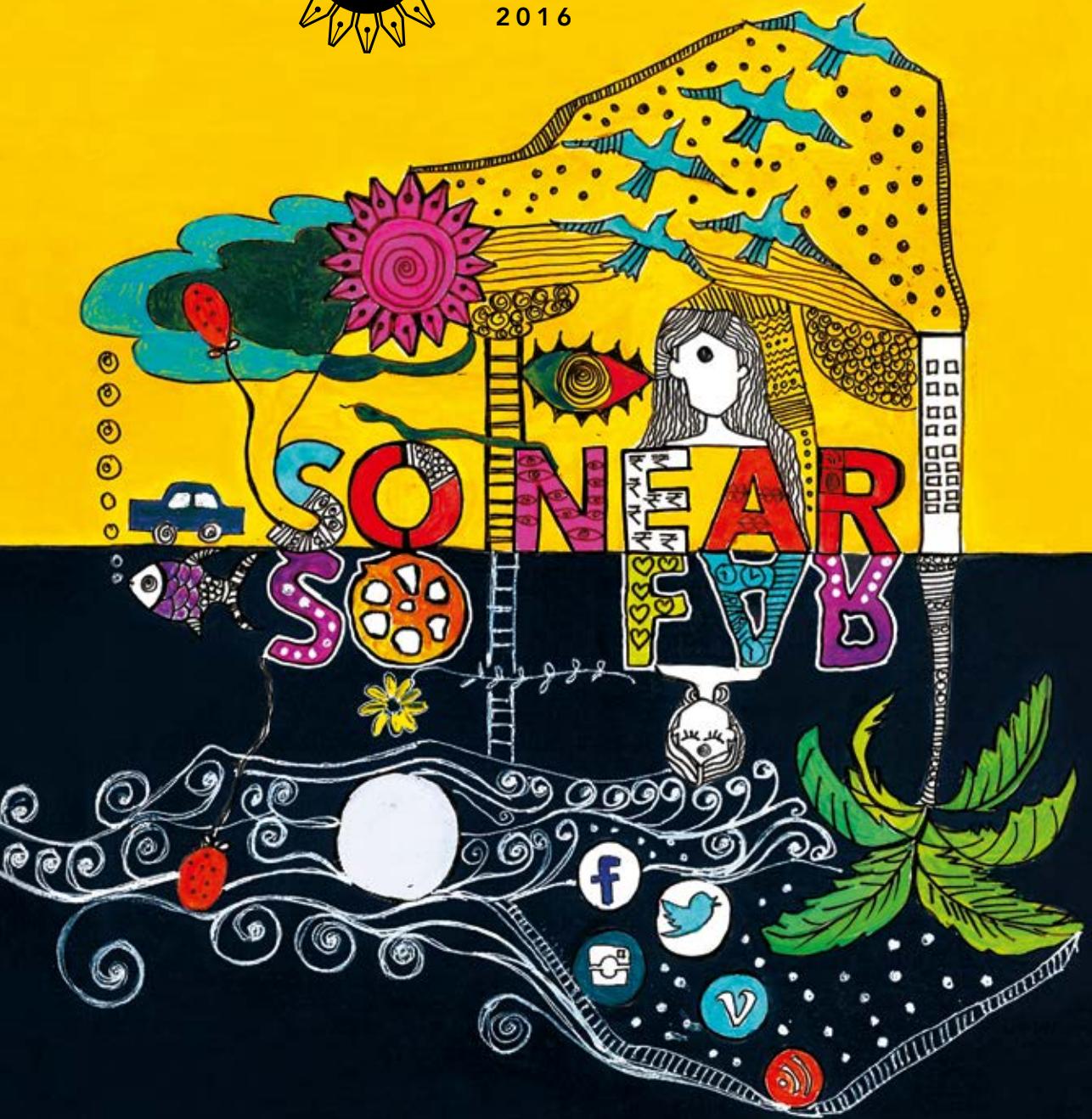




FILM WRITERS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS



4TH
INDIAN SCREENWRITERS
CONFERENCE
2016



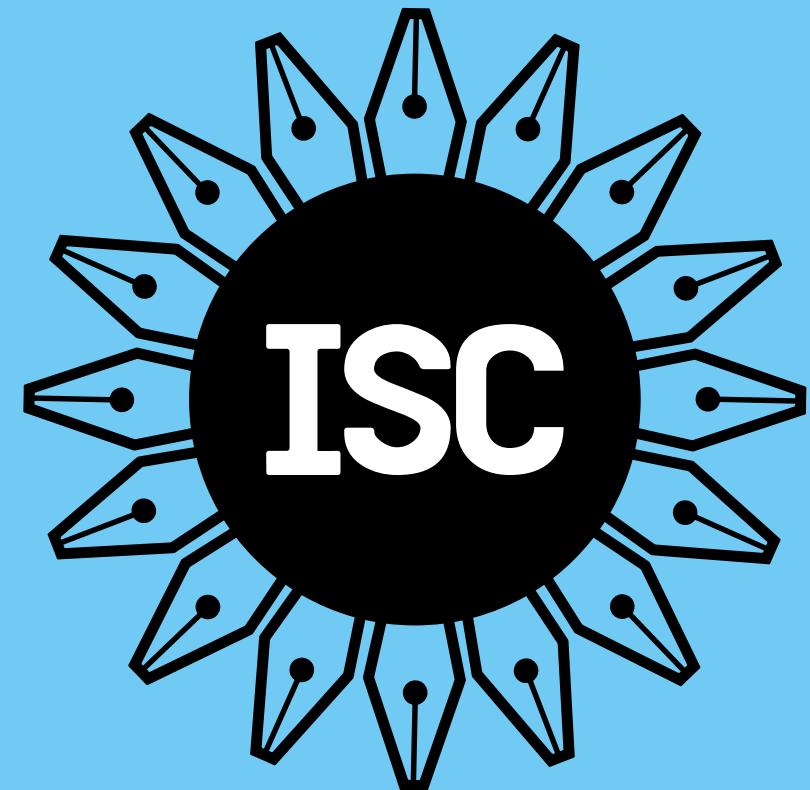
Do Our Stories Reflect India's Reality?

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PHANTOM



INDIAN SCREENWRITERS CONFERENCE

Conceived in 2006, the Indian Screenwriters Conference is a constructive response to the need of screenwriters from all over India to come together as a community. This regular platform allows us to discuss and debate, criticise and complain, analyse and plan action, and forge bonds - individual and collective. In our unity lies our progress, from our growth emerges our success. Let the Indian screenwriting movement rise!

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 Andheri West, Mumbai 400053
 Tel: +91 22 26733027, +91 22 26733108
 Fax: +91 22 66922899
 Email: filmwritersassociation@gmail.com
 www.fwa.co.in

Compiled and Edited by: Pooja Varma

Hindi Articles Edited by: Dinkar Sharma

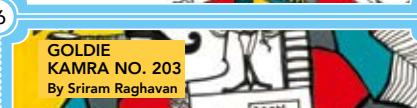
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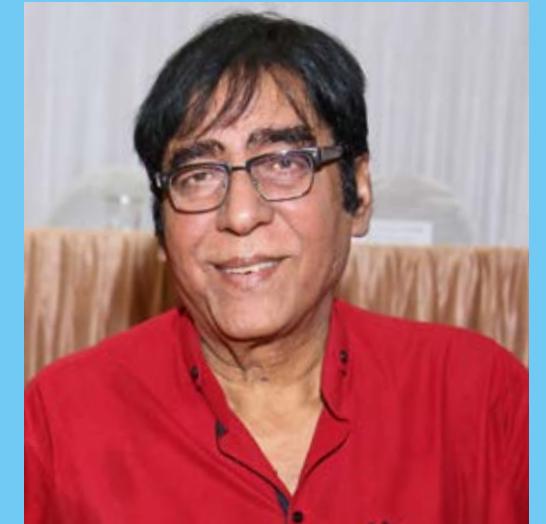
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The culture of a society is best revealed by the stories that are popular at that time. In fact, Joseph Campbell's seminal research of ancient cultures was done primarily by studying the tales, myths and other narratives of those times.

As storytellers, screenwriters can be seen as chroniclers of their times! If we look at the popular films of the decades of the fifties, sixties or even seventies, we notice that, apart from stories of romance, comedy and fantasy, there are very popular films that have plots and characters based on the issues of those times. Rural oppression, class inequality, caste discrimination, the challenges of secularism and other such social phenomena. Popular cinema reflected the India of those days, a newly independent society rich in pluralism and diversity, but also struggling with a growing turmoil within, keen to retain its multi-cultural sense of itself.

In fact, the inspiration for even love stories and comedies was derived from the real obstacles that screenwriters observed in the society around them.

And, yet, inexplicably, mainstream cinema of today barely skirts these issues, if at all it

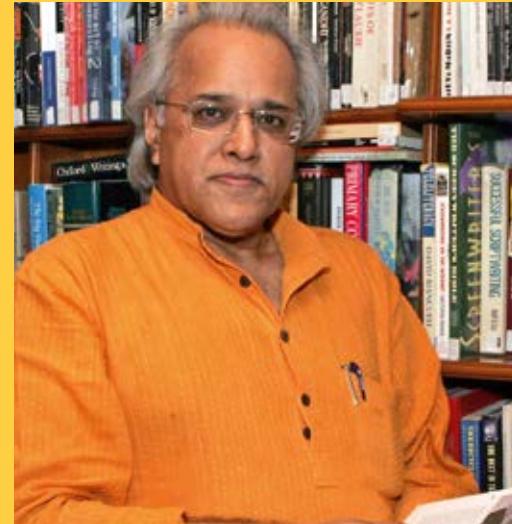
attempts to touch them. For some reason, we seem to be flitting between aspirational plots and decontextualized stories. The definition itself of the term entertainment has narrowed down to merely mean that which makes the audience laugh and sends them back comfortable. Scripts that leave a disturbing residue are not considered good business!

At FWA, we have consistently attempted to enrich the discourse within Indian screenwriting through seminars, workshops, pitchfests and other such initiatives. The Indian Screenwriters Conference is perhaps our most prestigious and popular platform, and we expect that the 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference too, will take this journey meaningfully forward.

I welcome you all at the Indian Screenwriters Conference!

Jalees Sherwani
President, Film Writers Association

MESSAGE FROM THE HON. GENERAL SECRETARY



शब्द भी एक तरह के सत्याग्रह हैं -
सत्य का आग्रह !
समय का सत्य,
संवर्धों का सत्य,
सोच और सरोकारों का सत्य,
संवेदनाओं का सत्य....
साहित्य हो या सिनेमा,
शब्द जहां भी है,
सत्याग्रह पर बैठे है !
यह हमें तय करना होता है
कि हमारे शब्द
इस सत्याग्रह में शामिल हैं या नहीं !
और आसान नहीं है
अपने शब्दों को
इस सत्याग्रह में झोकना
क्योंकि बाज़ार शब्दों को
धीरे-धीरे तवायफ बनाता जा रहा है !
शब्द केवल तफरीह का सामान
बनते जा रहे हैं,
उन्हें सत्याग्रह पर बिठाना
भूख को निमंत्रण देना है !
लेकिन हममें से जो लेखक
सत्य के काटे हुए हैं,
उन्हें भूख और बाज़ार के बीच

एक मार्ग खोजना होगा
जो बाज़ार से गुजरता तो है
मगर उसकी मंज़िल सत्य है,
बाज़ारू सामान, सम्मान और सुविधाएँ नहीं !
फ़िल्म राइटर्स एसोसिएशन
द्वारा आयोजित
चौथी इंडियन स्क्रीन राइटर्स कांफ्रेंस
फ़िल्म और टेलीविज़न के कथा, पटकथा,
संवाद और गीत लेखकों की
काम, दाम, नाम और
सम्मान की लड़ाई में एक
महत्वपूर्ण अखिल भारतीय
पहल है, और उसकी बढ़ती
हुई लोकप्रियता और सार्थकता
इस बात का सबूत है कि
गुलज़ार के शब्दों में हम
“उबलती हांडियों” ने “अपनी ज़िन्दगी
चूल्हे पर रखी है”,
मगर ये हांडियां खामोश नहीं हैं,
गुड़गुड़ा रही हैं,
कि वह समय दूर नहीं जब
हमारी दाल भी गलेगी, पकेगी !

कमलेश पांडे
माननीय महासचिव, फ़िल्म राइटर्स एसोसिएशन

MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENOR

Time-Capsule of Talent

“The causes made in the past, manifest as results in the present... and the seeds sown today will bloom as flowers in the future!”

This is the heart behind the initiatives undertaken by the Film Writers Association, an organization with a commitment to secure and protect writers' rights, and offer constant inspiration and education, to nourish and nurture talent, so that it may blossom to its fullest.

The 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference is no exception. As in the past, we once again bring together an eclectic group of writers, educators and media professionals under one roof, and give our members and students a chance to learn from and interact with them in a conference extending over two days.

The theme of the conference this time is: 'SO NEAR, SO FAR : Do Our Stories Reflect India's Reality?' When we look back at the art and literature of a time period, it forms a clear picture of the socio-economic and cultural reality of that time. But today we have varied platforms for creative expression, what with single screens, multiplexes, TVs, laptops and mobiles, all vying for our attention. The question that comes to mind is, if all these will be a part of the time-capsule that represent this current age, then what picture would they



create? Will the future generations be able to gauge our "real life" through the "reel life" that we are creating?

Several sessions have been planned to explore this theme from various angles. And in addition we will also explore other issues concerning the profession of screenwriting. Hearing the views of the creators of the small films that make a big splash, exploring the place of women in our stories, diving into the world 'of' television and 'in' television, looking at the collaborative relationship between the writers & producers, in cinema as well as TV, these are just some of the invigorating topics which will be discussed, in an attempt to give every attendee an enriching, unforgettable experience.

Each of us is unique, like a cherry, peach or plum, and we must bloom in the way that only we can. To discover our own innate talent and then exert ourselves to the very limits of our ability, give everything we have, and that is when our true potential will emerge. I must seek every opportunity to learn and hone my skills, and the use it to express myself in the way only I can. That's the way to write my own unique history, create my own time-capsule for the future generations to benefit from.

Preeti Mamgain

Convenor, 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference

MESSAGE FROM THE JOINT CONVENOR

Role, Responsibility and Business of a Writer

Writing is an expression. Self expression. And that very "self" is always defined by social factors around us. We are what we write. We write what we see around. Writers are the individuals who have designated themselves with the daunting task of recreating the time, place and characters of not only whatever era they live in but the era they have read, heard or imagined about.

While, a historian documents the action, a writer documents the emotion of mankind. And that has to be true. Hence the role and responsibility of a writer becomes very important. The writer's role is to testify about man and his circumstances, and to explain to people the essential meaning of today's world, which contains the seeds of tomorrow and future hope. Like philosophers and thinkers, writers are the builders of society.

But somewhere, we the writers seem to have lost track of where the society is going. Either it is "l'art pour l'art" or sheer business, that has led us to lose connect with the society. And of late, we have failed to recreate the society we are living in (particularly in television).



The 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference is a platform where FWA is bringing senior and experienced writers and other talents from Film and Television Industry to discuss the role, responsibility and business of writers.

The theme of the conference this time is: 'SO NEAR, SO FAR : Do Our Stories Reflect India's Reality?'

It's a big, big opportunity for the young writers and students of cinema to come and not only witness the constructive discussion but take part as well.

Cinema as visual medium has long ago taken over other forms of storytelling because it has been easy to create and connect with an audience. And that has made a screenwriter's job more fascinating and challenging. But let us not forget, it is the society we create our audience from. And therefore to connect, we need to tell their story.

Zama Habib

Joint Convenor, 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CONVENOR

कितने पास कितने दूर

"कितने पास, कितने दूर" स्थिति का अनुभव तमाम लेखकों को कदम कदम पर होता है। निर्माताओं से जल्द ही चेक आने वाला होता है, पर लंबे समय तक आता नहीं। अभिनेता प्रोजेक्ट में काम करने के लिए हाँ तो कहता है, डेट देता नहीं। दूसरों को क्यों दोष दें, हमारे अपने आइडियाज़ और ख्याल दिमाग में नाचते तो हैं, लेकिन हाफ फिट की दूरी पर होने वाले कागज़ या स्क्रीन पर उतरते नहीं। "कितने पास, कितने दूर" वाले दोहरे आयामों पर जीने का विधिलिखित हर रचनाकार के होने का मूलभूत पहलू है। लेखक प्रकाश हो जैसे। दोनों जी लेता है। पार्टिकल होना भी, बेव्ह होना भी। उस के लिए कम्पलशन है एक तरह का - क्यों कि बीच में तैरने के सिवा हमें सच का स्वरूप ठीक से दिखेगा भी नहीं। ज्यादा नज़दीकीयाँ और ज्यादा दूरियाँ - लेखक के जीवनानुभवों के परस्प्रेक्टिव्स को मेले के अजूबे आइने सा तोड़ मरोड़ देता है। भूलभूलैया से बाहर निकलने का रास्ता न अंदर घुसे आदमी को दिखाई देगा, न हवाई जहाज में उड़ने वाले यात्री को। पैरों तले सहारा देने वाली सुखद ज़मीन को छोड़ कर, खुले आसमान में बीचबीच त्रिशंकु की तरह लटकना होगा। रिस्क लेनी होगी। हर सृजनशील व्यक्ति का पैदाईशी डिफेक्ट है ये - सच को खोजने के लिए रिस्क लेने की खुजली। जो देखा है जिया है उसे समझते समझते कागज़ पर उतारना है। सच्चाई दिखाने की ललक, वो

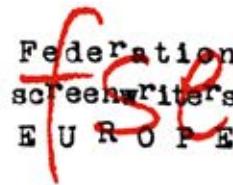


चुड़ैल है जो लेखकों को नए नए ज़ंगलों में ले जा के गुम करा देती है। लेकिन आज के मार्केट की हालत देख कर, क्या हमारी कहानियाँ त्रिशंकु के नज़रिये से डरावने सच दिखाती हैं? या सुखद भूमि के मोह में जो "मैनेजेबल" लगे, "एक्सपैक्टेबल" लगे, ऐसी सम्माननीय कहानियाँ ही दिखाती हैं? या ऐसा भी कि, भस्म करने वाला सच दिखाना तो पत्रकारिता का काम है, कला को ज़िदगी की उलझनों से परे होना चाहिए। सच्चाई की कीचड़ के ऊपर खिलता कमल, भूलभूलैया के ऊपर तैरता इंद्रधनुष दिखाना चाहिए? तभी तो मिलेगी न दुनियादारी के दर्दनाक झमेलों से मुक्ति?

आज की तारीख में हम क्या नज़रिया अपना रहें हैं, इस का जाय़ा लेने का मंच है ये कॉफरैंस। हमारी पेचीदी ज़िदगियाँ, हमारे काम, काम के पेच और चुनौतियाँ समझने का मंच। लेखक सब को समझने की कोशिश करता है, लिखता है। लेखक को कोई नहीं समझता। ये हम लेखक भाई भाई के लिए एक दूसरे को समझ लेने का मंच है। इस में घुल मिल जाइए। लोगों के गले में लटकते टैग्ज़ पढ़कर बेहिचक बात करने की पहल कीजिए। बहुत अकेला जीता है लेखक त्रिशंकु अवस्था में - इन दो दिनों में त्रिशंकुओं की गैंग बना लीजिए। ये लेखकों का कुम्भ है, नहा लीजिए।

Manisha Korde

Co-Convenor, 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference



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Brussels, 22 July 2016
To the Film Writers Association India

Dear FWA,

Greetings from your screenwriting colleagues in Europe.

As President of FSE I send you congratulations on hosting the 4th Indian screenwriters Conference. It looks a fascinating topic to discuss and I only wish we could join you. In these days of threats and opportunities we have much to learn from each other and I look forward to hearing more about the Conference and meeting you at the IAWG meeting in Paris later this year.

With all best wishes,

Robert Taylor
President, Federation of Screenwriters in Europe



Tuesday, 05 July 2016

Film Writers Association India FWA
Mumbai
India

First Floor
134 Tooley Street
London SE1 2TU
Tel: 020 7833 0777

President:
Olivia Hetreed
Chair:
Gail Renard
Acting General Secretary:
Ellie Peers

Dear FWA,

On behalf of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, I send all the writers gathered for the 4th FWA conference our very warmest wishes for a constructive, inspiring and stimulating series of debates.

We all need to see and hear your stories of India: individual, universal and real.

With all best wishes,

Olivia Hetreed
President, WGGB



**WRITERS
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AMERICA, WEST**

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July 6, 2016

Dear Film Writers Association,

We both remember with great affection our meetings with members of your elected leadership, and other Indian screenwriters at international union meetings and screenwriter conferences and workshops. Through our discussions we learned how much screenwriters in India and the U.S. have in common: the challenges of getting appropriate compensation, protections, and respect for the content we create from the international major media companies who employ us and our commitment that through our unions we are stronger collectively than individually.

Therefore we are writing on behalf of the Writers Guild of America, West to salute the Film Writers Association on the occasion of the 4th Indian Screenwriters Conference and to once again affirm our ongoing solidarity. We would also like to salute the Presidents and General Secretaries of the other screenwriters' associations of India who are joining you at the Conference.

We look forward to continuing our alliance in the years to come.

In solidarity,

Chris Keyser, former President of the Writers Guild of America, West
Tom Schulman, former Vice President of the Writers Guild of America, West



INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION OF WRITERS GUILDS

July 11, 2016

Dear FWA Colleagues,

On behalf of the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds, I wish you a very successful 4th year of the Indian Screenwriters Conference.

Such forums are an important vehicle for developing strength among writers and help empower us, wherever we may live, to tell the stories that matter to us.

In Solidarity,

Christopher Keyser
Chair, Policy & Research Group
International Affiliation of Writers Guilds
Past-President, WGA West

Members: Film Writers Association, Mumbai (FWA); La Guilde Française des Scénaristes (La Guilde); New Zealand Writers Guild (NZWG); Scriptwriters Guild of Israel (SGI); Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC); Verband Deutscher Drehbuchautoren (VDD); Writers Guild of America, East (WGA E); Writers Guild of America, West (WGA W); Writers Guild of Canada (WGC); Writers Guild of Great Britain (WGGB); Writers Guild of Ireland (WGI)



FWA joins Laadli to promote Gender Sensitivity in Films

FWA in partnership with *Laadli* will be promoting Gender Sensitivity through its activities including workshops, seminars, master classes and other programmes.

