home by protecting it from the external vile influences. In all, if the man will fight against the colonizers by trying to take the country forward by engaging himself in the education of science and technology to match the West, the woman will fight against the colonizers by protecting the home from their vicious influences. The sanctity of Indian customs and traditions should be safeguarded by the women.

Part B

Defining Gender

We are surrounded by anecdotes about gender. Everyone talks about gender in one or the other way. If one wants to be masculine for being a Man, the other wants to be beautiful and elegant for being a Woman. If one is sad because he is lean, the other is also sad because she is dark. In a sense, gender has engulfed our daily life. Then what is gender? The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word gender as the ‘behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (“Gender”’). Similarly, the Oxford English dictionary defines gender as ‘the fact of being male or female, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences, not differences in biology (“Gender”’). In the same vein, as reported in the Medicalnewstoday.com. website, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines the concept as, “Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed” (“Gender”’). When the

above definitions are analyzed, one can come to the conclusion that gender refers not to the biological traits of a man or woman but socially and culturally assigned roles or characteristics of men and women. Hence, it is a ‘constructed’ one and not a ‘natural’ one. As societies and their cultures vary from place to place, the construction assumes greater significance for study.

As a discipline studied among social sciences, Gender Studies take into account, chiefly, women’s study, men’s study and queer study. As a whole, Gender Studies try to explore the issues of sexuality, how certain stereotypical characters are assigned to different sexes and how such qualities are constructed within a society. An attempt is made in the following paragraphs to look at each study covered under the Gender Studies.

1. **Women’s Studies:** According to Wikipedia, women’s studies is an academic field that draws on feminist and interdisciplinary methods in order to place women’s lives and experiences at the center of study, while examining social and cultural constructs of gender, systems of privilege and oppression; and the relationships between power and gender as they intersect with other identities and social locations such as race, sexual orientation, socio-economic class and disability (“Women’s Studies”). It is also an enterprise that has its root in the second wave of feminism and originated as a challenge to male-defined and male-centered knowledge (Jackson). The basic premise of women’s studies is that traditional education is based on a study of men – usually upper class, Caucasian, educated men – while other groups of men and all different groups of women are erroneously subsumed under the category “mankind” (“Women’s Studies”). In the early phase, women’s studies was studied as part of programmes like literature,

history and sociology, but now the scope of studies has widened and is included even in other areas like art, music, philosophy, religious studies, comparative literature, anthropology, economics, psychology and political science. Women's studies offers us a new dimension to our understanding not only of gender, but also of caste, class, race, culture and ethnicity. It clearly draws distinction between a Brahmin woman and a Dalit woman; a white woman and a black woman; a rich woman and a poor woman; an Indian lady and a Pakistani lady etc.

2. **Men's Studies:** It is a common misconception among people that when the topic gender is talked about it is directed only towards women. Much attention is paid to issues surrounding women while forgetting men at all. In fact, there is a dedicated discipline titled Feminism to deal with concerns of women. Even though, there is a similar discipline meant for men's studies called Masculinism or Masculism, it is not as popular as Feminism. Many scholars of masculinism advocate for the rights of men asserting that even men suffer a lot at workforce and families. Men die more than women committing suicides unable to contain the pressures. Both men and women are biologically 'different' and hence, there should be different roles assigned for both men and women. Many masculinist critics also feel that defining masculinism has become very difficult as the term is not used widely and hardly by philosophers.
3. **Queer Studies:** The queer studies which is also called Sexual Diversity Studies or LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) studies is the study of issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity usually focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender dysphoria, asexual, queer, questioning, intersex people and cultures.

Sex and Gender

While looking at the concept of gender, one should also ponder over the idea of sex as both the terms are inseparable, and many a times used synonymously by people. Time and again, it is affirmed and reiterated that Sex is biological whereas Gender is social and cultural. Sex is the biological classification as male or female depending upon the reproductive organs of a human being. It is also based on the combination of anatomical, endocrinal and chromosomal conditions. Sex can be identified precisely at the genetic level with XX chromosomes being female and XY chromosomes being male.

However, there are other types which do not fit into the biological classification of male or female. One can be a gay or lesbian according to the biologically intrinsic qualities of attraction that one experiences towards the same sex even though anatomically one may belong to the category of male or female. That is why such people are called Homosexuals. If the world has accepted heterosexual qualities as natural, homosexuality is debunked as an abnormal condition of human beings. Therefore, such people are not welcome in many societies even to this day. However, writers like Judith Butler have questioned this notion.

There is also a condition like intersexuality or hermaphroditism where a person or animal is born with both male and female reproductive organs. This system is common among invertebrates like snails which do not have separate sexes. In animal kingdom, it is estimated that such animals make up around five per cent of the total 7.7 million animals. Even among hermaphrodites, there exist two kinds; sequential hermaphrodites and simultaneous hermaphrodites. Sequential hermaphrodites are animals which are born as one sex but later can change into

another. This contrasts to simultaneous hermaphrodite where an adult organism has both male and female sexual organs. These conditions are mostly found in animal kingdom and rarely among human beings. Hence, classification of sex even though is done in terms of male and female, doesn't end there. The minority among human beings is neglected and given no status in this classification, even though, of late, they too are getting attention and recognition.

After deliberating on the issues concerning Sex, when one looks at the concept of Gender, it is clearly visible that it is something which is constructed by the society. Being male and female is different but being a Man possessing masculine qualities and a Woman having feminine qualities is different. Society and culture assign different traits to male or female clearly demarking the differences. A man has to have several masculine qualities whereas a woman should possess certain qualities to be called and identified by those words. Masculinity which is related to qualities of men has some fixed traits like being strong mentally and physically, being stoic all the time lacking emotions, being rough and coarse, to be able to take decisions quickly so on and so forth. At the same time, feminine qualities which a lady should possess include being emotional, fragile, weak, soft, possessing qualities of indecisiveness etc. Even a writer like Shakespeare has affirmed these traits when he writes 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' in one of his popular plays *Hamlet* (Shakespeare 1.2.26).

Many a times, science is brought into this domain of arguments. It is often said that increased level of testosterone among men is the reason behind their being more aggressive than women and left brain dominance is said to be reason for men being rational. Women are categorized as emotional and weak as they lack these biological advantages. It is also argued that scientists work too hard to prove that there is science

behind these believed notions of feminine and masculine qualities. The society, especially men, is also found to be in urgency to believe these findings. Even women, who internalize these biased gender stereotypes, readily accept the prescribed roles and they conform themselves to fit into such stereotypical roles. Ironically, they even try to prepare their female children tread the same path and see to it that this chain of belief is never broken. But, the arguments relating hormones with behavioral patterns of human beings are challenged as social pattern is also said to be the reason for hormonal imbalance.

The Indian context

Gender roles in the Indian context are even more stratified or rigid. Here maleness is equated with power and authority whereas femaleness is associated with inferiority and subservience (Usha Ram et al 2). If men enjoy the freedom of external world, women have to find their peace and solace within the four walls of house. A man should be earning going out into the world whereas a woman should be working inside the house with the designation of Homemaker. Her job is to keep the family intact by remaining indoors doing all the household chores like cooking, rearing children and taking care of her husband and elders of the family. If a man's work is paid and recognized, a woman's work goes unnoticed and is never paid. Moreover, being a woman, she should remain loyal not only to the members of the family but even to the family deities.

A man's role is also not so easy in the Indian society. He has to adhere to certain norms defined by the society. He should never have feelings and emotions and he cannot choose to remain indoors doing household chores even if he wishes to do so. Jobs such as cooking, washing, cleaning are prohibited for men. He is the law

maker for and within a house. He decides what is best or worse for his family. In all, it is 'his' world and no one can question 'his' authority.

But, many a times, these bindings on a man prove costly to him. The authority he enjoys comes with certain expectation from the family members and also from society. There is constant pressure on him to prove that he is manly. Being the head of the family, he has certain duties and responsibilities too. Most of the times, he cannot shy away from these duties and responsibilities. Fingers are raised and he is made fun of when he, at any point of time, fail to perform his gender roles well. As Judith Butler says Gender is a role to perform and if one fails to perform it well, he or she is punished (Butler). An adult male should prove himself a worthy husband to his wife, a dutiful son to his parents and a devoted father to his children. Playing these multiple roles is not so easy for many men especially when they are naïve with no knowledge of the ways of the world.

Standards of life are improving in India as the country is marching towards progress. From a developing country, it is moving towards to be called a developed nation. With more accessibility to education, women are entering most of the fields which were hitherto occupied by only men. Even though, patriarchal mind set still prevails in most part of the country, it is slowly paving way for equality and wellbeing of both the sexes. Men, especially educated, are allowing women to be equal partners in decision making process with respect to family affairs. Happy families lead to a happy society and happy societies in turn lead to a happy nation. Women, who are new entrants in various fields, are enthusiastic about their new roles and they are playing them very neatly. On the other hand, men who were very complacent about their earlier roles are lagging behind in playing their roles and when compared to their

women counterparts, they are playing their roles pretty badly. This change is visible in clearly in fields like education and various job sectors.

When it is proved that women fare better than men, women are preferred more than men in many sectors like education and banking, not only in India but across the world. The challenge before men now is to rise again to prove that they can also be dedicated and hardworking like women. But, many men fail to rise to that level and hence face many problems.

However, when it is said that women are snatching jobs from men, it can't be treated as a rosy picture. It is true that women are entering new job market. But, they still face gender discrimination in terms of pay parity and promotion like issues. Men with patriarchal mindset, even though educated, still harass women mentally and physically in work places. Such crimes on women are a sad tale to narrate.

Atrocities on women

“Sexual violence against women and girls is rooted in centuries of male domination. Let us not forget that the gender inequalities that fuel rape culture are essentially a question of power imbalances.” – UN Secretary – General Antonio Guterres (“International Day”).

Women in India are accorded peculiar status. On the one hand, they are treated on par with deities. They are adored and worshipped by men. At the same time, crime on women is also very high in the country. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as quoted by the Harvard International Law Journal has recorded in its 2010 report that in India a woman is sexually harassed every 12 minutes (“Progress of Sexual Harassment”). An article posted in Economic Times reveals that the country

records four rapes every hour which in turn means nearly 100 women are raped a day here (Menon). On an average 6.3 women are raped in the country for every 1,00,000 women (Chauhan). This rate of report varies in the states of Delhi and Sikkim which stand at 30.3 for the same population and in Tamil Nadu it is less than one. In states where women are denied education, violence against women is under reported at a mere 0.5 percent. Due to under reporting, the actual data is not available. When violence goes unnoticed and unreported, even the legal measures adopted by the government are of no use. Moreover, women and children deter to report their violence before male authority due to coercion, shyness and disgrace. Hence, there is need to include more women in the police system and the system should be more humane and sympathetic as the system itself is considered ruthless by most victims. Hence, when it comes to atrocities on women and children, it is in shambles.

Data also reveals that rapists in many cases are known to the victim. It simply means that most other rape cases go unrecorded as there is stigma attached to rape in India and a victim is always worried about her social exclusion post rape. Unfortunately, even in the sensitive cases of rapes, fingers are pointed out towards the behavior of a woman, her dress, her ability to mingle easily with men, her habits etc. Men are never assessed and blamed in these terms.

Sadly, even children are targeted sexually in the country. India stands number one globally in terms of the child sexual abuse material (CSAM) found online as reported by the daily *The Hindu* (Kannan). More children have become victims of this nasty practice especially during the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020 as children have access to more screen space. A report in India Today, the prominent magazine of the country, reports that as many as 109 children were sexually abused every day in India

in 2018 (PTI). Going further, the data shows that a total of 21,605 child rapes were recorded in 2018 of which 21,401 cases were of girls and 204 were of boys. Four states in India Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh have introduced death penalty for rapes of minors who are less than 12 years of age.

Reasons for the rising reports of crime

Violence against women is a global phenomenon. It is not restricted to India alone. Most of the times, gender discrimination is found to be the root cause of violence. The World Health Organization defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against group or community that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Jana). Similarly, violence against women is defined by the United Nations as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (“Violence against Women”).

As rightly noted by the United Nations, violence against women happens at physical, sexual and psychological level. Women are abused physically, most of the times, by their partners and this kind of treatment is normalized in traditional societies like Indian. Most crimes against women go undocumented and unrecorded in India due to social and cultural beliefs. It is argued that a husband can punish his wife when she commits mistakes and she should tolerate it without qualms. However, the same rule is not accepted for men. He can commit mistakes and a wife should remain silent when he goes wrong. Girls are always taught by elders, mothers and grandmothers included, to tolerate such unacceptable behaviors of men for the smooth functioning

of a family. Retaliation is never taught to women when such violations happen within a family. Fear of social exclusion and banishment always grip women. Men are always considered strong and women are always treated as vulnerable. When a son sees his father beating his mother, he develops an impression that he too can treat his wife in such a manner in future. He begins to believe that he is strong and his female siblings are weak. Such a thought allows him to develop a sense of entitlement over women. This internalization of pseudo chauvinism has continued from generation to generation. Hence, women are at risk even in the hands of their own family members, their partners and other male members of the society. Patriarchal mindset and gender discrimination still rule the society.

Data collected on such violence is alarming. As per the World Health Organization (WHO) findings, one in three (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their life time. Globally, about 38% of murders of women are committed by male intimate partners and seventy percent of women are sexually abused by other than partners (Chauhan). The website of UN records that of the one in two women killed worldwide, she is killed by her intimate partner; while only one in twenty men was killed in similar circumstances (“Violence Against Women”). Stringent legal measures taken by the government too have failed to contain these atrocities against women.

Critiquing Gender

There is a need to understand the very concept of gender as the term is not as naïve as it appears to be. Behind the construction of any gender stereotype, there is an imminent politics played by a dominant group for various reasons. Predominantly,

power and subjugation of other sexes are apparent reasons, as explained by noted feminist critics like Virginia Woolf (*A Room of One's Own*, 1929), Simone de Beauvoir (*Second Sex*, 1949), Kate Millett (*Sexual Politics*, 1969), Juliet Mitchell (*Woman's Estate*, 1971), Luce Irigaray (*Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1974), Elaine Showalter (*The New Feminist Criticism*, 1985) and many others.

Deep rooted distrust among men about women's abilities, wide spread jealousy among men when women achieve great feats, men's mentality to show women low need to be rectified for a healthy society. It is possible to create a healthy society only when men and women work together and go hand in hand. Hence, there is a need to understand the concept of gender for both men and women and also people belonging to the categories of LGBT. In addition to this, gender roles should be understood to understand the power relationships operating in the society as most power is wrested with men and not women. The group of LGBT is nowhere in the scenario of power relations. It is men who rule the family. It is they who hold political strings even to rule domains and it is mostly they who also dominate the spiritual circles. As absolute power lies with men, it leads to corruption not only outside the domain of family but even in the political and spiritual arena. With absolute power, there is also development of psyche among the powerful to subjugate other sexes, especially women. This tendency leads to unrest in the society which in turn leads to an unhealthy nation.

Noted American Sociologist Michel Scott Kimmel opines that privilege is invisible to those who have it and visible to those who do not have it (Kimmel). Being a man is a privilege in the society. Most women do not enjoy their biological status and this experience gets worse with the addition of race and class as well. Being a

woman is worse for many, but in addition to it, being a Black or Dalit or Poor woman further intensifies her woes. These socially constructed gender roles are clearly visible to this set of women in particular and women in general but men rarely experience these discriminations. They are invisible to them.

In the Ted talk speech, Kimmel elaborates on the importance of achieving gender equality (Kimmel). He asserts that making gender visible is the first step to engage men and get support for gender equality. He notes that gender equality and happiness are complement to each other as countries which have achieved gender equality are also the countries which are high on the happiness scale. Gender inequality costs many countries a lot even monetarily. With egalitarian relationships within a family, the societies remain peaceful and prosperous. If men assist women in their household chores, women and even children would be happy. Similarly, when women share men's professional burden, even men are content. Kimmel concludes that for these reasons, there is a need to achieve gender equality.

Major critics on Gender Studies

Gender criticism is an off shoot of feminist criticism and when we look at gender critics, we basically look towards feminist critics. A few of feminist critics would be introduced and explained in the following paragraphs to understand gender disparity, gender stereotypes and the need to understand gender studies as a whole in an effort to set right these historical and contemporary blunders. Queer theorists would not be discussed in this part as it is not relevant for the study.

Feminist theorists

Feminist theorists fought and argued against stereotypical representation of women in different media as weak, emotional, irrational, vulnerable, frailty, seductress, and an object of sexual desire which naturalize and perpetuate oppression of women. Many feminist theorists, commencing from the early part of twentieth century, wrote extensively against these prejudiced representations from different parts of the world. Even though many others would have raised these issues, they were not documented. A few select writers are being explained here.

Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf is said to be one of the first thinkers who spoke for issues surrounding women. Her notable works *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938) speak of the issues women face not only in social but also in academic areas. Woolf finds that language itself is gendered. It is always masculine and even women involuntarily speak such a language. For long, women were denied the privilege to write worthy literature and even if some wrote, it was only using pseudonyms of men. The existing social and material conditions never allowed women to produce literature. Parents never encouraged girl children to become litterateurs as the male dominated society considered such an act a deplorable one. Women who internalized those restrictions dithered to take up such creative endeavor and those who dared to practice writing had to clear their own mental blocks.

Woolf calls such a hindrance 'Angel in the House' that takes shape within one's own mind. Whenever a woman tries to involve herself in writing literature, the Angel in the House steered by masculine state of mind tries to guide her to produce

one 'kind' of literature. It should be the kind of literature catering not to the minds of women but to men. It should not hurt male ego, but satisfy it. In all, the literature produced by women, should be masculine in nature. Hence, Woolf recalls that during her initial days of writing, she was troubled by this angel in the house which did not allow her writing to be subjective and honest. Hence, she had to kill it to produce an authentic 'female' literature.

Woolf speaks of women's true experiences for the production of an authentic women's literature. If these experiences are guided or obstructed by male fantasies, literature produced by women would not be authentic. Hence, women should be given access to financial and social freedom which are prerequisite for the creative blossoming of literature that can be called authentic, says Woolf.

Overall, Woolf advocates for women's rights during the time when hardly any attention was paid towards the fairer sex. She speaks for fundamental issues like education and minimum dignity for women so that they too lead a life worth living. Even though, later feminists demanded much more than these basic amenities, it is unfortunate that even after a century, women in many parts of the world are bereft of these basic rights. Woolf is an important feminist critic as her ideas are relevant even to this day.

Simone de Beauvoir

French feminist Simone de Beauvoir rues 'othering' of women in her phenomenal book *The Second Sex* (1949). Women make half of the total population. Still they have no respectable place in it. Their existence is that of an 'other.' Women are relegated to the periphery denying the due respect they deserve. They are 'second'

to the dominant sex called male. Men are always 'first' just because they are men. The word 'just' here has several connotations.

A man never tries to assert his identity, whereas a woman has to declare her presence time and again to prove that she indeed exists in the world, otherwise she is invisible to many. She has no identity of her own and she is defined in terms of man. As the book *Literary Theory Today* argues, she is precisely defined as *what man is not* (Nayar 87). This concept of 'othering' is very essential to understand how identities are constructed in human society. As Nayar quotes Beauvoir's words, "(woman) is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her.... He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (Nayar 87).

When women are defined in relation to man, not as herself, binaries are created which are not new. Women are assigned the qualities of being emotional, weak, seducing, irrational, tempting, frailty, and many more. On the other hand, men are provided with mere positive virtues like being strong, rational, reasoning, wise, unyielding, stoic etc. In the introductory part of her book *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir provides analogues of gender discrimination through citing from history. She quotes, "The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities" said Aristotle; 'we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness.' And St. Thomas for his part pronounced woman to be an 'imperfect man,' an 'incidental' being. This is symbolized in Genesis where Eve is depicted as made from what Bossuet called 'a supernumerary bone' of Adam" (15-16).

Beauvoir agrees that things are changing for women; they are entering the fields hitherto dominated only by men. They are able to compete with men equally in many areas of knowledge and skills. But, as men treat still her as an 'other,' her

condition has not improved. Her status may have improved, but not her state. Unfortunately, women too have internalized their secondary status and believe that they are inferior to men. As Nayar quotes Beauvoir, “Women still dream through the dreams of men” and what is needed then is for women to *start reading as women* (Nayar 88).

Kate Millett

Kate Millett, an American Feminist is said to have influenced the second wave of feminism. An activist who fought for the rights of not only women in general but also lesbians, Millett criticized canonical writers like D H Lawrence, Norman Mailer and Henry Miller for the depiction of sexism and heterosexism in their literary work. Millett is considered one of the first critics of patriarchy. Her well known work *Sexual Politics* (1969), based on her doctoral thesis submitted to Columbia University, unveils the dynamics of power in relation to gender and sexuality, discussing different spheres of knowledge like politics, literature, religion, ideology, psychology, anthropology and history. She argued that sexism and heterosexism lead to oppression of women, gender disparity and gender discrimination. She was against the normalization of heterosexism as she was of the opinion that even homosexuality should be accepted as a norm as it is innate among a section of population, even though, the number may be less.

Sexual Politics critically analyses man-woman relationships portrayed in the works of the said authors. For Millett, sexuality becomes a tool through which stereotyping of the female – as prostitutes, virgins, unchaste women, or sexual anorexics – achieves patriarchal domination (Nayar 88). In the first part of her book, Millett takes chunks of literature from Henry Miller’s *Sexus* and Norman Mailer’s *An*

American Dream and tries to show that the very act of sex involves power and subjugation of the weaker sex. In contrast, she juxtaposes the same portrayal borrowing examples from Jean Janet's *The Thief's Journal of Homosexual Love*.

Millett devotes a part of her book to criticize ideas expressed by the well-known neurologist Sigmund Freud. In a scathing attack on Freud's concept of 'phallogentrism,' Millett argues that Freud reinforced male sexuality as 'the' sexuality neglecting altogether female sexuality. In addition, Freud also speaks of women suffer from a 'lack' which makes her 'incomplete' as argued by philosophers like Aristotle. Millett criticizes these ideas asserting that a girl child could take her body as norm and hence there is question of being envious.

Millett who was considered fearless and frank went to a very conservative country like Iran to propagate her thoughts on the women's liberation movement. She was against veiling of face by Muslim women when they go outside and rigid laws that were to be followed by them. When Millett vociferously voiced her thoughts before the Iranians, they appeared blasphemous to them. The conservative Iranians could not tolerate her ideas and many plotted to kill her for the daring act. Millett was secretly airlifted to France in a bid to save her life.

Juliet Mitchell

Juliet Mitchell was a social feminist thinker from England who had authored books like *Woman's Estate* (1971), *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974), and *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (1976), a book of collection of essays which she co-edited with Ann Oakley. In her analysis of man woman relationship, Mitchell compares the relationship with that of a worker and a capitalist. She equates this state

of woman to that of an oppressed one. She tries to find out why and how women are always oppressed. Even though, she considers women as a feminist problem, she attempts to find solution to the problem in Marxism.

Mitchell raises a few fundamental questions in the introductory part of her book *Woman's Estate*. She asks, how do we analyze woman's position? What is woman's concrete situation in the contemporary capitalist society? What is the universal general area which defines her oppression? Is it family and her role as a mother? What are the politics of oppression, and so on (Mitchell 14-15). In her attempt to find answers to these questions, she argues that woman's oppression is linked to four essential social structures: production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization of children (Nayar 89). Even writers such as, Marx, Engels and Simone de Beauvoir accept that women are given secondary status in the society as they can't work like men. But, Mitchell argues that a woman is relegated to domestic work after assuming that she is not good at a task like hunting. It is this social weakness not physical weakness that is responsible for women's present status, she opines.

Kate Millett had vehemently opposed Freud's theory of phallocentrism where Freud had argued that women suffer from a fundamental 'lack.' But, Mitchell who was influenced by Lacanian thoughts argued that neglecting Freud altogether would prove detrimental to feminist cause as Freud's work was a critique and analysis of patriarchal society (Nayar 89). She was also of the opinion that Gender was a social construct, one created as a fantasy in children to explain the unpleasant discoveries of genital differences.

