

Depiction of Real life misery through the lens of Hindi Film “ Dastak(1970)”: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT: Cinema is considered as the tool of social transformation, changing agent and the reflection of society. The different eras of Hindi Cinema illustrate the different concern of a common man and their struggle. The various themes represent the image of India with a different approach. Social issues in the earlier eras were the dominant one theme on poverty , unemployment, problem of urban spaces, exploitation of peasants ,corruption, nation and nationalism were the main subject and each storytellers represent those emotions and problems in an ideal way .The present paper analyse the social issues and struggle of a common man and moreover how the director execute the human drama the agony faced by an ordinary people who live in the metropolis and their aspirations of life with the use of metaphors..

Keywords: social issues, metaphors, urban space

I- Thematic trends of Hindi Cinema

Hindi Cinema deals with diverse themes from last magnificent 100 years . Variety of socially relevant issues cultural issues are addressed by combining them with a fantasies, tradition and myths. Hindi film can be used to know the history of society and culture of India . Indian Cinema has been reflecting social, political and economic dynamics of the national community in it’s narrative since the beginning of the 20th century. The themes such as globalization nation and nationalism, caste, class, gender, terrorism and social issues themes but also suggest cinematic interpretation to solve the problems. The uniqueness of an Indian film industry lies in its form, content, storytelling expression of emotions and the creative of tensions within the narrative. “Some Indian filmmakers shaped cinema on the style of the ancient Indian art of story telling.“Hindi Cinema give a “common language and universe of discourse” to Indians (Guha, 2007). Cinema Played a major role in women emancipation, critique various social issues such as class and caste

discriminate religion intolerance and terrorism promoting globalization and encouraging secularism. “It also disseminate various socio cultural phenomena like globalization, westernization and urbanization and assimilate in Indian society and culture” (Gokulsing, 1998). Popular Hindi cinema has achieved its “national-popular acceptance” for the reason that Hindi “films iron out tensions among various constituencies in the nation and play out utopian ideals—ideals embrace by audiences from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (Virdi, 2003). Gulzar poet, Director , Scriptwriter speaks about the power of Hindi Cinema “There is nothing quite like Hindi cinema anywhere in the world. The importance of Hindi films stems from two principal trait. For one, they represent the only means of mass entertainment available in India. Secondly, they cut across regional boundaries and bind the entire subcontinent and its people together; no matter where in the world they currently live” (Gulzar, 2003). The themes like Shaheed , Naya daur , Mother India , Upkar and



Jagruti which induced a sense of nationalism for the nation about their heroic past , culture heritage greatness and glories which constitute the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. The era of 50’s ,60’s and 70’s also prevailed with the theme of caste system “Achuut Kanya” , “Sujata” and moreover the growth of industrialization urbanization in the 70’s and 80’s led to a further widening of the gap between rich and poor. “Zanzeer”, “Deewar” “Coolie” ,” Andha Kanoon” and film like “Kala Patthar” depict the struggle of the poor against the rich and the trend continued till 90’s. Madhur Bhandarkar “Traffic signal”, “page 3” ,Ashutosh Gowariker “Lagaan” come back of caste in contemporary Hindi cinema associated with emancipation of dalit .Theme of terrorism like “Fiza” , “Black Friday” and “26/11” and other themes dominant in these eras as well. Family oriented themes like “Hum Apke Hai Kaun” and “Hum Sath Sath Hain” movies “in contemporary cinema . Film like “ Dil Chahta Hai”, “Kal ho na ho” , “Waqt” and “Jane tu ya Jane na” depicts the family of globalised /liberalized Indian society where parents are more like friends than deities to be worshipped” (Gehlot, 2005). In the last couple of decade the thematic content and trend of Hindi Cinema has undergone a phenomenal transformation multiplex culture and the niche audience . “Lage Raho Munna Bhai” , “Phir Milenge” , “My brother Nikhil” , “Taare Zameen Par” and “Black” such films

not only entertain but also inculcate a sense of social responsibility in people. Therefore Cinema not only depicts the socio cultural environment but also shapes it. The film “Dastak” deals with the several social issues of society and also explain that how Rajinder Bedi represent the issues in a different cinematic way with the use of metaphors. .