Laadli - Population First's Girl Child campaign was launched in 2005 to promote positive image of girls and women in media by sensitizing and influencing the influencers i.e. media and advertising professionals, script writers, opinion makers, youth and educators.



www.populationfirst.org, <https://www.facebook.com/LaadliPF>, [Laadli_PF](#)



FILM WRITERS ASSOCIATION

2016

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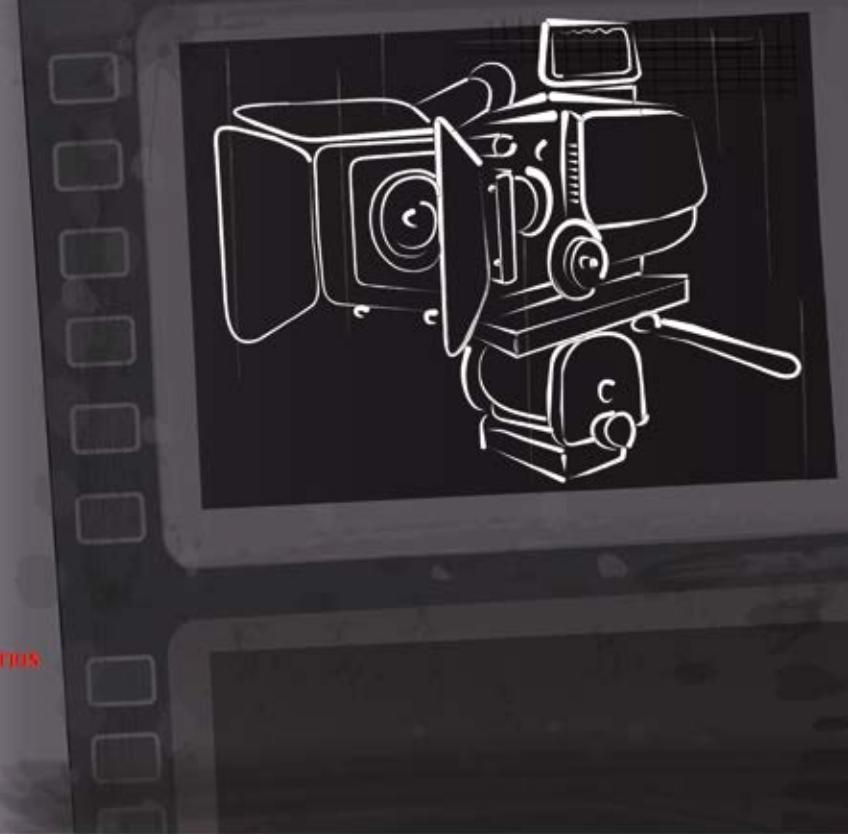
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WESTERN INDIA CINEMATOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION

24, 2nd Floor, Om Heera Panna Arcade,
New Link Road, Oshiwara, Jogeshwari W, Mumbai - 400 102.
T : +91 22 2635 5386 | +91 22 2635 5926
M : +91 88792 14579 | +91 98336 00757
E : info@wica.in | wicaoffice@yahoo.com
W : www.wica.in

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A- 223, Morya House, Andheri (W), Mumbai – 400053

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THE 3RD INDIAN SCREENWRITERS CONFERENCE: A Report

By Kamlesh Pandey
Hon. General Secretary,
Film Writers Association



UNTOLD STORIES

Screenwriting and the Truth of Our Times

The 3rd Indian Screenwriters Conference by Film Writers Association was held at St. Andrews Auditorium, Bandra West, Mumbai on February 25-26-27, 2013, with celebrated speakers and panelists, almost a who's who, from the field of media and entertainment not only from India but from Hollywood, and had a very stimulating, thought-provoking theme *UNTOLD STORIES : Screenwriting and the Truth of Our Times*. The 3rd Indian Screenwriting Conference was the most important screenwriters conference held so far because it was being held at perhaps the most critical moment in the history of Film Writers' Association as well as in the life of every Indian screenwriters because the much awaited Copyright Amendment Bill 2012 was passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha without a single vote against it. In 3rd Indian Screenwriters Conference, what we explored, analyzed, debated and discussed would perhaps echo through the life, work and wellbeing of Indian screenwriters for decades to come. It would not be an exaggeration to



state that we were standing at the crossroads of history at that very moment and the direction we chose to follow was not only going to define us but define the truth of our times as we wrote it...or ignored it.

On day 1, Chief Guest Shri Javed Akhtar and Special Guest Oscar Winning Hollywood Screenwriter and ex-VP of Writers Guild of America West, Shri Tom Schulman addressed the Conference. Well known social scientist and provocative columnist Shiv Vishwanathan delivered the Keynote address, followed by a panel discussion on 'Do Screenwriters Have a Social Responsibility' which included panelists like film writers Javed Akhtar, Tom Schulman, film maker Rakey Omprakash Mehra and Marathi screenwriter Girish Kulkarni television writer and Programming Head Vivek Bahl, eminent television writers Rajesh Dubey and Gajra Kottary, and was moderated by film scholar, analyst and Dean, Prasad Academy, Shri K.Hariharan.

The panel discussion on 'How Do Popular Cinema and TV Portray Women' included panelists Award Winning film makers Ashutosh Gowarikar, Anurag Basu and Kumara Raja and



television writers Preiti Mamgain, Satyam Tripty and Ila Bedi, and was moderated by social scientist and freelance journalist Rajani Bakshi.

Day 1 ended with the Presentation of FWA Award to Shri Javed Akhtar and Shri Salim Javed with a rich and insightful tribute to their contribution to Indian screenwriting by FWA President Shri Vinay Shukla.

On day 2, the panel discussion on 'The Charge of the New 'Write' Brigade' moderated by eminent young screenwriter Ms.Pubali Chaudhary had panelists that included young screenwriters Juhi Chaturvedi and Akshat Verma and screenwriter-directors Habib Faisal, Ravi Jadhav and Reema Kagti, was followed by an equally invigorating panel discussion



on 'Is the Old Order Cracking? New Ways of Storytelling' with panelists screenwriter Urmil Juvekar, Sanjay Patil, Bejoy Nambiar and Abbas Tyrewala and moderated by one of the finest and National Award Winning producer-director Govind Nihalani.

Television writer and programming head Saurabh Tiwari moderated a panel discussion on 'What Is Driving TV Content? Is it Changing? Can It?' with panelists ex-Director, FTII Shri Tripurari Sharan, television writer and programming heads Vivek Bahl and Sukesh Motwani, television writers R.D.Tailan, Charudutt Acharya and writer-director Gul Khan. Later, eminent film and television writer Ms.Anradha Tiwari moderated a panel discussion on 'The New Brigade on TV!' with panelists screenwriter Raghuvir Shekhavat and Mihir Bhuta, freelance writers Amal Donvar, television writer Swati Pandey, Marathi screenwriter Chinmay Mandlekar and internet show producer Mrinal Jha.

The day ended with the Presentation of FWA Award to Shri Gulzar with a lyrical tribute to his contribution to Indian screenwriting and lyrics by FWA General Secretary Kamlesh Pandey.



Mumbai, February 25, 26 & 27, 2013



Day 3 started with a panel discussion on much neglected children's films with the theme 'The Empty Playroom. Why Such Few Children's Films?' It was moderated by an FTII alumnus Chandita Mukherjee with an expert panel which included Gulzar, children's film maker Nila Madhab Panda, ex-Creative Head CFSI Monica Wahi and screenwriters Preiti Mamtgain, Farhan S. and Anand Shivkumaran.

'The Light Through the Fog: Implications of the Amended Copyright Act for Film and TV writers' was jointly moderated by veteran screenwriter Anjum Rajabali and popular television writer Rajesh Dubey with a panel that included such copyright experts like Souvik Biswas, Nikhil Krishnamurthy, Sai Gopal and Ameet Dutta.

Panel discussions on 'Writer-Producer Bhai-Bhai! The Minimum Basic Contract for Film Writers' included Federation of Western Indian Cine Employees Senior Vice President Shri Bhushan Chawla, director-producer Vipul Shah and Ramesh Sippy, copyright lawyer Nikhil Krishnamurthy, screenwriter Anjum Rajabali and WGA Executive Director Rebecca Kessinger, and was followed by a presentation on the

Writers Guild of America West by Rebecca Kessinger and Tom Schulman.

Day 3 ended with the presentation of FWA Award to legendary television writer Late Shri Manohar Shyam Joshi with a tribute to his contribution to Indian screenwriting by FWA team, and 'The Way Forward! What FWA Has for You in the Next One Year' by FWA President Shri Vinay Shukla, General Secretary Kamlesh Pandey and its entire Executive Committee with a Vote of Thanks by General Secretary Kamlesh Pandey.

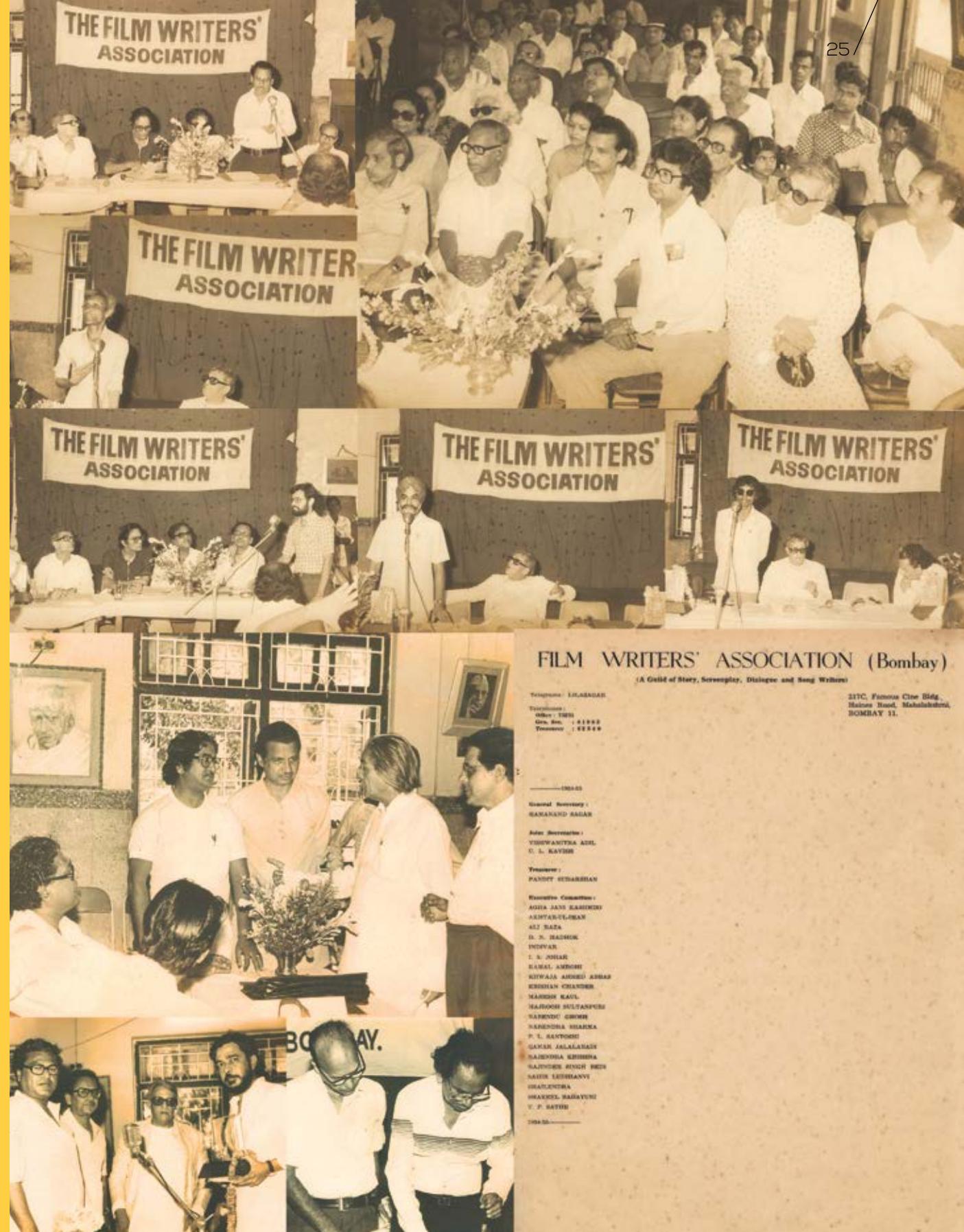
Gulzar Saab, while receiving the FWA Award, summed up the life and work of us screenwriters and lyricists very aptly when he said, 'Ubalti handiyan aur itni saari, sabhi ne zindagi chulhe pe rakhi hai. Na pakati hai, na galati hai, sabhi ne zindagi chulhe pe rakhi hai...' (Boiling pots and so many? (there were around 800 in 3ISC!) All of us have kept our lives on the stove, neither cooking nor softening...). The situation hasn't changed much. And thanks for that because if and when it gets cooked or softens, we would be too busy relishing it than living it and writing about it.



FILM WRITERS ASSOCIATION: THE DIAMOND YEARS

By Kamlesh Pandey

Based on Facts Courtesy
Opender Chanana



The Beginning

It amuses me no end and in fact thrills me that back in 1950 when most of us were not even born and a few of us like me were still in our nappies, on a Sunday afternoon in the humble Matunga flat of music director Anil Biswas during an open house of their weekly gathering of Cultural and Literary meeting, K.A.Abbas, Ramanand Sagar, Dr.Safdar Shah, Mahesh Kaul, Narendra Sharma, Chandrashekhar, Madhusudan, P.N.Rangeen and Amritlal Nagar, the idea of the Film Writers' Association (FWA), Bombay took birth. What is important to note here is the fact that the names associated with the birth of FWA more or less defined its DNA — social concern, progressive outlook, literary mindset, high professional standards, awareness of writers' fundamental rights and creative excellence in whatever a writer and a lyricist is expected to deliver.

Back Story

Till the early fifties most of the craftsmen and technicians worked with studios. There were no freelancers. In fact they were considered as permanent employees of the studios. The need to have a trade union body was never felt. It was only when a producer, Chimanlal Trivedi started the contract system in his production company, cracks developed in the relationship between the writers and directors who were considered as the two most important wheels on which the industry moved. The change in system led to disputes between the producers and directors on the one hand, and between directors and writers on the other. Apparently the director could no longer choose a writer of his choice. The same held true for writers. They now felt the need to have their own trade union bodies.

Adoption of Constitution 29th May 1954

On 29th May, 1954 another meeting of writers was held at Shree Sound Studios. Nearly 80 writers had enrolled as members by then and

appeal was made to all film writers to join the association. 24 writers were present at the meeting. The constitution of the association was adopted in the general body meeting held thereafter. The membership enrolment drive had been a success. On formation of the association it was in the fitness of things that one of its main initiators was elected as its General Secretary. The constitution did not have any provision for the post of President or Chairperson. Vishwamitra Adil and C.L. Kavish were elected as Jt. Secretaries while Pt. Sudarshan became the Treasurer. The council of members included stalwarts such as K.A. Abbas, D.N. Madhok, P.L. Santoshi, Mahesh Kaul, I.S. Johar, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Sahir Ludhianvi, Shailendra, V.P. Sathe, Shakeel Badayuni, Krishna Chandra, Kamal Amrohi, Rajendra Krishna, Ali Reza, and Nabendu Ghosh.

And so, on May 13, 1960, the Film Writers' Association got registered as a trade union under the Trade Union Act 1926 with Registration No.3726.

Precursor to formation of Federation of Western India Cine Employees

The association also took the initiative to convince other organizations/unions to interact with one another on regular basis and more important focused on the need to have a central organization of all worker-organizations. All associations complied and sent two representatives to a meeting held on 6th December 1954 at the office of Film Writers Association, Famous Cine Studios. It was in this meeting that a decision to have a Film Workers Federation was taken, which was the precursor to the formation of Federation of Western India Cine Employees a few years later.

Issues at stake

A few pertinent issues/matters which the association took up immediately on its formation:

- To institute 20 Annual Awards-five for stories, five for screen plays, five for songs and five for dialogues.

- Arrange informal meetings for interaction between prominent technicians of various crafts to debate on problems affecting them.

- To fight for dignity and rights of writers and to secure representation on National and International organizations and develop fraternal relations with them.

- To seek representation of writers on panels/committees instituted by

Government to debate on cinema and issues connected with it.

- To set up branches of the association in Poona (Pune) and Kolhapur.

- To submit memorandum to Government to enact comprehensive copyright law for safeguarding the rights of writers.

- A committee set up to formulate four types of standard contracts. One for the person who writes the story, second for the screen play and the third for dialogue writer and the fourth for lyricist.

- To have a Members Assignment Register to maintain details of registration of current assignments of members.

Minimum Wages & Standard Contracts

The first serious efforts to make standard contracts mandatory was made by the association when Mr. K.A. Abbas, President in his letter dated 3rd January

1961 addressed to IMPAA (Indian Motion Picture Producers Association)fixed the minimum wages as under:

Story: Rs.2,000/- (Rupees two thousand only)

Screenplay : Rs.2,500/- (Rupees two thousand five hundred only)

Dialogue: Rs.3,000/- (Rupees three thousand only)

Songs : Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred only)

By late sixties the association undertook the task of registering stories, screenplays, songs etc. It was felt that registration would protect the rights of writers in case of any dispute. The registration, with the passage of time, is one activity undertaken by the association that has withstood the test of time and continues to draw hordes of writers, professional as well as amateurs.

The first and only initiative Housing for members

At its meeting held on 10th February, 1977, the Managing Committee resolved to form Film Writers Cooperative Housing Society. It authorized Mr. Vishnu Mehrortra and Mr. Ghafil Harnalvi to operate a bank account for this purpose. In respect of providing shelter to its members belonging to the lower income group, the association can take credit for not only approaching the Government of Maharashtra during 1975/76 but succeeding in getting tenements for members in the suburb of Kandivali.

Authors Information The FIRST Periodical

'Authors Information', the first periodical published by the association to provide a platform to writers to air their views as well as their problems, began its shortlived journey on 17th May, 1976. The first issue was edited by Mr. Anil Kavish but from the second issue Mr. Madhusudan took over as Editor. Unfortunately it was discontinued. Although in the intervening period, the need for a mouthpiece as well as spokesman for writers has been acutely felt, no revival of its publication has taken place till to date.

Admission fee: Rs. 5000/- (for all categories)

Annual Subscription:

Associate & Fellow Members: Rs. 72/-

Regular Member: Rs. 120/-

Life Membership: Rs. 10,000/-

Welfare measures:

- Paravarik Sahaetya Kosh (Family Welfare Fund)

- Rishikesh Mukherjee Educational Fund for Bedi Rahi Scholarships (Education Fund)

- Emergency Relief Fund (Medical Assistance)

- Pension Scheme.

Special Events so far:

- In 1980 Silver Jubilee of the Association celebrated and a Commemorative Volume is published.

- Author's Information, the periodical of the Association was first published on 17th May, 1976. The periodicity was uneven and eventually closed after few years.

- The 1st Indian Screen Writers Conference (ISC) held in 2006 was a huge success with 275 writers attending. 2ISC (575 writers) and

3ISC (675 writers) were held in 2008 and 2013, respectively and saw representation from all the major writers, directors, some producers and even international representatives.

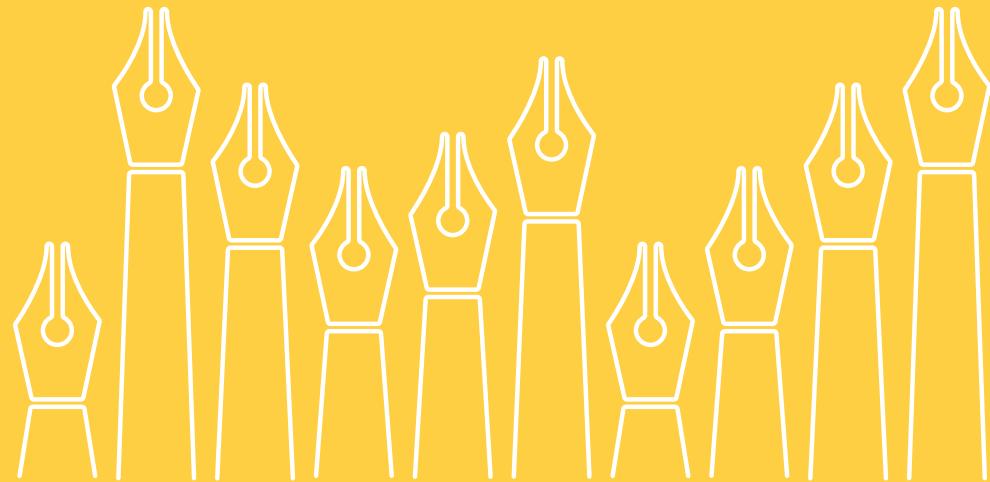
- Screenwriting Workshops and Seminars for film and TV writers, sometimes in collaboration with Whistling Woods, FTII, Living Bridge and other institutions and often at the office premises of Film Writers' Association have been conducted not only in Mumbai but in other cities too.

- Regular events are held every month at the office premises of Film Writers Association. In the last two years, it has held events on Saadat Hasan Manto, Sahir Ludhianvi, Bhojpuri Legends Bhikhari Thakur and Mahender Misir, a workshop on adaptation for Marathi screenwriters, documentaries of Anand Patwardhan, etc.

FWA has had a rich history of progress, being lead by stalwarts of the screenwriting field right from its inception. It hopes to continue to uphold that tradition to become a stronger and more effective organization for Indian screenwriters.

Edited by Anjum Rajabali



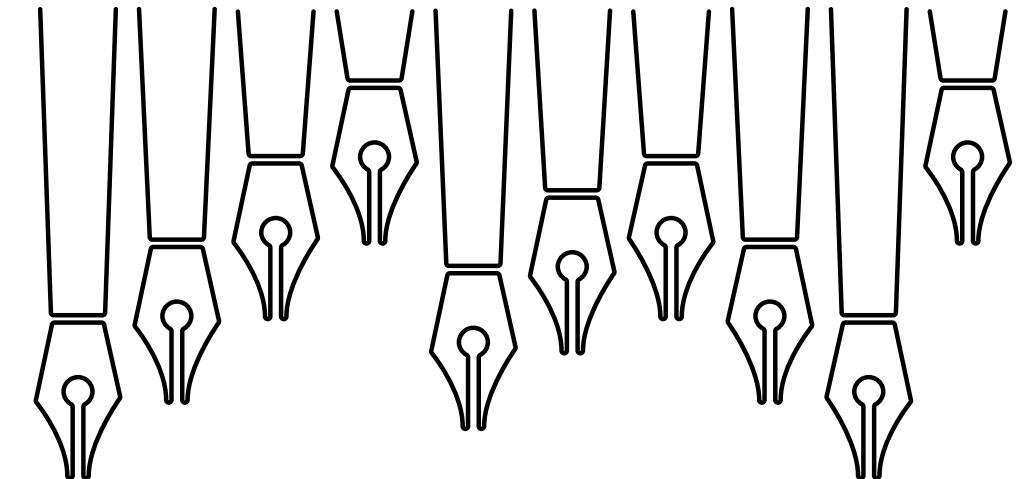


RIGHT TO

Authors Rights and
The Copyright Society
Under the Copyright (Amendment) Act
2012

By Souvik Bhadra

WRITE



Background:
The present Copyright Act in India was enacted in the year 1957 ("Copyright Act") for protecting the rights of creator of a literary, dramatic, musical, graphical or artistic work. The Copyright Act has been amended several times, in order to meet the national and international requirements. Most recently, the Indian government passed the Copyright Amendment Act 2012 ("Amendment Act") on 7 June 2012, bringing certain important changes to the Copyright Act. The Amendment Act has successfully brought the copyright laws in India in compliance with the World Intellectual Property Organization ("WIPO") internet treaties, such as the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT).

One of the main objective behind passing the Amendment Act was to correct the imbalance that prevailed under the copyright laws in India, which primarily favoured the film producers and record labels over the lyricists, script writers, song composers or creator of literary, dramatic, musical, graphical or artistic work ("Author"). This article aims at understanding the scope of the Author's rights under the copyright law and highlights the important changes brought about by the Amendment Act in this regard.

Authors Rights under the India Copyright law:

The Amendment Act has introduced a number of Author friendly amendments, facilitating greater protection and proper administration of the Author's rights. The Amendment Act further clarifies the scope of the rights available to Authors with respect to their creative work such as books, plays, music, films and other works of art.

Broadly speaking under the Copyright laws, the Authors have two important rights, which are the economic rights and the moral rights.

Economic rights:

The Copyright Act recognises eight economic rights of the Authors of any literary, dramatic or musical work which include:

- The right of reproduction;
- The right of dissemination;
- The right to exhibition;
- The right to communicate work to the public;
- The right to recitation, performance and "
- The right to broadcasting;
- The right to communicate through visual or sound recording and
- The right to communicate by broadcast transmissions.

However, the practice in the media industry in India has been such that the producers seek to own the entire bundle of rights attached to the Authors works (all the eight rights provided to the Author). Furthermore, in the year 1977 the Supreme Court in the case of IPRS v/s Eastern Indian Motion Pictures Association and Ors ("Eastern Indian Motion Pictures Judgment") had held that: "the producers of a cinematograph film are the first owners of the copyright in the musical and lyrical works and no copyright subsists in the composer of the lyric or music so composed, unless there is a contract to the contrary between the composer of the lyric or music and the producer of the cinematograph film"

Therefore, until now the Authors were not given their dues and were not recognised for the work created by them. It was rather the producers and the labels who bought the work from the Authors who were reaping the maximum benefit. Through the Amendment Act, the legislature seeks to protect the interests of the Authors and has therefore inserted the following provisions to safeguard the Author's rights:

• Right to Royalty:

Under the Copyright Act there was no provision for the Authors to receive royalty in return of exploitation of their work by the assignee. Even when such rights were created, it could be transferred or waived by the Author in favour of any person. Under the new provisions inserted by Amendment Act, it is provided that the Authors have the right to receive royalties from the assignee. The right to royalty is an inalienable right. Further, it is required that the Authors must receive equal share in profits earned by the assignee form exploitation of Authors works (other than exploration of such work in cinema halls) by way of royalty.