As Nayar puts it, "this idea rejects the sexual distinction by presupposing and fictionalizing that the sexes were once one (i.e. before castration) and this socially

conditioned fantasy, rather than an instinctually constructed one institutes the gender divide. As a result, man sees and believes himself to be a unified whole. This makes the feminine at once knowable and the guarantor of fantasy” (Nayar 90). With her widely circulated ideas on gender discrimination, oppression and politics of subjugation, Mitchell is considered to be one of the very few who steered feminist movement to a proper direction.

Elaine Showalter

Elaine Showalter, an American, is best known for her works like *Towards a Feminist Poetics* (1979), *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture (1830-1980)* (1985), *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (1990) and others. A significant part of her work is to trace the phases of women writing across decades. She has also tried to mark the male dominance over female which lead her to behave uncommonly. Critiquing a French painting in her book *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture (1830-1980)*, Showalter opines that “... madness as one of the wrongs of woman; madness as the essential feminine nature unveiling itself before scientific male rationality - suggest the two ways that the relationship between women and madness has been perceived. In the most obvious case, madness is a female malady because it is experienced by more women than men” (Showalter 3).

With statistical evidence, Showalter proves that women are plagued by madness more than men. It may be argued that a woman’s social condition is responsible for such a malady. It can also be told that women are confined within the four walls of a house in different roles such as a daughter, mother and wife. Women face stress due to ill treatment in the hands of husband and children. These situations

push a woman to the brink of madness. But, the fact does not stop here. Showalter analyses the problem with a different perspective. She tells, “Contemporary feminist philosophers, literary critics, and social theorists have been the first to call attention to the existence of a fundamental alliance between “Woman” and “madness.” They have shown how women, within our dualistic systems of language and representation, are typically situated on the side of the irrationality, silence, nature and body, while men are situated on the side of reason, discourse, culture, and mind.... Thus madness, even when experienced by men, is metaphorically and symbolically represented as feminine: a female malady” (Showalter 3-4). Hence, for Showalter, associating madness with women by people with a patriarchal mindset is a deliberate attempt to show her inferior to men.

Showalter coined the term ‘gynocriticism’ which intended to map the female literary tradition and to construct a female framework for the analysis of women’s literature. Hitherto, even female writers were dictated by the literary models and theories constructed by the male. Female literary tradition was considered inferior to men’s or it was accorded secondary status by men as the literature by women itself was thought to be limited to contents related to family, home, its problems, clothing, food and the related issues. But, Showalter sought to differ from the opinion and offered to provide non-canonical women authors who had a literary ‘tradition’ of their own.

Showalter identifies three phases in the development of such a female literary tradition.

1. Feminine Phase (1840-1880) – In this phase, women imitated male models of writing. They even accepted, endorsed and perpetuated the patriarchal ideology

through their writing. According to Nayar, Showalter points out that the women writers of the nineteenth century adopted masculine names or emphasized their marital status. The examples being George Eliot, Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Oliphant and others (Nayar 91).

2. Feminist Phase (1880-1920) – Protest is visible in this phase. Women writers protested against the patriarchal ideologies advocated by male writers through their literature. They rebelled against the Victorian sexual stereotypes and began to explore the woman's position in terms of work, class and the family (Nayar 92).
3. Female Phase (1920-) – Moving away from the earlier modes of imitation and protest, women writers began to explore novel ways to have a unique model that belonged entirely to them and their experiences. It was not to mimic or protest against male literary dominance but to create a literature that was purely feminine. It was the rejection of identity provided to them by patriarchy. Showalter dubs the post 1960s as heightened Female Phase. Overall, there was an effort to search for female voice, feeling, and identity in the literature produced by women writers and the search is still going on.

Hence, Elaine Showalter made an effort to establish a female literary tradition through her writings and speeches. Patriarchy had fixed certain norms to identify this tradition and there was a constant effort to prove that it belonged to a second grade which could not call for any attention. But, Showalter tried to provide female literary tradition a dignified status by pulling it out of the clutches of male ideology.

Luce Irigaray

French Feminist Luce Irigaray distances herself from the orthodox feminism which argues for equality. For Irigaray, equality signifies a suppression of female

difference and an acceptance of masculine values (Eden 102). Irigaray's chief works include, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (as thesis in 1973 and as a translated book in 1985) which happens to be her doctoral thesis, and *This Sex Which is not One* (1977). Irigaray's rejection of the male symbolic order in order to highlight difference has been regarded as the "radical feminist" phase of the feminist movement (Nayar 98). As many feminists point out, even Irigaray notes that women's domain is not so worthy as it involves only the activities of nurturing and caring whereas a man's domain is valuable as it is considered creative. Some of the highlights of Irigaray's arguments are as follows:

Irigaray argues for a female identity which she finds absent in most discourses. She raises her voice against Freud's theory of sexuality which is fundamentally centered on male sex. She also opposes Freud's idea of woman's 'lack' of male reproductive organ and thereby being jealous with the idea that even man suffers from lack of breasts. Irigaray opines that if Freud could speak of lack in women, he should also have spoken about degeneration of breasts in man. In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray addresses Freud's claim in his essay 'Femininity' that little girls are only little men (Donovan). Irigaray notes that Freud was influenced very much by the one-sex theory of his time which advocated that only men existed in the world and women were only variation of men. This belief led him to formulate a theory which was very general in nature.

Irigaray notes that only one kind of subjectivity exists in the Western society and that is male. She believes that men are subjects whereas the women are the Other of these subjects. If men are A, women are not B. They are the negative of A or A minus. Women are only what men are not. They are an appendage to men and are not

independent. However, Irigaray argues that sexual difference does not exist and true sexual difference demands equality of both sexes. While both philosophy and psychoanalytic theories are her targets, Irigaray identifies philosophy as the master discourse. She observes that since ancient times, philosophy has articulated fundamental epistemological, ontological and metaphysical truths from a male perspective that excludes women (Donovan).

Irigaray is critical even of Lacan. She is of the opinion that Lacan failed to rectify the mistakes done by his predecessor Freud while dealing with sexuality and subjectivity. She notes that even Lacan understood the world and language in terms of one-sex which is the male model. She remains unconvinced by Lacan's claims that the phallus is an ahistorical master signifier of the Symbolic order that has no connection to the male anatomy. She asserts that phallus is the master signifier which has connection with male anatomy and hence it is not ahistorical but constructed one.

For Irigaray the lack of a possible feminine ideal, of mediation in general, is responsible for the lack of self-love in and among women. A feminine symbolic therefore involves the symbolization, and rebuilding of the mother-daughter relationship, the construction of a female genealogy and a woman-to-woman sociality (Eden 111). She further argues that the woman's inability to represent herself is due to the undermining of the mother-daughter bond by and in the Symbolic Order. Motherhood is allowed only a small space, denied economic or social status and separated from the very aspect of sexuality (Nayar 101). Irigaray also points out that a daughter gains independent status only after getting separated from mother and by losing her first identity of the daughter.

Thus, Irigaray's arguments on language and sexuality exposed the fissures existed in the Western thought that was always considered advanced and imitable. She grounds her arguments based on her academic engagement with philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Derrida. She tends to appropriate the concepts of these individual thinkers, reworking and re-defining them from the viewpoint of sexual difference (Eden 105).

Helene Cixous

Helen Cixous's oeuvre has spread to different arena. A multi-faceted person, she is known as a feminist, theatre person, poet, activist, teacher, playwright and theorist. Born to parents of different origin and moving to different places, she was able to learn more than one language which had a great influence on molding her persona. Hailed by the great philosopher Jacques Derrida as the greatest living writer in French language, Cixous has published widely that include twenty three volumes of poetry, five plays, six books of essays and many other articles. Her major works include *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975), *The Newly Born Woman* (1986), *Sorties*, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (1990), *Coming to Writing and Other Essays* (1991), *Readings* (1992) and *The Third Body* (1999).

In her seminal essay, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous argues that the tradition of writing everywhere across ages has been phallogocentric which has created a claustrophobic atmosphere for women to think, write and be creative. Therefore, she urges women to practice their own style of writing which should be feminine in nature and she calls it l'écriture feminine or feminine writing. It is the kind of writing where women would use their body as ways of communication and as a means to assure

themselves into the text, world and history. For her, women do have the ability to debunk the male-centric tradition of writing only if they explore themselves with their bodily experiences and to create their own creative feminine writing with a feminine language. She considers the language used by men as repressive and therefore urges women to use 'white ink' which stands as a metaphor for women's milk and which has the ability to produce writing needed for women. As Cixous believes that women are bisexual by nature, she asks them to produce literature which addresses both the sexes.

While deliberating on the myth of Medusa, Cixous equates the act of killing Medusa by severing her head by Perseus to annihilating the female creativity. She adds that it is not only a deliberate act of stifling the female voice but also breaking off woman's languages by men who do not want her to thrive in an androcentric world. She uses the myth of Medusa to analyze psychoanalysis of Freud. Medusa's head, according to Freud, recalls male castration and in turn Cixous says that the very sight of women makes men scared of them and also scared of becoming like women. Cixous is also critical of Lacan's theory of Lack. She debunks the theory as lacking and inadequate. She even chides women who believe in the superiority of male sex as 'women of yesterday' who live in the grand narratives of the past and who are misled by their counterparts.

According to Cixous, patriarchy is maintained by the exchange of women as possessions from father to husbands in order to gain something. The male gains authority, power, virility and pleasure in the economy based on property and exchange. But, the feminine economy is based not on the property and exclusion but on the *gift* (Nayar 102). In the Indian scenario a father 'gifts' his daughter to his son-

in-law in the marriage. Once gifted, she no more belongs to her parents and she becomes an outsider in her own house in which she is reared and groomed for several years. Time and again she is made to feel so not only by her husband but even her own parents. Cixous' interpretation holds good universally, but more particularly to the Indian households.

Conclusion

Both nation and gender are the terms that require through understanding as they are often misunderstood and widely used with such misunderstanding even within the academia. The very concept of nation still requires proper understanding and deliberations even when it is argued that the concept is outdated as we are moving towards internationalism. A keen observation at the world affair could give us an idea that even in the present day context concepts of nation and nationalism are still the best tools for people at the helm or opposition to gain or retain power. A large section of people still live and die for them. A better understanding of these terms would at least educate us to teach others what is right and what is wrong. Should one live for them or die?

Similarly, the concept of gender too requires a thorough understanding in the present times. The very word gender envelops male, female and other sexes. However, the word gender is generally used to refer to weaker sex of all called female. In the creation, both male and female assume a vital place and they play a major role in the universal peace. If families, which have both men and women, remain happy, societies will remain happy. In a larger context, if families are happy, the whole world will be happy. When women are treated on par with men, when they are given the due respect that they deserve, this happiness can be achieved. However,

for a long time, women have been denied such love, care and respect by men. Men assume that they are all powerful and women are too weak which is not completely true. Hence, there is a need for them to understand women so that they accord equal rights and treat them fairly. The present chapter has tried to throw light on these topics.

Part C

Theorizing Cinema

Introduction

“Film theory has nothing to do with film.” Roger Ebert. (“Film Theory” 5)

The intent of the present chapter is to theorize cinema; to study cinema as part of cultural studies, especially popular culture. The movies taken for study belong to the category of commercial cinema and hence the objective is justified. Attempts would be made to study theoretical underpinnings, assumptions and validations of cultural studies in general and popular culture in particular.

Origin and growth of Indian film studies

The present flurry of activities and research in popular culture, especially popular cinema, began in Indian intellectual and academic circles in a small way four decades ago, a little after, and in direct response to the Emergency imposed in India in 1975 (Lal and Nandy xii). The new interest in popular culture grew in this environment (post emergency, reevaluation of Gandhiji etc.) and got identified as an alternative entry into Indian public consciousness (xxiii). Often identified with post-modernist or post-structuralist schools of thought and theories of post-coloniality, the

new discipline of film studies in India is also powered by the changing cultural politics in South Asia (xii). In India, as in the US, popular cinema has increasingly tended to become a battleground of cultures, tastes, aesthetics, and political ideologies (xiv). Nonetheless, it is usually by implicitly blurring genres that studies in the political ideology of films are made in India. This is partly because, among film theorists and social scientists, there is no intrinsic generic legitimacy for lowbrow cinema as mass entertainment, not even as a window to the social universe of South Asia (xv).

But, film scholar Rini Bhattacharya Mehta feels that it was in the era of globalization that popular cinema, especially, Hindi cinema entered the cinema study discourses with an increasing number of courses offered not only in Film/Media or Cultural Study programs but in the curricula of literature (Mehta 6). For her, the turning point in Indian Cinema Studies owes its impetus to the postcolonial moment in literary and cultural studies, inaugurated according to most scholars by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). It is quite interesting to know that until the 1980s, critical studies on Indian cinema was restricted to vital personalities like Dada Saheb Phalke, Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal, M S Satyu and the like. These auteurs produced off-beat films which were considered as classics and hence fit to be studied. There was no space for popular cinema as they were debunked as second grade films. But, globalization brought a greater change in the cinema studies as well. Now, even Indian universities are offering courses on films. Popular cinema which was being neglected as a low-brow, inferior form of art is now getting attention from scholars and academicians across the globe. It is high time; cinema is given the thrust it requires for a better understanding of the genre.

Cinema as part of Cultural studies

Cinema is undoubtedly a cultural apparatus that holds mirror to the society of which it is a representative. A wonderful gift of technology, cinema has grown to be a powerful entertaining medium in India as has been elsewhere across the globe. In more than a century, after its evolution, cinema has been playing myriad roles in India. It is not only entertaining the masses but also disseminating knowledge on several issues plaguing the society thereby playing the role of an educative medium also. It constantly projects existing ideas and values too (Butalia108). In a sense, films critique our time, our culture, our life and everything that is worth studying or even appreciating.

As cinema is a cultural apparatus, one needs to know the concept of culture as well. The Cambridge dictionary defines the word culture as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (“Culture”). As Kesava notes:

Culture making is a social process. It is the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience; and such meanings necessarily produce a social identity for the people involved. Culture is mediated through various forms. It undergoes changes with changing socio-economic and political conditions. (62)

Pramod Nayar in his book *An Introduction to Cultural Studies* tries to elaborate the meaning of the word culture. He differentiates between ‘culture’ in the common parlance and ‘culture’ in the academics of Cultural Studies (4). Nayar explains that the meaning of the word culture is ‘to cultivate’ in addition to ‘to

honour' and 'to protect.' However, by the end of nineteenth century, the word denoted the customs and tastes of the upper classes in Europe. Meaning of the word got complete transformation in a span of few centuries.

Going further, the same book evaluates the meaning of 'culture' in the context of Cultural Studies (4). It states that 'culture' is the mode of generating ideas and meanings which are governed by power relations. The elite or upper class controls meanings and it decides whose tastes are meaningful or meaningless. The tastes and interests of non-elite class are regarded as 'tasteless,' 'useless' or even 'stupid' whereas their own tastes are prioritized against these 'insignificant' interests. Hence, this culture of a select few gets more visibility whereas the culture of the majority gets neglected. Cultural Studies thus attempts to bring to forefront these power politics of the elite few. In a sense, as Frederic Jameson puts it, cultural studies came into the world as a result of dissatisfaction with other disciplines, not merely their contents but also their very limits as such (18).

However, culture is not outside the purview of criticism. Theodor Adorno calls culture an industry. Taking a Marxist stand point, he advocates that "all human beings are alike integrated into the 'totally administered' capitalist society through commodity exchange, bureaucracy and culture industry (qtd. in Edgar and Sedgwick 1). For Adorno, any work of art is a product of its age (2-3). And as the work of art is also a byproduct of a commercial media enterprise in the modern times, it tries to 'manufacture consent' among the masses as famously said by Noam Chomsky.

The postmodern notion says that there is nothing in the world but culture. Terry Eagleton calls this omnipresence of culture as 'culturalism' (Salih 194). As the same author notes, with some theorists, most notably Stanley Fish and Richard Rorty,

culture has become a “reality far deeper than the mind” and thus not open to rational analysis. In its regressive form, when culturalism enters postcolonial societies, it actually ends up feeding the most dogmatic forms of separatism and supremacism and as Salih quotes Edward Said, culturalism has become a “supremely stubborn” notion (Salih 194).

Eagleton and Raymond Williams believe that moving beyond culturalism cannot happen without a concentrated social effort, since only socialist thought seems to be capable of accommodating both local and universal (Salih 194). Culture in the form of affection, relationships, emotional fulfillment etc. has become too personal for many. But, this is not welcomed by Eagleton. Personal choices cannot be placed above collective action. He terms this aspect of culture as “claustrophobic” and believes that a common culture or “universal relationships” as solution to the problem. A designation like European Welsh is better than mere “Welsh,” as it is more emancipatory in nature (Salih 194).

In the Indian context, if one has to understand culture, one has to take into consideration the specific character of Indian society. The political struggles of nationalist movements and democratic struggles of post independent India produced a culture used extensively for propaganda of political ideals at the popular level (Kesava 62). As elsewhere, Indian popular culture tries to display the same in its forms like songs, movies or soap operas. Hence, it is mandatory that one understands the concepts properly, so that he/she has a better understanding of the life around.

Popular culture

Popular Culture is the culture of the masses. When the culture of the common is neglected or not given priority, Cultural Studies makes an attempt to look deeper into the meanings generated by the mass culture. Popular Culture includes graffiti, comic books, mass cinema or popular or commercial cinema against art cinema, popular music against classical music, open spaces as against the art galleries (Nayar 5).

Academic studies have always shown interest to study the interest of the elites. For them, art cinema becomes important than mass cinema, classical dance opposed to disco, films of 'great' auteurs against popular directors, and all these elite interests are viewed, practiced and followed by a few whereas the other forms are enjoyed and appreciated by a great number of people. If tastes and interests of elite are viewed as superior by academicians, the same of masses are relegated terming them as inferior. This disparity used to exist in almost all arena of arts and literature (unfortunately it exists even today).

As this disparity existed for several decades, a few scholars at the Bowling Green University decided to take Popular Culture seriously. In 1969, the department launched Journal of Popular Culture that carried essays on Spiderman comics, rock music, amusement parks, detective films and other such forms of popular culture (Nayar 5). As the same author states, it is in popular culture that Cultural Studies finds its initial movements.

Popular culture as it is discussed here includes both "folk" or "popular" beliefs, practices, and objects rooted in local traditions as well as "mass" beliefs,

practices and objects generated from political and commercial centers (Mukerji and Schudson 48). Conventionally, objects taken to be part of popular culture are readable objects, written or visual materials for which there are available traditions of interpretation and criticism (48).

It is vital to know that popular culture is generally associated with the spirit of resistance. (Kalpagam U 4599). A song, or a movie or a play can be used to instill confidence among people when they have lost hopes for a better society; or the cultural tools can be used to awake the dead spirits of people at helm when they fail to provide a meaningful administration. It is a well-known fact that cinema in India, in the initial days, did try to unite the masses against the colonizers. Even today, street plays are widely used by activists to spread messages of awareness among the people on various issues. As mentioned by Kesava in his essay *Popular Culture and Ideology*, in India, an activist like Gaddar invokes people's memory through his songs (61). It is a widely known fact that Gaddar uses songs as a social weapon to resist dominance and to liberate ordinary people from the oppressive social relationships. While mainstream art forms create subjective conditions and tend to relax the audience, Gaddar's art form creates objective conditions and tends to make the audience think (61).

Popular cinema as popular culture

Popular culture attempts to cater to the emotional expectations of the people who do not belong to the upper strata of the society. These people do not have access to the nuances of such art that belongs to the category of 'high' culture. Their means are meager and their dreams are not so colorful. Their life is not so charismatic and their routine is not so attractive. Hence, to come out of the humdrum of such dull life

and rejuvenate themselves, they take refuge in popular art forms like cinema or its music. An attempt is made here to understand popular cinema, especially, Hindi cinema as part of popular culture. The intention is to analyze the genre theoretically. However, as Lal and Nandy observe:

Popular cinema appears terribly flawed by the canons of global film theory and almost entirely disjunctive with the globally dominant aesthetics and concept of good cinema. Its principal attractions – the carnivalesque atmosphere, the centrifugal story-line, the larger-than-life characters, and stilted dialogue – also mark it out as flawed art and a curious intrusion into the world of modern art forms. (Lal and Nandy xiii)

Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular, as observed by Lal and Nandy are unique in nature. Their characteristics are not measurable in terms of global cinematic aesthetics. It is true because Indian cinema whether it is Hindi cinema or any other regional cinema are interconnected in their outlook and content. They are an offshoot of Indian tradition and culture of which theatre and mythologies, the core elements of cinema, are inseparable parts.

One may debunk Indian popular cinema as unrealistic, but it is a known fact that these films have now made inroads into film festival circuits, and connoisseurs of the art of 'high cinema' need no longer feign disinterest or embarrassment (Lal and Nandy xii). Indian popular cinema has even attracted the attention of post-modernists and post-structuralists – a certain sign these days that a research area or discipline has got identified with political correctness and academic fashion (xii).

The popular film critic Ashis Rajadhyaksha calls Hindi cinema an 'epic melodrama' (qtd. in Mehta 8). Commenting on this term, Mehta deliberates on the qualities of Hindi cinema. She notes that in the general world of melodrama, the boundaries and contrasts are drawn deeper and brighter by excesses, and in classical Bollywood (Hindi cinema), culturally loaded signifiers pointing to such concepts as nation-ness, womanhood, tradition, and benevolent patriarchy have played a momentous role (8).

Ashis Nandy tries to analyze the grammar and the normative codes which guide the storyline and expressive style of popular films, especially Hindi films, which he calls 'Bombay cinema.' In the process, he observes three characteristics of these films: first, the Bombay film is a spectacle not an artistic endeavor (89). Contrary to the popular beliefs, he says that popular Hindi cinema does not try to be a reflection of everyday reality. It reverses a major tenet of modern fiction and films where the characters do not develop through situations but the situations develop through the characters (90).

Second, the Bombay film has an expected climax. It bases its appeal not on the linear development of a story line but on the special configuration which the film presents of many known elements or themes derived from other movies, or, as Sudhir Kakar suggests, from familiar traditional tales (90). The viewer is expected to know these elements by heart and to experience in the films a feeling of *déjà vu* (90). In a sense, they replicate Indian popular stories from myths and legends. Noted film scholars Gokulsingh and Dissanayake compare Hindi films to fairy tales and myths. Like fairy tales, Hindi films have the psychological function of producing a sense of

security by upholding the picture of a world in which the family and *dharma* are safe and that there are parallels between the Hindi films and popular myths (44).

Similarly, film critic M K Raghavendra compares the use of myths by both Hollywood and Indian cinema. He argues that the Hollywood genre films refer back to mythologies with their foundation in history (Raghavendra 36). About use of myth in Indian cinema, he says that,

The Western draws upon the mythology associated with the origins of the American nation. The mythology of the cold war created its own genres- James Bond and Rambo, to name two- and some sub-categories under film noir can perhaps be traced to the depression of 1930. The curious fact about popular cinema in India is that history seems to have created no myths of its own and one is hard-pressed to find more than a film or two that uses even 1947 for its narrative thrust notwithstanding the efforts of the state to build a durable mythology out of the Freedom Struggle. (36)

Raghavendra argues that it is for the lack of a 'history' that Indian cinema depends largely on pre-history and the myths of Ramayana and Mahabharata for its narrations. Hence, the popular mythological characters of Rama, Sita, Arjuna, Yudhistira, Ganga etc. are revisited and the cinematic characters are brought before audiences in their miniature forms.

However, one may argue that such films are an imitation of myths and legends. But, for Nandy, the issue of plagiarism does not arise here. They operate within a consensus system which rejects the idea that the elements of a story are a form of personal property or individual creation (Nandy 91). Like *Ram Leela* or

Krishna Leela, Hindi films try to present the usual combination of themes, arrived at by design or sheer luck. It is also the reason why eighty per cent of films flop, but the producers try their luck time and again. It is a curious factor connected to Hindi or Indian cinema.

Third, the story line in these movies has to be synchronic and ahistorical. There is only a diachronic façade which the reader has to pierce (Nandy 91). At each moment a character is judged by what he has been, what he is, and what will he become. Thus there is ineluctable continuity between the past, present and the future and each of these temporalities gets telescoped into the other. The villain, usually played by a well-known actor, even though is good at the beginning will show his true self later in the movie and a spectator knows this beforehand. Similarly, the hero, however, wicked he is at the beginning; will soon rediscovers his good self and turns out to be a savior for others (91). This is equally true of stories which speak about three generations or even stories of reincarnation. Here the problems of one generation are repeated in the other generations or to keep up the continuity, the same actor is used in all the generations. They appear diachronic, but in reality they are synchronic in nature (91).