II- Synopsis of “Dastak”

The film begins with the knocking door shot and the next one was the wide panaroma shot of Mumbai slum area appeared on the screen. The story of newlyweds couple Hamid (Sanjeev Kumar) and Salma (Rehana Sultana). They move into the rental flat near red light area and the paan wala Akhtar helped them to arrange this flat . The flat had been the former home of a well known Mujra and qawali singer Shamshad prostitute . Men still come to the door in the hope of seeing Shamshad and every night the bell rang and the same thing happened for along time . The couple struggle to live with the bounds of their own moral conduct. Hamid live a poor lifestyle in Bombay slum area . Hamid works as a clerk in Bombay Municipal Corporation and hardly manage all the basic amenities of life . Salma comes from a small village where her widowed father lives with daughter Zora. The locals specially Akhtar paan shop owner wants Salma to start entertaining as it will increase it paan business . He’s is the one who helped them to search rental flat. When both refuse the other create ruckus and make false blame and inform the police that Salma indulge in a prostitution business . Salma spend the whole day in fear and use to talk with Myna bird. One day Shamshad visit Salma’s place and take to her place and she ran after knowing that she is the one because of whom they are in trouble. The couple went to Salma’s father place to stay for a long time but When hamid comes to know the father in law is in destitute the couple return back to Bombay. Salma insist Hamid to move out from this place as people thrown stone from the window and try to look inside when she’s alone in the house. Hamid start searching new place and finally after so much struggle he does find one even pays half of it and promise to pay the rest amount in one week. He gets the news that Zora engagemnt has been fixed and 1500 Rs are needed, now Hamid suffering from dilemma, tension and pressure of arranging money for flat and Zohra’s wedding . He asked for help from Company owner but he refuse . previously, one of the client of Hamid try to bribe him for contract but he always deny but when Hamid doesn’t find any way and failed in arranging the money he approach him and asked for money .The condition was so miserable that he was ready to take the bribe . The depressed condition leads both to a great frustration . One day Salma picks up the Tanpura when Brij Mohan one of the client of Shamshad just came to see her but Salma stop him from going away and start singing for him. Hamid was so annoyed that he picked up the knife to kill them both but he discovered his wife was pregnant. That is where the narrative comes to an unexpected halt.

III- Critical analysis of the depiction of issues:

The story explores the complex world of women and how women have viewed by Indian men. Though Salma is a trained Thumri singer but she's not suppose to sing as earlier acting singing dancing associated only with prostitutes and courtesans. (Ganti, 2004) "stated that Hindu and Muslim Community women bear the burden of representing the family or community status and respectability which traditionally has been associated". The film depicts the struggle of a common man to fulfill the basic amenities. The struggle of metropolis life clearly depicted when Salma continuously asking for shifting the room but due to money scarcity Hamid is not able to get it. (Miranda, 2013) "The story was originally penned and produced for radio during the housing shortage in Bombay in the 1940's". Rajinders Bedi brilliantly depicts the condition of Salma through metaphor. The caged bird symbolizes the free spirited young bride forced by circumstances to lock herself in the available narrow confines. Dastak shows some disturbing realities rape and abuse and constantly shows the fire of stove which metaphorically represent the fire which was burning inside Hamid because of rumors about his loved one. It's a film which shows that how human mind works with the different circumstances of the world and how desolation and frustration can lead people to the most extreme of reactions. This film also explores the ethos of prostitution in its reality and as a metaphor for the outside world. The treatment of the film and the metaphor used that time was completely different. The themes also focus firmly upon the difficulties of surviving honestly in a metropolis as in one scene when one of the client try to bribe hamid he refuse but on the other hand the worst situation lead him to the way of corruption though he was felt repent on doing this but circumstances forced him. (Bhaskar) "states that "Dastak" gestures towards the cultural and social implications of Salma's muslim identity". The song "*Mai Ri Main Kase Kahoon peer apne jiya ki*" it depicts the lonileness of her heart. She robes herself in a towel and sing this song in her mind and cries over her fate as she cannot do anything that her heart wishes to do. The song perfectly match the situation of the couple from which they are going through. (Miranda, 2013) Dastak means the combination of psychological and social pressure is embodied by the constant knocking on the door "Dastak" means "the knock".. In one very significant phase of the screenplay the couple decides to just run away from everything, back to their village. But there too, they witness enough misery to be compelled to return to their cursed urban abode. The film clearly depicts life is full of troubles you can't escape instead of that you have to face the problem and resolve it. The last sequence of the story, that also includes a song, is a stamp of genius. One of the best Hindi movie climaxes ever for one of the most unique Hindi film ever. "*Hum hai mataye-kuch-o-bazaar ki tarah, uti hai har nigaah kharidar ki tarah*" perfectly depicts the suffering. The song perfectly depict the miserable condition of the couple and their hardship of life that for money only she is doing what which her husband never wants her to do. The film is about the freedom of woman her dreams aspirations struggle for surviving and the problems in life. The harsh realities of life perfectly potrayed by Rajinder Bedi in such a perfect narrative.

IV- Conclusion

The film represents the different circumstances of middle class people and how agony of woman is not understood by the society. Film that showcases the way human mind works in problems with the circumstances of daily life and how frustration and fear can drive people to most of the extreme reaction . The film reflects every emotion of Hamid and Sultana brilliantly and every song depicts the situation of which the Protagonist was suffering. Dastak is a classical film which represents the every impression with perfect blend of classic songs, Cinematic imagination and metaphor.

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