• Assignment of Copyrights:

Under the Copyright Act, the Authors could assign the copyright to any person for current or future modes of economic exploitation. However, under the Amendment Act the rights to royalty cannot be waived or assigned by the Authors except in favour of their legal heirs or the copyright societies. Therefore, under the Amendment Act any agreement that seeks to assign or waive the above rights shall be void. In this regard, the Amendment Act has inserted the following provisions:

a) An assignment made by the Author is not applicable to any medium or mode of exploitation that was not in existence at the time of the assignment, unless such clause is specifically mentioned in the assignment agreement entered between the Author and the assignee;

b) The Author cannot assign or wave his right to receive an equal share of royalties from the assignee for exploring any work (to make a cinematograph film or sound recording) in any form other than communication broadcasting in cinema hall. The only exception to this rule is assignment of such rights to the copyright societies or the legal heirs of the Author.

Therefore, under the Amendment Act, the producers are obligated to share the non

theatrical exploitation royalties equally with the script writers, lyricists and the composers.

• Mode of Assignment of Copyright:

a) Issuance of license through copyright society:

The issuing or granting of license by the Author (who is a member of a copyright society) in respect of his work shall only be through such copyright society duly registered under the Act. The Amendment Act provides for the mode of assignment of copyrights. According to the present position of law any assignment which is contrary to an assignment made to a copyright society is void. Therefore, once an Author assigns all his present and future rights to a copyright society, he cannot assign the same to other persons.

Even if an Author is not a member of any copyright society and assigns such rights in favour of an assignee, he will still be eligible to receive equal share of royalty accruing from non theatrical exploitation of his work as a part of the film or otherwise.

b) All assignment to be in writing:

The Amendment Act requires that all such transfers have to take place in writing. And each right given to the assignee has to be separately mentioned in the Agreement.

• Works under Contract of Employment and Commissioned Works:

Under section 17 of the Copyright Act, if the work is produced by the Author under an employment contract or commissioned work, then the employer or the commissioning party is considered to be the first owner of the work. The Amendment Act clarifies that the above provisions will not affect the rights of the Authors of original literary, musical, dramatic and artistic works. Thus, the original Authors of such work will continue to be the first owners in such case.

• Moral Rights:

Moral rights are special rights conferred to Authors in addition to the economic rights. These rights are inalienable and requires that the Author be granted:

- i) Paternity right which is the right to claim Authorship of the work; and
- ii) Integrity right which is the right to object to any distortion, mutilation or other modification of, or other derogatory action in relation to the said work which should be prejudicial to his honour or reputation.

Under the Copyright Act it was provided that such moral rights could be exercised by legal representatives of the Author, however the right to claim authorship was an exception to this rule. Pursuant to the Amendment Act, this exception has been removed and the right to claim authorship can now be exercised by the legal representatives of the Author. Therefore, in case if the credit is not given to the Authors work after his death, his legal representative can take action against such breach. Also under the Amendment Act, the right against distortion is available even after the expiry of the term of copyright. However, under the Copyright Act, such right was available only during the subsistence of the term of copyright.

The Copyright Society:

Under the Copyright Act, no person other than a copyright society could issue licenses for the Author's works. The only exception to this rule was that the Author himself could issue licenses with respect to his own work. However under the Amendment Act, even the Authors are required to issue licenses for their work only through a copyright society. The copyright society is responsible for granting and issuing licenses, documenting the work done by Authors, collecting the royalties on

behalf of the Authors and distributing the royalties collected to the Authors. The board or the management of such copyright society will decide the rate of royalties to be charged and the scheme of distribution of royalties to the Author's will also be decided by them.

For this purpose, the Authors will need to form their own copyright society in which the Authors will be members. Once the copyright society is registered as a society it can start granting and issuing licenses. The registration of a copyright society is made valid for five years and is renewable thereon.

Conclusion:

Over all the amendments strengthen the rights of the author and help in streamlining the process of assignment and grant of licenses. It enables the Authors to retain their rights over the work created by them. The Amendment Act is a welcome step towards creation of protection and incentives for further development of the nature of Intellectual Property that forms the back bone of the entertainment industry. It has been historically seen that better IPR framework has always resulted in generation greater value and exploitation of innovations and creations to a level of appropriate and commensurate result.

We can be fairly certain that stronger IPR regime will therefore further boost the entertainment industry and help evolve a fair rise in the monetisable value of the industry in India due to inclusion of all creators as equitable stakeholders in the final exploitation of the end product.

Souvik Bhadra is the co-founder and partner of Ashlar Law, a full service multi-city law firm. He heads the Media-Entertainment Law practice of the firm.

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SUBMIT YOUR SCRIPTS**

SUBMIT YOUR SCRIPTS



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CENTRAL BORED OF FILM CERTIFICATION!

An incisive insight into
the reality of certification
and censorship in India.

By Leela Samson



The simple truth is this - the arts do not count in India. We make a lot of fuss about our 'great culture', but for the most part, we are insensitive to the country's indigenous and creative processes. The Government has never really got a grip of how truly valuable our arts are, including cinema. They do not put good money aside for the development, propagation and preservation of the intangible wealth of the nation, nor for the critical digitization of archival material – the wealth of our past. Most Indians at every level would much rather serve the 'tangible' wealth of the nation where the 'action' is, than have anything to do with the intangible wealth of the nation's art expressions.

The profile of the CBFC from an earlier conception of a 'censoring' agency to one that simply 'classifies' films as per the Cinematograph Act, 1952 is imperative, and not a choice anymore, in today's India.

Conceptually, the Central Board of Film Certification of India is envisioned as an autonomous body. While the constitutional status of CBFC is that of a subordinate office under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, the functioning and the decision making regarding film certification has to be totally independent of governmental or non-governmental influence. It is the duty of the Chairperson and the Board to ensure that this independence of the CBFC is not only maintained in institutions like the Central Board of Film Certification (and the three Academies – the Sangeet Natak, the Sahitya and the Lalit Kala), but is also perceived to be maintained - for such bodies are under the constant scrutiny of local and international media and any perceived interference in the working of these Boards is indirectly detrimental to the secular and democratic image of the Government. But does the I & B Ministry or the Ministry of Culture or Education of the day allow these institutions to retain their autonomy? Are they evolved enough as a

The profile of the CBFC from an earlier conception of a 'censoring' agency to one that simply 'classifies' films as per the Cinematograph Act, 1952 is imperative, and not a choice anymore, in today's India.

Government or as people to 'live and let live'?

To achieve greater transparency and more objectivity in the working of CBFC, it is critical that the Board members who oversee that policy is executed, the Advisory panel members who actually watch and certify the films and the Secretariat who man the main and the regional offices across the country - are all selected with utmost care by the appointing body, which unfortunately is the Government. This is the problem. The fact that films of every nature have flourished in the country is proof that they mostly were a cross-section of educated professionals with a degree of integrity. Alternatively, it is also true to say the large majority of films produced in the country require no special expertise to certify, especially in decades past.

The fact is, that any freethinking individual is generally hesitant to accept what are seen as 'enviable' posts and are justifiably suspicious and reluctant, lest their point of view is compromised. There is a crying need for the government to understand how delicate these appointments are. They may appoint their own people, who tow their line; or appoint freethinkers and doers whose dynamism and understanding they must support at all cost; or they may wish to appoint those who clamor for these appointments and love the status, who get political mileage and prestige out of it, but do little for the dynamics of the Board. It is unfortunate, that successive governments have 'planted' members on the Board with clear intent to break up a united and strong Board. The Ministry is known to take umbrage when they are reminded of the rulebook. But at the same time have been known to do their best to protect officers who have been proved corrupt.

It is time that producers and directors get a grip and understand that members of the Certification Board have little to do with the certification process, unless the Producer seeks a Review of the certification granted. It is the

Advisory panel member who certifies the film in a group of five. They are and always have been political party workers. This has been the practice since India's Independence. The Chairperson and CBFC Board members get to know the rating granted to a film only when the deed is done, when the CEO advises the Chairperson of a problem and seeks guidance, or when the press or an affected party bare their grievance to the media. Several Boards, and certainly the one I had the pleasure to lead were committed to streamlining and updating the processes of film certification allowing for freedom of expression, while remaining sensitive to crucial issues and concerns relating to social and gender inequities and injustices, community sensitivities, as well as national security concerns.

While berating the system, and Government interference, we have to amaze at the lack of interest on the part of the film industry. Decades have passed since the beginning of cinema in India, yet no demand was made by the industry for the introduction of a watershed hour on satellite television for adult content cinema, or a voluntary submission of a by-line by the Producer describing the film. Most of all is the need to amend the existing Cinematograph Act of 1952, which alone can address the administrative malaise and introduce more categories like UA-15. The nature and appearance of the actual Certificate has not been redesigned in 100 years! This is a visual art form, an animated expression. How can the film industry accept the ugly certificate, such as it is? The CBFC hologram can be designed and built into the certificate to avoid duplication and to maintain authenticity. The Regional offices needed to be provided with Digital Projection Systems and all Regional offices should at least have their own preview spaces. Why has an intelligent industry not demanded the above from the Government?

After 100 years of Indian cinema, eminent film personalities and artists across the country have justly questioned the need for certification. Most do not see any significance in it, especially in today's world. Others don't care to intellectualize the issue. They accept the rules and get on with it. They know how to beat

the system and do it overtly or covertly, with suave moves at every level, including speaking directly to the Minister or making crude arrangements at the bottom of the line. In a final analysis, it seems that sincere intentions to clean up the mess will never happen as so many, who receive a cutback are discomfited. There is ample evidence over the years of the corruption.

Initiating debate on the significance of cinema, its signifying procedures and narrative structures, and the communicative power of this extremely powerful medium that needs careful handling should be a Board's priority. Indian cinema deserves a new Cinematograph Act. Does the industry and its brightest minds not see the need for this? The new Act, when enacted will give it more teeth. While it is laid down that the CBFC certificate is binding and must be upheld, State governments have challenged the certificate and taken decisions that go against the certification, setting the entire process in jeopardy. Individual States banning or delaying the exhibition of certified films should become a thing of the past. One wonders sometimes if all the fuss around a good or bad film is not deliberate? It serves to break even for the bad film and rake in bigger bucks for the better film. The industry is party to this and it serves to take away from genuine grievance.

There is an audience for every kind of cinema. In the ultimate analysis, if films must be certified in a free society, a process that filmmakers have over time, endorsed for technical reasons, it is best that the Government in power disassociates itself completely from the process of certification, for it is simply not their business.



Leela Samson is a Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer, instructor and writer from India. She has served as the Chairperson of Central Board of Film Certification from 2011 to 2015.

SENSE AND CENSORSHIP

Divorce Already!

By Suchita Ranglani

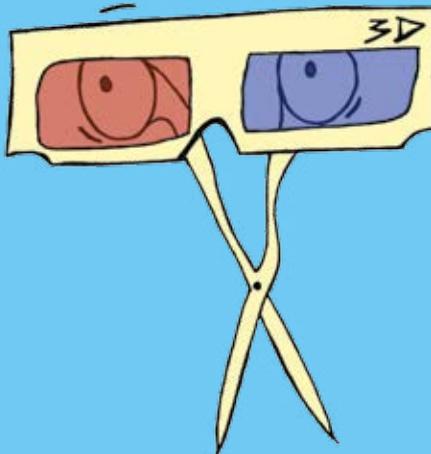


Magical Solution

With 89 objections to Abhishek Chaubey's *Udta Punjab*, it has been proven that the CBFC exists in a big blue bubble of their very own imaginary magical world! In this magic world He Who Must Not Be Named believes that just by removing "Punjab" from the title of the film, the prevalent drug problem in said state will go away! Yay! Like wise, their answer to communal differences subsisting in India is to deny a censor certificate to "*En Dino Muzaffarnagar*" a 147-minute investigative documentary on the 2013 communal riots in the western UP town. Close your eyes. Problem Solved!

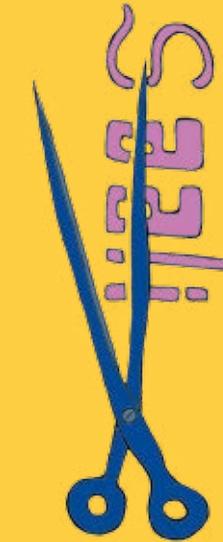
The Good Shepherd!

The CBFC seems to have taken it upon themselves to protect our pure, chaste minds from bad influence! One example of this good intention is the Warner Brothers' voluntary withdrawal of their Will Ferrell – Kevin Hart film "*Get Hard*" from being released in India. The studio was convinced that there was no way the Board members would let this adult comedy about a desperate man training a fraud millionaire for his upcoming time in jail, play on the Indian screens the way it was meant to. Congratulations CBFC, you scared them off with your scissors! *slow clap*



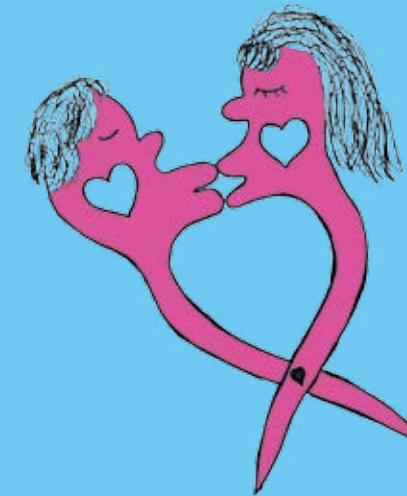
3-D for Danger!

The Jungle Book – the story of a child in a jungle was given a U/A certification because it was 3D!!! The considerate and caring members of the board were convinced that the 3D film would be terrifying for children! Well to be fair, 3D is a new, fresh, one of a kind, never experienced before, unknown concept in the country, and children have never been exposed to this novel phenomenon before!



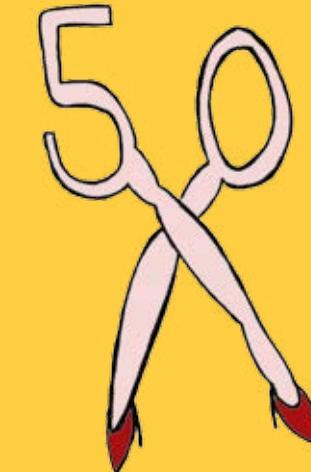
It's Only Words!

The CBFC have had a long-standing love hate relationship with words. They demanded the word "bhagwan" literally be replaced by "uparwala", "sambhog" by "milan" and "bastard" by "rascal" in Hate Story 3. Demanded "lesbian" be muted in Dum Laga Ke Haisha [because lesbian is a bad and abusive word?!] and "screwed up" be muted in Phobia [because they never do!]. In Spectre they substituted "balls" with "cats"! In Tamaasha they censored 'saali', a word that means sister-in-law in Hindi! On the other hand in NH10 , they were okay with the word "randi" the first time it appeared in the film but not the second time because the first time a character was shown rubbing it off the door it was scratched on! But the second time she didn't, maybe because her husband had just died and she might have had other things on her mind and not the delicate sensibility of the CBFC?



Double Standards

On one hand there is "Tamasha" and "Spectre", where the Censor board demanded that kisses and intimate scenes be shortened, on the other hand is "Aag Ka Gola" a 1990 film where Sunny Deol and Archana Puran Singh's lip lock plays on loop. On one hand is the Censor Board, and on the other hand, there is logic. The point is clear, and so is the hypocrisy!



Fifty Shades of Nude

From Rehana Sultan in Chetna and Dastak, to Mandakani in Ram Teri Ganga Maili, and Zeenat Aman in Satyam Shivam Sundaram – history shows India is a nation that can consume nudity without its culture being burned to the ground and its people scarred for life. Or at least it used to be. With films like Sins and The Painted House being banned in 2005 and 2015 respectively for nudity, it begs the question, were we better off in times of Mera Naam Joker?

नए तेवर में है २१ वीं सदी का हिंदी सिनेमा

गुजरे डेढ़ दशकों में हिंदी सिनेमा द्वारा तय
किए गए सफ़र का सारगर्भित विश्लेषण
अजय ब्रह्मात्मज की क़लम से



पिछले कुछ सालों में मुख्यधारा की हिंदी फिल्मों में मसालेदार मनोरंजन की मांग बढ़ी है। सलमान खान की फिल्म “वांटेड” से आरंभ यह प्रवृत्ति अभी तक चल रही है। ऐसी फिल्मों का एकमात्र मक्सद कम से कम समय में अधिक से अधिक कमाई करना है। इन्हें “वीकएंड सिनेमा” भी कहा जाता है। इस मक्सद के लिए पॉपुलर स्टार के साथ हिंदी सिनेमा के पारंपरिक तत्वों के साथ दक्षिण भारत की फिल्मों के “एंटी ग्रैविटी” एक्शन, अतिरिंजित रूप में पेश किए जाते हैं। अब तो नायक और खलनायक जमीन पर लड़ते ही नहीं। उनकी मुक्केबाजी हवा में होती है। फिल्में भी हवा में गोते लगा रही हैं। केबल समर्थित एक्शन का ऐसा दुरुपयोग शायद ही किसी और देश की फिल्मों में दिखता हो। मुख्यधारा की इस वेगवती प्रवृत्ति के साथ ही दर्शकों के बीच “द लंचबॉक्स”, “शाहिद”, “फ़िल्मिस्तान”, “क्वीन”, “मसान”, “अलीगढ़”, “पार्ट्स” जैसी फिल्में भी पहुंच रही हैं। उल्लेखनीय है कि इन फिल्मों को दर्शक और कलैक्शन मिल रहे हैं। समीक्षकों की सराहना मिल रही है। देश-विदेश के दर्शकों के बीच ऐसी फिल्में खास पहचान बना रही है। हम दर्शकों को भले ही मूढ़ और पारंपरिक कहते रहें, लेकिन वे बड़ी समझदारी से अपनी पसंद-नापसंद ज़ाहिर करते रहते हैं।

हालांकि सदी के आरंभ 2000-2001 से ऐसी कोई विभाजक रेखा नहीं खींची जा सकती, लेकिन अध्ययन की सुविधा और बदलती चेतना एवं रुचि को समझने के लिए हम सदी की करवट को महत्वपूर्ण मान सकते हैं। 21वीं सदी के पहले दशक में आई फिल्मों और निर्देशकों की अभिरुचि को हम पिछली सदी के अंतिम दशक में झलक देती प्रवृत्तियों से जोड़ सकते हैं। पिछली सदी के अंतिम दशक में सूरज बड़ात्या, आदित्य चोपड़ा और

करण जौहर ने हिंदी सिनेमा की दिशा नियमित और निर्धारित की। उनकी फिल्मों की सफलता से अधिकांश निर्देशकों की सोच और समझ प्रभावित हुई। यहां तक कि पहले ख्याति अर्जित कर चुके निर्देशकों ने भी अपनी शैली बदली। बड़ात्या, चोपड़ा और जौहर की खींची लकीर पर चलने में वे डगमगाए और धड़ाम से गिरे। यों इन तीनों के उदय के पहले हिंदी सिनेमा कंटेट, क्वालिटी और क्रिएटिविटी के लिहाज़ से रसातल की ओर जा रहा था। नायक एंग्री यंग मैन से विदूषक की मुद्रा में आ चुका था। वह अपनी फूहड़ हरकतों से दर्शकों को विरक्त कर रहा था। स्थिति इस हद तक बदतर हो गई कि तत्कालीन दर्शकों ने अपने सर्वाधिक प्रिय अभिनेता अमिताभ बच्चन को भी रिजेक्ट करने में देरी नहीं की।

इस दौर में सिनेमा देखने में आए तकनीकी हस्तक्षेप से बड़ा फर्क आया। वीडियो कैसेट के जरिए फिल्मों की पायरेसी बढ़ी और पारंपरिक थिएटर के मध्यवर्गीय दर्शक घटे। लोगों ने घरों में होम वीडियो को प्राथमिकता दी। छोटे शाहरों में तंबू सिनेमा तेजी से पनपा। टीवी और बीसीआर या बीसीपी से मिनी थिएटर तैयार होने लगे। सिनेमा के अध्येताओं के मुताबिक इस टौड़ में थिएटर के दर्शकों का प्रोफाइल बदल गया। सुविधाओं से वंचित फ्रंट स्टाल के दर्शक ही थिएटर आते रहे। इन दर्शकों की सामान्य रुचि का ख्याल रखते हुए हल्की, फूहड़, सैक्सी और कॉमिक फिल्मों के निर्माण में बढ़ोत्तरी आई। सिनेमा के विकास और हास में फिल्मों और दर्शकों की परस्पर पूरक भूमिकाएं होती हैं। यह वही दौर था, जब तेजी से ग्रामीण और कस्बाई नागरिक महानगरों की तरफ प्रयाण कर रहे थे। इन दर्शकों को दिन भर की मेहनत-मजदूरी के बाद एक्शन, सैक्स और साधारण अभिरुचि की फिल्में ही चाहिए थीं। अधिकतम आम दर्शकों के मनोरंजन के नाम पर

सिनेमा के सौंदर्यशास्त्र को तिलांजलि देकर दर्शकों को गुदगुदाने का कारोबार चल निकला। हिंदी सिनेमा का यह पतनशील दौर था। सिनेमा की स्वीकृति और दर्शकों की अभिरुचि के मुताबिक घटिया फिल्मों के चुनाव और निर्माण का तर्क आज भी स्टार, डायरेक्टर और प्रोड्यूसर देते हैं। वे कहते हैं “दर्शक जो चाहता है, हम वही परोसते हैं।” इस तर्क की ही परिणीति “द डर्टी पिक्चर” के विद्या बालन के संवाद में मिलती है। वे कहती हैं - “आँडीएस को क्या चाहिए? एंटरटेनमेंट, एंटरटेनमेंट, एंटरटेनमेंट।”

निश्चित ही बड़ात्या, चोपड़ा और जौहर की फिल्मों से दर्शक थिएटर में लौटे। सिनेमा सामान्य से संभ्रांत हुआ। आभिजात्य दर्शकों के लिए सिनेमा का पुनर्संस्कार किया गया। भव्य चमकदार सैट और उनसे भी भव्य भाव-भंगिमाओं के साथ “फीलगुड़” सिनेमा रचा गया। फिल्मों के नायक और किरदार अप्रवासी भारतीय होने लगे। इसी दौर में लोकप्रिय हिंदी सिनेमा का पंजाबीकरण भी हुआ। हिंदी सिनेमा के पारंपरिक दर्शकों से इन फिल्मों का सीधा नाता नहीं रहा। अपने ही देश के दर्शकों से कटा यह सिनेमा मुख्य रूप से अप्रवासी भारतवंशियों के मनोरंजन के लिए पल्लवित हुआ। विदेशी बाजार से कलेक्शन आया और वह भी डॉलर में... यही बजह है कि कुछ इतिहासकार ऐसी फिल्मों को “डॉलर” सिनेमा या “एनआरआई सिनेमा” कहना पसंद करते हैं। व्यवसाय और प्रभाव के लिहाज़ से ऐसी फिल्मों का व्यापक असर हुआ। रातोंरात सभी निर्माता-निर्देशकों ने देसी दर्शकों से पल्ला ज्ञाड़ लिया। हालांकि इन फिल्मों में भी ज्यादातर देसी इमोशन होते थे, लेकिन विदेशी लोकेशन अवश्य रहते थे। जो निर्माता-निर्देशक विदेशी पृष्ठभूमि में पूरी फिल्म नहीं सोच पाते थे, वे कम से कम गानों के लिए स्विट्जरलैंड जैसे देशों में फुर्र हो जाते थे। यह दौर काफी लंबा चला।