At the same time, themes of most of the Hindi films, like most of regional films, are similar. They run around the popular Sanskrit adage *Satyameva Jayate* (truth alone will triumph). The movies try to be moralistic in nature. It is always expected of them to be so in India. The protagonist, whether male or female, will undergo trials and tribulations for almost two and a half hour, but at the end will find moral victory. It is to be noted that this didactic nature of Indian movies has succeeded in attracting vast audience in several countries across the globe.

The characters of Hindi cinema are stereotypical in nature. The theme of the movie revolves around a protagonist fondly called as a hero, villain, heroine, father, mother, grandmother etc. But, the hero has to be surnameless, casteless, regionless, ethnically non-identifiable and ultimately ahistorical (Nandy 93). It is so because a Hindi film has to attract audience from across the nation and also Indian diaspora spread across the world. But, regional cinema carries marks of a region openly as they cater to a small audience of a particular community or a state in India or abroad. However, with the passage of time, in the era of dubbing and with an intention to earn more, even regional movies are changing. The plots and themes are being designed to attract a wide range of audience sans borders.

The moral approach in entertaining media is not restricted to India alone. One can find such characteristics in the American popular movies, television programmes and comic book characters that adhere to the minimal values expressed by censoring agencies – at least in the final moments. Even in the most violent crime comics, the last two or three panels generally contained warning that crime does not pay (Gilbert 144). But, Indian cinema runs basically on this premise that truth prevails at the end. There are exceptions to this rule, but they are very rare as in the movie *Aksar* (2006) where the plot is written exactly opposite way.

Before concluding, noted film critic M K Raghavendra's observations about Indian cinema are worth mentioning. According to Raghavendra:

Indian cinema is very different from cinema in the rest of the world and the primary difference is that it is not mimetic. It is not content with observation and respecting the dictum that reality is essentially unknowable. Indian cinema is hardly ever complex and almost never invites interpretation from the

audience. Academic interpretation is different and goes beyond artistic intent. Indian cinema, by and large, proceeds from truisms and messages which are illustrated through the narrative. Indian films are like fables: a fox must be cunning and a monkey should be mischievous in a fable for its message to be relayed unhindered. Even in art films (with some exceptions) the meaning is transparent. World cinema has three basic components: the capture of reality, authorial subjectivity (what the filmmaker wants to say) and character subjectivity (what a character is seeing or imagining). In Indian cinema, character subjectivity can hardly be found, and the filmmaker never has a personal viewpoint to offer. The achievements of some filmmakers like Ray, Adoor and Aravindan are that they introduced subjectivity and personal expression. Ghatak should also be mentioned here. (Raghavendra)

Conclusion

Cinema which is an off-shoot of the theatre in India has come across various changes in the previous one century since its inception. The need to study and theorize cinema has arisen now more than ever as the influence it has on people has grown in leaps and bounds in the recent past. Is cinema part of one's culture and tradition? Can it give rise to the evolution of new set of cultural codes? Does it preserve or destroy one's pure and pristine culture and tradition? Whether cinema can be used as a vehicle to bring about constructive social changes? Or whether it has vile influence on people to take a society towards moral destruction? Such questions can be answered and solutions can be found to such questions when cinema is studied academically. The present study on diasporic Hindi cinema is such an attempt.

CHAPTER IV

FOREGROUNDING NATION IN DIASPORIC HINDI CINEMA

Introduction

Since its inception, nation has been an integral part of Indian cinema, Hindi cinema not being an exception. The project of nation building was handled by Hindi cinema like any other regional language Indian cinema commendably in the colonial period and the process is still going on even in the post-colonial India. Globalization in the 90s introduced the genre diasporic Hindi cinema that deal with the themes of Indian diaspora and its emotional attachment with India. Even though, the genre is a fairly recent one, it has not lagged behind in ‘constructing’ a nation that is close to the emotional Indian psyche. Historical reasons accentuated the reasons for these movies to pay more attention to construct a utopian kind of nation sans deformities; the nation that one had read about in myths and stories and the nation one dreams to live in. Here the project was to woo Indian diaspora towards its motherland, to sing in praise of their long-abandoned country. In all, it was an attempt to build a nation that seemed perfect not only for the people who had dispersed from it due to economic migrancy but even for those who lived within.

When one attempts to find reasons for such a depiction, monetary considerations emerge as the prime reason. Cinema is no doubt a commercial medium and it always tries to find novel ways to earn more revenue especially in the age of globalization where one could get revenue in terms of dollars and pounds. Changing times and society give cinema opportunities to experiment with newer themes and plots. However, one wonders whether any plot can be used for commercial purpose.

Construction of nation apart from gender is one such subject matter (A detailed discussion on gender will be made in a separate chapter). It is unfortunate that the very act of movie making that began with an honest endeavor to imagine and build a free nation, that is India, has completely altered itself to a mere commercial enterprise over a period of century.

Hindi cinema playing the role of National cinema

National cinema is described as a cinema that represents its nation to its audience in the wake of growing influence of Hollywood across the world. It is a way of confronting the hegemony of Hollywood cinema that tries to mesmerize and attract more and more audience from across the world towards it thereby imposing its own dominant ideology, the American ideology. Film theory and critics argue that the role of national cinema is to appraise its viewers about its own culture and tradition, to help them to stay deep rooted in their values and not to be swayed away by the American way of life. To resist the aggressive Hollywood hegemony, countries like Canada, Britain, France, Australia and Italy have come up with various institutions to fund and produce national cinema. These countries do not want their cinema to suffer because of Hollywood cinema. Hindi cinema, as it is accepted and watched across India and across the globe, can be called national cinema. At the same time, as it has been described in the first chapter, it does possess the characteristics of a national cinema, where the characters do not possess surname, do not belong to a particular state, caste etc. Hindi cinema carefully stays away from the regional flavor so that it can be accepted across pan India.

The present chapter attempts to analyze how nation has been brought to the forefront in diasporic Hindi movies that are produced in the era of globalization. The

study starts with the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and ends with *London Dreams* (2009). A total of 11 movies produced in a span of 15 years are taken for the study which are made by resident Indian directors. A movie titled *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) directed by Mira Nair, an NRI director and *Purab aur Pachhim* (1970) that belonged to pre-globalized context are taken for the sake of comparison.

Construction of Nation

A nation is constructed with the help of its myths, legends, culture, tradition, festivals, so on and so forth. Hindi cinema tries to construct India or Hindustan through all these modes. Cinema has been an offshoot of the traditional genre theatre in India and it attempts to carry the rich legacy of plays even in the modern era. Song and dance, an integral part of Indian cinema, are a gift of the tradition of theatre that are not so often found in movies from other parts of the world. The aforesaid elements of myths, legends, etc. are found in almost all the Indian films, including Hindi cinema. According to Uberoi, “the 1990s family melodrama endorses traditional values through its staging of elaborate northern Indian marriage ceremonies and by making the joint family into the locus of the nation at a moment in time when the nuclear family was replacing the extended family among India’s middle class” (qtd. in Sharpe 61).

The cinematic genre may vary, films may belong to the genre of action, spirituality, romance, patriotism, thrill, sci-fi or *masala*, but the inclusion of these elements will always be there without fail. The process of construction of nation is always at work in one or the other form in these movies.

As it is mentioned already, the genesis of Indian cinema coincided with the genesis of India. The country which was under the colonial rule for centuries began to make efforts to free itself with the aid of several freedom fighters who spearheaded a nationwide agitation against the British. Several film producers attempted to use the newly-evolved medium of cinema to instill patriotism among the natives so that they be united to stand against the ruthless imperialists. The movies assisted the natives to visualize a free India that belonged solely to them. The construction of nation in the imagination of people by the cinema began from the pre-independent era itself and the endeavor is still going on even in the post-independent India.

The concept of patriotism has always been a pet subject for Indian film producers, especially for the Hindi film producers. Themes involving the nation - the threat that it faces from the alien and the vile forces from within, and its rescue by the valiant soldiers, brave warriors, the patriotic common men, the heroic women; the wars that the country fought in the post independent era with its neighbours China and Pakistan, recur in the Hindi cinema in various forms.

Similarly, the Hindi cinema engages fondly in recounting the sacrifice made by gallant heroes during the country's freedom struggle. Biopics have been made on freedom fighters to pay a tribute to their selfless services to the nation. Notable movies in the genre are; *Making of the Mahatma* (1996), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Gandhi My Father* (2007) in remembrance of Mahatma Gandhi; *Shaheed – E – Azaad Bhagat Singh* (1954), *Shaheed* (1965), *Shaheed Bhagat Singh* (1963), *Amar Shaheed Bhagat Singh* (1974), *Shaheed – E – Azam* (2002), *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002), and *23 March 1931: Shaheed* (2002) for Bhagat Singh; *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* (2005) for Mangal Pandey; *Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero*

(2004) to remember Subhash Chandra Bose; *Sardar* (1993) for Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel; *Veer Savarkar* (2001) for Savarkar; Queen Lakshmi Bai as in *Jhansi Ki Rani* (1953) and *Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi* (2019). Films are also made on lesser known heroes like Udham Singh like *Shaheed Udham Singh* (1999) and *Sardar Udham Singh* (2021).

Patriotic feelings among the viewers are stirred with the plots surrounding historical characters of the pre independent era. A few of the vital movies in this genre are; *Ashoka: the Great* (2001), *Jodha Akbar* (2008), *Bajirao Mastani* (2015), *Padmavat* (2018), *Panipat* (2019).

India has had three wars with the neighboring Pakistan and one with China. There have been several movies produced on these wars so as to enable viewers emotionally get attached to the nation and its gallant warriors. Vital movies in this genre are; *Haqeeqat* (1964), *Hindustan Ki Kasam* (1973), *Vijeta* (1982), *Prahaar* (1991), *Border* (1997), *LOC Kargil* (2003), *Lakshya* (2004), *Tango Charlie* (2005), *1971* (2007), *Shaurya* (2008), *Holiday: A Soldier is Never Off Duty* (2014), *Raag Desh* (2017), *The Ghazi Attack* (2017), *Uri: The Surgical Strike* (2019).

Struggle of the nation against not only colonizers but also foreign invaders, starting from Alexander to British, gets repeated in Hindi films time and again. Interestingly, this theme of invasion is based not only on 'authentic' history. Many a times, imaginary history is created in cinema and imaginary war heroes are created for cinematic purposes, but care is always taken to instill patriotic feelings among the viewers. The country will always be India and the foes are from within or outside. The nation, fondly termed as *Bharathmaata*, gets into various troubles and to save her

from those perils, her sons or daughters risk their lives and get success in their patriotic endeavor. *Kranti* (1981) and *Lagaan* (2001) are only two among many.

The list of patriotic movies does not end with the above mentioned movies as patriotism and jingoism are always used as ready-to-serve commodities in Hindi films. Whenever the country witnesses skirmishes with its neighbours, producers of Hindi films come up with movies that stir patriotic feelings among the spectators. They make movies on biopics or historical events and if no such themes are available, they create an imaginary event to arouse the 'true Indian' from within one's conscience among the spectators. Audience watch the movies, enjoy the country's victory over aliens, pat themselves proudly as they are part of such a great country and go home humming the patriotic songs of the movie happily. No one bothers whether an authentic historical event was portrayed or an imaginary. All they are happy about is that an enemy, whether real or imaginary, was trampled to death valiantly. The problems with such representation are that an imaginary enemy is perpetuated in the minds of the audience and also political failures for a healthy relationship with the neighbours get smartly hidden in the high pitched noise of patriotism.

Construction of Nation in diasporic Hindi cinema

Diasporic Hindi cinema is a terminology used for Hindi films that deal with the theme of Indian diaspora living abroad. A slew of these movies were released post globalization which was a new trend in Hindi cinema. According to Madhuja Mukherjee, it was the global-local dialogues in the 1990s that prompted the new Hindi films that some have described as Bollywood to include a diasporic *imaginaire* to address their burgeoning worldwide market (Mukherjee 38). In the past, it was very

rare to see Hindi movies taking up themes that included expatriate Indians. But, globalization brought such change in the cinema industry. It was so because the aim of these movies was to attract Indian diaspora that had spread across the globe towards Hindi cinema as the cinema provided such audience ‘a link to their home country’ as mentioned by Maya Ranganathan (qtd. in Forestier 3). Apart from the monetary reason, the producers also intended to attract the attention of the Indian diaspora towards its homeland. They wanted to show their beloved ‘India’ to the diaspora so that the emotional attachment will never be lost.

Noted film critic Madhava Prasad in his essay *Surviving Bollywood* throws light on the term Bollywood used for Hindi cinema and the changes it has brought with it in the very art of film making. According to Prasad:

The makers of the new popular cinema have produced yet another variation of the nationalist ideology of tradition and modernity, and most interestingly, they have sought to relocate what we might call the seismic centre of Indian national identity somewhere in the Anglo-America. In other words, this new trend in the industry has brought the NRI decisively into the centre of the picture, as a more stable figure of Indian identity than anything that can be found indigenously. (44)

Continuing his arguments on the NRIs, the economic power they possess, intention of the governments to attract their capital and their influence on the art of film production, Prasad mentions that,

While economists continue to be sceptical about NRI patriotism making a difference to foreign direct investment (FDI), culturally it is indisputable that

the NRI is increasingly beginning to look like the sole guarantor of Indian identity. In this regard, the NRI productions themselves have lately become more important than the indigenous ones which, with a few exceptions like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995, Aditya Chopra), continue to pose the “return to roots” as the redeeming factor in tales of dislocation. (Prasad 44)

According to Viridi, in Hindi cinema the figure of the diasporic Indian is metonymic of the anxiety of the invasion of the west and disappearance of an “Indian identity,” which it cleverly manipulates to reimagine the nation in response to changing conditions (197). The diasporic Hindi movies tried to showcase the life as led by Indian diaspora who have spread across the globe. As mentioned by Prasad, not only Indian producers, but those producers who live abroad did make movies to bring about the lives of NRIs. *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) is one such example. *Monsoon Wedding* presents the contradictions of everyday life that opening up of India to globalization has introduced. The film destroys any lingering image of a nation mired in some pre-modern space as a traditional land with ancient customs and beliefs. Rather it reveals a postmodern world in which cell phones and e-mail coexist with age-old rituals and occupations (Sharpe 59). Nair brilliantly explains the hybridity of global culture with a very common plot in the movie.

The theme of the film revolves around a grand Punjabi wedding ceremony that takes place in the suburbs of Delhi where NRIs spread across the globe unite to celebrate it carrying their emotional baggage along with them. The term NRI not only refers to people who live across the globe. It also signifies the social and cultural transformation India has gone since 1991 (Sharpe 58). The movie, unlike the movies made by resident Indians, brings before the audience the characters who speak Hindi,

English and Punjabi. It reveals the transformation India was going through in the initial days of globalization where Indian way of life was opened to the hitherto unheard Western ways of urban life. One can observe the fusion of Western and Eastern ways of life in the movie.

The theme throws open lives of educated Indians who were at crossroads to choose between traditional and modern ways of life. The female protagonist of the movie Aditi Verma is engaged to Hemant Rai from the US only a few weeks ago but she has interest in her boss Vikram who is married. As it happens with most of Indian families, the girl does not divulge her love interest with the family members but can't disown her married lover even after the marriage is fixed. When the guests have arrived for the marriage, she snugly escapes at night from home to have physical intimacy with her beloved but gets caught in the act by the police. However, for reasons unknown, she later feels she should stop seeing her lover and move on with the new relationship. Hence, without bothering about the consequences, she confesses before her Houston fiancé everything about her affair with Vikram. Even though, the boy gets upset in the beginning, he appreciates her honesty and accepts her and everything ends happily for them.

Monsoon Wedding was different in many ways from other Hindi movies made by resident Indians in portraying the nation. The movie boldly shot sexually explicit scenes of smooch and kissing which were until then a taboo for Indian viewers. The characters who involve in such scenes are from urban middle class and Nair boldly brings such scenes on screen making it clear that such life was led by Indian educated urban youth and there was a need to accept the fact. The movie also deals with the themes of extra marital affairs and sexual molestation which were rarely brought on

screen in Hindi films. Nair tries to tell that such things do exist in the nation, even though, in the popular imagination the nation is projected as traditional and ethical.

The Indian and NRI characters of the movie seem to be well educated and they belong to upper middle class. They are the typical Westernized Indians who speak English, smoke and drink at home. For Patricia Uberoi such NRI figures at best represent the temporary abeyance of the “Americanization” of Indian identity, under siege in the era of globalization (qtd. in Viridi 197). The English speaking, golf-playing father, like a typical Indian father, is unaware of the affair of his daughter. But, he is very emotional when it comes to the matter of his daughter’s marriage. He is ready to raise funds for the purpose. He is a mixture of tradition and modernity, India and the West, an Indian and an NRI in a sense.

Calling her film “a Bollywood (Hindi) movie, made on my own terms,” Nair exposes the myth of nation at work in Hindi films about the NRI. Rather than transporting the Indian experience of globalization to Britain or the United States, Nair stages the identity crisis it is creating within India (Sharpe 70). The “Indian-ness” of an Indian national identity can be established through the hybridized NRI precisely because the new consumer culture threw into crisis the home/world opposition underpinning the nationalist claim to an authentic, spiritual self that the British were unable to colonize (Sharpe 66). The Indian Aditi and the NRI characters who are present in the movie have the dilemma of choosing between the free life style of the West or Indian way of life or the life shackled in age old traditions and customs of the land. When the time comes for taking a final call, Aditi decides to be honest and she chooses the morally right path of being frank about previous relationship with her fiancé. As curtains are ready to be drawn, Aditi wins over the heart of her fiancé

and Aditi's father sends his brother-in-law out of the family wedding as he was found to be a culprit who had the habit of molesting young girls. The film ends with the allegorical messages of punishment for sinner and truth prevails in the end.

The book *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* traces the journey of Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular. It cites the reasons why a great director like Govind Dandekar established cinema in India. Dandekar once said, "I decided to establish it (the industry) on a permanent footing to provide employment to hundreds of worker-artists like me. I was determined to do my duty... to defend this industry even in the absence of any financial support, with the firm conviction that the Indian people abroad would get a true picture of India" (qtd. in Gopal and Moorti 10). Dandekar wanted to present the non-resident Indians a true picture of India. He did not want them to forget their homeland and be aliens in their own country after a brief span. He wanted them to be connected with the nation always.

However, this objective of Dandekar, to show true India to its viewers abroad has altered over a period of years. Cinema has grown to be a very influential medium in the past several decades. The influence that it wields on the audience is huge. The money involved in it is also abundant. From an art and commercial enterprise, it has grown out to be an industry. In the commercial hub, earning profit becomes the sole intention of the investors. Hence, they represent the nation in such a way that it attracts not only insiders, but even outsiders. Diasporic Hindi movies, at least in the initial days attempted to portray India as all good and flawless. The reality was not always shown on screen.

Hope Marie Childers in her thesis “*You Go Girl!*” *Nationalism and Women’s Empowerment in the Bollywood Film Kya Kehna!* quotes Indian film critic Sagarika Ghose from an interview published in Indian Express that NRIs are the next colonizing threat to India. In a scathing review of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001), labelled a “ghastly film,” she complains that, after watching it, “it’s impossible to avoid the conclusion that contemporary India is nothing but a figment of the NRI imagination” (qtd. in Childers 21). Ghose proceeds to describe how the flow of NRI capital has Bollywood “bound in chains to the dictates of overseas audiences,” and is thus re-shaping the Indian cultural landscape, creating “an ersatz tradition” to “appeal to an émigré audience that has no patience for Indian realities other than those peddled by a sensationalist media.” She voices a concern that is increasingly common among resident Indians, namely that “in the sphere of culture, the NRI’s vision of India is drastically and sometimes irrevocably in conflict from the vision of those who actually live there” (qtd. in Childers 21).

A few movies testify this argument. In India it is a common phenomenon that cobras are revered as deities. Mythically they have enormous importance. As cobra gods are found in Indian myths like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*, people carry a sense of awe and respect for them. Numerous stories are woven around the myth of cobras which are popularly known by names like *Naagakannika*, *Naagadevata*, *Naagin* etc. Films and soap operas are made with the themes of snakes. However, it is also true that when people face live cobras, they do not hesitate to kill the reptiles as they are venomous.

However, the movie *Pardes* (1997) portrays the snake phenomenon curiously. There is a scene where Rajeev, the NRI who has arrived in India to have a glance at

the country and the lady whom his father wants him to marry, sees a cobra in his room at night. He gets scared. Ganga who enters the room then pays obeisance to the snake by folding her hands and mutters an unheard prayer. The snake that appeared fatal a few minutes ago slithers slowly out of the room. Ganga proudly tells Rajeev that “Snakes are not considered as animals in India instead they are treated as deities. So, you need not worry” (*Pardes* 57:35 – 59:10). The impressed Rajeev utters the word “amazing.” The movie brings back the age old tradition of believing snakes as deities. But, the reality does not fit the filmic narration.

Patriarchal fathers

Patriarchy has been the hallmark of Indian society for long. Fathers are the decision makers in the family. He is the earning member of the family and the family has to obey rules framed by him. The mother plays a major role in the smooth functioning of the family by taking care of the inner affairs of the home. However, when the question of major decisions arises, it is the father who has the final say. Such characters are shown in the diasporic Hindi movies as well. Meheli Sen has commented on the role of father figures in the Hindi films of the new era:

While scholars have noted Bollywood’s renewed investments in ‘tradition,’ the family etc., the salient figure of the new, Hindu Father has been subsumed under generalized discussions of ‘patriarchy,’ which do not do justice to the complex miscellany embodied by the figure... On a more abstract register, he gathers around himself the deeply masculinist discourses that are espoused/disseminated by the Hindu Right. (Sen 149)

The diasporic Hindi cinema has such father figures who are patriarchal in nature. Apart from being patriarchal, they are dominant, Hindu but they do not necessarily belong to the extreme right. The movies were directed towards expatriate Indians residing in different parts of the globe and that could be the reason why the father roles were designed so. However, it is curious to note that these patriarchal father roles appeared in the beginning of the 90s when the very genre presented films which concentrated on themes of hyper patriotism and nationalism.

The first diasporic Hindi film in the post globalized context that had the patriarchal father figure, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) opens with a scene from London's city square. Chaudhary Baldev Singh, the role brilliantly played by late Amarish Puri, reminiscences his stay in an alien land. He is a shop keeper in London originally from Punjab, India. While feeding the pigeons of England in the city square he says,

“This is London. I have been here for the past twenty two years. This street asks me my name. Where do I come from? Why am I here? Even after spending half of my life here, the land has been stranger to me and I, for it. No one knows me here, except these pigeons. They do not have a country like me; they go where they get food. When can I fly back? I don't know. My needs have severed my wings. Livelihood has shackled my feet. But, one day, I shall definitely return to my country, to my Punjab!” (*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* 00:50)

Baldev turns nostalgic in this monologue. He has been residing in London for more than two decades, but he still yearns to go back to India. Immediately after this monologue, the song ‘*ghar aaja pardesi*’ (return wanderer) shows Baldev beside a mustard field feeding pigeons. This scene is from India, may be from Punjab as

cherished by Baldev. The lines are addressed to people like Baldev who are in different parts of the world. They are invited back to their home land as the nation beckons them back.

Baldev is one among the first generation of people who tried to find a living abroad. He might have flown to a different nation, but he finds himself deep rooted in his home land, its tradition and culture. As soon as he opens his shop, he offers *pooja* to the goddess of wealth Lakshmi is a testimonial among many. In the movie, the Non Resident Indian (the NRI), hitherto portrayed as the marginal outsider with affected speech and behavior was redeemed and validated as not just a possible Indian national subject, but possibly one of the best (Mehta 1).

Commenting further on the role of NRIs in the movie, Mehta writes that *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is all about a drama that covers two continents and is visually and verbally 'Indian'; it is openly vocal about Indian values and customs, in spite of the fact that the major protagonists lived their lives in England. Moreover the NRI is not required to return to India and stay there – and this is the twist that makes it for *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* – the NRI could remain NR and be the 'I,' that is Indian (1). The same writer asserts that *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is about the 'Return of the Nation.' Nation, despite not having gone anywhere, has come back with a vengeance in globalized India (2).

In the same movie, another father character, parent of Raj, the protagonist is played by veteran actor Anupam Kher. Even though, he does not play a major role in the movie, he is also an NRI who is emotional about his nation. When he comes back to India after a long time at the behest of Raj, he says "Aye, my country, my soil" and he continues, "If one moves away to a different country, one gets everything, but one

can't get food prepared by Indian homemakers, the nation's language and its culture... How can one love Thames when one loves Ganga" (*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* 02:27:00- 02:27:25). The father's love for his country is visible here even though he has been residing in London for long.

Another important father role is played by the veteran actor Amarishpuri in the movie *Pardes* (1997) directed by Subhash Ghai. The role is given the name Kishorilal. His country shifts from England of *Dilwale Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* to America in the movie. The movie begins with a scene from India. Standing before the iconic Taj Mahal, Kishorilal gloats before his American friends about the greatness of India. Similar to Baldev of *Dilwale Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, he says,

"I have been living in America for the past 35 years. But even now, when I return to India occasionally, I get thrilled unknowingly. I feel as if I have returned to my mother's lap. Today, my India may or may not have something. But, it has lots of love. Every monuments and even the air present around tell one word love. In America, the meaning of the word love is 'to take.' It has its own limitations. But in India, it only means, 'to give,' 'to give' and 'to give.'" (*Pardes* 02:30)

Kishorilal, the first generation NRI firmly believes in the above lines that India has been a land of selfless love. It may be poor materially, but culturally it is very rich. In spite of his long association with America, Kishorilal has never been able to attach himself with the country, because India is everything for him. He is not attracted by the culture of consumption which is the hallmark of the West. Although, he is an 'NR' outwardly, he is very much an 'I' at the core.

The third diasporic Hindi film carrying such a father figure is *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* (1999) directed by legendary actor Rishi Kapoor. It is the only movie directed by Rishi Kapoor in his career. The film was critically appreciated for its theme but it could not attract more audience to theatre. The movie was not considered a flop but the earning was considered below average.

The very title *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* means ‘Come, Let us go back.’ It simply says, we are wearied of the Western ways, come let us go back to our motherland. The father figure involved here is Balraj Khanna, the role played by the popular actor Rajesh Khanna. Lured by the West, and carrying a greed for wealth in his heart, young Balraj travels abroad deserting his wife and son in India. In America he earns abundant prosperity besides name and fame with his sheer hard work. He marries again to settle there and has a son from the marriage. But, the American wife deserts him and their two year old son to marry another guy. The uncared, mother-less son gets spoilt with his American ways as the father is busy earning wealth. However, as the story progresses to end, Balraj meets his first son with the help of the female lead character and everything ends on a note of happiness. Balraj is pardoned by his perennially-waiting wife in India and the deserted Indian son. The spoilt American son Karan too unites with the father and step brother. They all return to India happily to join the long deserted family members.

The movie *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* can be seen as a repetition of the old *Poorab aur Pachhim* (1970). Unlike the previous two NRI genre Hindi movies *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and *Pardes*, *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* had a different theme with many similarities. If the NRIs do not return to India in the earlier movies, they do come back to India in *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*. In the first NRI Hindi genre film, *Purab*

aur Pachhim, Bharat is the protagonist who visits an alien country. However, he does not get attracted by the material richness of the country but he is shocked by the spiritual barrenness of it. People of the nation, he sees, are completely involved in hedonistic activities without bothering about the moral duties towards one's own life. The patriotic Bharat purges the vice qualities of the corrupt NRIs and brings them back to their long forgotten nation India. The theme of *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* runs on the same line. The director, Rishi Kapoor, who belonged to the old school of thoughts, probably wanted to attract the NRIs with the theme. But, in the globalized context, may be the people did not like it much. Many NRIs who had found greener pastures in the distant countries did not want to come back to their motherland soon. May be because of these reasons, the film did not fare well in the box office.

Unjust father figures

As already mentioned, the father figures in the early diasporic Hindi movies *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), *Pardes* (1997), *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* (1999) are all patriarchal, rule-minded and dominant in nature. They share adequate screen space with the other chief characters. But, it is quite interesting to note that the mother characters are made weak in these movies. Among three wives of these three fathers, one is docile, other one is dead, and the last one is away from her husband throughout her life. But, the fathers who have to be responsible and reasonable are designed in such a way that they make wrong decisions and choices at crucial junctures in the story line.

Chaudhary Baldev of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* commits the mistake of choosing a wrong groom for his daughter Simran. In the movie, the chosen-groom is an Indian and the one who is chosen by his daughter is an NRI. The NRI beloved is

pristine pure even though he is not born and brought up in India. The Indian groom was chosen for the daughter twenty years ago. A promise was made to the father of the groom when the boy and the girl were little kids. In *Pardes*, the second movie, Kishorilal brings Ganga, an innocent Indian girl to America so that his son will marry her. Lies are told about the American son that he is all good. The American-son turns out to be ill-bred son who is completely immersed in pleasure-seeking activities without bothering about the Indian customs and traditions. In the last movie, *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*, the father Balraj wants the innocent Indian girl Pooja to marry his American-bred, spoilt son Karan. Hence, in all these movies, the father figures make a mistake that has an impact on the storyline.

Decline in the yearning father figure themes

It is vital to note that with the passage of time, the theme of yearning father figures who always thought of India while living in abroad, or who wished to return to India one or the other day, began to wane. There were movies with NRIs but the 'dominant' father figure began to disappear from diasporic Hindi movies slowly. In the post globalization context, the earlier discussed three movies; *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), *Pardes* (1997) and *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* (1999), had such father figures who decided about the affairs of the family. Among the 12 diasporic Hindi movies considered for the study, only one movie *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (2006) carried an important father figure. The other eight movies did not have such characters in them.

The father figure of *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (2006) is different from the first three NRI movies that came in a row in the initial years of globalization. The first generation fathers in the earlier movies had left India for the sake of finding

prosperity in the West. Even though they lived in those countries, emotionally there were connected to India, their motherland. But, the father found in *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* is not so attached to India. Never once in the movie does he, by name Samarjit Talwar aka Sam, goes down the memory lane about India, its culture or tradition. He leads a hedonistic Western life in America as if to suit his Anglicized name Sam with an adjective Sexy. Samarjit is a widower and has a son whose marriage is in shambles. The fun-loving, flirting father wishes it to be normal but when he comes to know that it can't be repaired, on his death bed, he suggests his daughter-in-law to end the marriage so that the couple can have a better life. He may look Western in his life style and outlook but inside he seems to be an Indian who pays a lot of respect to marital relationships. He seems to be a mixture of West and East combination.

The character of Samarjit is designed in such a way that he apes the West in his routine. He is rich and independent. He is an NRI but he never speaks of his past or his future that may have any connection with India. Not only Samarjit, but no other characters speak of India in the movie. *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* is a movie which includes the theme of relationships within and outside the marriage. The events of the movie were made to take place outside India but the characters involved are only Indian. The movie chose to deal with extra-marital relationship, infidelity in a loveless marriage and hence was not accepted open handedly in India. But, it is quite interesting to know that the movie was well received outside India which proves the fact that such relationships which are deemed illegitimate do exist in marriages everywhere and Indians do not like to discuss them openly. They do not want even to watch them on screen. The movie was ahead of its time and hence was not a crowd puller in India.

Patriotic protagonists

The vital father figures appeared in diasporic Hindi cinema only in the initial years of globalization. Later movies released in the new millennium did not pay heed to such yearning father roles. Instead, they experimented with varied characters and roles. A few movie movies introduced young patriotic characters. But, it is to be noted that among those characters most characters are from India and after a brief span in an alien nation, they return to India changing a few NRIs traditionally, culturally and morally. In a few instances such as *Ramji Londonwaley* and *Namastey London*, the male protagonists bring back NRI female protagonists to India. The reverse happens only in the first diasporic Hindi movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* where the NRI protagonist takes the NRI heroine back to England exhibiting his patriotic Indian-ness. In the second movie *Pardes*, an Indian bride is taken back to America.

Among a slew of diasporic Hindi films, one movie stands apart from them all. Unlike those movies which were shot mostly in the USA or Britain, the movie in question is shot in India though it speaks mainly on the life of an NRI. This rare movie is *Swades* (2004). It is rare because it deals with the narration of an NRI protagonist who returns to India for the welfare of poor village community. The movie deals with the themes of social justice, social change and personal transformation. The protagonist Mohan Bharghav works for NASA and comes to India in search of an aged nanny who had taken care of him in his childhood days. Now he wants to take her back to America so that he can take care of her. But, he is shocked to see the villagers in her village leading a life of misery. There is so much of poverty, caste discrimination and social exclusion. Deciding to bring a change in their life, Mohan sets on an impossible journey. After a lot of struggle, he assists them to

get electricity with his own resources. He also educates them on the social evil system of class and gender. When time comes for him to decide between stay in America or India, he chooses the latter for the welfare of the poor and needy. But, he does so after assisting NASA to complete the incomplete projects over there in the USA and also to help it in its future assignments. *Swades* attained the status of a cult movie like its predecessor *Lagaan* (2001) by the same acclaimed director Ashutosh Gowariker.

Another movie that speaks about a patriotic protagonist is *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. It calls for a special attention for various reasons. The male protagonist of the film Raj, the role played by Shah Rukh Khan, is shown as the quintessential protector of Indian customs and traditions in spite of being an NRI. According to Purnima Mankekar, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* affirms the Indian male's agency by casting him in the figure of the NRI investor and the custodian of the Indian woman's sexual purity – the quintessential trope of Indian identity – thus replaying the classic woman/nation conflation (qtd. in Viridi 197). There is a scene in the movie that happens with the romantic protagonist couple on their Eurail tour. The law abiding girl at home, takes the permission of the father and goes with friends on the one-month trip. The traditional girl at home enjoys her trip a lot by attending parties wearing the Western kind of dresses, even boozing once at night. The next morning she finds herself on a couch with a different dress. She does not remember what happened last night. She asks Raj, the protagonist about it. Looking serious, he says that they slept together. Simran gets shocked listening to this but then Raj tries to reassure her that he was just joking. When Simran does not trust him, he tells her that he is an "Indian" and being so, he knows what chastity is for Indian girls (*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* 01:05:50 – 01:06:50).

Even though, Raj is an NRI, he claims to be an Indian when the question of chastity of a woman arises. Raj is probably the second generation expatriate who has never visited India but speaks flawless Hindi. He has lost his mother, but has a father who is a millionaire and is ready to fulfill any of Raj's dreams/aspirations. He goes in search of his bride to India and finds her too in Punjab. The girl and even her mother ask him to elope with the girl when marriage preparations are being made against her wishes. But, he is an Indian and he does not want to hurt the feeling of elders. He does not want to 'snatch' her instead; he wants to 'earn' her from them, as he says in one of his conversations with the girl. When he is caught in the act of impersonation, he behaves like an honest Indian boy and gets ready to go but with the firm conviction in the mind that he will win the girl in the end. His samaritan acts indeed win the bride for him from the adamant father of the girl and everything ends in happiness. So, the careless lad who is seen at the beginning of the movie is completely transformed before the movie gets over. Except in the initial scene, throughout the movie, he is seen as a protector of Indian values and tradition. The concluding message of the movie seems to be that he may be living abroad, but he is a true Indian at heart.

Ad hoc NRIs

On the other hand, there are a few diasporic Hindi movies where the main characters go abroad, reside there temporarily, change the hearts of the selfish NRIs with their true Indian-ness and return to the homeland. They succeed to instill the sense of pride of being an Indian in an alien land among those NRIs by proudly narrating the greatness of the nation that they have forgotten.

Pardes (1997), the second movie in the post globalization era, has Ganga in the lead female role. She travels to America to purge the evil nature of the

Americanized NRIs. However, the character of Ganga will be taken in the next chapter on gender for study.

The character of Rohan Khanna, the protagonist of *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*, needs a glance. He lives with his mother and grandfather in Delhi with no job in hand. He is depressed and curses himself for taking birth in India. Then he meets his neighbor Ranjit Kapoor who is an NRI. Ranjit suggests Rohan to come to the US so that he can change his life.

After a few days, Rohan goes to America. He meets Ranjit who is running a motel in the name of Ronny Cooper with an American wife. In America, he treats his aged parents as servants and denies any help to Rohan.

A helpless Rohan meets two taxi drivers, Iqbal Singh from India and Sardar Khan from Pakistan who help him with food, shelter and a job. Rohan also meets Pooja, an Indian like him, who is deserted in America by her brother. Everything seems to be fine, but Rohan is not happy with menial jobs which do not earn him much. With an intention to earn more, to do something great, he gets ready to marry an NRI vamp Lovelyn rejecting the selfless love of Pooja. He severs relationship with all who had helped him in the beginning accusing them of being jealous of his success.

Lovelyn is an NRI who leads hedonistic life. Rohan can't accept such life as he is an Indian. He repents his decision to desert his friends and goes back to them. In the meanwhile, unknowingly, with the help of Pooja, he meets his father whom he had assumed to be dead. Angry Rohan is ready to disown his father for cheating him

and his mother throughout their life. But, when his mother accepts the husband, he pardons the father and returns to India with his father and half-brother.

When the character of Rohan is reviewed, we get to know a few curious factors. When Rohan is in India, he is a simple boy who aspires to lead a healthy life. But, when he moves to the US, he changes to be a selfish dreamer. There is an attempt to portray the US as a country which prioritizes pleasures over morality, simplicity over lavishness.

The important NRI characters of the movie Ranjit, Lovelyn, Karan - Rohan's half brother and Balraj - Rohan's father, besides Pooja's brother Sameer and his wife Nikhi are shown as selfish who do not care much about relationships. Smoking and boozing which are seen as pleasure-seeking activities in India are common among all these characters. If these activities are rare for women in India, they are very common among NRI women characters. They practice them without remorse. If Rohan adores and respects his mother in India, the NRI Karan sees his father only as a supplier of money. He does not share any emotional bond with the father. Similarly, the NRI Ranjit who takes his parents to America with a promise of better life, treats them as slaves over there. He is neither ashamed of his behavior nor has any sympathy for the aged parents. Hence, there is a deliberate attempt to construct a vilified image of America. It is to show that the very soil of America inculcates wicked characteristics among the people whereas the Indian soil purges such characteristics from a human being.

It is also vital to know that if there is moral corruption among the rich NRIs, the lower and middle class NRIs do not possess such negative traits. There are taxi drivers, small canteen proprietors, a *paanwallah* and other small workers who

struggle to meet both the ends in the US. All these find themselves attached to the guests from India Rohan and Pooja as they are a part of their 'Imagined Community.' The two new guests are from India, who have come to America in search of greener pastures, belong to very ordinary class. More than anything, they are selfless and innocent like the middle class NRIs. That is the reason they develop instant affinity towards the newcomers and welcome them into their clan.

The song *O Yaraa Maaf Karna* Rohan tries to construct a nation that follows the adage unity in diversity. In the song, Rohan, the protagonist, calls himself an alien who has come to reside in the hearts of NRIs. Iqbal Singh, the Indian Sikh, (the role is played by Jaspal Bhatti) is seen in the song in Punjabi attire dancing to the tune of a *bhangra*. Saluting the rivers Ganga and the Jamuna, the Sikh asks Rohan, how is his beloved nation? Nation here is compared to a female beloved which is quite different as nation is generally compared to a mother. All his middle class NRIs turn emotional and nostalgic when he sings it. Interestingly, the song speaks about the brotherhood that is much required between the people of India and Pakistan, between Hindus and Muslims.

The character Sardar Khan, a citizen from Pakistan, too recalls his connection with his nation in the song. He is suddenly seen in the traditional attire of Muslims, singing the tune of a *qawwali*. When he misses his nation through its river or sweets, Rohan says that he need not be sorry as he is a shadow of him, like a brother to him. However, the song is cloaked in words such that it would not hurt the self-proclaimed patriots who would be ready to hate Pakistan. The words used by Sardar Khan, the Pakistani, like the river Chenab flows in both the countries of India and Pakistan, the other words related to festival, customs and traditions are followed by Muslims in

both the countries. The names of the Indian and Pakistani taxi drivers are also interesting. Sardar Khan is the name given to the Pakistani whereas Iqbal Singh is the name of the Indian. The name and surname both are interchangeable. The song tries to construct a nation which has amity between people of all faith and religion. Unity in diversity has been brought in to show how special the country is.

Another movie which speaks about an ad hoc NRI is *Ramji Londonwaley* (2005). After six years into globalization, the movie's portrayal of NRI characters changed completely. The NRI characters in the movie are not pleasure-seeking individuals as shown in the earlier NRI movies. The plot of the movie takes place in London as the title suggests, but the protagonist Ramji is not a *Londonwaley*, a resident of London. Ramji goes to London to fulfill his financial needs, but returns after a short stay changing the lives of many NRIs. He brings back an NRI maiden also.

The theme of the movie revolves around Ramji, a naïve villager who is an expert in culinary skills. He is an orphan and to marry his sister off to a wealthy suitor, he needs money. He goes to London in search of it. After a few problems, he manages to find a job in a restaurant. Due to his innocent behavior and expertise in cooking, he wins the heart of many in London including a girl. He marries her in a church changing his religion to save himself from getting arrested by the police as he has lost all his documents and is presumed to be an illegal immigrant. In the end, he returns to India even after proving himself to be a person with valid documents. He rejects a lucrative job offer of being a head chef in a prestigious hotel. He departs from London saying that he has more responsibilities to shoulder in India. If he stays back it would prove to be his selfishness and nothing else. His innocence and

goodness win the NRI girl and she joins him in the last minute to go to India permanently. The movie ends with Ramji's English medium school being inaugurated by veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan.

The major NRI characters of the story are Samira, the female protagonist; Guru, the restaurant owner who helps Ramji during his crisis; his wife; Jai Kapoor, the crooked lawyer friend of Guru; and Samira's grandmother. All these NRI characters except Jai Kapoor are portrayed as virtuous individuals who earn their bread in an alien land sweating hard. Most of these characters are not very emotional about their roots. They do not talk about India. Only Ramji is shown as being emotional about his customs, traditions and motherland. In the aero plane, he is reluctant to use paper in toilet as he considers paper as equivalent to the goddess Saraswati (*Ramji Londonwaley* 25:45 – 26:20). The English greeting word 'hi' appears to him a Hindi word of sadness *haay*. Similarly, he performs the annual rites of his parents in London following the Hindu rituals sitting next to a water body with the help of a *pundit*. When the question of a temporary marriage arises, he worries a lot to change his religion. Marriage is not a problem for him, but changing religion is. When he is asked to divorce the wife of the temporary marriage, he says that it is a sin to desert a wife. Ramji does not tolerate disgrace to any woman. When he sees the crooked lawyer Jai with Sameera, he shouts at Jai saying he does not know what are the rules and regulations of England, but in India women are treated on par with deities and no one can disgrace her (*Ramji Londonwaley* 01:36:15 – 01:36:25). Ramji's character is designed in such a way to uphold the culture and traditions of India.

The song *Gore gore logon se ek bandhan bandhan ho gaya* (*Ramji Londonwaley* 45:05-49:10) speaks about his relationship with London and its people. It says that the East meets the West and a strong bond develops between the two. In the back drop of the song we have a group of dancers in Indian attire, at times, riding on a vehicle with the flag of England. The movie does not say that the East is best and the West is morally corrupt. It maintains a balance between the two by remaining stoic about topics on nation or nationalism.

Another movie that speaks about an ad hoc protagonist is *Namastey London* (2007). Like the previously discussed movie *Ramji Londonwaley*, even this movie has London in its title and has several other resemblances. The story revolves around a marriage that is arranged to meet a compulsion. The female partners of both the movies are NRIs. They do not consider the marriage as real and in the end because of the virtues of the partner, they agree to live with the Indian partner as wives. The male protagonists win over the female partners because of their true Indian-ness. If female protagonists of both the movies are well-educated, modern and independent, the male protagonists are traditional to the core. They exhibit all the good qualities of an honest and innocent Indian to win over the adamant NRI girls.

The female protagonist of *Namastey London* seems to be from a North Indian family as her name is Jasmeet Malhotra but she does not want to call herself an Indian as she is born and brought up in London. She loves to call herself a British with an English name Jazz. She enjoys spending time with her flirt boss who is a three time divorcee. While her parents wish her to marry an Indian boy, she does not want to do so as she feels she does not have any emotional connection with the nation. She tells her friend that she did not take birth in India, she has grown singing the British

national anthem from the age of three, her tastes and attitude everything is British. So how can she call herself an Indian (*Namastey London* 14:00-14:25)?

But, she is so conscious of her *Indianness* that she cannot accept a kiss before her marriage. Like most traditional Indian women, she is not ready for it. On another occasion, when she is disgraced for being a person of Indian origin, when India is called a land of snake charmers, she feels very bad. But, when Arjun, the male protagonist, narrates the greatness of India before those English guests, she is very happy and feels very proud to be an Indian.

As previously mentioned while discussing the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, the burden of carrying the tradition and culture not only lies with women, even men are given this responsibility. When Jazz disowns her marriage with Arjun without any remorse, Arjun is heart-broken. Being a 'free-man,' he does not choose to marry any other girl of his choice. Instead, he waits for Jazz to change and accept him as her life partner. He says that as he is married, he cannot marry again (*Namastey London* 01:57:00 – 01:57:25). In the Indian Hindu tradition, the idea is used for women. Most of women in India, do not marry if they lose their partners for one or the other reason. But, here a man uses the idea and Jazz is moved emotionally when she hears these words. The Indian womanhood within her gets awakened and she develops remorse for having married Arjun for no reason. She begins to compare the 'love' showered on her by her English fiancé and the Indian husband. In the end, on her wedding day, she stops taking oath and runs back to her distraught Indian husband.

The movie also tries to speak the duality faced by the first generation Indians. The parents try to have an Indian identity in spite of spending a good amount of time

in an alien country. But, their children who are born and brought up in the alien country do not identify emotionally with India as they are not connected to it physically or emotionally. They assume that they are the citizens of that country itself; the idea which terrifies their parents.

Father of Jasmeet, Manmohan Malhotra who is a traditional Indian to the core wants his only daughter to uphold the values, tradition and customs of India. He expects them from his daughter. He is emotionally attached to India. The ringtone of his phone is *saare jahaan se accha Hindustan hamaara*. Being a devout Hindustani, he wants his daughter to be married off to an Indian groom. But the fun loving, carefree daughter does not have any emotional attachment with India. She is a British in her way of life and attitude. Looking at her life style the father begins to believe that he is the Indian father of a British daughter. Hence, to make her an 'Indian' he takes her to India and slyly marries her off to an Indian Punjabi lad Arjun Singh. In the end, Jasmeet changes herself. Not because of her father but because of Arjun.

The fate of another father, a taxi driver from Pakistan is also same. The father, Parvez Khan has a son Imran who leads a life that is not accepted by any traditional Muslim. He has a blonde girlfriend Susan and wishes to have a live-in relationship with her. He is asked to change his religion if he wants to marry Susan by her parents. However, after minor scuffles at home, Imran changes himself and finds his true identity and peace of mind in the company of his parents. The whole family goes on a tour to Pakistan for a change too.

Indian movies are usually not disconnected from popular mythologies *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Theme and characters of the movies get connected to the popular myths as they are a part and parcel of Indian consciousness. Game of

chess is used in Mahabharata that is played between Kauravas and Pandavas. Draupati, wife of Pandavas is used as a pawn in the game. Winning and losing her lead to the 18-day Great War between the two clans and destruction of Kauravas. The diasporic Hindi movies too bring in games to win over the beautiful maidens by virtuous people from the vice people who may have connections to some alien nations.

If the game of *Kabaddi* is used in the movie *Pardes*, the game of Rugby is used in *Namastey London*. In *Pardes*, the female protagonist is used as a pawn without even asking her consent. The winner will take her as wife. But, in *Namastey London*, the heroine is not used as a pawn. The game is portrayed as a fight between the colonizers and the colonized. If the colonizers are completely British, the colonized side consists of players from India and Pakistan. As can be expected by any Eastern viewer, the colonized side wins the match in both the movies. The game is used as a kind of 'the empire writing back with a vengeance.' In the postcolonial context, the hint is that India can beat the West on several fronts. There is a secret agenda to portray India as a self-sufficient, strong nation.