इस दौर में अनेक निर्देशकों ने यहां तक कह डाला कि हम बिहार और यूपी के दर्शकों के लिए फिल्में नहीं बनाते। हमें चबनी छाप दर्शकों की जरूरत नहीं है। याद करें तो यह वही दौर था, जब हिंदी सिनेमा के मुख्य दर्शकों ने मनोरंजन के विकल्प के रूप में भोजपुरी सिनेमा को चुना। भोजपुरी सिनेमा हिंदी फिल्मों में आए बदलाव से पैदा वैक्यूम को भरने में सफल रहा। परिणाम स्वरूप भोजपुरी सिनेमा तेजी से बढ़ा। उसकी इस बढ़त को अभिनव सिंह कश्यप की सलमान खान अभिनीत “दबंग” से विराम लगा। “दबंग” ने आम दर्शकों की रुचि का क्वालिटी प्रॉडक्ट दिया, जिसमें चमक-दमक के साथ पॉपुलर स्टार की धमक भी थी। साथ ही भोजपुरी समाज का बैकड्राप भी था।

समय के साथ समाज बदलता है। समाज बदलने के साथ सभी कलारूपों के कथ्य और प्रस्तुति में अंतर आता है। पिछले सौ सालों के इतिहास में सिनेमा में समाज के समान ही गुणात्मक बदलाव आया है। 1913 से 2016 तक के सफर में भारतीय सिनेमा विशेषकर हिंदी सिनेमा में बदलाव के कई चरण आए। इन चरणों से हम सभी वाकिफ हैं। पिछले पंद्रह सालों में आए बदलाव पर अधिक विवेचन नहीं हुआ। परिवर्तन की प्रक्रिया को तत्काल समझ पाना मुश्किल होता है। फिर भी पिछले 53 सालों में पहचान बना चुके हस्ताक्षरों और उनकी फिल्मों का स्टीक अध्ययन करें तो कुछ सामान्य ट्रेंड रेखांकित किए जा सकते हैं।

हिंदी सिनेमा में पिछली सदी के अंतिम दशक के उत्तरार्द्ध में आए राम गोपाल वर्मा ने सचेत और व्यवस्थित ढंग से लीक तोड़ने का सफल साहस किया। हैदराबाद से सफर आरंभ कर वे मुंबई पहुंचे। मुंबई में पहले तो उन्होंने स्टार सिस्टम में प्रवेश किया। प्रचलित और लोकप्रिय अभिनेताओं के साथ उन्होंने शैली और सोच में नई फिल्में पेश कीं। ऐसी कुछ फिल्मों के निर्देशन के बाद उन्होंने “सत्या” से

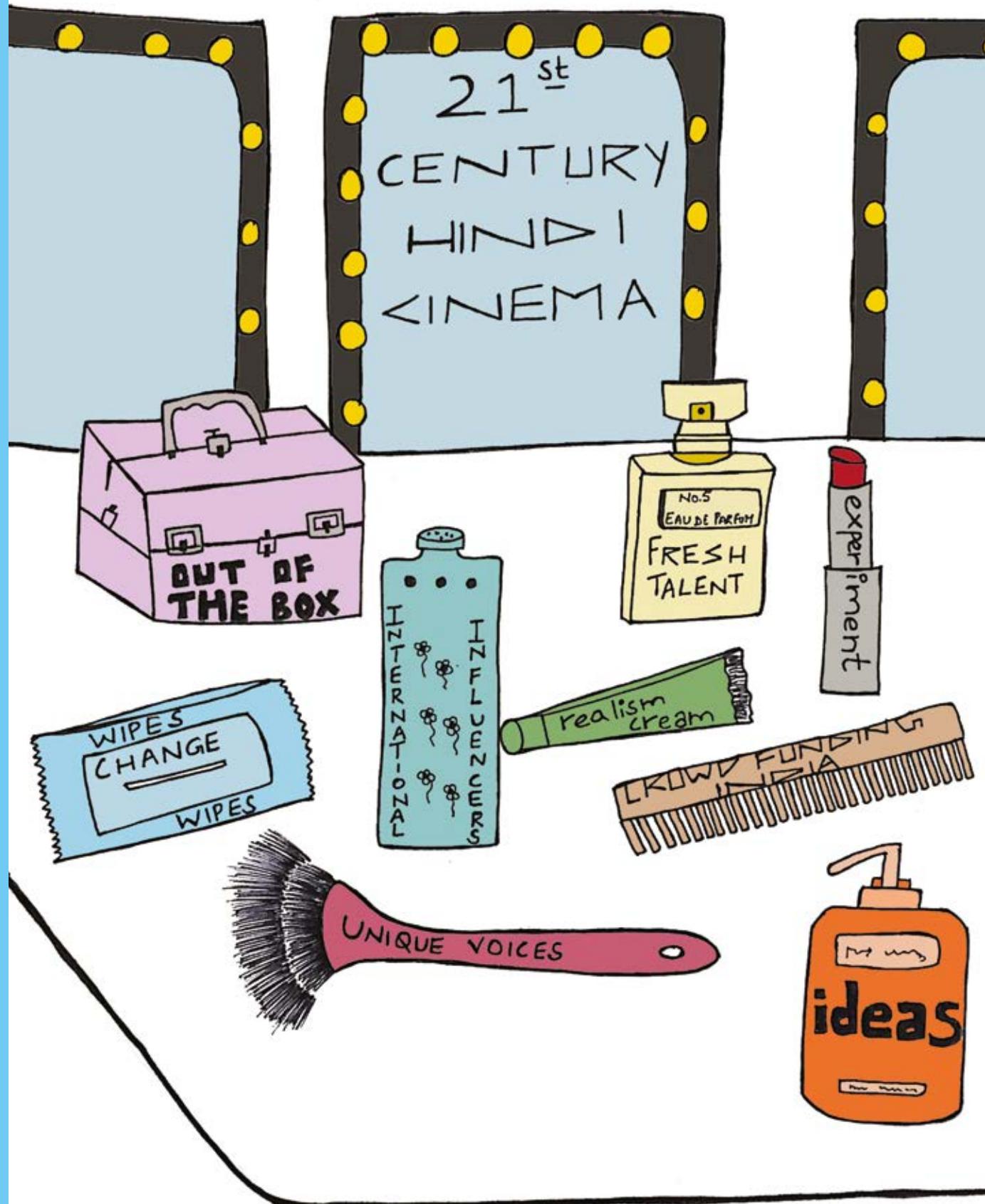
परिवर्तनशील दस्तक दी। “सत्या” कई मायनों में हिंदी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री की वह प्रस्थान फिल्म है, जहां से नए विचारों और प्रतिभाओं का आगमन होता है। हिंदी फिल्मों के स्टार सिस्टम को तोड़ कर मनोज बाजपेयी के रूप में एक नया सितारा उभरता है तो कैमरे के पीछे अनेक युवा प्रतिभाओं को पहला मौका मिलता है। “सत्या” की सफलता ने उनके लिए हिंदी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री के दरवाजे खोल दिए।

इन प्रतिभाओं में सबसे प्रमुख नाम अनुराग कश्यप का है। अनुराग कश्यप 21वीं सदी में नए किस्म के सिनेमा के अगुआ बने। उनके नेतृत्व और साथ में अनेक महत्वाकांक्षी निर्देशकों ने पॉपुलर सिनेमा के विकल्प के रूप में कुछ अलग काम किया। आरंभ में उन्हें भी पहचान और उपेक्षा के संकट से गुजरना पड़ा। यह तो हर इंडस्ट्री में होता है। नई प्रतिभाओं को अपनी सोच का लोहा मनवाने में वक्त लगता है। रामगोपाल वर्मा के प्रयास से आए बदलाव को हम 21वीं सदी की प्रवृत्तियों का संक्रान्ति या गर्भकाल कह सकते हैं, जिसमें भविष्य के निर्देशक खुद को मांज रहे थे।

सन् 2000 में आमिर खान की पहल से हिंदी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री में फिल्म निर्माण का तौर-तरीका बदला। आशुतोष गोवारीकर की “लगान” के निर्माण का निर्णय लेकर आमिर खान ने भविष्य के सिनेमा की नीव रख दी। इस फिल्म ने हिंदी फिल्मों की दशा, दिशा और राह बदल दी। फिल्म इंडस्ट्री में व्याप्त आलस्य, भ्रष्टाचार और “चलता है” एटीट्यूड कम हुआ। निर्माता और अभिनेता एक साथ अनेक फिल्में करने के बजाए एक समय में एक फिल्म करने के लिए जागृत हुए। गौर करें तो तत्कालीन परिदृश्य में “लगान” फिल्म एक असंभवित योजना थी। उस फिल्म में वह सब कुछ था, जो किसी भी असफल फिल्म में हो सकता है। जावेद अख्तर ने आमिर खान को “लगान” नहीं बनाने की सलाह दी थी। बहरहाल, “लगान” ने इतिहास रचा। इस फिल्म के बाद हिंदी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री में आमूल-चूल

परिवर्तन आया। कंटेट, मेकिंग और मार्केटिंग के क्षेत्र में “लगान” की पहलकदमी का असर हुआ। उसके तुरंत बाद आई आमिर खान अभिनेत “दिल चाहता है” भी खास फिल्म है। “दिल चाहता है” ने हिंदी फिल्मों में स्टार इमेज के ढकोसले को तोड़ा। पहली बार किरदारों के मिजाज से कलाकार के लुक बदल गए। सभी कलाकारों को नया लुक और एटीट्यूड दिया गया। इसके पश्चात यह ट्रेंड बन गया।

पिछले 15 सालों में हिंदी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री में देश के सुदूर इलाकों से आए लेखकों, निर्देशकों और तकनीशियनों ने सफलता पाई है। अपनी छोटी-मोटी कोशिशों से उन्होंने खुद की पहचान कायम की और हिंदी फिल्मों का रूप-स्वरूप भी बदल दिया। पहले के दशकों में ऐसा कभी नहीं हुआ कि एक साथ इतनी मौलिक प्रतिभाओं ने फिल्म इंडस्ट्री में कदम रखा हो। दशकों पहले विभाजन की वजह से आजादी के बाद हिंदी फिल्मों का केंद्र मुंबई बनने पर जरूर लाहौर, कोलकाता और अन्य प्रांतों-इलाकों से महत्वाकांक्षी आए थे। उनकी सांस्कृतिक, सामाजिक और परिवेशगत भिन्नता ने हिंदी फिल्मों को समृद्ध किया था। इस दौर में लेखन, निर्देशन, गीत-संगीत सभी क्षेत्रों में सृजनात्मक विविधता और कलात्मकता दिखाई दी। मौलिकता, गंभीरता और मनोरंजकता की वजह से उस दौर को कालांतर में हिंदी फिल्मों का स्वर्णयुग कहा गया। बाहर से आई प्रतिभाओं का वैसा ही योगदान पिछले 15 सालों में दिखाई पड़ा है। बाजार और कॉर्पोरेट की भाषा में इसे धोनी और “स्मॉल टाउन” प्रभाव कहा जा रहा है। अब जीवन के किसी भी क्षेत्र के अवसर बड़े शहरों के नागरिकों तक सीमित नहीं रह सकते। छोटे और मझोले शहर की प्रतिभाएं अवसर छीन रही हैं और कुछ कर गुजरने का हक्क हासिल कर रही हैं। बाहर से आई प्रतिभाओं के इस प्रवाह ने फिल्म इंडस्ट्री के परिवारवाद की घेराबंदी में सेंध मार



दी है। उन्होंने हिंदी फिल्मों में विषय का आवश्यक विस्तार किया है। वे अपने साथ नई प्रतिभाएं भी ले आए हैं।

राजकुमार हिरानी से लेकर नीरज घेवन तक ऐसी प्रतिभाओं की लंबी सूची है। अनुराग कश्यप, इमियाज अली, अनुराग बसु, तिग्मांशु धूलिया, शुजीत सरकार, हबीब फैज़ल, डॉ. चंद्रप्रकाश द्विवेदी, सुजाऊ घोष, अजय बहल, मनीष शर्मा, नीरज घेवन आदि ने हिंदी सिनेमा का कंटेंट बदल दिया है। इनकी फिल्मों में जिंदगी के ताज़ा अनुभव हैं। वर्तमान के गतिमान समाज के रैफरेंस हैं। उल्लेखनीय है कि इन प्रतिभाओं ने लंबी तैयारी और संघर्ष के बाद यह मुकाम हासिल किया है। अधिकांश ने पहले टीवी शो और शॉर्ट फिल्में बनाई हैं। सभी ने अपनी ज़िन्दगी के कीमती 5-10 साल दे कर ही कुछ पाया है। इनकी फिल्मों के किरदार हमारी ज़िंदगी के आसपास के हैं। मजेदार तथ्य यह है कि उन्होंने अपने-अपने तरीके से हिंदी फिल्मों की परिपाठी और प्रणाली को अपनाया और पेश किया है। कुछ फिल्मकारों ने क्रांतिकारी ढंग से अलग राह चुनी, लेकिन अधिकांश ने बगैर बगावत का तेवर अपनाए ही हिंदी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री को हिचकोला दे दिया है। अच्छी बात है कि पूर्ववर्तियों की तरह “पैरेलल” लकीर खींचने के बजाए इस पीढ़ी के फिल्मकारों ने सिस्टम का हिस्सा बन कर अंदर से चीजें बदली हैं। अब कला और व्यावसायिक फिल्मों की गैरज़रुरी दीवार टूट चुकी है। स्वर्णयुग के फिल्मकारों की तरह 21वीं सदी के युवा फिल्मकार नारे और झंडे के बिना नए अभियान में निकल पड़े हैं। उन्हें दर्शकों का भरपूर साथ मिल रहा है।

दर्शकों का यह ध्यार और साथ मल्टीप्लेक्स संस्कृति के बाद स्पष्ट रूप से देखा और समझा गया। मल्टीप्लेक्स (आधुनिक तकनीक से सज्जित अपेक्षाकृत कम सीटों का थिएटर) की ज़रूरत काफी समय से महसूस की जा रही

थी। पैरेलल सिनेमा के दौर में ऐसे थिएटरों के अभाव की वजह से एनएफडीसी अपनी उत्तम कोशिशों को दर्शकों तक नहीं ले जा सकी। वितरकों और प्रदर्शकों को अपने अपने बड़े सिंगल स्क्रीन थिएटर के लिए हमेशा ऐसी फिल्मों की दरकार रही, जिनमें स्टार और लोकरुचि हों। जो सिनेमाघर के अस्सी प्रतिशत सीटों को भर सके। पैरेलल सिनेमा की निहित क्षमता इतने दर्शकों तक पहुंचने की नहीं थी। इस सदी में मल्टीप्लेक्स के आगमन और विस्तार से छोटी और सीमित बजट की कंटेंट प्रधान फिल्मों को पर्याप्त दर्शक मिले। “चांदनी बार” की सफलता का श्रेय मल्टीप्लेक्स संस्कृति को दिया जा सकता है। मल्टीप्लेक्स संस्कृति ने मनोरंजन का मुहावरा बदला। थिएटरों से भाग खड़े हुए दर्शक फिर से सिनेमाघरों में लौटे। मल्टीप्लेक्स संस्कृति को तेजी से फैले मॉल कल्चर का भी सहारा मिला। पिछले कुछ सालों में मल्टीप्लेक्स महानगरों से निकलकर सभी प्रदेशों की राजधानियों और जिला शहरों में फैल रहे हैं। हालांकि अभी भी बड़ी फिल्मों की रिलीज के समय छोटी फिल्मों को स्क्रीन नहीं मिल पाते हैं, लेकिन स्पष्ट रूप से स्थितियां पहले से बेहतर हुई हैं। अब छोटी फिल्मों को ढंग की रिलीज मिल जाती है। फिल्म निर्माण में कॉपरेट के आने से भी फ़र्क पड़ा है। कॉपरेट एक तरफ तो पॉपुलर स्टार की फिल्मों को प्रश्रय देते हैं, लेकिन दूसरी तरफ छोटी फिल्मों और नए निर्देशकों को भी उनका आश्रय मिलता है। इन दिनों, पहली फिल्म के अधिकांश निर्देशक किसी न किसी कॉपरेट हाउस के साथ जुड़ कर फिल्में बना रहे हैं। डिज़्नी, यूटीबी, इरोस, वायकॉम 18 और अन्य कॉपरेट कंपनियां युवा निर्देशकों की भिन्न सोच को तरजीह दे रही हैं। उन्हें धन और सुविधाएं मुहैया करवा रही हैं। अच्छी बात है कि ऐसी फिल्मों को दर्शकों का समर्थन मिल रहा है। फिल्में सफल हो रही हैं। यह धारणा बन रही है

कि कंटेंट सही हो और उसकी उचित मार्केटिंग हो जाए तो दर्शक आ जाएंगे। रोचक तथ्य यह है कि ऐसी फिल्मों में मुनाफे का प्रतिशत बड़ी फिल्मों से कई गुना ज्यादा होता है। अफ़सोस यही है कि 100 करोड़ क्लब की मानसिकता में हम फिल्मों की लागत को नज़र अंदाज कर देते हैं। सिर्फ कलेक्शन के आंकड़े बताकर धौस जमाने से दर्शक भी विभ्रम की स्थिति में रहते हैं।

21वीं सदी में सिनेमा में आए बदलाव को बारीकी से समझने के लिए पिछले दशक में आए निर्देशकों की फिल्मों का अध्ययन करना होगा। इन सभी में कुछ तत्व समान हैं। ये सभी निर्देशक कर्बे या छोटे शहरों से आए हैं। सिनेमा का पैशान उन्होंने हासिल किया है। उन्होंने अपने परिवार के पारंपरिक पेशों से अलग जाकर फिल्मों की दुर्गम राह चुनी है। सभी पढ़े-लिखे और फिल्म लिट्रेट हैं। देश-विदेश

की अनगिनत फिल्में देखने के बाद उन्होंने निर्देशन की कमान संभाली है। आज के ज्यादातर निर्देशक लेखक भी हैं। उन्होंने विषयों के चुनाव में प्रचलित रुचि को तबज्जो नहीं दी है। इन सभी निर्देशकों की फिल्में अत्यंत व्यक्तिगत और निजी हैं। यही कारण है कि वे विशिष्ट और अलग हैं। 21वीं सदी की सिनेमा की नई पौध भविष्य में लहलहाएगी और दर्शकों को मनोरंजन के स्वादिष्ट फल देगी। सिनेमा नया हो चुका है।

अजय ब्रह्मात्मज 20 सालों से फिल्मों पर लिख रहे हैं। 12 वर्षों से दैनिक जागरण अखबार में फ़िल्म संपादक तथा फ़िल्म फ़ैस्टिवल, सेमिनार और बहसों में सक्रिय हैं।
(ब्लॉग : <http://chavannichap.blogspot.com>)

WHERE ARE THE MANGO PEOPLE?

Is the common man walking away from Indian cinema, into the horizon?

By Sukanya Verma



For the common man who spends the better part of his day struggling to make ends meet, thoughts are a luxury and cinema is akin to faith.

When he sets foot inside a movie theatre, he subconsciously hopes the artist portraying him on silver screen would not only voice his retribution and resentment but also recognize his inner romantic and aspirant because life itself is gradual and gruelling.

Hindi cinema offers a retreat from reality but dreams and desires are as much a part of it as hopelessness. Caught in this inexplicable vortex of contradictions, he wants to forget, he wants to relate but, more than anything, he desperately wants to succeed. When he whistles or claps at the hero's moment of triumph, it's more to do with the man he hoped to be or believes he had become in that one short-lived instant.

Back in the age of idealism and innocence on screen and off it, films frequently focused on the common population and the degree of discrimination they had to cope with. Wittingly or not, it spawned an imagery of champions.

Whether it was Raj Kapoor distinguishing the bum pleading social acceptance, Dev Anand battling his wobbly conscience to emerge unscathed, Dilip Kumar fighting for the rights of the exploited working class, Kishore Kumar falling back on his reliable stock of humour to deal with unemployment, Nargis fighting all odds to single-handedly raise her brood, Johnny Walker cautioning us about the bittersweet ways of a city life or Balraj Sahni standing up to near destitution, Sanjeev Kumar's heartfelt depiction of a distressed existence or Shatrughan Sinha's taking it head on with razor-sharp sass, these unique representations of the everyman resonated profoundly with its inspiration and target – the aam viewer.

Back in the age of idealism and innocence on screen and off it, films frequently focused on the common population and the degree of discrimination they had to cope with. Wittingly or not, it spawned an imagery of champions.

With due respect to them, nobody struck a chord the way Amitabh Bachchan did; his grasp of mass discontent carved his angry young man identity in a way that uplifted the audience and escalated his stardom.

Armed with power-packed lines and smouldering energy compensated for his humble pedigree whilst he fought the evildoers and fixed the 'system' even while he was a part of it. In comparison, the ones essayed by Amol Palekar, Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Farookh Shaikh or Nana Patekar appeared rather deglamourized albeit far more realistic in their conviction and crisis.

Regardless of aesthetic value, class divide played a major bone of contention in commercial fare. It didn't matter if the face of poverty was as pretty as Rishi Kapoor's or Rekha's. Despite his flair for disco dancing, Mithun Chakraborty would have to put up with a whole lot of high society snobbery because of his impoverished background. Whereas a smart, educated bloke like Sunny Deol struggled to secure a job since his chawl-dwelling daddy wasn't influential enough.

If it wasn't the rich versus poor conflict, writers explored the subject of conscience and its certain moral victory amidst deceit and temptation. It's the sort of flawed everyman Anil Kapoor and Sanjay Dutt lend swagger to while Shah Rukh Khan of yore delivered with inimitable, infectious charm.

Except in a film industry driven by formulas, trends and business, bigger is automatically better.

Around the time SRK's on screen avatar gave up his middle-class accessibility to embrace the affluent and fashionable versions of Raj and Rahul sporting designer brands and spewing hip lingo, Hindi cinema, too, discovered the

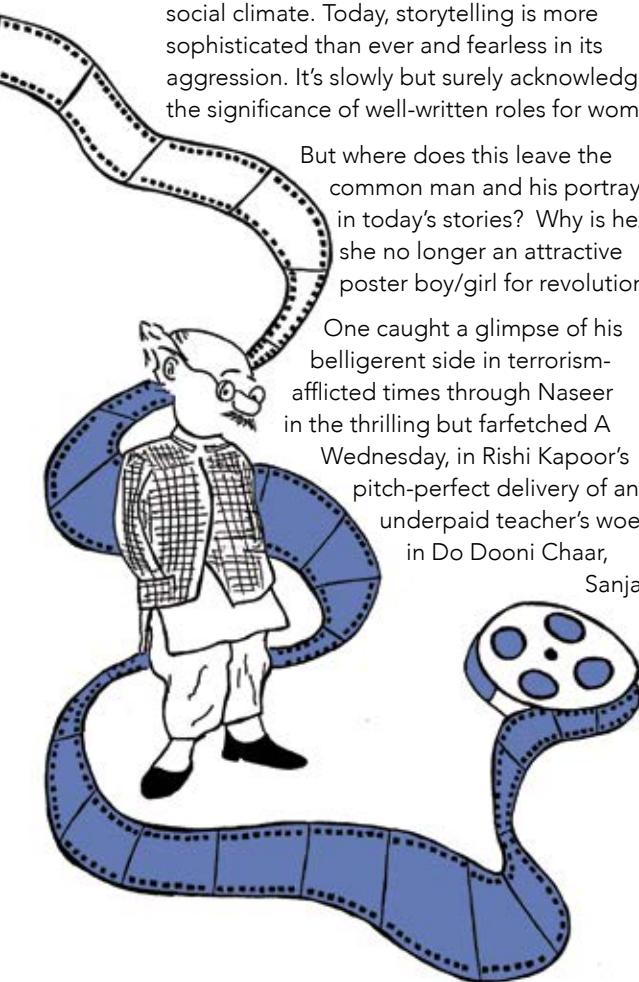
lucrative side to ritzy romances and upper-class, urban narrative.