The other movies taken for study, though belong to the NRI genre of Hindi films, do not much talk about the ideas of nation or nationalism. The movie *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) revolves around the theme of parental love. Half of the story takes place in India with a family involving a patriarch as its head. When one of the sons goes against his wishes, he is sent out of home. The abolished son goes to London to find a livelihood and the rest of the story takes place abroad.

The son in London is Rahul. To unite Rahul with the parents, Rohan, Rahul's brother comes to London. When London is shown for the first time in the movie,

Vande Mataram song is heard and a bunch of girls dance to the tune wearing traditional and modern outfit of saffron, white and green colour (1:46:40 – 1:48:55). Symbolically, it is as if to show that Rohan has taken the culture, tradition, love and the whole nation with him to his brother who has been missing it for long.

When the family of Rahul is shown in London, we can see that his wife Anjali, who in the first part of the movie, is shown as a vivacious, cricket-loving, patriotic lady from Delhi's Chandni Chowk, still having emotional attachment with India which she always calls 'Bharath.' Anjali keeps singing songs like *mere desh ki dharti sona ugle* at home which disturbs neighbours. But Anjali says that the song is sung so that her son would learn it. The song is all about India's religion, culture and tradition. Her little son who does not know anything about India should learn them (01:51:47 – 01:52:35).

On the other hand, Rahul never speaks emotionally about India, but Anjali always does. She rears her son too to be patriotic about her nation. He is made to sing national anthem *Jana Gana Mana* with English children in chorus in the school annual day programme which is attended mostly by British parents. However, when he sings it, when Rahul and Anjali pay respect to it, even British respect it by standing. Anjali is so deep rooted in her culture that she does not enjoy being called mummy by her son. She always repeats the sentence *saare jahan se accha, Hindustan hamaara* (among all the nations, India is the best). Her sister Pooja who is now an adult and studying at King's College, London has developed the attitudes of a British in her lifestyle. But, when it comes to emotions, she is made to behave completely like an Indian. Apart from these few factors, the movie does not speak much about nation.

Kal Ho Na Ho (2003) is another movie where the theme revolves around NRIs and where the whole story takes place in the US but the concept of nation is not given much importance. Even though the movie is a triangular love story, it brings in several aspects of life like its temporality, relationships, universal brotherhood, love etc.

Naina Catherine Kapoor (Preiti Zinta), Aman Mathur (Shahrukh Khan) and Rohit Patel (Saif Ali Khan) are the major characters of the movie. Naina lives in a family always troubled by minor domestic scuffles. The family runs a restaurant in New York but it is in loss. Rohit Patel is Naina's friend who always has confusions of choice. But, the curious fact to notice is that there is no mention of their lineage. There is no mention of the details regarding their arrival to this alien country but all of them speak flawless Hindi. No one speaks about India or even mentions it except one old lady Lajjo who speaks of Punjab, her native place.

Aman is a fun-loving person who has some ailment related to heart. He knows that he can't live for long and hence, wants to keep everyone happy around. When he and his mother move to Naina's neighbourhood, there is no mention of their previous place of residence. Viewers cannot know whether they come from India or from a different place in New York. But, Aman helps Naina's family members to solve their personal and financial problems.

Aman changes the Café New York owned by Jennifer, Naina's mother, to Café New Delhi for the purpose. They begin to serve Indian delicacies to Americans to attract them. It is a kind of repetition of *Ramji Londonwaley* scenario. Not only name of the café is changed but also the national flag. Indian tricolour adores the walls of the restaurant. The financial problems of the family get resolved after these

changes. The movie *Kal Ho Na Ho* speaks about India or its connections, only in these couple of instances. Rest of the movie revolves around the already mentioned issues.

Of all the movies being discussed in the thesis, *I Proud to be an Indian* (2004) is different. The movie does not speak of NRIs and their emotional bond with India. It does not even talk of the customs and traditions of India. But, it brings to fore the problems often faced by NRIs in an alien land. There have been several Hindi movies dealing with the lives of expatriate Indians. But, no other movie had dared to take up the issue of racial discrimination that exists in developed nations. It requires a lot of courage to speak against developed nations as it may cost a lot financially for the producers of the movie. The message of the movie is clear; India cannot tolerate atrocities on it. It can bounce back.

The story of the movie takes place in London. The father of I once says that “people come to England dreaming for a better life, but after coming here, one has to meet tragedies. God! Let none have such time” (16:10 – 16:25). Attack on Indians is very common in London. There is a police officer who wants to help the family. But, Indians are afraid of Skin Heads, a ruffian, racist organization which believes that Whites are above all; Asians or Africans. They are the best, great, and pure. I retaliates whenever the family members are in trouble. But, because of the family members’ fear, he does not get any support. However, in the end, he settles his score with the Skin Heads in a duel with its head thereby bringing the nasty practice of harassing Indians to an end.

It is vital to note that nowhere in the movie, the protagonist is given a name. He is referred to as only ‘I’ which means ‘Indian.’ He is portrayed as an angry young

man who explodes whenever injustice is meted out to his kith and kin. There is a hint in the film that he has been brought to London as he did the same in India, the attitude that used to trouble his aged father. There is no mention of his mother throughout the film. Whenever he is asked to calm down or go with the wind, he asserts that he can't live compromising his ideals. If he wants to live, it is only keeping his head high, with due self-respect. He maintains that dignity till the end, and gets ready to leave London when he is made seek forgiveness from Skin Heads. He is proud to be an Indian and always wants to be so.

The movie also shares the idea of brotherhood. There are two Pakistani characters Aslam and his sister Noor. Aslam is a gym trainer who in the beginning has some understanding with Cane, the head of Skin Heads. He hates Indians and once tries to kill I at the behest of Cane. Later, there grows friendship between Aslam and I. Even Noor falls in love with I. I changes Aslam. He convinces Aslam that Cane, a British, wants to take the advantage of the historic enmity between people of India and Pakistan. They can fight against Skin Heads if they unite. Aslam is killed by Skin Heads when he retaliates against them and in the end Noor who is left alone unites with I. There is a clear cut message that being neighbours, India and Pakistan should stop spewing venom at each other and develop a mutual congenial relationship.

Another movie that speaks of NRIs is *Salaam Namaste* (2005). The story takes place in Australia unlike other diasporic movies which concentrate only on America or Britain. The movie does not speak India as a nation that is too traditional. This movie through its characters tries to project India as a nation that is advanced, independent and progressive.

The movie was considered a bit ahead of its time. It speaks about a relationship out of wedlock. Live-in relationship is not common in India. But, the NRI Amber and Nick decide to live together without getting married. The concept is bit bold but people had no qualms in receiving it. If all other Indian characters have anglicised names, Amber is the only one in the movie who has not changed her name. Even though her friends call her Amby, she loves calling herself Amber.

The movie is not so emotional towards the parental love. It does not show anything about Nick's parents and there is only passing reference to Amber's parents. But there is no great union with the parents. It does not even talk of greatness of India or its customs, traditions, culture etc. However, love turning into marriage and rearing of kids together are some Indian ideas that are exhibited in the movie.

There is not much to be talked about India or Indians in the movie. The feelings that Nick, Amber have at the end can be close to what Indians feel. The emotional nation is not constructed in the movie.

Apart from the main characters, only one more, the NRI Jaggu Yadav's character can be paid attention. He is a Bihari. He does not like Indians. For him, only two kinds of Indians exist; one, who can't be trusted and the other who can't be tolerated. He considers himself an Australian who was an Indian in the past. He has married a White lady and behaves like a patriarch speaking bad English. As he is portrayed as a comic character, his attitude towards Indians is not paid attention by the viewers.

There is also a minor NRI character worth mentioning. He is Deepan Nair, the owner of the radio station where Amber works. Nair is a typical Keralite. He cannot

pronounce Amber's name properly, he calls her Humber. His Hindi has Malayalam influence. This is a stereotypical representation of South Indians in Hindi movies.

The last movie in the study is *London Dreams* (2009). Even though, the whole movie does not take up the concepts of nation and gender as such, through a few characters we can try to assess them. There are three major and two minor characters. Arjun and Mannu are two childhood friends in India. Arjun wants to be an acclaimed musician but his family members do not want him to be a musician as his grandfather had committed suicide because of the disgrace he had to experience in London. However, Arjun goes to London at an early age to pursue his dream. Mannu stays back in his village in India. He is a carefree guy who does not pay much of attention to his life.

Arjun becomes a noted musician in London in his youth. He invites Mannu also to London to assist him. But, Mannu gets attention of the public very soon because of his intrinsic talent in music. Arjun not only loses his popularity but also the girl whom he wanted to marry to Mannu. He gets jealous. In an attempt to destroy Mannu out of jealousy, he destroys himself as well. But, he realizes his mistakes, and everything is set right in the end.

Arjun is an NRI. Much of his life is spent in London. He is ambitious and talented but selfish. He has sweated a lot to earn his success. As he has lost a lot to earn name and fame, he is not ready to accept defeat easily. He wants to retain all the glories he has earned by destroying his innocent friend. He has no remorse to do so. He repents for his actions, but only at the end.

Mannu on the other hand is very innocent. He is born talented in music. He trusts Arjun completely and cannot expect any wicked deeds from him. He returns to India when he comes to know about Arjun's dreams. He is an Indian, so cannot have any negative characteristics in him.

Priya is also an NRI but is born and brought up in a conservative Iyer family in London. Her father has interest in classical music whereas she is devoted towards pop music. Like most of the Hindi movies, Priya's role is only complimentary to the theme of the movie. She is an appendage to the main characters. Her presence or absence doesn't make much difference to the overall theme.

The two minor characters are from Pakistan. They are also musician brothers. If one is designed to be good. The other is bad. They are supplementary roles and do not have much role to play in the movie. Overall, the movie tries to project that a person can be selfish if he is bred in an alien nation whereas a person from India can be inborn talented, innocent and filled with all the virtues of life.

Conclusion

The diasporic Hindi films began to gain popularity with *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995). The initial movies that were produced immediately after globalization dealt with the concept of nation, nationalism and gender. They tried to construct India for the expatriate Indians which was traditional, most of the times and rarely modern. The movies projected India as a nation that was morally and spiritually strong. If the characters from India were portrayed as virtuous, most NRI characters were shown as influenced by the greed and selfishness of the West. It was not just the patriotism that compelled the producers to portray India in such a way. More than

patriotism, it was the money involved in terms of dollars and pounds that was responsible for such projection. The chapter has tried to study what kind of nation was constructed by diasporic Hindi movies.

CHAPTER V

FOREGROUNDING GENDER IN DIASPORIC HINDI CINEMA

Introduction

In the YouTube video on Sex and Gender, Savita Singh tries to ponder on the difference and relationship between the two concepts. She asserts that the identification of man-woman on the basis of physical attributes is sex. But, the society attributes certain qualities to both men and women. It constructs men and women and assigns specific roles to both. Such way of construction influences the construction of the modern state, economy, bureaucracy, educational institutions and social relations (Singh 4:50-5:30). But, then the construction does not stop there. There is a power relation underneath the politics of gender construction. Women's inferiority compared to men is guaranteed by the patriarchy itself (5:35-5:43).

Ann Oakley, in her book *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972) throws light on the significance of understanding the concept of gender so as to understand the origins of women's oppression in patriarchal societies. She asserts that women's natural inferiority is constructed culturally, socially and politically. She calls it gendering of women as domestic creature, weak and inferior to men (qtd. in Singh 8:25-8:56). Singh argues that through the fixed gender roles, women are oppressed and ostracized in various ways.

The general controversy about whether sex differences in personality and behaviour are innate or learned will probably rage fiercely for many years to come, but it is obvious that culture plays a major role in shaping male and female personality

(Okley 77). Women are always expected to be traditional and carriers of family values. Men are not expected to do them. They are expected to be the decision makers of family.

The assignment of gender roles starts at an early age for children. Boys are asked to empty rubbish, clean ashtray and empty waste baskets whereas the girls are instructed to wash dishes, make beds and lay tables (Okley 176). These roles are furthered by the society as they grow. Physical strength, aggressiveness, the ability to prove oneself, legally or illegally – are believed to be the ideal qualities of a man. Similarly, women are expected to be faithful, docile, coy and beautiful to get acceptance in a family or society. Interestingly, her roles are decided even by external agents like advertisements and films.

‘Gender is a social construct whereas sex is biological.’ This popular notion has been often cited and discussed repeatedly in the academic circles. Cinema, a major entertainment medium in the modern world, tries to create gender roles to suit the expectations of the audience involving certain amount of politics as well. Most of the times, these roles represent the local flavours. But, after the onset of globalization, when cinema began to cross borders, there were changes in the construction of gender roles. Then, the roles had to serve the expectations of the global audience for a major commercial venture like Hindi cinema. Not everything was changed when it came to representation of women onscreen. Most of the times, they were cast in the moulds of tradition and sometimes in the mould of modernity. But, in whatever role, their bodies were never stopped from commodifying. The projection was/has been to satisfy the male gaze.

Internationally acclaimed actress Tannisha Chatterjee is of the opinion that the crisis of feminine commodification has gone from bad to worse in recent years. She opines, “Bollywood (Hindi film industry) doesn’t treat women with dignity. Having said that, I insist no moral policing should happen. But we as artistes should not carry on the heaving and thrusting as things that audiences want” (qtd. in Sonowal 23-24). With the passage of time, the industry is welcoming female artists who are more educated and more modern in outlook. But, the problem of commodification is growing more, rather than becoming less. The problem of stereotyping is also continuing, unfortunately, with the silent approval of female artists. When life is centred around money, when everyone wishes to have a materialistic, selfish life, when everything is commodified and most importantly when the industry is male dominated, these things are expected to happen.

Gender roles in Hindi cinema, particularly, diasporic Hindi cinema have become a site of study for film critics and academicians as they represent the agenda of a filmmaker. Through a cinema, a director tries to project the ideas shared by majority. Roles are created in such a way too. However, one’s ideologies intervene in the portrayal of gender roles in a movie, especially diasporic Hindi cinema which is watched, enjoyed and studied by film enthusiasts around the world. The cinema is turning out to be a major cultural ambassador for expatriates who have spread across the globe.

The diasporic Hindi cinema tries to negotiate between the home and the world. In this scenario, construction of gender roles is a topic worth studying. It is so because the world is changing fast with time. People are moving with the changing times. Do films go with the pace with which the world is changing is a question worth

enquiring. The gender roles that are created in the movies; do they represent the reality found around or do they remain relevant with the passage of time? The present chapter tries to find answers for these questions.

The present chapter pays much attention to the study of women characters found in diasporic Hindi cinemas produced by resident Indian directors. Hindi cinema or Indian cinema has always been male-centric, masculine in nature and hence more attention will be paid for women characters. Male characters will also be studied but not with so much of attention as most roles are stereotypical in nature. Attempt will also be made to study women characters created by Non Resident Indian women directors in their movies.

According to Asita Bali, every society in its own way has time and again stated the way in which women should look like or the role she should play. Irrespective of the culture, women across have followed these rules and abided by them so as to get accepted in the society (Bali 93). Cinema which is a reflection of the society tries to bring them before the people sometimes, in an imaginary way and most of the times, akin to reality. As it is already noted, if sex is biological, gender is social. The aim of the present chapter is also to study how these gender roles are constructed in diasporic Hindi cinema.

According to Rachel Dwyer, Indian cinema's roots lie in many art forms (theatre, music, painting, photography, literature, dance, storytelling) as well as other aspects of culture that were stimulated by the colonial encounter and the new media that developed during the nineteenth century (qtd. in Bali 97). Women have always been expected to uphold the values of Indian culture and tradition by the male dominated society. They are given such an upbringing from their childhood. Any

digression in the rules of tradition is considered a blot on the family in particular and society in general. Hindi cinema, including the diasporic Hindi cinema tries to cast women in such moulds that it is impossible for them to escape from these stereotypical portrayals. As observed by Gokulsing and Dissanayake, the stereotypical portrayal of women in Indian cinema is mainly due to historical and cultural reasons (qtd. in Sonowal 23).

According to Sharpe, Bollywood (Hindi film) heroines commonly serve an iconic function in representing family values that the Western decadence and materialism have undermined (Sharpe 62). At the same time, there is also argument that after the globalization, when the west entered right into the middle of the middle class homes, there was apprehension among the people as to decide what is Indian and what is western? Or what happens to the tradition and customs that had been practiced so far in the developing nation? Women, who had been the torchbearers of Indian customs and traditions; will they change or remain same. When films portray them, how will they be presented on screen? According to Bali, post liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG), Indian film industry started attuning itself to the female body representation of the West to address the diaspora's audience. The kind of actresses which were selected to represent woman were young and western in origin and were also expected to match the body type of the western society and norm (Bali 102). Preity Zinta in *Salaam Namaste* (2005) can be taken as an example here.

The study of gender roles in the present chapter begins with the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and ends with *London Dreams* (2009). A total of 11 movies produced in a span of 15 years are taken for the study, which are made by

resident Indian directors. Partial reference would be made to *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and *Purab aur Pachhim* (1970).

Women as torch-bearers of tradition

The Indian society has always thrust the onus of carrying its long held customs and traditions on women's shoulder. If men negotiate with the outside World, women have to take care of the affairs of the Home. According to Pande,

Women in India are deeply embedded in the sociocultural moorings and belief systems that are ingrained in historical antecedents and mythical/religious narratives. Patriarchy, power hierarchies and gendered perceptions are the fundamentals of these narratives. Although Indian culture in reality is immensely diverse and heterogeneous with no uniform template, the patriarchal social order tends to dominate the overarching frame. The paradox is that, within this framework, women have been considered important agents in sustaining Indian culture and tradition, functioning as nodal points in the patriarchal family structure. Notwithstanding a subservient position in a culture riddled with patriarchy, women have been the bearers of tradition and transmitters of culture to the next generation. (Pande 7)

When compared to the resident Indian women, the onus of carrying the burden is even more on NRI women. Interestingly, most diasporic Hindi movies try to project female protagonists as digressing from the Indian culture and tradition. A male protagonist is there to bring her back to the boundaries of these values.

The women who are born and brought up in an alien nation, are shown usually as having fallen into the grip of a consumer capitalist society where attaining physical

pleasure seems to be the sole aim of life. These women are seen wearing modern attire attending parties in night clubs and pubs. They do not hesitate to consume alcohol or smoke cigarettes. At times, they are promiscuous in nature too.

This kind of portrayal began with the very first diasporic Hindi movie, *Purab aur Pachim* (1981). According to Jyothika Virdi, the film explicitly manifests the ideology mythifying the “essence” of Indian womanhood (Virdi 63). Preeti who has developed all the vices of the West, in the end, gains back all the Indian qualities and return to India never to return to England. Virdi assesses this transformation as:

Preeti’s gradual transformation leads her to reflect on the East/West divide. She is struck by the devotion of the family servant’s wife, who waits forty years in her home village before her husband brings her to the city, and by Bharat’s female childhood friend who never confesses her love for him, constrained by an appropriate coyness. Preeti’s brother Shankar, a *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* cult member, expounds on *lajja* and *sharam* (coyness and shame), the “rare jewels” the Indian woman possesses. (Virdi 64)

Bharat with his Indianness influences Preeti in London so much that she falls in love with him and wants to marry him. But she is not ready to reside in India. Bharat agrees to her proposal but on one condition. She has to visit India once. On arrival, Preeti is inspired by the Indian way of life to such an extent that she quits all her Western habits and transforms herself to an Indian bride to the core. According to Virdi, the errant girl (Preeti) finds her origin, embraces Indian womanhood – that defining essence of Indianness – proving Bharat’s thesis about: “*apne yahaan ki mitti kuch aise hai ajnabi ko bhi sanskar sikha deti hai*” (the soil of the (Indian) land is such that even a stranger learns its culture) (Virdi 64-65). But, it is vital here to know

that this *sanskar* (culture) is learnt only by an NRI woman like Preeti. Neither Harnaam (the first generation of NRI who has gone to England in greed of wealth) nor his son Omkar learn this fast. In the beginning, Harnaam still speaks of the attraction money has. His son Omkar drinks, smokes, slaps his mother, thrashes and even kills his grandfather without any remorse. Indian soil does not change him till the end even though his father changes in the end as he belonged to the nation.

There are few other women characters in the movie worth studying. But, these characters are from India. These are kept to juxtapose the character of Preeti. There is young Gopi who has grown with Bharat in the same house and who has developed love towards him. But, due to shyness, she has never expressed it before him. She has worn *shararm* (coyness), the rare jewel throughout her life and ultimately, she marries the one whom she does not love. Her grandfather trusts her so much that he fixes her marriage date without even asking her opinion. Gopi does not have any problem with it. The character of Gopi is created in such a way that Indian women never have any say in decisions that could affect their life. To some extent, it is true with most Indian women even to this day.

There are two radical women characters in the movie. One is Ganga and the other is Kousalya. Ganga is the mother of Bharat. She loses her patriotic husband Om to the bullets of British. She gives birth to Bharat soon after the death of Om. When she is asked to remove *sindhoor* (*bindi*) which is the symbol of *suhaagan* (Indian wife whose husband is alive), she says that she can't do that as her patriotic husband will live forever. By wiping her *sindhoor* she does not want to disgrace her husband's sacrifice. She asserts that she will wear it till her end. Her father-in-law praises her for

such bold attitude saying she was *suhaagan*, she is *suhaagan* and she will remain a *suhaagan* till the end (*Purab aur Pachhim* 00:10:20 – 00:11:25).

On the other hand, there is Kousalya, Ganga's sister-in-law who comes to know that Om was killed due to her husband Harnaam's treason. She considers Ganga as a blessed one as she still has *sindhoor* in spite the death of her husband. But, she believes that she is like a widow even though her husband is alive. He is a traitor and his life is equal to death. When she boldly shares this opinion with Harnaam, he gets angry and wants her to remove that holy *sindhoor* from her forehead, which she removes without any hesitation (*Purab aur Pachhim* 00:11:25 – 00:13:15). She wears *sindhoor* again only when Harnaam returns to India from England after couple of decades and repents for his life long misdeeds.

There is one more minor character in the form of Sharma's cook; wife of Lalchand. She has been living in Benaras since her marriage that took place in her childhood days. But, Lalchand is in London with Sharma to fulfil the last wish of his father. The father had asked him to serve Sharma like Hanuman and he should never desert him. As Sharma did not visit India for almost forty years, Lalchand could not visit his wife in Benaras. She has spent her whole life waiting for her husband to return from London. She is united with the husband only in the end when Sharmas visit India at the behest of Bharat. She is old now, but happy to be united with the husband. Preethi's brother Shankar tells her that "only in India a wife waits for her husband for forty years. He has understood India, now better she too understands it" (*Purab aur Pachhim* 02:43: 00 – 02:43:10).

The four Indian women characters are placed against the character of Preeti to show how strong Indian values are. It is these values that bring a transformation in

her. She sheds her temporary worn Western identity and succeeds in redeeming her Indian identity. However, her mother Rita who believes that India is a beggars' nation, finally has to remain in India as neither her husband nor daughter is ready to return to England. The movie suggests that even she has to change and the soil of India will change her.

Voices of protest among women in diasporic Hindi cinema

Even though, the world of Hindi cinema is patriarchal in nature and women are portrayed as submissive, weak and meek, rarely women do raise voices of protest. But, most of the times the voices come from older women rather than young. According to Purnima Mankekar, films such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and *Pardes* creatively deploy feminism – bourgeois feminism – using a woman-centered discourse that gained widespread currency in the Indian middle class, thanks in no small part to the women's movement's efforts (qtd. in Viridi 198). The two movies mentioned bring to fore women's voices of protest.

Baldev of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is an authoritative husband and father. Both his wife and daughters do not dare to raise voice against his decisions. However, contrary to his wishes, Simran, his daughter falls in love with a boy whom Baldev dislikes in London. When she divulges this scary detail with the mother, she asks her to forget her lover as the father will never approve this alliance. The mother says,

“When I was young, I was told that both men and women are equal. I grew up believing the same. But, with the passage of time, I came to know that the idea was a flat lie. I had to stop studying so that I facilitate my brothers’. It was my

first sacrifice. Then at each stage, I sacrificed as a daughter, a sister and a wife. But, when you were born, I made a promise to myself. I told myself that my daughters would never make these sacrifices that I have made. What if she is a girl, she will live life as she wishes. She will get all the happiness of her share. But, I was wrong. I had forgotten that women cannot even make promises. She is born so that she could sacrifice herself to men because men will never sacrifice anything for women...” (*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* 01:38:00 – 01:40:00)

But the same mother, when realizes the matured love that exists between the young lovers, recalls the promise she had made herself. She supports her daughter Simran in her difficult times. She asks her to elope with her beloved Raj. She even compels Raj to escape from the place as no one will understand their insane love. She is now ready to stand against her husband. She does not want her daughter to make any sacrifice for the sake of others’ happiness.

A similar situation is also found in *Pardes*. But, here the voice is not of a mother but a grandmother. Ganga, the female protagonist, is invited by the NRI Kishorilal to America so that she understands the American way of life of his family, especially of his son Rajeev whom she is supposed to marry. To Ganga’s dismay, things go awry and she is forced to return to India to protect her chastity. Arjun, the foster son of Kishorilal, brings Ganga to India. He has developed interest in Ganga but he has no intention of snatching Ganga from Rajeev. Kishorilal and Suraj Dev, in a fit of rage and sense of getting cheated by Arjun and Ganga, reach them to punish. The mother and grandmother of Ganga too reach the place to avert any mishap. In an emotional outburst, Ganga asserts that marrying Rajeev is like drinking poison. But, if

her father wishes so, she will happily drink the poison. But, the grandmother intervenes and asks Ganga, “Why should you drink poison? For centuries, women have been doing the same. First, listen to parents, then to husband, then to children. You won’t drink poison.” (*Pardes* 02:54:56 – 02:55:10). And then confronting Kishorilal who wanted Ganga to be his daughter-in-law, she tells, “You wanted to take Ganga of India, wanted her to settle in America. Why should Ganga, Indian Ganga go to America where nothing matches? Why should she go to such an alien land?” (*Pardes* 02:55:20 – 02:55:50). However, in a turn of events, Kishorilal asserts that he will still take Ganga to America but not as a bride to his son Rajeev but as a bride to his foster son Arjun.

NRI women in diasporic Hindi cinema

NRI women in diasporic Hindi cinema are cast usually in clichéd, stereotypical moulds. They are portrayed antithetical to the virtuous Indian women characters. If Indian women have the onus of carrying the baggage of their tradition and culture on their shoulders, NRI women have to wear their anti-Indian traits on their sleeve. They have to be prototype western women so that they are shunned by the viewers. For an acceptance from the audience, either they have to change and return to India, or they can choose to remain in an alien country with the same western vices. An examination of NRI women characters in diasporic Hindi cinema is made in the following paragraphs.

The first female character from a diasporic Hindi cinema in the post liberalized context is Simran from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. She is a girl who is born and brought up in London. Her father is a traditionalist who has abundant respect for the Indian way of life. He practices it inside and even outside the home and

expects the same from his family members. But Simran, who is born and brought up in London, has to negotiate between the home and the world. If life inside the home is Indian, outside it is completely western. Hence, she can only be a combination of both the ways of life. It is visible in her life style.

Even though, Simran is seen wearing traditional dresses, following the traditional ways of life at home; behaving like a shy, father-feared girl at home; she is shown as a carefree, fun-loving girl when she goes to Eurail tour with her friends. She does not stop herself from wearing modern dresses and at times she is also seen as a scantily clad woman. She is portrayed as if she is trying to come to terms with the western modernity. She experiments with the act of boozing once, and as she is not used to it, loses her consciousness too. When she gets up in the morning in a changed attire, she is unable to recall how she landed up in an unknown place. She suspects Raj, her new friend to have played pranks with her. She even assumes that he has seduced her. The girl who was bold enough to booze, roam in modern attire, suddenly behaves like a true Indian, traditional, old-fashioned girl who cares too much about her chastity.

As Pavitra Sundar observes, “purity” for women in Hindi cinema is fundamentally about their sexuality. When the heroine falls in love, she gives her heart and soul to her hero but does not engage in sex before marriage (marriage being her destiny). This quasi-spiritual idea of love and the moral strictures on female eroticism do not keep women’s bodies from being fetishized in film visuals and dialogues (Sundar 148). *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is not different. The film fits well into this argument. The movie at times shows the heroine Kajol as an object of male gaze. She is seen wearing revealing clothes outside home and once, only

wearing a towel at home. The song *mere kwabon mein jo aaye*, where she is pictured so, has been studied by various critics pondering on these topics.

Sameera is another NRI character from the movie *Ramji Londonwaley* (2005). She is a typical NRI who is born and brought up in London. Throughout the movie, there is no mention of her parents, but she lives with her grandmother. According to Ramji, the protagonist from India, she wears 'little dress.' Sameera is shown to be an independent girl who does not trust easily any strangers as told by her grandmother. She works as a travel agent in London and she is in a relationship with Jai, a lawyer of Indian origin. But, the intelligent and independent Sameera fails to identify the true motive of the person with whom she has developed a relation. She comes to know that Jai is already married only through Ramji. It leaves her heartbroken after which she begins to develop affinity towards the naïve cook from India, Ramji whom she had abhorred so far.

Sameera has no emotional bond with India. She does not even claim to be the torch bearer of Indian traditions and customs. But, she is not shown as a lady who takes pleasure in hedonistic activities of the West. She is nowhere seen as a lady who gives priority to worldly pleasures. In the whole movie, audience do not see even a single scene from a beachside, or a pub, night club etc., which are shown usually as pleasure seeking places filled with pleasure giving activities like drinking, dancing etc. The character of Sameera is in complete contrast to Preeti of *Purab aur Pachhim*, Simran of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, Lovelyn of *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*, Jasmeet of *Namastey London*, Naina of *Kal Ho Na Ho*, Rhea and Maya of *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* who all are NRI characters and who involve themselves at one or other point of time with pleasure seeking activities of the West.

Outwardly, Sameera may be an NRI, but inside she has the emotions of an Indian woman. When Sameera finds out that her fiancé Jai has already married, she is broken very much. She cannot believe that she is cheated. She was always independent and she would not believe anyone easily. But, she had believed Jai very much and when her trust was breached, she takes time to come out of it.

When she had to involve herself in a false marriage with Ramji for his benefit, she argues with Jai that it will not be easy for her as she is in relationship with him. She agrees to the marriage only after lot of insistence from Jai and her friends. But, once she comes to know about the crookedness of Jai, she shifts her attention to Ramji who is very innocent and not so educated. In the end, when the time comes for Ramji's exit from London, she gets ready to go with him to India, a country that she has never visited. Her feelings lead her to take such a big decision of her life. Emotionally, in these aspects, she seems to be closer to Indian women.

Lovelyn of *Aa Ab Laut Chale* is another NRI character worth studying. The character is portrayed as a temptress, a vamp who is born and brought up in America. Vikrant Kishore observes the role of vamps in Hindi cinema. He states:

Bollywood cinema has exploited the vamp's character in almost every film, characterising them as mean, seductive, coquette and vixenish, characterless and promiscuous. Since the lead actresses in the early Bollywood cinema were mainly shown as virtuous and morally upright people, the vamp characters fulfilled the requirement of the eroticised, fetishized and sexualised imagery for the male gaze. (Kishore 141)

The character of Lovelyn suits the above description completely. There is no sight of her parents throughout the movie. According to her, her father has made her abundant fortune. Her life is filled with fun-filled, pleasure-seeking activities. She has nothing to do except spending time in smoking, boozing and attending parties. She sings, dances in scantily clad body. She does not stick to one partner. Her role is no better than that of a seductress. Her sole motto of life seems to be enjoying it to the most.

The character of Lovelyn is a replication of Preeti of *Purab aur Pachhim*. Both these characters are prototypes of western women. However, the portrayal is stereotypical. If the eastern characters are filled with virtues, the western characters are portrayed in dark light. If Preeti attains redemption in *Purab aur Pachhim*, Lovelyn is left with no such option. Preeti returns to India whereas Lovelyn stays in America. Nowhere does she speak of her origins. Hence, there is no return back to India. Rohan, the protagonist, once tells her that coyness is women's ornaments. She cannot remove them and adopt shamelessness and heartlessness. But, Lovelyn answers that she has those traits (boozing, partying, boldness etc.) in her culture. If they are not in his culture, it is not her fault. If Rohan wants to marry her, he has to change, he has to adapt to her culture (*Aa Ab Laut Chale* 1:54:40 – 1: 55:05). But, Rohan says that their cultures have difference of earth and the sky. He cannot marry her and leaves her. After that there is no reference to Lovelyn in the movie.

Through the character of Lovelyn, the American society is portrayed as a society that pays attention to material pleasure rather than human relationships. Pooja, the female protagonist from India has a sojourn in America. During her stay, she changes a few NRIs who are bitten by the western, selfish life style and returns to

India. But, Lovelyn as she does not consider herself to be an Indian has to remain in America. The hidden meaning of such portrayal is that the virtuous Indian people can change the vice nature in NRIs, but the vice NRIs cannot affect the virtuous Indians and draw them towards an alien culture.

Anjali of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (2001) has a dual role to play in the movie. In the first half of the movie, she is in India and in the second half, she is shifted to London. However, she always carries her culture and tradition wherever she goes, even to England. Much of her role has been spoken about in the previous chapter. In contrast to her 'model Indian' role, we have another character Pooja, Anjali's sister. Both Anjali and Pooja are born and brought up in Delhi's *Chandni Chowk*. After Anjali's troubled marriage with Rahul, the couple shifts to London taking the adolescent Pooja with it. However, after a few years, when Pooja is seen in London, she is seen as a completely changed adult. The audience have to suspend their disbelief while accepting the characters of Pooja and Rohan, Rahul's brother as there is no match between the adolescent and adult characters.

When adult Pooja is seen for the first time in the movie in London, we see her in complete contrast to Anjali. The depiction is stereotypical in nature. If Anjali always wears *sari*, a dress to mark the culture and tradition of India, the NRI Pooja is seen in revealing western attires. She does not care to eat properly as most of her time is spent before mirror paying much attention to her makeup and to keep the body slim. She does not want to be called *mousi*, a Hindi word meaning aunt, before English by her nephew. She likes herself to be called *Poo* but not Pooja. She has lot of attitude and treats men lowly. She has two unnecessary songs to showcase her dancing skills. Pooja loses her importance in the movie after the arrival of Rohan, Rahul's brother in

London. Pooja assists him to unite with his brother and in turn to bring the whole family together. Prominence of her role ends there.

Another important NRI female character is Amber from *Salaam Namaste* (2005). Amber is not a typical Indian. Her character is culturally defiant and unconventional. She is ahead of her time. She is modern, progressive. She doesn't care much for her parents. She leads a selfish life very independently. She takes her decisions boldly without consulting others. Decisions like living together or having baby out of wedlock are very uncommon on Indian screen. But, Amber involves in them might be because she is living in an alien land with progressive ideas. However, she is no Shakuntala of Mahabharata here. She doesn't want to abandon her unborn kids. But, at the time of suffering, she repents. She brings in *Karma*. She thinks that she is paying for her sins, selfish attitude. Intentionally or unintentionally, the director of the movie allows these Indian concepts to creep in. The Indian touch to the characters is undeniable.

Gangopadyay quotes Sathain to evaluate the diasporic female roles in one of her articles. She notes:

In reality we see two diasporic women: one who travels independently and is therefore fiercely non-conformist, and the other who travels to follow and is subordinate to her husband. Bollywood traditionally prefers to represent the latter as the desirable diasporic woman, but more recent films have allowed the first type to play the protagonist, perhaps indicating a slow acceptance of female autonomy in the diaspora. (qtd. in Gangopadyay 5)

The character of Amber fits neatly into the first kind of female character that has been referred to in the above article.

Rhea and Maya are two NRI characters from the movie *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (2006). The plot of the movie takes place in New York. Not even a single shot is from India. The movie concentrates only on the theme 'love in marriage and love outside the marriage.' It does not offer the spectators the doses of nation or gender directly. Concepts of Indian-ness, patriotism, return to roots etc. do not find place in the movie. There is no mention whether the characters are first generation NRIs or the second or the third. The theme of the movie 'extra marital affair' is a bold selection. It may be for this reason, the plot takes place elsewhere and not in India as in India, the concept is not openly accepted.

Conflicts in the gender roles are portrayed in the movie. As gender is a social construct, both men and women, especially, women are expected to stick to their prescribed roles. Any diversion from the roles would mean sacrilege and the repercussions can be disastrous. Women are expected to remain within the four walls of the house cooking food for the family while the men are there to work and earn outside the premises of home.

Rhea and Dev are a married couple. Theirs is a love marriage. Dev is a soccer player. But, when Dev loses ability to play because of an accident, Rhea has to take the reins of household responsibilities. Now, she remains the sole earning member of the family and Dev grows bitter towards her due to his inability to contribute anything financially for the family. Moreover, a workaholic Rhea goes on acquiring success in her profession but at the cost of her family. Due to her busy work schedule, she can't pay much attention to her son or her husband. But, whenever she finds time, she does

not fail to take care of them. But, the already bitter Dev finds faults with Rhea for her inability to provide enough time for the family members. At times, when Rhea asserts that she has to do it for the sake of the wellbeing of the family, he loses patience. The marriage starts breaking for the reason. There would not have been any problem if Dev was earning and Rhea was toiling within the four walls of the house. The couple, especially, Rhea pays a heavy price for violating the norms of the stereotypical gender roles. She loses her husband for another lady. Hence, transgressing the limits prescribed by the society is never tolerated and a woman not a man has to pay price for it is the stereotypical formula adopted by not only diasporic Hindi cinema but Indian cinema in general. The woman may be an uneducated and rural, or educated and urban. There is no escape from the punishment. The character of Rhea can be compared with Amber of *Salaam Namaste*.

Another character Maya from the same movie has a similar story to tell. She is the wife of her childhood friend Rishi Talwar. She marries him against her own wishes, as she has been reared by Rishi's father since her childhood. After a few years of her marriage, she falls in love with Dev, Rhea's husband, who has grown bitter towards life for his inability to achieve anything. When both Dev and Maya share the detail of their love with their partners, they are thrown out of home. Still, Dev and Maya lie each other that their partners have pardoned them and life has to move on. The Indian familial and sentimental reasons stop each other to be frank. As they have transgressed the rules of the family, they are punished and live separately for three years before the dramatic union in the end. Both the women, Rhea and Maya are punished for not being normative. But, the same does not happen to men. Rishi marries another lady and Dev gets back Maya, though after suffering for some time.

There are hints that Rhea will also marry but she also has a son to take care of. The patriarchal rules laid down by the society are clearly visible in the movie.

Jasmeet aka Jazz is the leading NRI female character from the movie *Namastey London* (2005). Her character is also a replication of the character Preeti of *Puab aur Pachhim* (1970). Jazz is born and brought up in London and does not have any connection with India except that she has Indian parents. She has never visited it and she does not want to visit it. As influenced by the culture of the West, she leads a carefree life which is abhorred by her father. She seems to be well educated. She works in London and enjoys taking her decisions independently. She rejects all the Indian grooms by trick as she does not like them. She calls herself a British and so she wants to marry her flirt English boss who is a three time divorcee. Like Preeti she enjoys partying but here, against her father's wishes.

However, similar to Preeti Jasmeet too attains redemption in the end. Preeti attains it after coming to India but Jasmeet attains it in London before coming to India permanently. Leading male protagonist Arjun changes Jasmeet through his selfless and *saccha pyar* (true love). In a dramatic turn of events, on the day of her wedding, Jasmeet decides to return to India with Arjun whom she had already married in India just to please her father. The British Jazz will have to change as the Indian Jasmeet. The movie speaks much about the concept of nation rather than gender.

There is another minor character in the form of Jasmeet's mother Bebo Malhotra. She is a struggling wife and mother who tries to establish herself as an NRI. She can't shed her Indian traits and adapt to the alien culture of the alien land. Even though she works with her husband in his boutique, she cannot speak English properly. Her husband who is intrigued by the western ways of his daughter blames

Bebo for it. He tells her that ‘You couldn’t become a *mem* and you are trying to make Jasmeet a *mem*,’ which means a fashionable, modern and western cultured lady of England. The husband and wife argue and accuse each other for Jasmeet’s western way of living (*Namastey London* 28:30 – 30:00). The older couple’s dilemma to adapt itself to a new country and its raging modernity throwing back the rich legacy of tradition can be seen. Similarly, the children belonging to the second and subsequent generation of NRIs who readily accept the alien country and its culture as their own are explained in the movie. But, when they stand face to face with the Indian culture and tradition, they do undergo transition. Even though it is a repetitive factor in many diasporic Hindi films, the audience will enjoy the factor as they always like the NRIs to return to their roots.

The conflicting ideas of tradition and modernity are also seen in the movie *London Dreams* (2009). But, not much thrust is given to these elements in the movie especially to the female characters. The leading lady is Asin playing the role of Priya Zaveri. Her father is a typical south Indian who has interest in *kathakkali* dance but the girl enjoys western music and dance. Even after being a traditionalist, she falls in love with an Indian talented singer and marries him. The audience are not told whether the family approves this relationship or not. Except these couple of common factors, the movie does not show anything about the lady.

Soothing Indian female characters

In comparison with the NRI female characters, the diasporic Hindi cinemas present Indian women characters which are portrayed as prototypes of Indian women who wear the customs and traditions of the land on their sleeves. They stand sharply in contrast with the NRI female characters that are analysed in detail. These women

characters spread the aroma of Indianness in the alien countries and they awake the forgotten sense of being an Indian among a few NRI characters and return to India or stay back in the alien country.

Number of such characters is very less but it makes a valid study. The attempt is to analyse how these characters are constructed in diasporic Hindi cinema.

The second vital diasporic Hindi movie in the post globalized scenario *Pardes* (1997) has Ganga as the female lead character. Ganga is a typical Indian girl who is born and brought up in Dehradun. The very name Ganga is associated with purity in the Indian context. It is a much revered and widely accepted belief that the river Ganga purges one of all the sins if the person takes immersion in it. The lead character Ganga is invited to America in the course of time. Kishorilal, a childhood friend of Ganga's father wants Ganga to marry his spoilt son so that she purges the evil influence of the west not only on him but his entire family.

It is to be noted that women are expected to be pure, chaste and flawless in the Indian context. Since time immemorial, they are treated on par with deities in theory but subdued, suppressed and oppressed in reality. The onus of carrying the nation's long preserved customs and traditions to the future generation lies on their shoulders. Men are also assigned a few responsibilities like earning for the family, taking care of the affairs of the home etc. Men do not face much problem if they fail in their duties and responsibilities. But, a woman who is given more sensitive responsibilities will be criticized harshly by the society if she digresses in her duties and responsibilities. She has multiple roles to play in her life time. She has to fit neatly to the roles of a daughter, sister, wife, sister-in-law, mother, mother-in-law and grandmother. At every stage, she has challenges to face and she has to remain victorious. Any failure will be

attributed to her lack of skills to cope with the harsh situations of life. Seetha of Ramayana and *agnipareeksha* - her trials are therefore used as metaphors to refer to harsh life of women in India.

Ganga in the movie *Pardes* has to undergo several trials and tribulations before emerging victorious in her struggles, before she proves that she is as pure as the river Ganga. When she is invited to America, she goes without qualms. The family allows her to visit America only after she is engaged to Kishorilal's son Rajeev. After going there, she finds that she has no identity. She faces anger and resentment of the westernised family at every step. In a party after her arrival in America, she is equated with *gobar* which means cow dung by Neeta, Kishorilal's sister-in-law. When she gets upset, the elderly Krishna, sister of Kishorilal, suggests her to remain calm and patient. She tells that half of the people who live in the house of Kishorilal are Indian whereas half of them are American. Due to this fact, she will be rejected time and again by the Americanized Indians and she should tolerate as she is going to be the future daughter-in-law of the family. This is going to be her test till she is accepted. Even Ganga endorses the advice saying that even her mother back home has taught her that a woman has to undergo various tests from birth till her death (*Pardes* 1:32:00 - 1:33:25). The gist of her speech is that women should learn to have patience in spite of rejection time and again.

Ganga is on a mission to purge the westernised Indians from the evil western life style. In the beginning of the movie, in a conversation with his friend Suraj Dev, Ganga's father, Kishorilal asserts that the NRIs need daughters like Ganga desperately. It is because the NRIs have thrown their children to the western kind of lifestyle so much so that even after attaining abundant success, there is a constant fear

of failure. Observing all this, one can come to the conclusion that only daughters like Ganga can be a ray of hope for them (*Pardes* 19:35- 20:52). Kishorilal utters these words of hope as he has seen Ganga as being an embodiment of Indian culture, tradition and values.

However, it is quite interesting to note that both Kishorilal and Ganga fail in their mission. Ganga cannot change Rajeev or any member of the family. No one shuns the western lifestyle. In an attempt to understand the way Americans lead their life, Ganga is taken by Rajeev to Las Vegas, a fun filled city known for its hedonistic activities. Although Ganga is seduced by the glamour and glitter of an American lifestyle, she refuses to engage in premarital sex with her fiancé (Sharpe 63). The innocent Ganga feels cheated by the false promises of Kishorilal. Contrary to the claims made, Rajeev is found to be a spoilt son of a rich American who has undiminishing interest in smoking, boozing and women. She does not and cannot accept him as her husband. But, she chooses the good Arjun as her life partner and return to America in the end as he is Indian at heart and way of life. The west remains west and the east remains east and the twine do not match in the movie.

Pooja is another vital character from the movie *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* (1999) who has a sojourn in America to bring in positive changes in the life of NRIs. Pooja is invited by her brother to America slyly so that she should marry his aged American boss Lazaaro. When Pooja refuses the proposal, she is thrown out of his house. The NRI brother and his wife are portrayed as selfish couple who has the habit of boozing and smoking even inside their house.

Once thrown out of the house, Pooja is helped by Rohan and his middle class Indian and Pakistani friends. In course of time, she gets a job in the house of Balraj

Khanna, a wealthy NRI. In spite of possessing name, fame and wealth, Balraj is a dejected man as his only son Karan has immersed himself in the American way of life. His American wife has deserted him. But, Pooja wins the heart of Balraj with her dedicated work, love and affection. She changes his physical and mental health. With Pooja's help, Balraj finds his first son from his Indian wife in the form of Rohan. With Rohan, he naturally finds his wife and father in India. In the meanwhile, his spoilt American son Karan also mends his ways and everything ends happily for the family. Pooja who is responsible for all these pleasant changes is also included in the family as Rohan and Pooja are in love. The character of Pooja is designed in such a way that she brings smiles on everyone's face wherever she goes as she is a prototype Indian girl.

Similar to *Pardes*, the NRI Balraj wants Pooja to marry his spoilt son Karan whereas Rohan loves her. However, in the end, the American spoilt son does not marry her and he too changes himself and returns to India with the father and newly found brother. In *Pardes*, Kishorilal, the patriarch takes everyone back to America whereas in *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*, everyone comes to India. As the title suggests, they all return to the home and Pooja is the main reason for the happy reunion.

Female character of *Monsoon Wedding*

After studying the diasporic Hindi movies of resident Indian directors, study of *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) is taken up as it is directed by the NRI director Meera Nair. The female protagonist of the film is studied in this part so as to know how women characters are portrayed by Nair. The plot of the movie is restricted to Delhi but people involved in the plot are mostly NRIs.

As explained earlier, two categories of women are found in diasporic Hindi cinema. The NRI women who live in a different country, and Indian women who visit an alien nation. The NRI women present in diasporic Hindi movies are the ones who are at once educated and modern. Even though they live in a different country, they will adopt Indian ways of life in the end. The second category of Indian women who visit a different country for a short time will change the hearts of many NRIs by their Indianness. In *Monsoon Wedding*, Nair has a hybrid female protagonist who is at once traditional and modern. Aditi, the female protagonist, is a blonde who is seen in a traditional sari on her wedding night. According to Sharpe, countering the tendency in Bollywood (Hindi) cinema to make the Indian woman into a receptacle of traditional Indian values, Nair centers her film on an upper-middle-class Hindu woman's desires and subjectivity (Sharpe 70). Unlike Ganga and Pooja of *Pardes* and *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*, Aditi is a lady who works in a Delhi office and she is in love with her boss, a married man. She is not averse either to kiss or have physical intimacy with her lover even though she has agreed for an arranged marriage with an NRI. *Monsoon Wedding* reveals that at the heart of the battle between tradition and modernity is not the question of a woman's sexual abstinence prior to marriage but her right to choose that is withheld through the double standards upheld for men and women (Sharpe 71).