The need to exemplify the man of the street on celluloid no longer holds any appeal among filmmakers. It's been a while since we saw the leading players break into a basti song, warm bonhomie among neighbours or the communal, caricature-free solidarity immortalised by a certain Amar, Akbar and Anthony.

No doubt it's healthy to discard out-dated plot points in favour of relevance and evolving social climate. Today, storytelling is more sophisticated than ever and fearless in its aggression. It's slowly but surely acknowledging the significance of well-written roles for women.

But where does this leave the common man and his portrayal in today's stories? Why is he/she no longer an attractive poster boy/girl for revolution?

One caught a glimpse of his belligerent side in terrorism-afflicted times through Naseer in the thrilling but farfetched A Wednesday, in Rishi Kapoor's pitch-perfect delivery of an underpaid teacher's woes in Do Dooni Chaar, Sanjay



But where does this leave the common man and his portrayal in today's stories? Why is he/she no longer an attractive poster boy/girl for revolution?

Mishra's mid-aged existential crisis in Ankhon Dekhi or Bhumi Pednekar's feisty response to her boorish husband in Dum Laga Ke Haisha to name a few.

He's still operating in the over-the-top persona and grand hijinks of Salman Khan's hyperbolic hero. Khan's insane fan base refers to him as Bhai, lose their mind every time he delivers a haughty catchphrase or rolls out an absurd dance move and scramble for a selfie. Only his brand, though hugely populist is too smug to truly resemble the man of the masses.

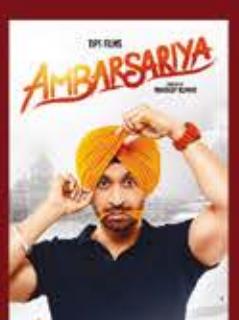
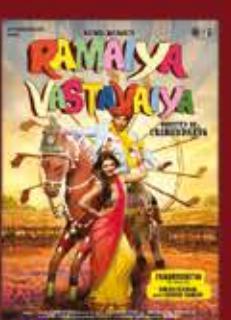
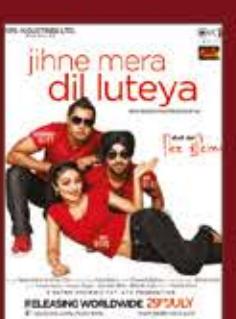
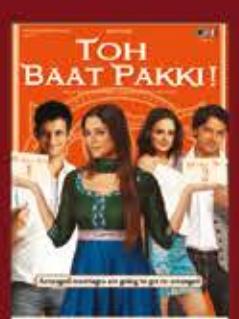
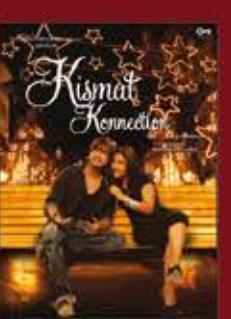
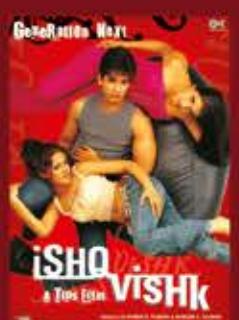
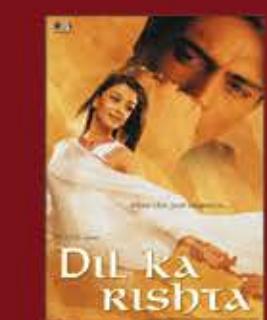
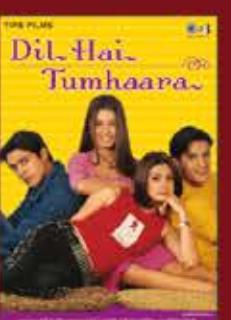
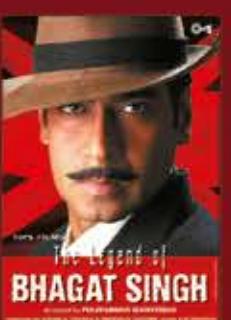
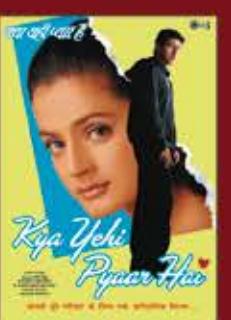
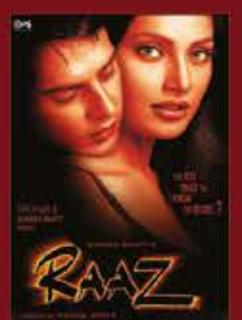
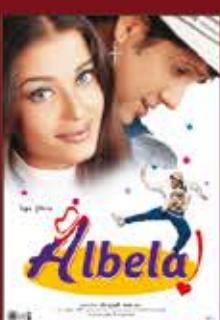
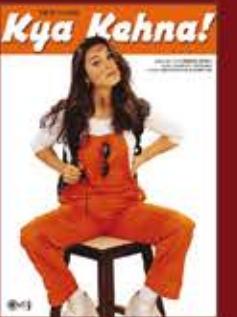
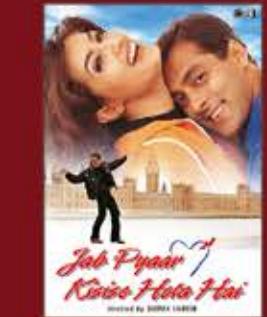
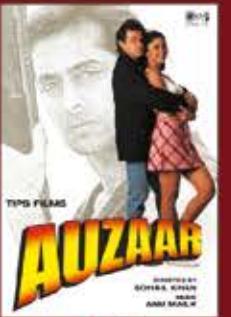
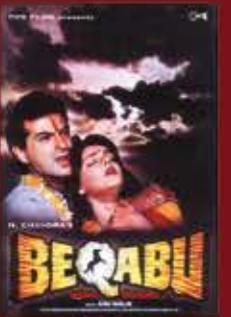
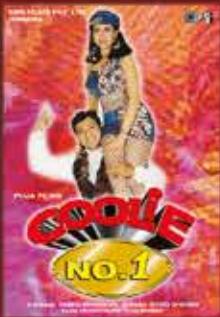
At the same time, the pragmatic, materialism-driven generation neither has the patience to appreciate the fuss around a rich-poor romance nor any high standards of integrity to judge a character for its lack of ethics.

Entertainment is increasingly about gritty, shocking content and new age Hindi film script fashioned by adventurous filmmakers like Anurag Kashyap, Vishal Bhardwaj and Sriram Raghvan recognises the value of wicked. Under this new format, idealism has made way for depravity within the lower middle class.

A far cry from the anti-hero known to redeem itself in the third act, the riff raff of society is all darkness and menace. Robbed off his basic means, the bitter, neglected and unapologetic underclass is in the mood for ugly payback.

Somewhere in its preoccupation with overblown role models, timeworn voices of dissent and bleak personifications, silver screen has completely forgotten its duty to fulfil the common man's fantasy as the dazzling underdog, the dormant dreamer.

Sukanya Verma is a Mumbai based senior film critic, music critic, features writer, quiz host and columnist with rediff.com and its sister publication India Abroad for the last 16 years. She was awarded with the Best Critic prize at Jagran Film Festival in 2014.



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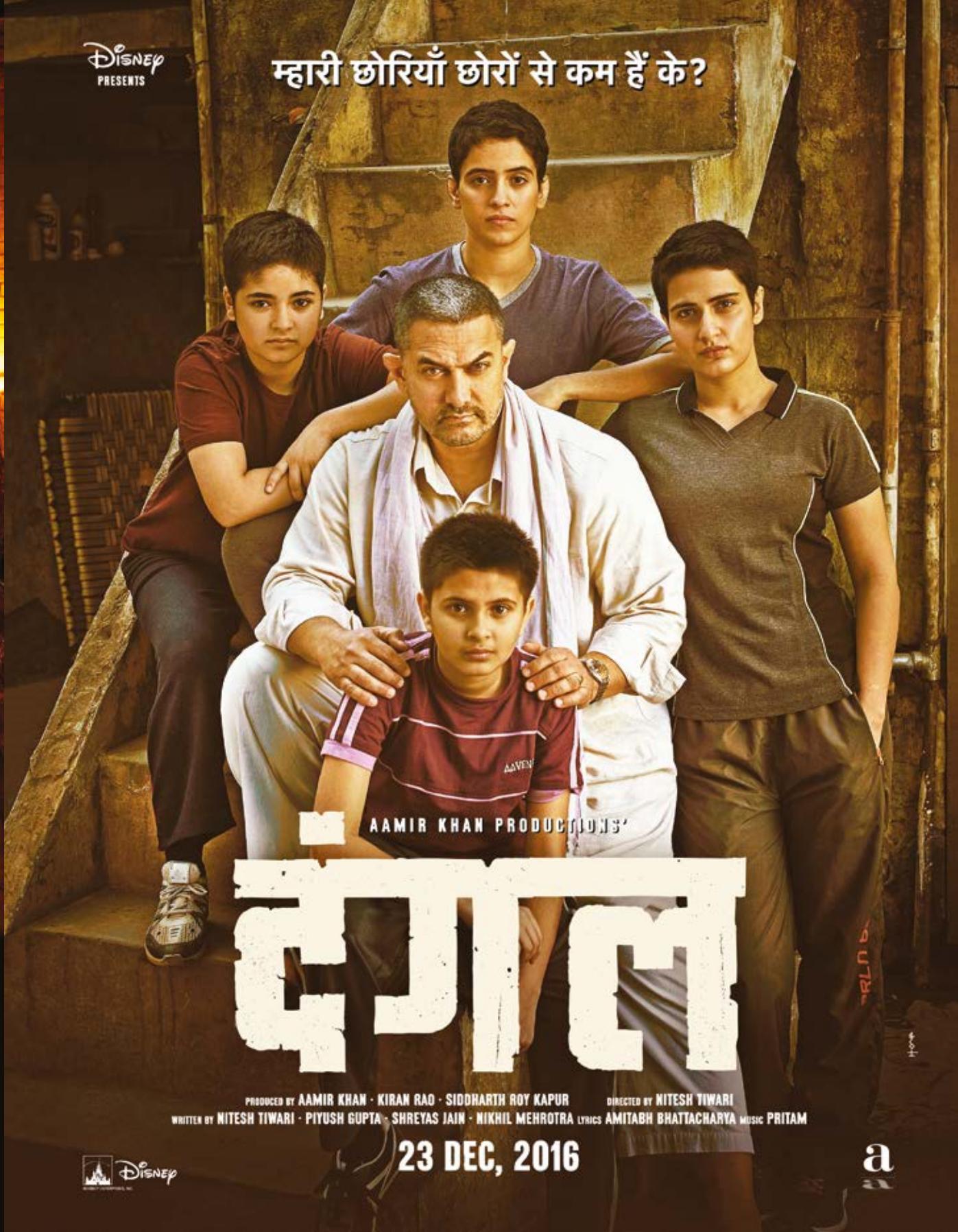
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23 DEC, 2016



THINKING IN ENGLISH, SPEAKING IN HINDI

Reflections on language in
Hindi film making.

By Tejaswini Ganti



Over the years, I have been struck by the increased presence of English in film titles, song lyrics, dialogue and the scripting process itself. I have been encountering a greater number of people within the industry who confess their inability to "think in Hindi" and their greater ease with English. This is a result of the changing demographics of the film industry with the presence of a larger number of writers, directors, actors, and producers educated in English-medium schools in contrast with earlier generations of the industry. The fact that many scripts today are written in English and then translated into Hindi or that dialogue has to be written in Romanized Hindi rather than in Devanagari can be construed as an unfortunate byproduct of these changed demographics. Thinking about this year's conference theme, *Do Our Stories Reflect India's Reality?*, it would be easy to presume that the growing presence of English demonstrates a disconnect between filmic narratives and the broader social and cultural context.

However, when looking back at the film industry's history, the picture is actually more complex. In fact, for most of its history, fluency or even competence in Hindi has not been a prerequisite for acting, directing, or writing within the Hindi film industry because since its beginning, the industry has been marked by tremendous linguistic, regional, and religious diversity. Parsi and Gujarati finance, Marathi

directors, and Anglo-Indian performers were all features of early Indian cinema.

With the advent of sound in 1931, Mumbai filmmakers had to make a conscious choice of which language to make films in - Hindi offered the largest markets, but which type of Hindi?

Filmmakers finally settled on Hindustani, which had operated as a sort of lingua franca throughout northern India. This led to a peculiarity – Mumbai became the only city in India where the language of the film industry's output did not correspond to the dominant languages of the region – Gujarati and Marathi. This was in direct contrast to other major centers of film production such as Kolkata, Hyderabad, or Chennai.

If one looks at acting and directing talent, one is struck by the diverse backgrounds of the personnel even with the advent of sound in 1931. For example, Bombay Talkies, one of the largest pre-World War II studios and one that left an important legacy in the post-independence Hindi film industry in terms of stars (Dev Anand, Raj Kapoor, Ashok Kumar, Dilip Kumar) and directors (Gyan Mukherjee), had many Germans in its employ and some iconic Hindi films from this era like Achhut Kanya were directed by Franz Osten. One of the top stars of the 1930s was the Australian-born Mary Evans, renamed "Fearless Nadia" who gained fame with her action/stunt films despite her heavily accented Hindi.

With the advent of sound in 1931, Mumbai filmmakers had to make a conscious choice of which language to make films in - Hindi offered the largest markets, but which type of Hindi?

Even in the scripting process, English has played an important role dating to the early sound era. During the 1930s, in studios like Bombay Talkies, scripts and dialogues were initially conceived of in English by the writer (referred to as a "scenario" writer) after which the dialogue writer translated them into Hindustani. Since scripts were frequently written by individuals who were not proficient in Hindustani, the autonomous dialogue writer emerged as a longstanding staple of Hindi cinema. At the same time, writers who were fluent in Urdu were in great demand as dialogue and lyric writers, since Persianized Urdu was held in high regard by producers and directors and many well-known Urdu poets, playwrights, and novelists supported their literary endeavors by working in the film industry. One consequence of this division of labor was that characters in older Hindi films spoke in the same register of Urdu or Hindustani regardless of social class or region. While the dialogue and lyrics of older films were poetic and eloquent, and definitely made an impact on audiences, the speech in these films did not mimic or represent how people actually spoke. Although films from the 1940s and 50s were concerned with commenting upon and responding to the social context of their time, they were not overly concerned with sounding 'real.'

Today, there has been a sea change in how films sound. In the last decade, there have been a number of Hindi films - Band Baaja Baraat, Omkara, Pan Singh Tomar, Vicky Donor, Do Dooni Char, Ishqiya, Gangs of Wasseypur, Luv Shuv Tey Chicken Khurana, Dum Lagake Haisha among others - in which the dialogue is much more regionally specific and reliant on local dialects than films from earlier decades. This is in stark contrast to the past where for example, a petty criminal in the 1950s (Raj Kapoor in Awara), a dockworker in the 1970s (Amitabh Bachchan in Deewar), and a wealthy NRI in the 1990s (Shah Rukh Khan in Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge) all spoke in the same type of Hindi, despite the widely diverging backgrounds, locations, and time frame of each character. Currently, some writers and directors are very interested in conveying dialogue that is rooted in and emerging from a specific regional and cultural milieu. This sort of attention to linguistic detail seems to be part of a tremendous concern amongst a newer generation of filmmakers with gesturing toward a type of realism within mainstream cinema. One effective way to signal the 'real' is through dialogue. Language has become an important way to distinguish between films and is being foregrounded not just in the songs, but also in the dialogue and speech of characters. Thus, language, in terms of dialect, accent, slang, proverbs, has become an important part of the

At the same time, writers who were fluent in Urdu were in great demand as dialogue and lyric writers, since Persianized Urdu was held in high regard by producers and directors and many well-known Urdu poets, playwrights, and novelists supported their literary endeavors by working in the film industry.

mis-en-scène – akin to songs, action, locales, and sets.

I find it intriguing that this turn toward the colloquial and vernacular is happening at the same time that fluency in Hindi appears to be waning among many writers, directors, and actors. In fact, I feel these processes are actually related. In an industry filled with people who are more comfortable “thinking in English,” the varied dialects and regional registers of Hindi appear exotic and distinctive. With English having become the default language of the business and practice of filmmaking, some filmmakers are able to deploy Hindi as a self-consciously marked commodity and brand identity. These filmmakers often win praise from the English-language media in India and abroad for their authentic portrayals of the Hindi heartland.

The fact that some filmmakers are able to utilize language in a way that in an earlier era of filmmaking would have been regarded as limiting or alienating audiences, has to do with the changing structures of finance, production, distribution, and exhibition reshaping the Hindi film industry. One of the biggest changes since the advent of multiplexes and corporate production and distribution companies is the diminished significance of the ‘universal hit,’ – films that do well all over India across all demographics. A universal hit is simply not as necessary within this new financing and distribution scenario. Thus, there is less anxiety on the part of the financing side of the industry if a film appears limited in its appeal.

The Hindi film industry has always been and had to be self-conscious about language because of its commercial orientation. In the earlier years of the film industry, language choice was discussed and thought about in terms of intelligibility and access to the largest markets. Today, language is a means of marking a film as distinct within a crowded marketplace and of garnering status within the film industry. Both are choices borne out of commercial considerations, but they reflect very different moments and transformations in the economics of the Hindi film industry.

Tejaswini Ganti, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Program in Culture & Media, New York University, author of *Producing Bollywood: Inside the Contemporary Hindi Film Industry* (2012) and *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* (2nd ed. 2013)

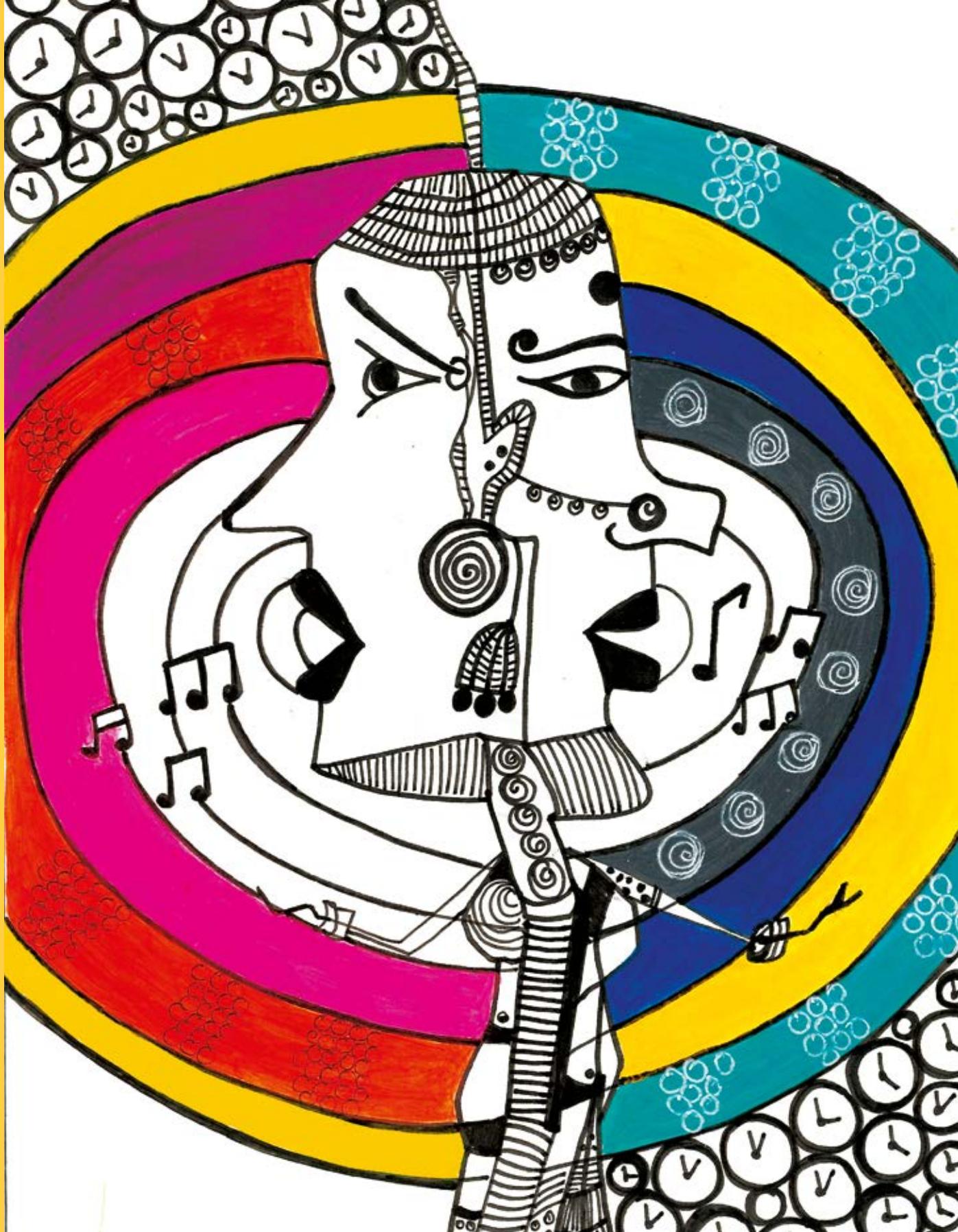
In an industry filled with people who are more comfortable “thinking in English,” the varied dialects and regional registers of Hindi appear exotic and distinctive.



LYRICS AAJ KAL

Songwriters today are faced with a new face of the Hindi Film Song.

By Kausar Munir



"Aaj kal gaanon mein voh baat nahi rahi..."
 "Be sir pair ki baatein, shaayri kahan hai?"
 "Arre sahab, jab shayar hi nahi rahe toh shaayri
 kahan se aayegi!"

Let us spare you the rest of the lyrical lamentations put before us songwriters, I'm sure you get the drift.

We do too, no really, we do!

We get that the listening audience is largely lamenting the loss of a golden era (read 1950's-60's) of film music. An era in which creatively talented and acutely skilled composers, singers, musicians but most of all song writers-lyricists-poets came together to create an unforgettable memory bank of Hindi film songs. All true. But like the song for all seasons aptly says, "Kaliyon ka chaman tab banta hai, Thoda resham lagta hai, Thoda sheesha lagta hai, Heere moti jadte hain, Thoda sona lagta hai"

Arthaath- The song sings the tune of its times.

The 1950's with it's newfound freedom was a time of idealism. The romanticism of a young nation poised to make its unfulfilled hopes of a better life come true. Magar ye ho na saka, and filmmakers of the time were compelled to showcase, if not mirror, the dashed hopes of the toiling 'kisan', struggles of the exploited mill worker, the angst of the educated yet unemployed youth...the new breed of the Hindi film protagonist, the 'hero'.

Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt were foremost in questioning the complex idea of this new India oscillating between hope and hopelessness. And these 'romantic- idealist heroes' found their voice in the socialist poet and lyricist, Sahir Ludhianvi. Sahir unrelentingly asked the difficult questions, challenged authority and

somehow still kept the embers of hope alive
 "Ye duniya agar mil bhi jaaye toh kya hai",
 "Jinhe naaz tha Hind par voh kahan hain",
 "Voh subah kabhi toh aayegi..." A staunch socialist himself, Sahir Ludhianvi perhaps holds the distinction of singlehandedly awakening the social consciousness of the Hindi Film Song, sometimes even when the script didn't support his cause. But his contemporaries like Shailendra, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Shakeel Badayuni, Hasrat Jaipuri continued to keep the flag of love and poetry (the two staples of cinema of the time) flying gloriously high.

Cut to circa 2000- "Hum hain naye, andaaz kyun ho puraana". (Javed Akhtar, Dil Chahta Hai)

50 years later, the hopes and dreams of India are hugely transformed. The largely rural landscape of Hindi cinema has shifted not just to big cities, but to big cities on foreign shores. NRI dreams, an upwardly mobile middle class and an ever-growing young population whose chief concerns are being rich, famous and successful (and to party, if music companies and producers are to be believed). These rule the consumption of films, and by extension their songs.

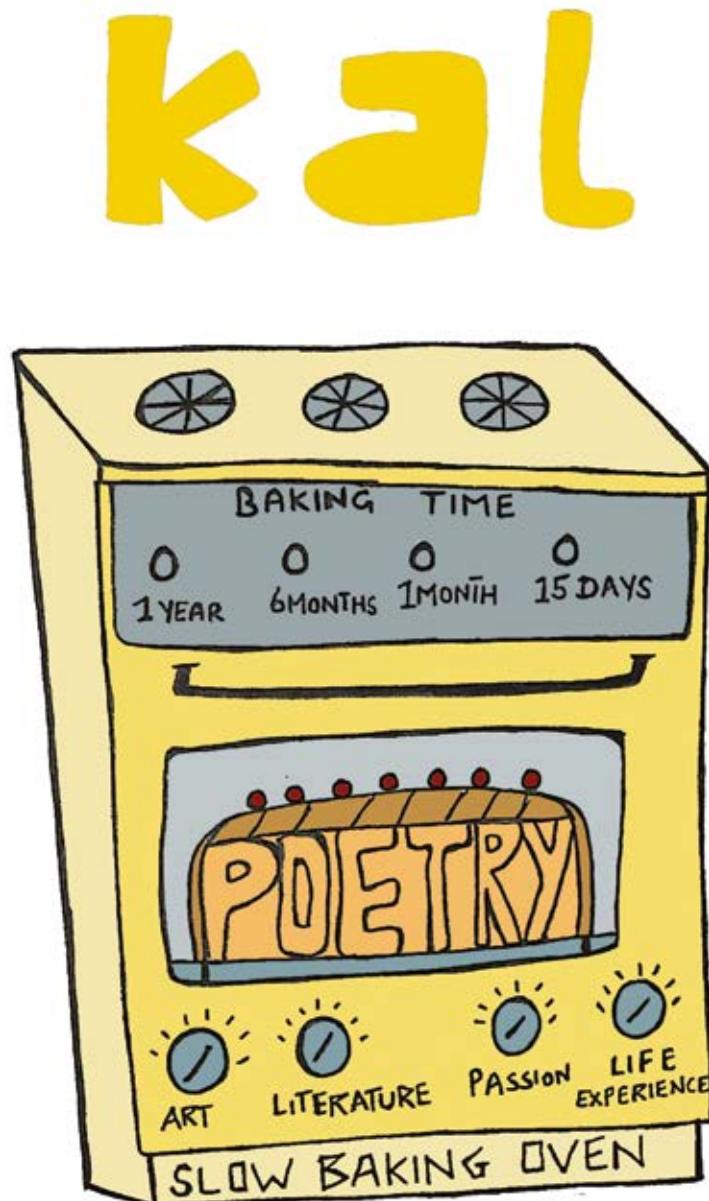
This new age audience has to be spoken to in their vocabulary, in a language that rivals 'smsing' and 'emoticons'.

Contrary to the popular perception of Hindi Cinema as being stagnant, the lyricist more than anyone else knows that as the spoken word has evolved, so also the poetic expression in the songs that are demanded of them. So, the runaway hit 'Badtameez Dil' doesn't just please the crowd, but speaks to it, in a language that it understands.

The digitally wound-up audience has to be wooed by the right 'sound'. In addition to an

This new age audience has to be spoken to in their vocabulary, in a language that rivals 'smsing' and 'emoticons'.





evocative melody and relatable words, the right track becomes equally important in making a connection. Case in point being the soundtrack of *Udta Punjab*. Where the concerns of a burning social issue were conveyed through a dynamic youthful sound besides being musically and lyrically relevant.

The collapse of a physical conveyor of music namely records, tapes, CD's, the film album is now stripped to a hot-selling single and thus the need for a 'hook-line' to attract the listeners and then engage them with the 'thought' of the song, if at all. From *Kajraare* to *Balam Pichkaari*, from *Aal iss Well* to *Sadda Haq*, 'catchy phrases' become more a tool to capture the faltering attention of the listeners, to attach it to the larger aim of the film, whether that is entertainment or engagement.

Add to these paradigm shifts, the slow fade out of lip sync, especially in films that dare to present the varied realities of the times that we live in. Songs with words are floating into the BGM space and lyricists are left to navigate this brave new world with speedy dexterity.

In such a scenario film music largely becomes the jar of honey used to lure the audience into slamming a great 'opening weekend'. And the struggle of the lyricist is to stay relevant, to entertain, to capture not only the imagination of the audience but also bridge the gap between appreciation and commercial viability.

As daunting as this task seems, it is not impossible. At least the lyricists don't think so. You may say we are dreamers but we're not the only ones. Because, even in an age of a million distractions, attractions and options available to music listeners, they remain tuned into Hindi Film Songs. Filmmakers provide a varied landscape of cinema from social to anti-establishment films, from entertainment to

engagement, from song and dance routines to BGM. And the volume of films being produced has room for every kind of writer to thrive in...

Helmed by the six decade old, new and original voice of Gulzar Sahab, and the staggering thought-scape of Javed Akhtar; alongside the new age poetic idiom of Prasoon Joshi (*Rang De Basanti*) and Irshad Kamil (*Rockstar*), the layered populism of Amitabh Bhattacharya (*Ye Jawaani Hai Deewani*), the contemporary socialism of Swanand Kirkire (*Khoya Khoya Chand*) and Piyush Mishra (*Gulaal*), the distinctive multi-culturalism of Kausar Munir (*Ishaqzaade*), the quirky depth of Anvita Dutt and Mayur Puri, the emerging hinterland emotiveness of Varun Grover (*Dum Laga ke Haisha*)... Hindi film lyric-writing has perhaps entered its next Golden Age.

It is also noteworthy that most of the lyricists today are writing in several other formats, showcasing their multifaceted repertoire of writing skills and range of subjects. And they bring this delightfully varied knowledge to the Hindi Film Song.

Indian films have the unique distinction of being the only cinema that sings. Social harbingers or comic capers, studio backed starry block-busters or niche independent films- now more than ever, Hindi film songs are singing the tune of the films they are set in and it's our privilege to give them words.

Albeit, "Jo bhi main kehna chahoon, barbaad karen alfaaz mere..."

(With inputs from Amitabh Bhattacharya and Swanand Kirkire)

Kausar Munir is a successful lyricist and screenwriter in the Hindi film industry with several noteworthy films like Ishaqzaade, Anjaana Anjaani, Bajrangi Bhaijaan, Daawat-E-Ishq to her credit.

In such a scenario film music largely becomes the jar of honey used to lure the audience into slamming a great 'opening weekend'.

हिन्दुस्तानी बोली के बहाने

किरदार और उसके परिवेश के आपसी
रिश्ते पर एक पैनी नज़र
संजय चौहान की क़लम से



लम्बे अरसे तक हिन्दी सिनेमा में दिखाई देने वाला हिन्दुस्तान फिल्मी हिन्दुस्तान हुआ करता था। वे किरदार कहाँ के हैं, किस परिवेश या प्रदेश के हैं, पता ही नहीं चलता था। ऐसा नहीं है कि इसके पहले उपचाद नहीं था। राज कपूर की फिल्मों का जिक्र करें तो “तीसरी कसम”, “जिस देश में गंगा बहती है” का हिन्दुस्तान एक खास परिवेश और समाज की पहचान करता था। वैसे ही दिलीप कुमार की फिल्में मसलन “नया दौर” या “गंगा जमुना” या “संघर्ष” में देशी मिट्टी की सौधी सुअंध थी। लेकिन अधिकतर फिल्में अपने परिवेश या बोली से कोसों दूर थीं। इन फिल्मों को देखते हुए पता नहीं चलता था कि ये कौन सा हिन्दुस्तान है जो हम देख रहे हैं, इसकी दुनियाँ, रीति-रिवाज, चाल-दाल, कपड़े, बोली-भाषा सब एक अलग ही दुनिया के लगते थे।

शोखर कपूर की “बैटिट कबीन” अचानक दर्शकों को ऐसे परिवेश में ले गई जो अनदेखा, अनजाना था। मुंबई का एक नया रूप “सत्या” में देखने को मिला जबकि इसके लेखक द्वय सौरभ शुक्ला और अनुराग काशयप या निर्देशक राम गोपाल वर्मा, मुंबई में पले-बढ़े नहीं थे। कॉलेज या युनिवर्सिटी की जो तस्वीर हिन्दी फिल्मों में दिखाई देती थी वो तिगमांशु धूलिया की “हासिल” से कोसों दूर थी। वहीं विशाल भारद्वाज ने “ओमकारा” में खांटी बोली का इस्तेमाल किया और दर्शकों को लगा ये भी एक हिन्दुस्तान है। अपनी ही फिल्मों का जिक्र भी करता चलूँ तो “आई एम कलाम” में जहाँ राजस्थान की मारवाड़ी बोली थी, तो “साहिब, बीबी और गैंगस्टर” में उत्तर प्रदेश का प्रचलित लहज़ा था और “पान सिंह तोमर” में चम्बल की बुंदेली मिट्टी की खुशबू थी।

इन फिल्मों की सफलता सिर्फ़ छोटे शहरों तक सिमटी नहीं रही। महानगरों या जिसे फिल्मी भाषा में “मल्टीप्लैक्स की ऑफियन्स” कहा जाता है, वहाँ भी ये फिल्में न सिर्फ़ खूब चलीं बल्कि इसकी भाषा, लहजे और परिवेश को युवा पीढ़ी ने जमकर सराहा। इन फिल्मों के कारण निर्माता और निर्देशक के दिल से एक बड़ा डर निकला कि दर्शकों को वास्तविक हिन्दुस्तान देखने से गुरेज़ नहीं है।

हाल ही में आई “मसान” में जहाँ बनारस का रंग था, वहाँ “उड़ता पंजाब” में सररों के खेत और बल्ले बल्ले के बजाय एक कड़वी सच्चाई थी और असली पंजाब था। अब निर्माता, निर्देशक जोखिम उठाने को तैयार हैं।

इसमें एक अहम तथ्य ये भी है कि इन फिल्में के निर्देशक और लेखक भले ही हिन्दी फिल्मों को देख कर पले-बढ़े हैं लेकिन उनकी सापाजिक, राजनीतिक और आर्थिक समझ मुम्बईया हिन्दी फिल्म की नहीं थी। इनमें से अधिकतर निर्देशक-लेखक मुम्बई में नहीं हिन्दुस्तान के मुख्तालिफ़ इलाकों से अपनी मिट्टी, अपनी बोली, अपनी भाषा और अपनी सोच लेकर आये हैं।

मुम्बई में पले-बढ़े अधिकतर लेखक-निर्देशकों ने ये दुनिया नहीं देखी थी, इसलिये उनका हिन्दुस्तान तब भी और बहुत कुछ आज भी, असली हिन्दुस्तान से अलग है। उन लोगों के संदर्भ भी हिन्दी फिल्मों के रहे इसलिये उनकी सोच और भौगोलिक समझ भी सौधी सपाट रही। जैसे जैसे हिन्दुस्तान के मुख्तालिफ़ इलाकों से आये लेखकों और निर्देशकों ने अपनी कहानी कहानी शुरू की, वैसे वैसे हिन्दुस्तान की एक अलग और नई तस्वीर पर्दे पर आती गई। जिन फिल्मों का यहा जिक्र किया अगर वे फिल्में मुम्बई के पले-बढ़े और हिन्दी फिल्मों के संदर्भ को ही हिन्दुस्तान समझने वाले लेखकों या निर्देशकों ने बनाई होती तो कल्पना करके ही सिहरन होती है कि ये फिल्में कैसी बनतीं। मैं एक फिल्म लिख रहा था जहाँ छात्र राजनीति के चलते छात्रों के दो गुटों में खून-खराबा होता है और एक प्रॉफेसर की हत्या कर दी जाती है। मुम्बई के नामी निर्देशिक उस फिल्म को निर्देशित करने वाले थे। वे इस बात को मानने को ही तैयार नहीं थे कि विश्वविद्यालय में छात्र राजनीति इतनी खूनरेज़ी हो सकती है कि अपहरण हों चाकू और बम्ब चलें, हत्या हो जाए। मैंने उनसे कहा कि मुम्बई हिन्दुस्तान नहीं है, अगर मुम्बई युनिवर्सिटी के स्टूडेन्ट इलेक्शन में ये चीजें नहीं होती तो इसका कर्तव्य मतलब नहीं कि हिन्दुस्तान में ऐसा होता नहीं और जिस जगह का जिक्र इस फिल्म में है, वहाँ ये एक सच्ची घटना है। ये मध्यप्रदेश की एक युनिवर्सिटी में हुआ था। लेकिन वे नहीं माने और उन्होंने कहानी बदलने को कहा। मैं उन्हें आदर सहित नमस्ते कह के निकल गया।

कई बार इन महानुभाव जैसों को लगता है “यार इस तरह की फिल्में चल रहीं हैं तो हम भी अपनी फिल्मों में ऐसा कुछ प्रयत्न करते हैं।” वे इसे एक “फैशन ट्रेंड” की तरह इस्तेमाल करते हैं। “इक काम करते हैं, अपने किरदार से बिहारी बुलवाते हैं, मज़ा आ जायेगा... पब्लिक पसंद करेगी।” अब उन्हें ये समझाना मुश्किल होता है कि बिहारी कोई भाषा या बोली नहीं है। बिहार में भोजपुरी, मैथिली, मग्ही, अंगीका और न जाने कितनी बोलियाँ हैं और वे अलग अलग इलाकों में बोली जाती हैं। आपका किरदार अगर मिथिला का नहीं है तो वह मैथिली कैसे बोलेगा। उत्तर प्रदेश की भोजपुरी और बिहार की भोजपुरी की दूरी उन्हें कैसे दिखाई जाये? चम्बल की बुंदेली और उससे सटे इलाके की बाधेली या मालवी बोली का अन्तर किस तरह पाटा जाए? राजस्थान की मेवाती या मारवाड़ी परिवेश उनकी समझ से परे हैं।

आज की हिन्दी फिल्मों में अगर हिन्दुस्तान की एक नई और असली तस्वीर दिखाई देने लगी है तो इसका बहुत बड़ा कारण उन इलाकों से आये लेखकों और निर्देशकों को है। उसकी एक और महत्वपूर्ण वजह ये भी है कि इन फिल्मों ने बॉक्स ऑफिस पर सफलता भी हासिल की। इसलिये निर्माता और कॉर्पोरेट के दिल और दिमाग से ये डर निकल गया कि लोग असली हिन्दुस्तान और उसकी बोली, परिवेश देखने से गुरज़ करेंगे।

“पान सिंह तोमर” के पहले भी कई बायोपिक बनी थीं लेकिन बॉक्स ऑफिस पर नहीं चलने की वजह से सबको लगा कि “बायोपिक” को टच न ही करना बेहतर है। “पान सिंह तोमर”, उसकी बोली और परिवेश की सफलता से अचानक कई लोगों की नींद टूटी, उन्हें लगा इस “जॉनरे” को भुनाना चाहिये ओर फिर “बायोपिक” फिल्मी जुबान में “हॉट प्रॉपर्टी” बन गया। हिन्दुस्तान का असली चेहरा दिखाने वाली सारी फिल्में चली हों ऐसा नहीं है लेकिन अब ये तो कहा जा सकता है कि इसे दिखाने और वहाँ की बोली के इस्तेमाल का डर काफी हद तक कम हो गया है। ऐसा नहीं है कि पुरानी फिल्मों की तरह एक अलग “फिल्मी हिन्दुस्तान” दिखाने वाली फिल्मों का बनना बन्द हो जायेगा, वे बन रहीं हैं और चल भी रहीं हैं। लेकिन युवा दर्शक, जो



हिन्दुस्तान की आबादी का 65 प्रतिशत हिस्सा है, उसकी सोच-कल्पना के विस्तार ने हिन्दी फिल्म के निर्माता और निर्देशकों को ये सोचने पे तो मजबूर कर दिया है कि किस फिल्म समझाना की कहानी कही जाए, और किस बोली में बोली जाए। अब उन्हें ये तो समझ आने लगा है कि अगर सन्तरे का खेत दिखाना है तो नागपुर जाना होगा, कश्मीर नहीं। कश्मीर की ज़मीन में संतरे उग नहीं सकते, वहाँ सेब ही उगाने पड़ेंगे।

संजय चौहान पत्रकारिता से फिल्म लेखन में आये। “आई एम कलाम” के लिये सर्वश्रेष्ठ कहानी का फिल्मफेयर पुरस्कार। “पान सिंह तोमर” और “साहिब, बीबी और गैंगस्टर” से शीर्ष लेखकों में शुमार।

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Does television reflect the reality
of the Indian woman?

By Gajra Kottary





Over nearly two decades in the TV industry, I have observed that whatever be the brand and color of feminism we espouse, we women do tend to stick with each other. This is much to the intrigue, fascination and sometimes irritation (I dare say!) of our male colleagues. The women characters we create for our TV shows may often be each other's worst enemies. But we women in the television industry, quite a united tribe, often proudly declare, that if the film industry is biased in favour of men, we have had our come-uppance by weighing the odds heavily in favour of women.

So be it the length of roles and choice of protagonists, the sheer number of women characters, the storylines themselves and even the payments to them in comparison to the males, television is a woman's medium. Not only that, a visit to most of the GEC offices as well as those of prominent production houses, is a feast for the eyes in terms of the riot of colour that only the feminine presence can be.

Yes, the behind the scenes scenario in TV too, is dominated by women.

So if this was a battle of numbers we women would win our pretty hands down, any day. But alas it is not. Despite our strength of numbers, we have been able to do precious little for our tribe. Most media analysis sites and papers are full of lamentations of the regressive and anti-feminist content of television which is actually doing more disservice than contributing to the cause of women. And they are largely right in what they analyse, even though it hurts those of us practitioners who try so hard to bring some of our progressive thoughts for women to reflect in our stories and characters.

During the good-old days of Doordarshan in the 1980's we had programmes like Udaan and Rajni that dealt with strong women, who were an inspiration to all viewers, and especially to women. Even though they made diverse choices in being either career women or housewives, they chose to live their lives with independence, strength and conviction.

While in Udaan the protagonists dream was that of becoming an IPS Officer, Rajni was the television version of the angry no-nonsense woman, who asked uncomfortable questions to everyone around her and extracted answers and confessions from all, including the high and mighty.

Udaan was inspired by the real-life story of director Kavita Choudhary's elder sister Kanchan Choudhary who after several hardships, went on to become the first female Director General of Police and it instilled in its female audience, a desire for emancipation – beyond the claustrophobic confines of domesticity. While Rajni helped housewives realise back then that they could be empowered and could empower others too, earning rare respect for the pure homemaker.

However, with the advent of cable and satellite television and a major upheaval following it, things rapidly changed. The new millennium saw the phenomenal success of the soaps involving family dramas like Kasauti Zindagi Kay, Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki, Kyunki Saas Bhi



Kabhi Bahu Thhi to name a few. We went from seeing empowered and relatable female characters in Swaabimaan and Tara in the mid-nineties to women wearing expensive saris, decked from head to toe in gold, holding a thaali containing fruits and flowers and praying sincerely for the welfare of their husbands and family. This imagery became the typical portrait of a woman in serials; a perfect wife, perfect mother and perfect daughter-in-law who showered love on all her loved ones and was an icon of purity and devotion for the audience.

Each serial portrayed how an 'ideal' woman should behave when myriad responsibilities are foisted upon her, be it in maintaining the happiness of her household, taking care of the children or even running the family business. Our much loved 'bahu' was expected to deal with everything thrown at her with a smile, while handling herself with the aplomb of a professional. If the woman was allowed to work, her character was often that of a vamp, who tried to steal the leading lady's husband or children.



She would be shown as a modern, stylish woman who was always scheming and plotting the downfall of the protagonist. It seemed like the makers were trying to reinforce the gender stereotype present in our society, ostracizing those women who choose to be recalcitrant and chalk out an independent path for themselves.

But the phenomenal success of these serials never obliterated the fact that they targeted a certain, specific, economically privileged section of society where the main source of familial income was either inherited property or that amassed by business activities. This particular focus on such women who were married off to rich households often belonging to well to do class, themselves further alienated these serials from a larger reality- reality that had, in reality, changed over the decade.

So this was the period when our shows were really very far away from reflecting the emerging social reality in India where scores of girls especially from the middle class were

studying, working and maintaining their work life balance. Yet there were no stories to reflect their reality, nor that of rural or poorer women, let alone offer them inspiration!

There were a few exceptions of course. One of the bravest shows in the new millennium was Astitva, whose protagonist was not only a committed working woman, but also dared to marry after falling in love with a much younger man, all with her dignity intact. Yet Astitva, though it survived much longer than expected, did not exactly shake the TRP charts. The reason analysed was that Dr Simran was inspirational but not relatable to the average housewife and target audience, used to a diet of the less thinking protagonists.

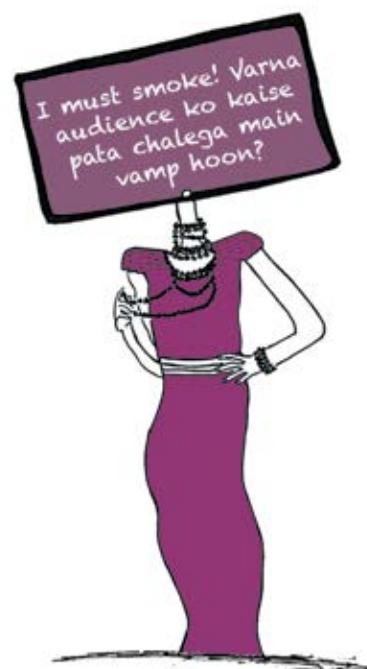
Even in regional TV serials, the most typical feminine aspects of a woman's personality were extolled. The super hit Malayalam serial 'Stree' initially portrayed the protagonist, Indu, as a feminist who was bold, stubborn and independent. It caused an uproar and led

to the team of 'Stree' having to change the personality of her character to that of a more quiet, submissive and sacrificing woman.

Towards the end of the first decade of the millineum, and just after the success of the then experimental Balika Vadhu, it became a trend to work the themes of serials around social issues. Since most social issues in India involve girl children and women, it seemed for some time as if serials were finally going to reflect and therefore improve upon women's reality, since they would increase awareness and sensitivity. To some extent this did happen too, but as the waves receded after the flood of such shows, of late we are back to mindless dramas, and stunts to garner TRP's, as inter-channel competition is hotting up every day. So welcome to the daayans, ghosts, chudails and nagins. Can we get any further away from reflecting the reality of women ?

Though it's more acceptable to end on a note of optimism, I sign off on a rather shameful and thought provoking bit of data. A UNESCO report released in 2009 had described the common images of women in the Indian media: "the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, the hardfaced corporate and political climber." The report states that, at the current rate of progress on stereotyping women, it will take another 75 years to achieve gender equality in the media. Given the earlier stated fact in this piece about how women outnumber men in the TV industry, does this not sadly prove that mean adage about a woman being another woman's worst enemy ?

Gajra Kottary is a Mumbai based screenwriter who has been writing for television for over 14 years. She has written for shows like Astitva...Ek Prem Kahaani, Balika Vadhu, Ek Veer Ki Ardaas Veera, Jyoti and many others.



कहानी और सिनेमा

रौबीले ठाकुर जैसे सिनेमा के आगे आज भी
ग़रीब किसानी की तरह खड़ी कहानी के हक्क की
आवाज़!

अशोक मिश्र की क़लम से



अमूमन एक अच्छी कहानी, अच्छे-सफल सिनेमा की गारंटी मानी जाती है। बाबूद इसके हिन्दी सिनेमा में अच्छी कहानियाँ नजर तो आती है मगर कम और कभी-कभी ही! हिन्दी सिनेमा आज जब वैश्विक हो गया है और विश्व सिनेमा के पटल पर नजर आ रहा है तब तो अच्छी और सच्ची कहानियाँ की ज़रूरत और बढ़ती नजर आती है। हम हर साल बहुत बड़ी संख्या में फ़िल्में बनाते हैं, मगर कितनों की कहानी हमें याद रह जाती हैं? कितनी कहानियों पर हम सिनेमा हॉल से निकलते हुए, घर-दफ्तरों, बसों, लोकल ट्रेनों में सफर करते हुए बातें करते हैं?