Aditi realizes that there is no use in waiting for the married boss to divorce his wife when she finds herself in an awkward situation with him. However, she decides to come clean before she marries the NRI. She divulges everything to the fiancé who gets upset soon but later accepts her as he realizes that he too was in love with a girl once and he had not bothered to tell about the same to Aditi. In the end, both of them marry happily.

Unlike the resident Indian directors, Nair does not keep the Indian female protagonist as an embodiment of Indian virtues. She is not a woman who is coy, chaste, dutiful, faithful, and trustworthy daughter. She does not bother to smoke or drink. She has no problem with premarital physical intimacy as she thinks she loves the already married, much older guy. Nair shatters the very image of a prototype female Indian through the character of Aditi. If Nair is bold enough to present the changing upper middle class Indian female psyche, the population which is miniscule, the resident Indians try not to fiddle with such risky subjects. They take refuge in the same old stereotypical representation of the female subjects whether they are Indian or non-resident Indians.

Conclusion

Representation of gender in diasporic Hindi cinema does not bring before a researcher a Pandora's box of surprises. Most men are patriarchal in nature whereas women are cast in the stereotypical moulds. Two classes of NRI men and women are presented in diasporic Hindi movies; older and younger generation. People from the older generation are usually nostalgic about India, its culture, tradition and values that they want the younger generation to adopt. However, the NRI young generation is found to be immersed in the material pleasures of the west. They are least bothered about India and anything associated with the country. Many do not even want to visit it and accept the alien land as their own. If older people are traditional, the younger people are modern in their life and outlook. Hence, the conflict between the tradition and modernity is often seen between these two generations of people. It is with both men and women.

However, if studied separately, subtle differences can be seen in the treatment of NRI men and women. Older men are authoritative and decision makers in the houses whereas women are submissive. Even though they have moved to a different country, they are usually portrayed as shadows of Indian women who are guided by the moral code of conduct; to live as appendage to men with no voice of their own. They are strictly guided by the culture and tradition of the nation and it is their bound duty to protect the honour of the family and thereby nation by preserving its spirit intact. They live in another country carrying the burden of being 'Indians.' They cannot live in a way that will dishonour their motherland.

The younger men and women who belong to the second or subsequent generation of NRIs do not live with the burden of being Indians. Most of the characters presented in the diasporic Hindi movies, irrespective of the gender, live comfortably adapting themselves to a different nation. The nation they live in is not alien for them. It is their own, even if they are not acceptable completely in them. These men and women call themselves British, American or Australians. They have no problems living the way that is acceptable in the country but abhorred by the elders of the family. Their life is filled with hedonistic activities. Enjoying life without bothering much about morality is their motto.

However, the characters are influenced by a few other Indian characters and they will change in the end. A few of them even return to India, to their ultimate roots, finding Indian values attractive and acceptable. A few change, but remain in the alien country. Whatever may be the case, there is no escape from Indianness. Very rarely, NRI characters do not change and stick to their pleasure seeking activities but they will never come to India or they will never call themselves Indians too. Overall, the

construction of gender in diasporic Hindi movies is done stereotypically. Initially, the intention was to attract more NRI audience to not only theatres but even to their motherland. But, with the passage of time, the producers changed their attitude and altered the way films made. Even now there are diasporic Hindi movies, but one can see a complete change in the construction of gender and nation in them. There is not much of Indianness in them. They are there, like any other Hindi movies.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the years immediately following independence, Indian cinema was caught up in a collective endeavor of nation building, offering narratives that negotiated the challenges and choices facing its publics (Sarkar 50). Probably, no other cinema of any other nation in the world has ever been used for such a worthy endeavor. Cinema was introduced in India as a medium of entertainment. But, it shouldered the more vital responsibility of bringing people across the country together to stand against the colonizers in its initial days. Even to this day, cinema in India has the responsibility of showcasing traditions and customs of the nation to the world.

Well known film scholar Rachel Dwyer explains Indian cinema in the following words:

Indian cinema is now a global phenomenon, though different in scale from that of Hollywood. Outside Western Europe and the USA, it is hugely popular and is often preferred to local and Hollywood cinemas, celebrated as a non-Western form that upholds different traditions and values, in particular in its depiction of love within the larger family and a changing, often Westernizing society. (Dwyer, *Picutre abhi baki hai* 23-24)

In addition to the above mentioned qualities, popular cinema also plays the pivotal role of shaping the concrete life and abstract imagination of a large chunk of Indian populace. If the moving images on screen can push a spectator to oblivion of

the humdrum of routine, the same images can also transport the same person to the dizzying memories of nostalgia.

Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular plays multiple roles. The films cannot be neglected merely as a medium of entertainment. As any Indian film, the Hindi film is also a mighty cultural product consumed by millions of people in India and world-wide as a global media form (Dwyer, *Picutre abhi baki hai* 8). It has succeeded in creating a pan Indian aura among its spectators from not only within India but also from across the globe. Watching the Hindi films, the spectators assume themselves to be part of an imagined community of the great nation called India. Even while studying Hindi cinema, we cannot omit the influence it has on people living abroad. According to Jigna Desai, Hindi films, especially diasporic Hindi films, irrespective of their quality, can be emotionally satisfying to the first generation immigrants as they remain nostalgic about their homeland (qtd. in Swaminathan 87). Any study of Bombay Cinema (Hindi cinema) must finally address the role of this cultural form in the lives of the peoples of the Indian diaspora (Misra 235).

The present study is not based on reception of the movies by the audience as audience reception of a film cannot be predicted. It cannot be imagined that diasporic Hindi films are watched only by NRI audience. It cannot also be concluded that these films are more popular with NRI audience than resident Indians. The Hindi film *Dil Se* (1998) which is a non-diasporic Hindi cinema was more popular in the UK than with Indian audience. At the same time, most diasporic Hindi movies have been popular among Indian audience. A few Indian or Hindi movies are popular with native audience in other countries as well. Scholars such as Raminder Kaur (2005),

Rajinder Dudrah (2006) and Shakuntala Banaji (2006) have worked on Hindi films based on their reception by the NRI and also resident Indian audience.

It is quite interesting to note that Hindi cinema changed substantially in the post globalized era. Prior to globalization, Hindi cinema had the quality of a national cinema. But, it changed its outlook in the new scenario. Post globalization, it began to find novel ways of marketing to reach more global audience. According to Dwyer, it is Aditya Chopra's *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (often called DDLJ), that is really the point of departure for a new type of cinema and film practice that came to be called Bollywood (Dwyer, *Picutre abhi baki hai* 22).

In an attempt to woo the Indian diaspora which had spread across the globe, Hindi cinema changed thematically. Plots with non-resident Indian characters became common. It was so because the diaspora of late capital had then become an important market of popular cinema as well as a site for its production (Mishra 236). On the emergence of NRI genre of Hindi films, a critic comments that,

The initial production of these films was inspired by the growing potential market of overseas South Asians in a climate of economic liberalization with new opportunities for the export of Indian cinema and in a context of nationalist ideologies in Indian politics (see Brosius and Yazgi 2007). Over the years, the film narratives have suggested a variety of ways to cope with such identity crises by outrightly dismissing Western culture, emphasizing nostalgia and Indian values, promoting physical return to India, highlighting the transnational nature of Indian identities and so on. (Vandeveld 47)

For many the space occupied by the new diaspora - the space of the West - was also the desired space of wealth and luxury that gets endorsed, in a displaced form, by Indian cinema itself (Mishra 236). In addition to these elements of wealth and luxury displayed by the Indian diaspora, the new set of movies had a strong dose of nationalism and even jingoism. For Sarkar, what is striking is the extent to which Hindi films have been able to capture the dilemmas of the lived world of the masses, engage them at the level of their desires and fears, and generate a palpable realm of belonging that has emerged as the strongest realization of an imagined collectivity – more compelling than state-sponsored nationalism (Sarkar 51). The chief NRI characters of these movies were shown as the carriers of Indian tradition and culture. Such traits are more visible in the chief characters Shah Rukh Khan and Amarish Puri in the early diasporic Hindi films such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and *Pardes* (1997).

There are opposite views to this argument also. It is alleged that Hindi cinema does not represent Indian diaspora authentically. For Mishra, the diasporic Hindi movies present their own and India's (mis)reading of the diaspora (267). The movies bring global into local, presenting people in Main Street, Vancouver, as well as Southhall, London, with shared “structures of feeling” that in turn produce a transnational sense of communal solidarity (238). For Mishra, there is a difference between newspaper reading and watching these movies in an attempt to believe that they all belong to a particular nation.

As films can propagate serious topics such as nationalism, they can be used for academic purposes. Cinematic texts are worth studying as they wield a lot of influence on the masses. The present study is such an attempt. The concepts of Nation

and Gender as represented in Hindi cinema that thematically deal with the characters of non-resident Indians form the core study area of the present research. Such films are mentioned as diasporic Hindi cinema throughout the study. Gist of the study is given in the following paragraphs.

The introductory chapter of the thesis deliberates on the core area of study. Besides introducing the topic, it ponders on the review of literature, scope of study, methodology applied, major films to study and a brief note on the films selected.

The second chapter makes an attempt to study Hindi cinema's tryst with the concepts of nation and gender since its inception in India.

The third chapter is a detailed discussion on the theories of nation, gender and cinema. Major theorists and their contribution to the fields are deliberated here.

In the years immediately after independence, Indian cinema was caught up in a collective endeavor of nation building, offering narratives that negotiated the challenges and choices facing its publics. In that sense, popular cinema participated in what the great Mexican writer Octavio Paz referred to as India's "project of nationhood" (qtd. in Sarkar 50). The fourth chapter concentrates on the representation of nation in diasporic Hindi cinema. An attempt is made to study the movie *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) directed by the NRI director Meera Nair in order to compare the representation of nation in the movies directed by resident and non-resident Indian directors.

The fifth chapter follows the pattern adopted in the fourth chapter. It deals with the representation of gender in diasporic Hindi movies. It also studies such

representation as found in *Monsoon Wedding*, a movie directed by non-resident Indian director Meera Nair.

The present concluding chapter summarizes the findings of the research.

Findings of the study

Unlike the previous Hindi movies released in the pre-globalized period that dealt thematically with non-resident Indians, the portrayal of nation and gender was of a particular kind in the diasporic Hindi movies. Earlier, the nation was generally portrayed as agrarian, immersed in the age-old customs and tradition. Gender roles remained stereotypical. The non-resident Indian men were rich but had no control over the affairs of the family. They were materially successful, but spiritually poor. Unlike the men back in India, most NRI men were not patriarchal in nature. They remained mute spectators to whatever happened within the family. *Purab aur Pachhim* (1971) remains a representational movie.

However, in the post globalized scenario, the representation changed. The nation became modern, advanced but still spiritually rich and flawless. The nation remained the same that the NRIs nostalgic about. The first generation of Indian diaspora is also shown as the one that is ever ready to return home. They are termed as 'hybrid NRIs' struggling to reconcile their 'Indian hearts' with 'Western contexts of living' (Vandeveld 47).

Vandeveld made a study on how the diasporic Hindi films were received by the NRIs living in Belgium. The researcher reveals that,

The representations of Indian diasporas in the diasporic Hindi films have been tackled in a variety of ways, for instance because they 'overlap with the Indian state's political, cultural, and economic agendas' (Mehta 2005, 149) or because they present the NRI as a nostalgic migrant yearning for his homeland. The representations of NRIs inherent to the films are criticized for their distorted depiction of affluence and sexual values. In this way the Indian diaspora as a market for this cinema is revisited and the negotiation with diasporic representations by the diasporic audience questioned (48).

Similarly, when the gender roles in diasporic Hind cinema are assessed, we can observe that two categories of NRI men were created in the post globalized era. One, the stereotypical, morally-corrupt characters whereas the other set of characters were morally upright. The first set of NRIs fell easy prey to the vile attractions of the West as shown in the movies such as *Pardes*, *Aa Ab Laut Chale*, *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* and *Namastey London*. The first and the subsequent generation of NRI men are seen in the 'deplorable' acts of womanizing, boozing and partying.

The second set of NRI men remained non-resident but 'Indian' at heart. These men were portrayed as the torch-bearers of Indian customs and traditions in an alien land. They were the prototypes of Indian values in the distant West. Such a portrayal was new as these responsibilities had always been shouldered by women. Here men took up the virtuous responsibility. The characters played by Shah Rukh Khan and Amarish Puri in the movies such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Pardes*, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* stand examples for such a portrayal. This kind of depiction was seen as an attempt to woo the NRI audiences to theatres who would pay in dollars and pounds.

There are two sets of NRI women in diasporic Hindi cinema. The first set of women is influenced by the vile West. They are rich, independent and free to do what they wish. In no way, they are inferior to men who have the same qualities. These women cannot be called the torchbearers of Indian values in the distant West. They require men from India to uplift them from their moral decay. Some change whereas others do not change. Such characters can be seen in the movies such as *Ramji Londonwaley*, *Aa Ab Laut Chale* and *Namaste London*.

The other set of NRI virtuous women are seen in the movies such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Pardes*, *Ramji Londonwaley*. Interestingly, these women are seen in the roles of hardworking mothers or dutiful wives in addition to wise grandmothers. They uphold Indian values but their roles are not so strong in diasporic Hindi movies. They have limited screen space.

When one tries to find out reasons for such representation, several factors are revealed. The first and the foremost reason is the political upheaval that was taking place in the country at the time. A few events that took place in the 1990s had repercussions on the future of the nation. The results of those political and communal events are being felt even today.

The political scenario of the time

1990 was the decade when globalization took countries to storm. Movement of people across continents rose as multinational companies opened their branches worldwide. Better opportunities and an affluent life style prompted thousands of families to settle in alien countries. Back home, Bharatiya Janata Party stoked nationalist feelings among the people by a promise to construct temple for Rama, the

Hindu deity at Ayodhya. The party's patriarch L K Advani took out a chariot journey across the nation to gather support from people for the cause. Century old Babri Masjid was demolished to pave way for Rama temple as the site was said to be the birth place of Rama.

Noted critic Mishra has recorded a detailed discussion on the acceptance of *maryaada purush* Rama across India as the supreme god. He notes:

Why India chose the heroic Rama, not Krishna, who probably had a more powerful pan-Indian presence or for that matter, the great warrior figures Arjuna, Bheema, and Yudhistira, or the "yet-to-come" tenth incarnation, Kalki, who could have been given an altogether original story, has never been answered satisfactorily. Under the circumstances, Sheldon Pollock's answer to this question is as good as any. He argues that unlike the "tragic aporia" that marks the *Mahabharata* and its heroes, including Krishna, the divination of Rama in the *Ramayana* combines the powers of a God with those of the earthly king. For the worldly king, the text of Rama sanctions his own divine right because in deferring to Rama as his model, a mortal king actually becomes a divine king. Forever conscious of how literary antecedents merge with the real, the priestly caste must have connived at this conflation to begin with. (208)

Mishra alleges that the historic *rathyathra* and the events connected in addition to ascendance of BJP to power paved way for the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and cultural globalization (203). The BJP in power also did a good job. It accorded the status of industry to celluloid, liberating it from the clutches of underworld mafia. The Hindi movies produced in the period projected the ideologies

upheld by the ruling government. The diasporic Hindi cinema was not different. The movies had a strong dose of nationalism, where the main characters sung the glory of India in addition to its long revered customs and traditions. It was in a sense a call to the NRIs to return to their roots, to their motherland. The movies promoted another kind of *Ghar Wapsi*.

Hindi cinema as growing soft power

The study also finds that Hindi cinema's influence on people across the globe grew substantially in the globalized context. Roopa Swaminathan asserts that "the world is feeling the impact of Bollywood (Hindi cinema) like never before (Swaminathan 9). As a nation, India has never had a history of invading weaker nations. Even though it is capable of subduing minor nations, India has never done so using its hard power; that is the use of militia, arms and weapons.

However, India has been very influential while using its soft power. Soft power is the use of cultural or economic approach to influence other nations. Joseph Nye of Harvard University popularized the term soft power. According to him, when one country gets other countries to want what it wants might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or commanding power of ordering others to do what it wants ("Soft Power").

Of late, Hindi films have been influencing different nations across the globe through their soft power. The unique kind of plots, the strange song and dance sequences that have complete disrespect for the principles of three unities attract not only Indian audience but also non-Hindi speakers of alien nations. Judging by the number of movies, Indian film industry is the largest movie industry in the world. The

number of Hindi films is significant in it. Hindi movies have gone global and at times, they are earning more revenue in other countries than at home. Indian films have been seen in top ten lists of movies in the UK and the USA (Pillania 116). Apart from Hindi films, even regional films share the coveted status. Hindi films are said to be popular in more than hundred nations. As a testimony to this, foreign production houses such as 20th century Fox and Disney are investing on not only Hindi films but also regional language movies. The use of Hindi film dance rather than folk or classical forms in the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006 signified Hindi cinema's cultural dominance and coming of age, yet many regarded it as a nail in the coffin of traditional Indian culture (Dwyer, Picture abhi baki hai 9). It is quite amazing that in many European countries, Bollywood (Hindi cinema) tourism has developed. Tourists are taken to places where popular Hindi movies are shot. To attract more NRI audience, films like *Kal Ho Na Ho*, *Dhoom 3* are shot mostly in foreign locations.

Hindi films' popularity in other nations is not new. Actors of yester years such as Raj Kapoor, Dileep Kumar, Dev Anand had fan following in different countries. Raj Kapoor was very popular in Russia. The iconic Tamil actor Rajnikant is still popular among Japanese. Amitabh Bacchan has been popular with audience of several nations so also are Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, Madhuri Dixit, Priyanka Chopra and many other Hindi film actors.

Quite interestingly, Indian celluloid has been global in character since its inception. Father of Indian cinema Dhundiraj Phalke's films were reviewed in England. Indian films involved actors from other nations such as France, Italy, Germany, America and Iran. The movie *Savitri* (1924) is the best example for the

trend. It was directed by J J Madan and Giorgio Mannini and was shot in Italy with Italian actors.

In the post-independence scenario, Hindi films remained popular among spectators of many nations. Russia is said to have imported around 200 films between 1950 and 1989 (Swaminathan 57). The song *Mera jhoota hai Japaani... Sar pe laal topi rusi...* from the popular actor Raj Kapoor's film *Awara* (1951) shows how the actor was connected with Russia. The word *rusi* in the song means Russia. Even in the post globalization scenario, Russia has been a profitable market for Hindi films.

India has had two neighbors who have developed love-hate relationship with India in the recent past. At the international level these countries cannot show their differences, but it is often visible at the border. The countries in question are China and Pakistan. In terms of hard power, China is stronger than India. In this regard, Pakistan might not be stronger than India but it could prove India a potential threat for various reasons. But, now it is no secret that India has been wielding a greater influence on both the countries through its soft power.

If Hindi films have found in China a potential market, people of Pakistan are crazy about Hindi films. Like Russia, even China's love of Hindi films started with Raj Kapoor's *Awara* (1951). It saw ups and downs in between and now Hindi movies have carved a niche in China. At times, they have enjoyed equal status of Chinese films in the red dragon country. Aamir Khan's *Dangal* (2016) broke all previous records of Indian films in terms of earning revenue in China. It grossed more money in China than it earned in India. As China is considered to be an enemy for India, right wing activists termed Aamir an anti-national for the reason. *Panchjanya*, the mouthpiece of *Rastriya Swayam Sevaka Sangha* (RSS) which is the ideologue behind

Bharathiya Janata Party, accused Aamir Khan of forging bonds with 'enemy countries' ("Indian films"). Akshay Kumar, Irfaan Khan, Rani Mukherjee, Salman Khan and many more Indian actors have been very popular among Chinese audience. Along with the peculiar song and dance sequences, the common theme of victory of virtue over vice found in Hindi cinema draws Chinese audience to the theatres. It is a Buddhist nation and the people over there share common traits with their Indian counterparts.

Pakistan's tryst with Hindi cinema is a curious anecdote to narrate. Once an indivisible part of India, Pakistan has grown out to be an antagonist of India in the recent past. At times, due to political reasons and the skirmishes at the border, both the nations involve in mudslinging activities for such hostile situations. Media portray Pakistan as a terrorist nation that is unable to feed itself properly. On the other hand, according to same media reports, Pakistan projects itself as a powerful nation which is capable of subduing India if such a situation arises. However, people of Pakistan have always welcomed Hindi cinema apart from cricket. Any cricket match between both the countries is always termed as a match between archrivals. Media glorify the match as if it is a war between two rival nations. Fan frenzy would also be very high during these matches.

But, the same does not happen during film shows. People of Pakistan adore Hindi films as their own. According to a Pakistani media analyst, Pakistan was the third largest market for Hindi films and about 50-60 per cent of revenue in Pakistani cinemas came from Hindi films (Gultasab). Sometimes, they were enjoyed more than the films of the nation. It is because Pakistani films failed to attract the native audience as Hindi films. The restrictions imposed by the local government at times do

not allow the native film makers to match their movies with Hindi movies. When things were fine in the past, cultural exchanges had taken place between the two nations. Films like *Heena* (1991), *Awarapan* (2007) were shot in Pakistan. Pakistani actors and singers such as Veena Malik, Fawad Khan, Rasheed Naz, Jawed Sheikh, Zeba Bakhtiar, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Atif Aslam and Noor Jehan had worked for Hindi films. The versatile Indian actors like Om Puri, Kirron Kher, Naseeruddin Shah, Vinod Khanna had also contributed to Pakistani film industry. But, whenever Pakistan had skirmishes with India, the country used to ban Indian films. However, the movies succeeded to enter Pakistani homes through pirated DVDs and web links. As Roopa Swaminathan observes:

The argument within Pakistan over Bollywood rages on. On one side, film distributors in Pakistan argue that Bollywood films have at least mobilized the Pakistani people to venture into movie theatres and watch them. The distributors feel that the government should not interfere with this business model and should leave politics out of culture. (152)

Unfortunately, since February 2019, Pakistan has banned Indian films. It was done so when the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir was withdrawn by the government of India. But, it is also true that Indian movies are being watched by people of Pakistan in one or the other way as Pakistani movies are less popular among natives.

Whether the hostile relationship between Pakistan and India will ever be resurrected politically is a question to be answered by the political leaders. But, at least a few Hindi movies in the recent past have tried to strengthen the relationship between the two nations with their emotional stories. For long, Pakistan had been

portrayed in Hindi films in poor light. But, films like PK (2014), *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015), *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017) tried to show Pakistan or its people in brighter light. Such a change is recent and people of Pakistan are happy about it. The book *Bollywood Boom* records such a positive review shared by a Pakistani viewer Momina Rana. After watching *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, the young lady has this to say, “the general public in both Pakistan and India is peace loving and that is why this movie is so widely appreciated here, and must be out there (India) as well. I would love to watch this movie again and again, as such film is not made every day” (Swaminathan 160).

The soft power of Hindi films in the US and the UK is also quite astonishing. Hindi films find a stiff competitor in both the countries. Hollywood movies dominate in the US and the case is similar in Britain as even England has had a strong cinematic tradition. However, Indian films in general and Hindi films in particular fare well in both the countries as they have a considerable amount of Indian diaspora which is very influential as well. In a new trend, in addition to Hindi films, southern Indian movies, especially, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu language movies are being welcomed with open hands in the two countries. These movies are loved and enjoyed by the natives also.

Hindi films have created such magic even in the African and Australian continents. Many Hindi movies are shot in these countries. Africans have been huge fans of Hindi cinemas for long. Nigeria has had an influential cinematic history. Still, Hindi films are a huge hit there. They are more popular in the West African countries like Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. Africans seem to like and enjoy the formulaic Hindi films’ rags to riches story, song and dance sequences and universal morality preached in the movies.

Hindi films are also very contemporary in Middle East countries. They are released along with Arabic movies as well. The films are popular with people of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Sudan and UAE. The magnitude of Indian diaspora in these countries is also quite voluminous. Due to all these reasons, Hindi movies have a significant presence in these countries.