कुछ ही फ़िल्मों की कहानियाँ ऐसी होती हैं जिनके बारे में हम अपने दोस्त यारों से कहते हैं, “अबे, जा देख ले! ऐसी कहानी कभी देखी-सुनी न होगी!”... और फिर हम फ़िल्म की कहानी सुनाने लगते हैं, दोस्त चिल्लाता है, “कहानी मत सुना बाप... देखने का मज़ा कम हो जाएगा !”

हम सिनेमाकार, लेखक जीवन से, आस-पड़ोस से कहानी पाते हैं और उनमें अपनी कल्पना की बधार लगा के उसे पटकथा में ढालते हैं। मगर यह भी सच है कि हमसे से ज़्यादातर हवाई-जहाज़ी होते जा रहे हैं, पांच सितारा होटलों में मीटिंग-सीटिंग करते हैं, या नहीं करते “तो ऐसे दिन आयें!” - ऐसा मनाते रहते हैं। तब हम देश को, लोगों को, उनकी समस्याओं को, उनमें भरी हुई हिस्सा और हास्य, प्रेम और धृणा आदि अनेक मनोभावों को कैसे प्रतिबिम्बित कर पायेंगे अपने काम में? सत्यजीत रे कहते हैं, “मैं जब कोई मौलिक कहानी लिखता हूँ तो उन लोगों के बारे में लिखता हूँ जिन्हें मैं सीधे जानता हूँ। मैं उन्हीं हालातों को लिखता हूँ जिनसे मैं अच्छे से परिचित होता हूँ।”

हमारे सिनेमा में अच्छी कहानियों के अकाल की बजह ये भी लगती है कि हममें से ज़्यादातर लेखकों और सिनेमाकारों का देश में अनेक भाषाओं में लिखे जा रहे साहित्य से वैसा गहरा सम्बन्ध नहीं रह गया है जैसा पहले हुआ करता था। ...वैसा सम्बन्ध जैसा मंटो या प्रेमचन्द या फणीश्वर नाथ रेणु के साथ था। हिन्दी में अनेक नये कहानीकार बेहतरीन कहानियाँ लिख रहे हैं.. तमिल, तेलुगू, पंजाबी, मराठी में और अन्य भाषाओं में भी ऐसा ही

होगा - क्या उनके साथ एक रचनात्मक कॉलेब्रेशन की ज़रूरत नहीं है ?

स्टीवन स्पीलबर्ग ने एक सटीक बात कही है, “जब मैं बच्चा था तब मैं सिर्फ़ मैं होता था किसी के साथ कॉलेब्रेशन नहीं करता था, बस दोस्तों के साथ कैमरा लिए मनमानी करता फिरता। पर बड़े होने के बाद समझ आया कि फ़िल्म की कहानी सिर्फ़ तुम्हारी अकेले की नहीं होती बल्कि उन सब की होती है जो तुम्हारे ईर्द-गिर्द रहते हैं, तुम उसे अकेले नहीं बनाते।”

हमारी ज़्यादातर कहानियों में ज़िदगी के बहुत से आयाम नहीं दिखते... हिस्सा एक ऐसा ही विषय है, जिस पर हम किस्म के प्रयोग कर रहे हैं। गालियों को भी अपनी अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम बना के सच तक, यथार्थ तक पहुँचने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं। लेकिन और भी गम है ज़माने में? फिर शारीरिक हिस्सा से कहीं ज़्यादा बढ़ चुकी है मानसिक हिस्सा! मैं विनम्रता से इस हिस्सा को टटोलने की बँकालत करता हूँ।

हिस्सा के बाद, हास्य भी दर्शकों को लुभाता रहा है मगर हम जो पहले हर साल दो-तीन सुपर-डुपर हिट हास्य फ़िल्में बनाते थे, अब बहुत कम हास्य-व्यंग्य की फ़िल्में पेश करते हैं। कॉमेडियन का तो हमने फ़िल्मों से सफाया ही कर दिया है।

बढ़ती-घटती साम्प्रदायिकता, बदलते राजनैतिक समीकरण, बेतहाशा मंहगाई, मीडिया जिसका बड़ा हिस्सा न्यूज़ की जगह “स्वर्ग की सीढ़ी!” या “क्या बहां अब भी पांडव आते हैं?” जैसे कार्यक्रम दिखा रहा है, ये सब सीधे सीधे विषय हो सकते हैं... और चारों तरफ दिनों दिन नई-नई शब्दों में बढ़ता हुआ आतंकवाद तो है ही। एक अच्छे सिनेमा की यही सब तो खाना-खुराक होते हैं। इनके बगैर सिनेमा बन तो सकता है मगर वो क्षणभंगुर हो कर रह जाता है।

मराठी सिनेमा में पिछले कुछ दिनों में ऐसी सफल फ़िल्में आई हैं, जिन्होंने नये अंदाज़ से नई नई कहानियों के साथ शिक्षा, जाति-प्रथा, सामाजिक भेद-भाव, प्रेम से जुड़ी समस्याओं को पेश करके बिलकुल नये अंदाज़ का भारतीय सिनेमा पेश किया है। यह विवाद का विषय हो सकता है कि सिनेमाकार सामाजिक सरोकार का सिनेमा

बनाये या न बनाये। मगर मुश्किल ये है कि आप कुछ भी बनायें, आपकी रचना का सामाजिक सरोकार अपने आप ही निश्चित हो जाता है।

अच्छी कहानियाँ सोचना और लिखना बेहद मुश्किल काम है। बड़े से बड़े लेखक, कहानीकार अपनी ज़िन्दगी में कुछ ही अच्छी कहानियाँ लिख पाते हैं। लेकिन वक्त इतनी जल्दबाजी का है कि अच्छी कहानियाँ सोचना बेहद कठिन होता जा रहा है। हम आनन-फ़ानन में कहानियाँ परोस रहे हैं। कभी चाट अच्छी बन जाती है, कभी नमक-मिर्च ज़्यादा हो जाता है।

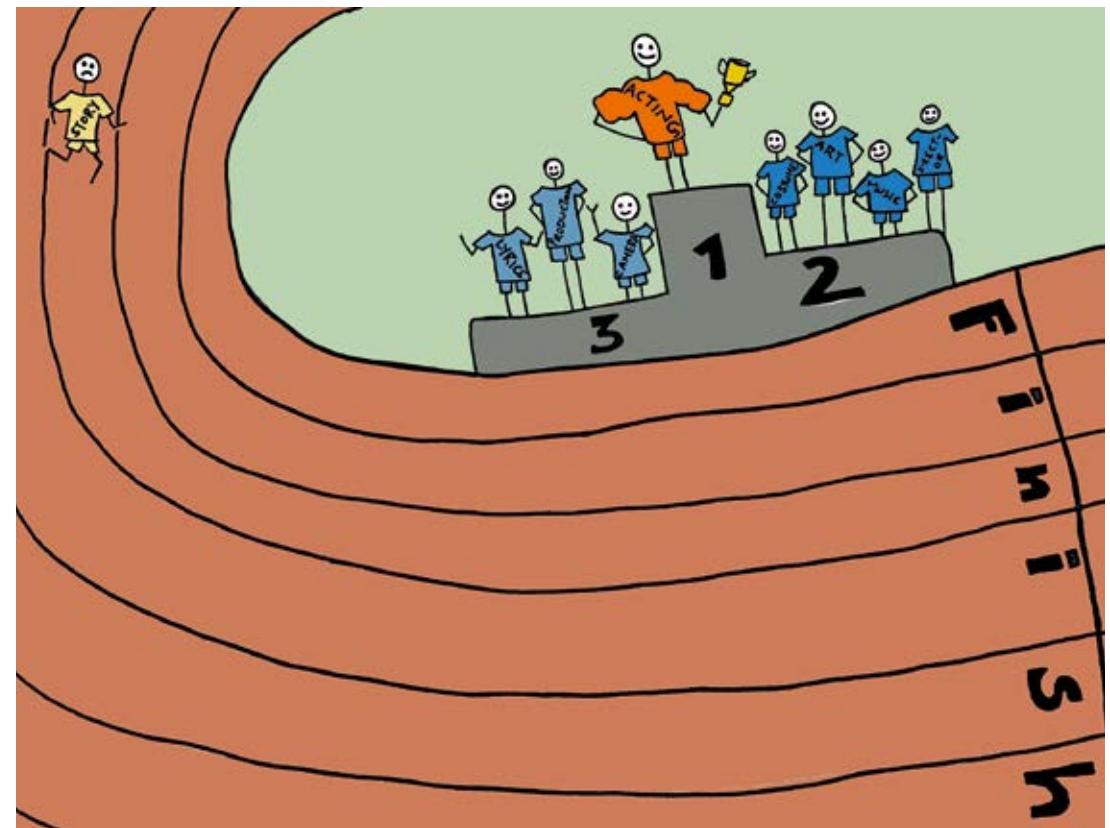
फ़िल्म का निर्माण और उसे देखने का कर्म सामूहिक है। दर्शक, लेखक, निर्माता, निर्देशक सब एक दूसरे की ज़िन्दगी को समझें तभी ज़िन्दगी के नये-नये आयामों को छूने वाली कहानियाँ आयेंगी।

स्टीवन स्पीलबर्ग एक और पते की बात कहते हैं, “फ़िल्म

के बारे में सबसे अच्छी बात ये होती है कि जो भी फ़िल्म देखता है वो अपना अनोखा अनुभव सिनेमा हॉल में लेकर आता है, पर सिनेमाकार कहानी कहने के अपने उम्दा अंदाज़ से सिनेमा हॉल में बैठे सभी लोगों को एक ही समय में एक साथ ताली बजाना, हँसना और डरने आदि का अनुभव करा सकता है।”

आइये सैर करें देश की, ज़्यादा पढ़े-समझें उन कहानियों को जो हमारे बगल में खड़ी हैं और हमसे कह रही हैं, “ए, लेखक जी ! भइया हमको भी लिख दो यार !”

अशोक मिश्र एनएसडी के बाद फ़िल्म-लेखन से जुड़े। श्याम बेनेगल निर्देशित “समर” तथा सईद मिर्ज़ा निर्देशित “नसीम” के लिए सर्वश्रेष्ठ पटकथा के दो राष्ट्रीय फ़िल्म पुरस्कार। पांच अन्य राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार प्राप्त फ़िल्मों का लेखन। “वैलेकम टू सज्जनपुर” से खास पहचान।



YAADON KI BAARAAT

Some anecdotes about our greatest writers.

By Kamlesh Pandey



HITS AND MISSES

Pt. Mukhram Sharma, the first writer of Hindi cinema who commanded a star status among producers and directors was narrating a story to Bimal Roy while they were travelling in Bimal Da's car to the studio. Bimal Da did not like the story much. So Pt. Mukhram Sharma got Bimal Da's driver to stop the car in the middle of the road, got off and went straight to the office of B.R. Chopra and narrated the same story to him. That film went on to become one of the most successful films of that year! It was the classic, *Sadna*.

Akhtar Mirza, father of director Sayeed Mirza and Azeez Mirza, took a story to Mehboob Khan because the story demanded a major star and Mehboob Khan could get any star. Mehboob Khan did not see any potential in the story and rejected it. Akhtar Mirza took it to B.R. Chopra. B.R. Chopra liked the story and took it to Ashok Kumar for the lead role. Ashok Kumar rejected it, telling him that he is not suitable for the lead character, and instead, advised him to take Dilip Kumar. The film became '*Naya Daur*', an all-time classic and a blockbuster of that year.

In the hay days of Salim-Javed, producer Premji went to them for a story-script to make a film.

They had a script ready but Premji did not quite like it. They offered to write another script for him based on a story they were working on. Premji liked the story and bought it. That film was '*Iman Dharam*' which didn't do too well at the box office. And the story-script that Premji rejected was '*Trishul*' which broke all records at the box office!

LOAN FOR LYRICS

When Raj Kapoor first asked Shailendra to write lyrics for his films, he refused and asked him for a loan of Rs.500/- for an emergency he was facing and promised that he would finally pay it back. When Shailendra went to Raj Kapoor to pay back the loan of Rs.500/-, he was listening to the script of '*Awara*' being narrated by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas. After the narration, Raj Kapoor asked Shailendra, 'So what do you think of the story, Kaviraj?' Shailendra responded, 'Gardish mein tha, aasman ka tara tha, awara tha!' Raj Kapoor jumped at Shailendra's response and refused to take the money and instead asked him to write the lyrics. That was how the film '*Awara*' got its title and Raj Kapoor got the song that resonated all over the world and Indian cinema got a team that made history.

GENEROSITY FOR GULZAR!

Gulzar Saab was hired by a producer to write dialogue for a film. The work started, many months passed but his remuneration was never even asked for nor mentioned by the producer. So one fine day, Gulzar Saab got enough courage to broach the subject of his remuneration to the producer. The producer regretted his oversight, called his production manager and very kindly asked him to arrange a local railway pass for Gulzar!

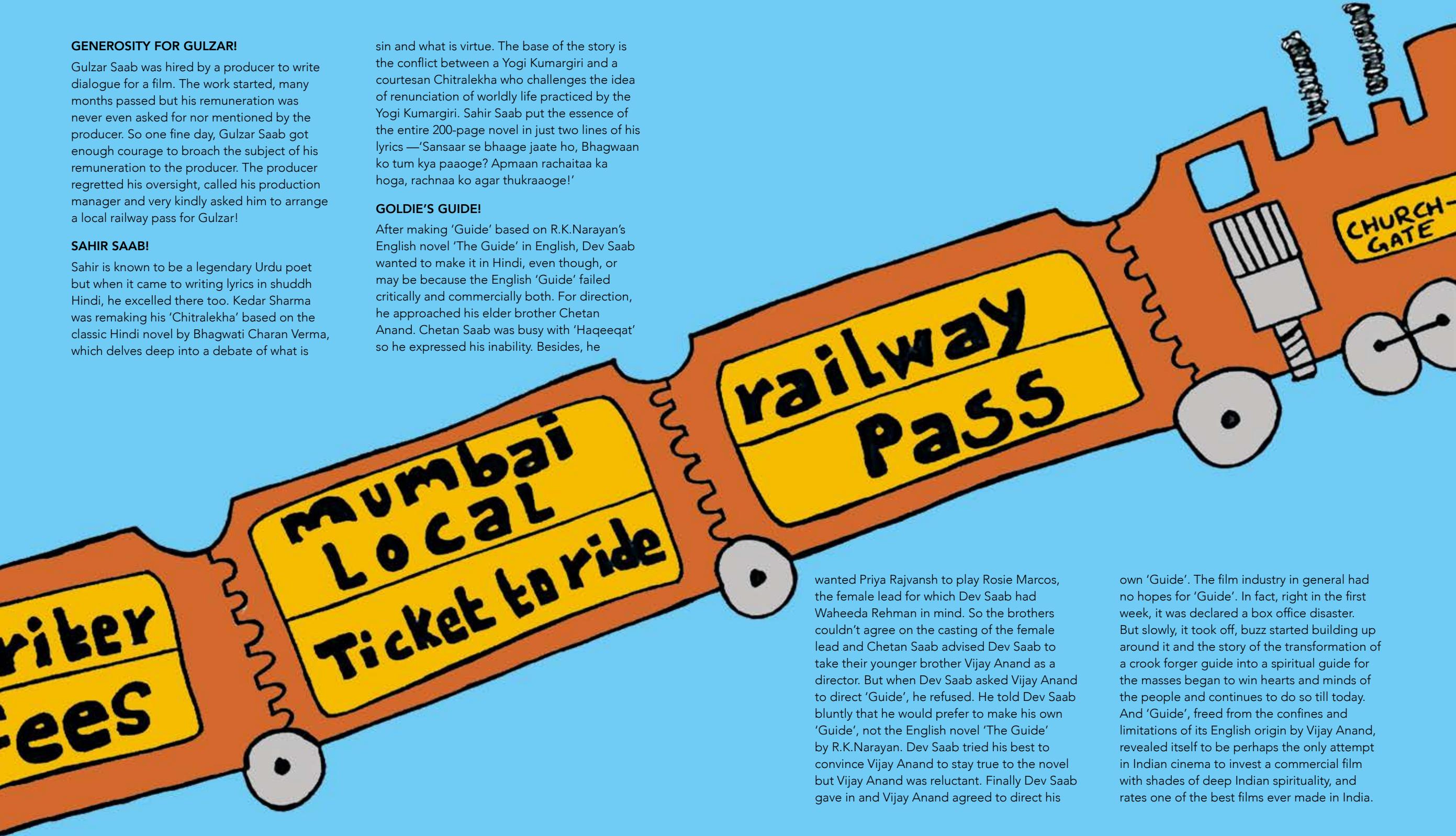
SAHIR SAAB!

Sahir is known to be a legendary Urdu poet but when it came to writing lyrics in shuddh Hindi, he excelled there too. Kedar Sharma was remaking his 'Chitralekha' based on the classic Hindi novel by Bhagwati Charan Verma, which delves deep into a debate of what is

sin and what is virtue. The base of the story is the conflict between a Yogi Kumargiri and a courtesan Chitralekha who challenges the idea of renunciation of worldly life practiced by the Yogi Kumargiri. Sahir Saab put the essence of the entire 200-page novel in just two lines of his lyrics —'Sansaar se bhaage jaate ho, Bhagwaan ko tum kya paaoge? Apmaan rachaitaa ka hogaa, rachnaa ko agar thukraao!'

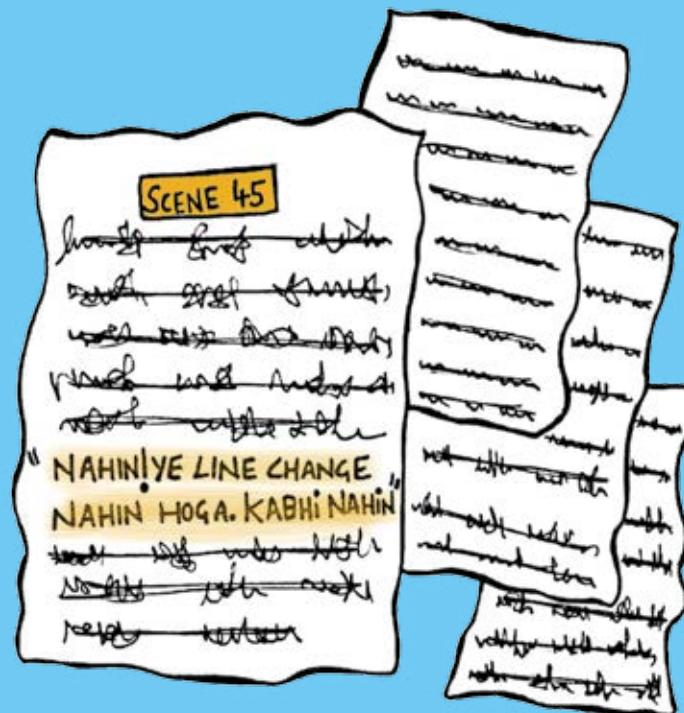
GOLDIE'S GUIDE!

After making 'Guide' based on R.K.Narayan's English novel 'The Guide' in English, Dev Saab wanted to make it in Hindi, even though, or may be because the English 'Guide' failed critically and commercially both. For direction, he approached his elder brother Chetan Anand. Chetan Saab was busy with 'Haqeeqat' so he expressed his inability. Besides, he



wanted Priya Rajvansh to play Rosie Marcos, the female lead for which Dev Saab had Waheeda Rehman in mind. So the brothers couldn't agree on the casting of the female lead and Chetan Saab advised Dev Saab to take their younger brother Vijay Anand as a director. But when Dev Saab asked Vijay Anand to direct 'Guide', he refused. He told Dev Saab bluntly that he would prefer to make his own 'Guide', not the English novel 'The Guide' by R.K.Narayan. Dev Saab tried his best to convince Vijay Anand to stay true to the novel but Vijay Anand was reluctant. Finally Dev Saab gave in and Vijay Anand agreed to direct his

own 'Guide'. The film industry in general had no hopes for 'Guide'. In fact, right in the first week, it was declared a box office disaster. But slowly, it took off, buzz started building up around it and the story of the transformation of a crook forger guide into a spiritual guide for the masses began to win hearts and minds of the people and continues to do so till today. And 'Guide', freed from the confines and limitations of its English origin by Vijay Anand, revealed itself to be perhaps the only attempt in Indian cinema to invest a commercial film with shades of deep Indian spirituality, and rates one of the best films ever made in India.



LINE MAARA!

Writer Rajendra Singh Bedi, one of the finest novelists in Urdu and Punjabi was also a much sought after dialogue writer. Once while present at the shooting of one of the films for which he had written the dialogue, the director asked him to change a line. But Bedi Saab refused. Again and again. The director begged him, the producer begged him, even the actor begged him but Bedi Saab continued to resist and refused to change that line. They all tried to reason with Bedi Saab that it was just a matter of one line, why was he so adamant on not changing it? Bedi Saab looked at them and said, 'Because this is the only line of mine which has survived in the film!'

TAAR KA VAAR

For his film 'Sangam', Raj Kapoor was relentlessly pursuing Vaijayanti Mala to play the female lead. But Vaijayanti Mala kept refusing for one reason or another. So Raj Kapoor used the mukhda of one of the songs and telegrammed it to Vaijayanti Mala—'Bol Radha bol, Sangam hoga ki nahi?' And Vaijayanti Mala had no choice but to respond 'Yes, hoga, hoga!'

ISS MEIN KYA NAYEE BAAT HAI?

Javed Saab was narrating a story to a producer. The producer loved the story but refused to produce it. 'Why?' asked Javed Saab. 'Because,' the producer wisely enlightened him, 'this story has never been made!'



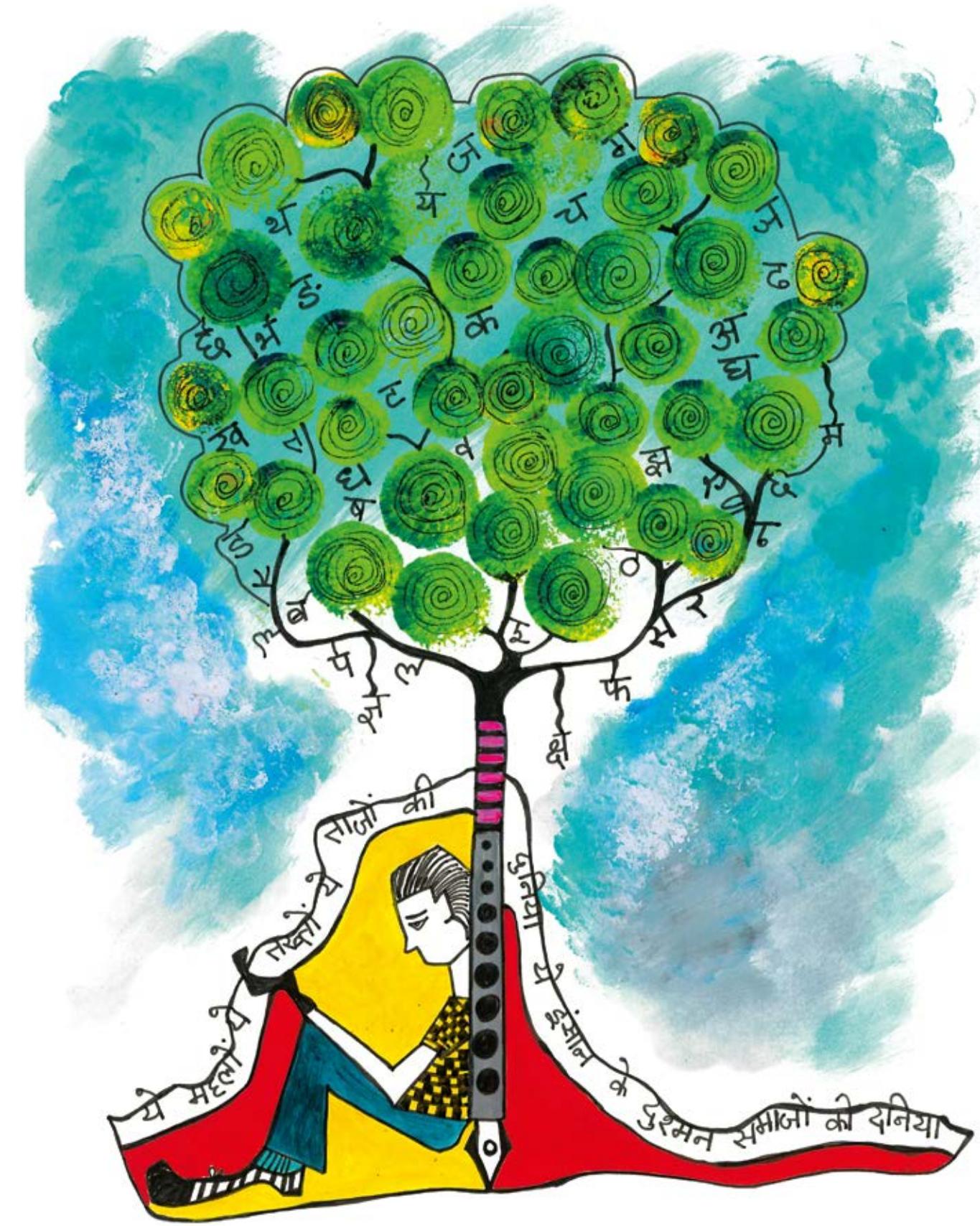
RAAT O RAAT

When Sholay released, writers Salim-Javed found the writing credit given to 'Sippy Films Story Department' on the posters and banners! Indignant, they got together a group of men, some black paint and courage. Through the night they went to every poster that was put up in the city. Next morning, Mumbai woke up the posters of Sholay that boldly announced – Written By Salim Javed!