The soft power of Hindi films is such that at times, Hindi film artists are used for diplomatic purposes. The popular artists are requested to intervene as they have more appeal among the people as ambassadors of culture than the politicians. *Aman Ki Asha*, an NGO of Pakistan which is trying its best to reduce the stalemate relationship between Pakistan and India has requested Hindi film actors to travel more frequently to Pakistan, to deal with less-than-savoury issues, promote business and trade between the countries, while trying to keep the respective governments out of the picture (Swaminathan 162). Similarly, in India, Hindi film actors are used to spread the message of peace and love among citizens. They are also used to promote social responsibility among people. Popular Hindi film actor Aamir Khan's television talk show *Satyameva Jayate* (2012-14), truth alone triumphs, was a huge hit worldwide. The program was about eradicating social evils such as rape, sexual abuse, female foeticide, domestic violence, untouchability etc. from the Indian society and Khan was appreciated for taking up such relevant issues. Similarly, many leading actors of Hindi cinema are used by the government to spread educative messages among the masses. In all, the soft power of Hindi cinema has influence on people across the world and if used constructively, can bring many positive changes in the lives of people.

To conclude, diasporic Hindi cinema emerged as a genre chiefly, in response to globalization and the political changes that took place in the 1990s. Films replicate society and diasporic Hindi cinema was also not an exception. The mentioned historical milestones altered the very way Hindi films were being made. With better financial assistance and a new class of diasporic spectators, producers began to experiment with themes. Indian diaspora entered into the themes of Hindi cinema with better projection. At the same time, the new genre of diasporic Hindi cinema took up two vital concepts in it. It tried to construct nation and gender as imagined by the first generation of Indian diaspora and also as projected by the nationalist politics at home. The present study has carefully assessed how the two concepts were constructed in a particular manner and the reasons for the same. The study also concludes that the construction made in the diasporic movies was not naïve but involved cultural politics and an ideology shared by the dominant class.

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**NATION AND GENDER IN DIASPORIC HINDI
CINEMA: A STUDY**

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In

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the years immediately following independence, Indian cinema was caught up in a collective endeavor of nation building, offering narratives that negotiated the challenges and choices facing its publics (Sarkar 50). Probably, no other cinema of any other nation in the world has ever been used for such a worthy endeavor. Cinema was introduced in India as a medium of entertainment. But, it shouldered the more vital responsibility of bringing people across the country together to stand against the colonizers in its initial days. Even to this day, cinema in India has the responsibility of showcasing traditions and customs of the nation to the world.

Well known film scholar Rachel Dwyer explains Indian cinema in the following words:

Indian cinema is now a global phenomenon, though different in scale from that of Hollywood. Outside Western Europe and the USA, it is hugely popular and is often preferred to local and Hollywood cinemas, celebrated as a non-Western form that upholds different traditions and values, in particular in its depiction of love within the larger family and a changing, often Westernizing society. (Dwyer, *Picutre abhi baki hai* 23-24)

In addition to the above mentioned qualities, popular cinema also plays the pivotal role of shaping the concrete life and abstract imagination of a large chunk of Indian populace. If the moving images on screen can push a spectator to oblivion of

the humdrum of routine, the same images can also transport the same person to the dizzying memories of nostalgia.

Indian cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular plays multiple roles. The films cannot be neglected merely as a medium of entertainment. As any Indian film, the Hindi film is also a mighty cultural product consumed by millions of people in India and world-wide as a global media form (Dwyer, *Picutre abhi baki hai* 8). It has succeeded in creating a pan Indian aura among its spectators from not only within India but also from across the globe. Watching the Hindi films, the spectators assume themselves to be part of an imagined community of the great nation called India. Even while studying Hindi cinema, we cannot omit the influence it has on people living abroad. According to Jigna Desai, Hindi films, especially diasporic Hindi films, irrespective of their quality, can be emotionally satisfying to the first generation immigrants as they remain nostalgic about their homeland (qtd. in Swaminathan 87). Any study of Bombay Cinema (Hindi cinema) must finally address the role of this cultural form in the lives of the peoples of the Indian diaspora (Misra 235).

The present study is not based on reception of the movies by the audience as audience reception of a film cannot be predicted. It cannot be imagined that diasporic Hindi films are watched only by NRI audience. It cannot also be concluded that these films are more popular with NRI audience than resident Indians. The Hindi film *Dil Se* (1998) which is a non-diasporic Hindi cinema was more popular in the UK than with Indian audience. At the same time, most diasporic Hindi movies have been popular among Indian audience. A few Indian or Hindi movies are popular with native audience in other countries as well. Scholars such as Raminder Kaur (2005),

Rajinder Dudrah (2006) and Shakuntala Banaji (2006) have worked on Hindi films based on their reception by the NRI and also resident Indian audience.

It is quite interesting to note that Hindi cinema changed substantially in the post globalized era. Prior to globalization, Hindi cinema had the quality of a national cinema. But, it changed its outlook in the new scenario. Post globalization, it began to find novel ways of marketing to reach more global audience. According to Dwyer, it is Aditya Chopra's *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (often called DDLJ), that is really the point of departure for a new type of cinema and film practice that came to be called Bollywood (Dwyer, *Picutre abhi baki hai* 22).

In an attempt to woo the Indian diaspora which had spread across the globe, Hindi cinema changed thematically. Plots with non-resident Indian characters became common. It was so because the diaspora of late capital had then become an important market of popular cinema as well as a site for its production (Mishra 236). On the emergence of NRI genre of Hindi films, a critic comments that,

The initial production of these films was inspired by the growing potential market of overseas South Asians in a climate of economic liberalization with new opportunities for the export of Indian cinema and in a context of nationalist ideologies in Indian politics (see Brosius and Yazgi 2007). Over the years, the film narratives have suggested a variety of ways to cope with such identity crises by outrightly dismissing Western culture, emphasizing nostalgia and Indian values, promoting physical return to India, highlighting the transnational nature of Indian identities and so on. (Vandeveld 47)

For many the space occupied by the new diaspora - the space of the West - was also the desired space of wealth and luxury that gets endorsed, in a displaced form, by Indian cinema itself (Mishra 236). In addition to these elements of wealth and luxury displayed by the Indian diaspora, the new set of movies had a strong dose of nationalism and even jingoism. For Sarkar, what is striking is the extent to which Hindi films have been able to capture the dilemmas of the lived world of the masses, engage them at the level of their desires and fears, and generate a palpable realm of belonging that has emerged as the strongest realization of an imagined collectivity – more compelling than state-sponsored nationalism (Sarkar 51). The chief NRI characters of these movies were shown as the carriers of Indian tradition and culture. Such traits are more visible in the chief characters Shah Rukh Khan and Amarish Puri in the early diasporic Hindi films such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and *Pardes* (1997).

There are opposite views to this argument also. It is alleged that Hindi cinema does not represent Indian diaspora authentically. For Mishra, the diasporic Hindi movies present their own and India's (mis)reading of the diaspora (267). The movies bring global into local, presenting people in Main Street, Vancouver, as well as Southhall, London, with shared “structures of feeling” that in turn produce a transnational sense of communal solidarity (238). For Mishra, there is a difference between newspaper reading and watching these movies in an attempt to believe that they all belong to a particular nation.

As films can propagate serious topics such as nationalism, they can be used for academic purposes. Cinematic texts are worth studying as they wield a lot of influence on the masses. The present study is such an attempt. The concepts of Nation

and Gender as represented in Hindi cinema that thematically deal with the characters of non-resident Indians form the core study area of the present research. Such films are mentioned as diasporic Hindi cinema throughout the study. Gist of the study is given in the following paragraphs.

The introductory chapter of the thesis deliberates on the core area of study. Besides introducing the topic, it ponders on the review of literature, scope of study, methodology applied, major films to study and a brief note on the films selected.

The second chapter makes an attempt to study Hindi cinema's tryst with the concepts of nation and gender since its inception in India.

The third chapter is a detailed discussion on the theories of nation, gender and cinema. Major theorists and their contribution to the fields are deliberated here.

In the years immediately after independence, Indian cinema was caught up in a collective endeavor of nation building, offering narratives that negotiated the challenges and choices facing its publics. In that sense, popular cinema participated in what the great Mexican writer Octavio Paz referred to as India's "project of nationhood" (qtd. in Sarkar 50). The fourth chapter concentrates on the representation of nation in diasporic Hindi cinema. An attempt is made to study the movie *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) directed by the NRI director Meera Nair in order to compare the representation of nation in the movies directed by resident and non-resident Indian directors.

The fifth chapter follows the pattern adopted in the fourth chapter. It deals with the representation of gender in diasporic Hindi movies. It also studies such

representation as found in *Monsoon Wedding*, a movie directed by non-resident Indian director Meera Nair.

The present concluding chapter summarizes the findings of the research.

Findings of the study

Unlike the previous Hindi movies released in the pre-globalized period that dealt thematically with non-resident Indians, the portrayal of nation and gender was of a particular kind in the diasporic Hindi movies. Earlier, the nation was generally portrayed as agrarian, immersed in the age-old customs and tradition. Gender roles remained stereotypical. The non-resident Indian men were rich but had no control over the affairs of the family. They were materially successful, but spiritually poor. Unlike the men back in India, most NRI men were not patriarchal in nature. They remained mute spectators to whatever happened within the family. *Purab aur Pachhim* (1971) remains a representational movie.

However, in the post globalized scenario, the representation changed. The nation became modern, advanced but still spiritually rich and flawless. The nation remained the same that the NRIs nostalgic about. The first generation of Indian diaspora is also shown as the one that is ever ready to return home. They are termed as ‘hybrid NRIs’ struggling to reconcile their ‘Indian hearts’ with ‘Western contexts of living’ (Vandeveld 47).

Vandeveld made a study on how the diasporic Hindi films were received by the NRIs living in Belgium. The researcher reveals that,

The representations of Indian diasporas in the diasporic Hindi films have been tackled in a variety of ways, for instance because they 'overlap with the Indian state's political, cultural, and economic agendas' (Mehta 2005, 149) or because they present the NRI as a nostalgic migrant yearning for his homeland. The representations of NRIs inherent to the films are criticized for their distorted depiction of affluence and sexual values. In this way the Indian diaspora as a market for this cinema is revisited and the negotiation with diasporic representations by the diasporic audience questioned (48).

Similarly, when the gender roles in diasporic Hind cinema are assessed, we can observe that two categories of NRI men were created in the post globalized era. One, the stereotypical, morally-corrupt characters whereas the other set of characters were morally upright. The first set of NRIs fell easy prey to the vile attractions of the West as shown in the movies such as *Pardes*, *Aa Ab Laut Chale*, *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* and *Namastey London*. The first and the subsequent generation of NRI men are seen in the 'deplorable' acts of womanizing, boozing and partying.

The second set of NRI men remained non-resident but 'Indian' at heart. These men were portrayed as the torch-bearers of Indian customs and traditions in an alien land. They were the prototypes of Indian values in the distant West. Such a portrayal was new as these responsibilities had always been shouldered by women. Here men took up the virtuous responsibility. The characters played by Shah Rukh Khan and Amarish Puri in the movies such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Pardes*, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* stand examples for such a portrayal. This kind of depiction was seen as an attempt to woo the NRI audiences to theatres who would pay in dollars and pounds.

There are two sets of NRI women in diasporic Hindi cinema. The first set of women is influenced by the vile West. They are rich, independent and free to do what they wish. In no way, they are inferior to men who have the same qualities. These women cannot be called the torchbearers of Indian values in the distant West. They require men from India to uplift them from their moral decay. Some change whereas others do not change. Such characters can be seen in the movies such as *Ramji Londonwaley*, *Aa Ab Laut Chale* and *Namaste London*.

The other set of NRI virtuous women are seen in the movies such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Pardes*, *Ramji Londonwaley*. Interestingly, these women are seen in the roles of hardworking mothers or dutiful wives in addition to wise grandmothers. They uphold Indian values but their roles are not so strong in diasporic Hindi movies. They have limited screen space.

When one tries to find out reasons for such representation, several factors are revealed. The first and the foremost reason is the political upheaval that was taking place in the country at the time. A few events that took place in the 1990s had repercussions on the future of the nation. The results of those political and communal events are being felt even today.

The political scenario of the time

1990 was the decade when globalization took countries to storm. Movement of people across continents rose as multinational companies opened their branches worldwide. Better opportunities and an affluent life style prompted thousands of families to settle in alien countries. Back home, Bharatiya Janata Party stoked nationalist feelings among the people by a promise to construct temple for Rama, the

Hindu deity at Ayodhya. The party's patriarch L K Advani took out a chariot journey across the nation to gather support from people for the cause. Century old Babri Masjid was demolished to pave way for Rama temple as the site was said to be the birth place of Rama.

Noted critic Mishra has recorded a detailed discussion on the acceptance of *maryaada purush* Rama across India as the supreme god. He notes:

Why India chose the heroic Rama, not Krishna, who probably had a more powerful pan-Indian presence or for that matter, the great warrior figures Arjuna, Bheema, and Yudhistira, or the "yet-to-come" tenth incarnation, Kalki, who could have been given an altogether original story, has never been answered satisfactorily. Under the circumstances, Sheldon Pollock's answer to this question is as good as any. He argues that unlike the "tragic aporia" that marks the *Mahabharata* and its heroes, including Krishna, the divination of Rama in the *Ramayana* combines the powers of a God with those of the earthly king. For the worldly king, the text of Rama sanctions his own divine right because in deferring to Rama as his model, a mortal king actually becomes a divine king. Forever conscious of how literary antecedents merge with the real, the priestly caste must have connived at this conflation to begin with. (208)

Mishra alleges that the historic *rathyathra* and the events connected in addition to ascendance of BJP to power paved way for the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and cultural globalization (203). The BJP in power also did a good job. It accorded the status of industry to celluloid, liberating it from the clutches of underworld mafia. The Hindi movies produced in the period projected the ideologies

upheld by the ruling government. The diasporic Hindi cinema was not different. The movies had a strong dose of nationalism, where the main characters sung the glory of India in addition to its long revered customs and traditions. It was in a sense a call to the NRIs to return to their roots, to their motherland. The movies promoted another kind of *Ghar Wapsi*.

Hindi cinema as growing soft power

The study also finds that Hindi cinema's influence on people across the globe grew substantially in the globalized context. Roopa Swaminathan asserts that "the world is feeling the impact of Bollywood (Hindi cinema) like never before (Swaminathan 9). As a nation, India has never had a history of invading weaker nations. Even though it is capable of subduing minor nations, India has never done so using its hard power; that is the use of militia, arms and weapons.

However, India has been very influential while using its soft power. Soft power is the use of cultural or economic approach to influence other nations. Joseph Nye of Harvard University popularized the term soft power. According to him, when one country gets other countries to want what it wants might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or commanding power of ordering others to do what it wants ("Soft Power").

Of late, Hindi films have been influencing different nations across the globe through their soft power. The unique kind of plots, the strange song and dance sequences that have complete disrespect for the principles of three unities attract not only Indian audience but also non-Hindi speakers of alien nations. Judging by the number of movies, Indian film industry is the largest movie industry in the world. The

number of Hindi films is significant in it. Hindi movies have gone global and at times, they are earning more revenue in other countries than at home. Indian films have been seen in top ten lists of movies in the UK and the USA (Pillania 116). Apart from Hindi films, even regional films share the coveted status. Hindi films are said to be popular in more than hundred nations. As a testimony to this, foreign production houses such as 20th century Fox and Disney are investing on not only Hindi films but also regional language movies. The use of Hindi film dance rather than folk or classical forms in the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006 signified Hindi cinema's cultural dominance and coming of age, yet many regarded it as a nail in the coffin of traditional Indian culture (Dwyer, Picture abhi baki hai 9). It is quite amazing that in many European countries, Bollywood (Hindi cinema) tourism has developed. Tourists are taken to places where popular Hindi movies are shot. To attract more NRI audience, films like *Kal Ho Na Ho*, *Dhoom 3* are shot mostly in foreign locations.

Hindi films' popularity in other nations is not new. Actors of yester years such as Raj Kapoor, Dileep Kumar, Dev Anand had fan following in different countries. Raj Kapoor was very popular in Russia. The iconic Tamil actor Rajnikant is still popular among Japanese. Amitabh Bacchan has been popular with audience of several nations so also are Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, Madhuri Dixit, Priyanka Chopra and many other Hindi film actors.

Quite interestingly, Indian celluloid has been global in character since its inception. Father of Indian cinema Dhundiraj Phalke's films were reviewed in England. Indian films involved actors from other nations such as France, Italy, Germany, America and Iran. The movie *Savitri* (1924) is the best example for the

trend. It was directed by J J Madan and Giorgio Mannini and was shot in Italy with Italian actors.

In the post-independence scenario, Hindi films remained popular among spectators of many nations. Russia is said to have imported around 200 films between 1950 and 1989 (Swaminathan 57). The song *Mera jhoota hai Japaani... Sar pe laal topi rusi...* from the popular actor Raj Kapoor's film *Awara* (1951) shows how the actor was connected with Russia. The word *rusi* in the song means Russia. Even in the post globalization scenario, Russia has been a profitable market for Hindi films.

India has had two neighbors who have developed love-hate relationship with India in the recent past. At the international level these countries cannot show their differences, but it is often visible at the border. The countries in question are China and Pakistan. In terms of hard power, China is stronger than India. In this regard, Pakistan might not be stronger than India but it could prove India a potential threat for various reasons. But, now it is no secret that India has been wielding a greater influence on both the countries through its soft power.

If Hindi films have found in China a potential market, people of Pakistan are crazy about Hindi films. Like Russia, even China's love of Hindi films started with Raj Kapoor's *Awara* (1951). It saw ups and downs in between and now Hindi movies have carved a niche in China. At times, they have enjoyed equal status of Chinese films in the red dragon country. Aamir Khan's *Dangal* (2016) broke all previous records of Indian films in terms of earning revenue in China. It grossed more money in China than it earned in India. As China is considered to be an enemy for India, right wing activists termed Aamir an anti-national for the reason. *Panchjanya*, the mouthpiece of *Rastriya Swayam Sevaka Sangha* (RSS) which is the ideologue behind

Bharathiya Janata Party, accused Aamir Khan of forging bonds with 'enemy countries' ("Indian films"). Akshay Kumar, Irfaan Khan, Rani Mukherjee, Salman Khan and many more Indian actors have been very popular among Chinese audience. Along with the peculiar song and dance sequences, the common theme of victory of virtue over vice found in Hindi cinema draws Chinese audience to the theatres. It is a Buddhist nation and the people over there share common traits with their Indian counterparts.

Pakistan's tryst with Hindi cinema is a curious anecdote to narrate. Once an indivisible part of India, Pakistan has grown out to be an antagonist of India in the recent past. At times, due to political reasons and the skirmishes at the border, both the nations involve in mudslinging activities for such hostile situations. Media portray Pakistan as a terrorist nation that is unable to feed itself properly. On the other hand, according to same media reports, Pakistan projects itself as a powerful nation which is capable of subduing India if such a situation arises. However, people of Pakistan have always welcomed Hindi cinema apart from cricket. Any cricket match between both the countries is always termed as a match between archrivals. Media glorify the match as if it is a war between two rival nations. Fan frenzy would also be very high during these matches.

But, the same does not happen during film shows. People of Pakistan adore Hindi films as their own. According to a Pakistani media analyst, Pakistan was the third largest market for Hindi films and about 50-60 per cent of revenue in Pakistani cinemas came from Hindi films (Gultasab). Sometimes, they were enjoyed more than the films of the nation. It is because Pakistani films failed to attract the native audience as Hindi films. The restrictions imposed by the local government at times do

not allow the native film makers to match their movies with Hindi movies. When things were fine in the past, cultural exchanges had taken place between the two nations. Films like *Heena* (1991), *Awarapan* (2007) were shot in Pakistan. Pakistani actors and singers such as Veena Malik, Fawad Khan, Rasheed Naz, Jawed Sheikh, Zeba Bakhtiar, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Atif Aslam and Noor Jehan had worked for Hindi films. The versatile Indian actors like Om Puri, Kirron Kher, Naseeruddin Shah, Vinod Khanna had also contributed to Pakistani film industry. But, whenever Pakistan had skirmishes with India, the country used to ban Indian films. However, the movies succeeded to enter Pakistani homes through pirated DVDs and web links. As Roopa Swaminathan observes:

The argument within Pakistan over Bollywood rages on. On one side, film distributors in Pakistan argue that Bollywood films have at least mobilized the Pakistani people to venture into movie theatres and watch them. The distributors feel that the government should not interfere with this business model and should leave politics out of culture. (152)

Unfortunately, since February 2019, Pakistan has banned Indian films. It was done so when the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir was withdrawn by the government of India. But, it is also true that Indian movies are being watched by people of Pakistan in one or the other way as Pakistani movies are less popular among natives.

Whether the hostile relationship between Pakistan and India will ever be resurrected politically is a question to be answered by the political leaders. But, at least a few Hindi movies in the recent past have tried to strengthen the relationship between the two nations with their emotional stories. For long, Pakistan had been

portrayed in Hindi films in poor light. But, films like PK (2014), *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015), *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017) tried to show Pakistan or its people in brighter light. Such a change is recent and people of Pakistan are happy about it. The book *Bollywood Boom* records such a positive review shared by a Pakistani viewer Momina Rana. After watching *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, the young lady has this to say, “the general public in both Pakistan and India is peace loving and that is why this movie is so widely appreciated here, and must be out there (India) as well. I would love to watch this movie again and again, as such film is not made every day” (Swaminathan 160).

The soft power of Hindi films in the US and the UK is also quite astonishing. Hindi films find a stiff competitor in both the countries. Hollywood movies dominate in the US and the case is similar in Britain as even England has had a strong cinematic tradition. However, Indian films in general and Hindi films in particular fare well in both the countries as they have a considerable amount of Indian diaspora which is very influential as well. In a new trend, in addition to Hindi films, southern Indian movies, especially, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu language movies are being welcomed with open hands in the two countries. These movies are loved and enjoyed by the natives also.

Hindi films have created such magic even in the African and Australian continents. Many Hindi movies are shot in these countries. Africans have been huge fans of Hindi cinemas for long. Nigeria has had an influential cinematic history. Still, Hindi films are a huge hit there. They are more popular in the West African countries like Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. Africans seem to like and enjoy the formulaic Hindi films’ rags to riches story, song and dance sequences and universal morality preached in the movies.

Hindi films are also very contemporary in Middle East countries. They are released along with Arabic movies as well. The films are popular with people of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Sudan and UAE. The magnitude of Indian diaspora in these countries is also quite voluminous. Due to all these reasons, Hindi movies have a significant presence in these countries.

The soft power of Hindi films is such that at times, Hindi film artists are used for diplomatic purposes. The popular artists are requested to intervene as they have more appeal among the people as ambassadors of culture than the politicians. *Aman Ki Asha*, an NGO of Pakistan which is trying its best to reduce the stalemate relationship between Pakistan and India has requested Hindi film actors to travel more frequently to Pakistan, to deal with less-than-savoury issues, promote business and trade between the countries, while trying to keep the respective governments out of the picture (Swaminathan 162). Similarly, in India, Hindi film actors are used to spread the message of peace and love among citizens. They are also used to promote social responsibility among people. Popular Hindi film actor Aamir Khan's television talk show *Satyameva Jayate* (2012-14), truth alone triumphs, was a huge hit worldwide. The program was about eradicating social evils such as rape, sexual abuse, female foeticide, domestic violence, untouchability etc. from the Indian society and Khan was appreciated for taking up such relevant issues. Similarly, many leading actors of Hindi cinema are used by the government to spread educative messages among the masses. In all, the soft power of Hindi cinema has influence on people across the world and if used constructively, can bring many positive changes in the lives of people.

To conclude, diasporic Hindi cinema emerged as a genre chiefly, in response to globalization and the political changes that took place in the 1990s. Films replicate society and diasporic Hindi cinema was also not an exception. The mentioned historical milestones altered the very way Hindi films were being made. With better financial assistance and a new class of diasporic spectators, producers began to experiment with themes. Indian diaspora entered into the themes of Hindi cinema with better projection. At the same time, the new genre of diasporic Hindi cinema took up two vital concepts in it. It tried to construct nation and gender as imagined by the first generation of Indian diaspora and also as projected by the nationalist politics at home. The present study has carefully assessed how the two concepts were constructed in a particular manner and the reasons for the same. The study also concludes that the construction made in the diasporic movies was not naïve but involved cultural politics and an ideology shared by the dominant class.