Kamlesh Pandey is an Indian screenwriter with a career spanning over 3 decades and films like Tezaab, Dil, Rang De Basanti and Delhi 6 to his credit.

MAIN PAL DO PAL KA SHAAYAR HOON...

Remembering Sahir Ludhianvi
By Vinay Shukla



The name conjures up the image of a man who ruled Hindi film music as a lyricist in 50s, 60s and 70s; and continues to do so even after his death. True to his name - Sahir means magician - he cast a spell on his listeners and readers with his words.

But first, a personal anecdote: The year was 1976. I was making my debut as director; and Sahir saab was to write lyrics for the film. About a month before the recording of songs was scheduled, Sahir saab was taken ill and hospitalized. He called me and asked that I sign another lyricist. My pleas did not work with him. He said, "Vinay, I approach each song fearing that may be this one time, I'll fail. There are times when I take even one month to write a song. I don't want to be the reason for upsetting your shooting schedule."

Imagine Sahir Ludhianvi saying this! That's how seriously he valued lyric writing. Every word was chosen with the care of a jeweller; each song chiseled like a sculpture.

*Mann re
Tuu kaahe na dheer dhare!
Voh nirmohi
Moh na jaane
Jinkaa moh kare...*

He plays with words phonetically, without diffusing the meaning; or allowing the pensive mood to slip.

If his lyrics were full of feelings, they were also full of meaning. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was among the first of lyricists who brought Thought into film songs.

He held that poetry should be used as a tool for social change. In the preface of GAATA JAAYE BANJARAA, an anthology of his film songs, he writes:

It has been my constant endeavour to bring film songs closer to creative poetry, so that the message of social and political change reaches

the common people... If the songs in this anthology, along with providing entertainment, also satisfy your social, political, and literary urges; I would be content that I have not failed in my effort.

Unless thoughts turn into feelings, poetry does not emerge. Sahir's ideological beliefs formed the bedrock of his creativity; and yet his songs about society and the system do not sound propagandist. The list of songs that reflect his genius and versatility is too long and requires a tome. Hence, perforce, I have chosen just a few of his songs from among the ones that go with the theme of this seminar 'SO NEAR SO FAR – Do Our Stories Reflect India's Reality?'

Sahir did not believe in God; nor did he believe in Destiny. He envisioned a society in which man has faith in himself and his efforts to shape his life.

*Tadbeer se bigdi huyee taqdeer banaa-le,
Apne pe bharosa hai toh ik daav lagaa-le
Toote huye patvaar haiN kishti ke toh gham kya,
Haari huyee baahon ko hi patvaar banaa-le*

In fact, he mocked at those who believed in God and thought that He would set things right.

*AasmaaN pe hai Khuda aur zameeN pe hum,
Aajkal voh is taraf dekhta hai kum
Itni door se agar dekhta bhi ho,
Tere mere vaaste kya karega voh?*

He held religion responsible for dividing humanity and wanted us to rise above it.

*Tu Hindu banega na Musalmaan banega,
Insaan ki aulaad hai, insaan banega*

It was not only religion; Sahir was also critical of our society for the manner in which it treated its women.

*Aurat ne janam diya mardoN ko,
Mardon ne usse bazaar diya*

Pithy, poignant, scathing, and ironical! That's Sahir's skill – mastery over the craft; and yet, no

twisting of thought: it is straight and pierces like an arrow. And this is applicable to all his songs.

Gender discrimination was something that disturbed Sahir deeply. Perhaps it had something to do with the manner in which his father treated his mother. The angst that he felt about women's oppression is best expressed in the song *JinheiN naaz hai Hind par voh kahaan haiN*. He vividly paints the deplorable condition of prostitutes; but here, the profession is also used as a metaphor embodying man's attitude towards women. To him, they are nothing more than sex objects. A stanza in the song has wider implications:

*Madad chahti hai yeh Havva ki beti,
Yashoda ki hum-jins,
Radha ki beti,
Payambar ki ummat,
Zulaikha ki beti,
Jinhe naaz hai Hind par voh kahaan hain!*

Sahir is agonized by the world in which humanity is lost: man has become man's enemy. All values of relationship, friendship and loyalty have been swallowed by the swamp of greed and selfishness. The market-driven world which stifles the voice of an artist – Sahir vehemently rejects such a world.

*Ye mahloN, ye takhtoN, ye taajoN ki duniya
Ye insaaN ke dushman samaajoN ki duniya
Ye daulat ke bhookhe rivaajoN ki duniya
Ye duniya agar mil bhi jaaye toh kya hai!*

But the poet in him still retains his dream of a Utopian world:

*Inn kaali sadiyon ke sar se
Jab raat ka aanchal dhalkega
Jab sukh ke baadal pighlenge,
Jab sukh ka saagar chhalkega
Jab amber jhoom ke naachega,
Jab dharti naghme gaayegi
Voh subah kabhi toh aayegi...*

Sahir, well aware of the dynamics of history and its transient nature, wrote:

*Kal koyee mujh ko yaad kare,
KyoN koyee mujh ko yaad kare
Masroof zamaana mere liye,
KyoN waqt apna barbaad kare*

Sahir saab, the busy world still does, and always will remember you.

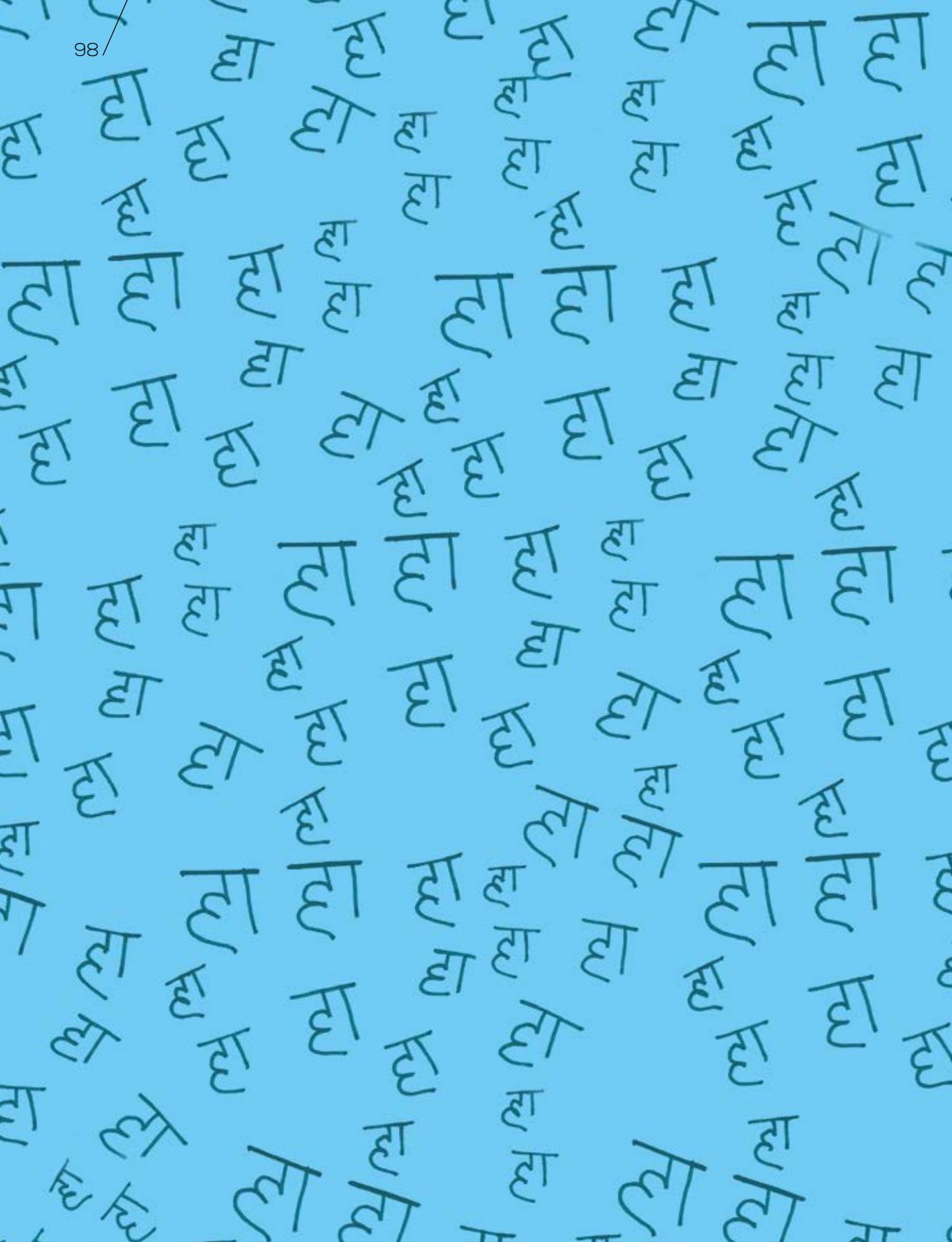
Vinay Shukla is the writer-director of many notable films, including the winner of 6 national awards, Godmother. He has also served as the President of FWA from 2012 – 2014.

YEH JO HAI ZINDAGI

Remembering Sharad Joshi

By Kundan Shah





Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi was one of the first series in 1984, to be commissioned by Doordarshan to a team that was not in house. It was a sitcom with an out and out attempt at hardcore comedy. Television was, is and always will be a writer's medium and hence the search was on for the writers. Sharad Joshi's name was suggested. Manjul Sinha (the co-director) and I were reluctant to try anyone from the field of literature. We felt that a literary author would not be able to approach the writing with the particularities that the medium demanded. However, our producer Mr S S Oberoi, had already arranged a meeting with the great satirist. It was too late to back out. But I was very, very apprehensive.

Sharadji came in his trademark half-sleeved bush-shirt and an openness that was surprising. As the meeting progressed, I realized he had no 'literary hang-ups' at all. He listened to the format - very elementary and simplistic – and made one crucial suggestion. We had borrowed the concept of the serial from Ranjit Kapoor's recent play "Ek Ghoda, Chey Sawaar" - an adaptation of a Broadway hit "Six Men and a Horse". The original dealt with a henpecked husband bullied by his domineering brother-in-law, a boorish police inspector. Sharadji made a crucial change – the brother-in-law became the character of Raja – a good-for-nothing parasite full of naïve ideas. The character added a lot of colour and many episodes were woven around him.

One time Sharadji took very long to write an episode. It was way past the deadline and we did not hear from him. Our many attempts to contact him met with no response. We were at our wits' end and quite worked up by the time he finally he made an appearance. To my dismay, he had completely changed the

structure. Besides, it was double the length. But Manjul loved the episode. I was still nursing my ego and told Sharadji very rudely that he had totally ruined my sitcom situations and progressed in a totally different direction. I still remember his reply: "Beta, main structure ko follow karte-karte wahan challa gaya jahan meri kalam mujhe le gayi (I tried to follow the structure but got carried away by my pen and followed it)." This taught me an important lesson – to enjoy the organic writing process instead of blindly following a dead mechanical structure.

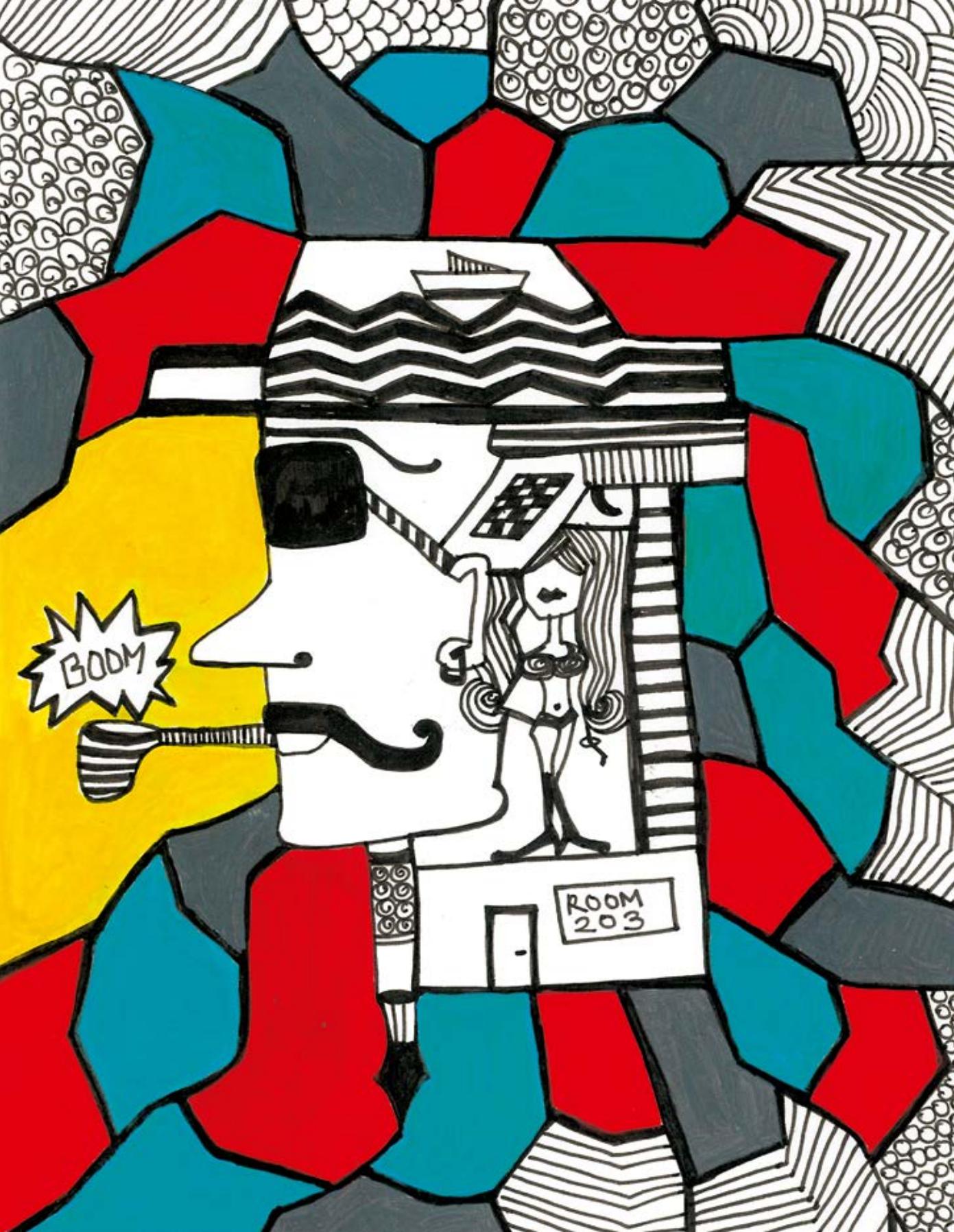
One afternoon, after our meeting, he revealed that he wanted to go buy himself a bush shirt from Flora Fountain! We were in Goregaon and he wanted to take a taxi all the way to Flora Fountain just to buy a shirt! But the taxi ride would cost more than the shirt! I almost blurted this out but stopped myself. At that time I thought it was an idiosyncrasy. But eventually I learnt the life lesson this incident actually was. It had nothing to do with the cost of the shirt and everything to do with the sheer pleasure of the experience he had been looking forward to. This was what 'zindagi' was all about.

After YJHZ was done, I ran into him often. Once, he said to me that we must make a series on Charles Dickens' Pickwick Papers. He insisted I buy a copy and read it. I bought the copy all those years ago. But still haven't read it. What a regret! But I look forward to reading it some day, just like he looked forward to buying that shirt...

Kundan Shah is a critically acclaimed, National Award winning Indian film director and writer with films like *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron* and series like *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* and *Nukkad* to his credit.

GOLDIE KAMRA NO. 203

A tribute to Vijay Anand
By fanboy Sriram Raghavan



So what happened in the hotel room once he checked in? Did he start drinking...and smoke endless cigarettes....? Or did he chew his pen and pace around the room - one character at a time? The lack of internet, cellphones and television would have been a major advantage.

Vijay Anand didn't have the climax of Johnny Mera Naam. So he locked himself in a hotel room vowing not to emerge till he had got it. 48 hours later his assistant got worried and entered the room to find the writer sprawled on a sofa with dozens of furiously written sheets around him.

If you haven't seen the filmdo watch it and stop after the O BABUL PYARE SONG. And try and figure out what will happen next! Oh yes, it'll be a happy ending...but how to hold the viewer for the crucial next 30 minutes?

The climax of JMN is almost 30 minutes and features a madly thrilling standoff between the good guys and the gaddaars. But who is who? It features all principle characters in one room, the tables turning faster than an Udupi hotel during lunch hour! It's so good that it's spoiler proof.

Johnny Mera Naam is a film that gave me multiple orgasms before I knew what they meant. I was in Class V and watched it in Alpana Talkies, Poona, a 6 pm show. Ticket price Rs 2.20 - upper stall!

How I prayed that my dad would be back from work by 5.30, so that I wouldn't miss the titles! And what titles! I whacked the mood wholesale for Johnny Gaddaar.

Blood red dripping titles set to a pulsating Kalyanji Anandji score...a boxing match followed by a murder and then another. A smuggler in lock up and a prison break...all in the first ten minutes! I walked out of the cinema hall just like a happy drunk walks out of a bar. Much before I drank my first beer, I had tasted

How I prayed that my dad would be back from work by 5.30, so that I wouldn't miss the titles! And what titles! I whacked the mood wholesale for Johnny Gaddaar.

Vijay Anand's heady cocktail of thrills, music and cinematic cool. And had become an addict.

I sometimes lament that there is so little available on Hindi mainstream filmmakers. There is barely any record of their process except for some stray anecdotes and interviews. Of course, we have the films and it's in the films that we will find clues to the filmmaker, his process, his compulsions and his art...

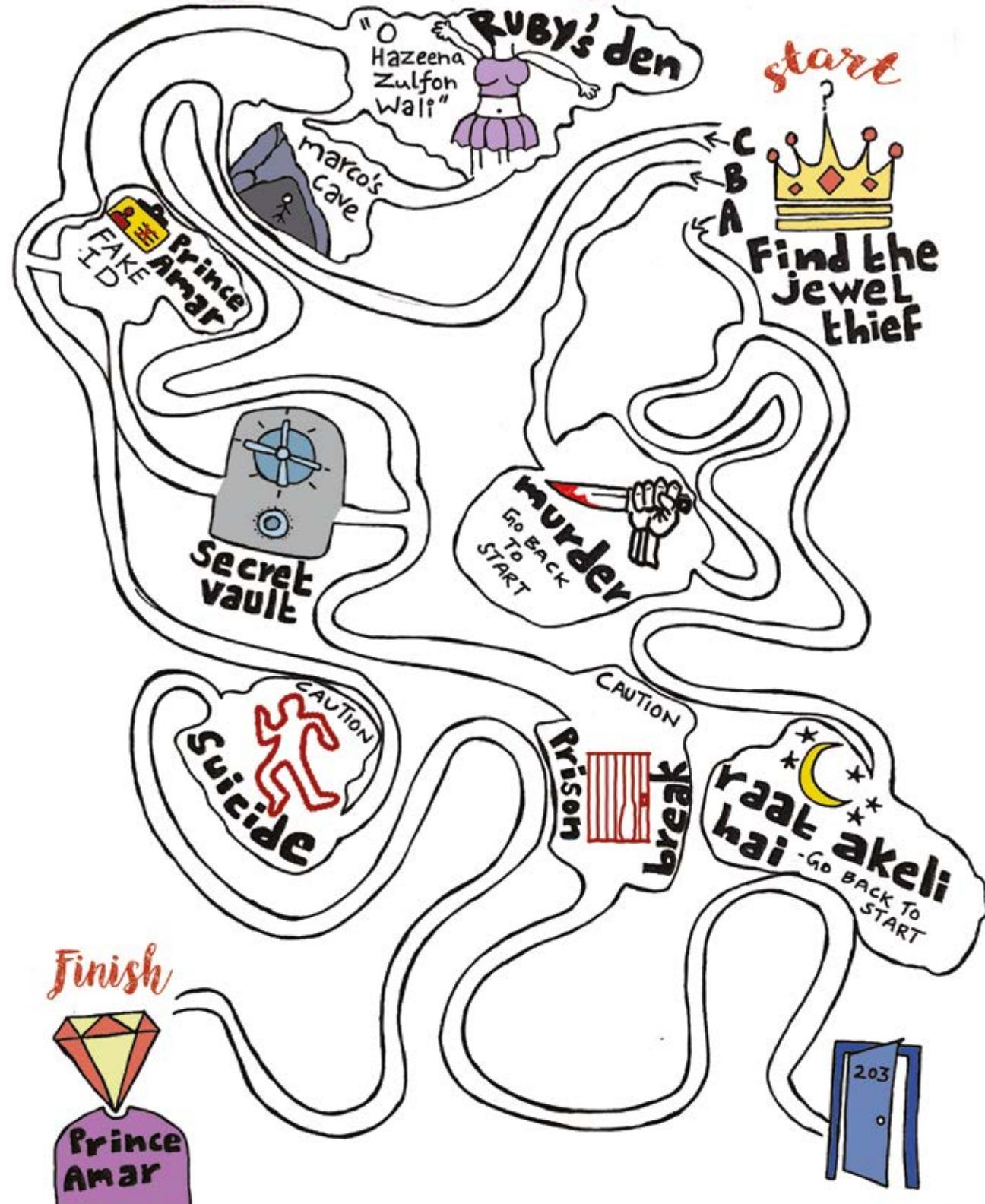
There's a scene in Kala Bazaar where Dev Anand's character is selling tickets in black outside the Metro cinema. It's a crucial scene introducing the heroine Waheeda Rehman.... And guess which film is running at the Metro? North by Northwest! Hitchcock's classic adventure about a man who doesn't exist and an innocent who is mistaken for him. Which is also the one line premise for Jewel Thief, I dare say, the best suspense thriller made in India.

Jewel Thief has no connection with N by NW but is Goldie's most Hitchcockian work. When I first met BP Singh, director of TV shows AAHAT and CID, I remember him telling me that everything he knew about making thrillers, he learnt from this one Vijay Anand film. We discussed the shoe removing scene with great glee and detail. Mr Singh called it a great example of 'boiling the scene'. I love the term.

Kya ishq ne samjha hai kya husn ne jaana hai... Hum khaak nasheenon ki thokar mein zamana hai. I often show my team scenes from Vijay Anand films to illustrate a point. One of my favourites is the title sequence of Goldie's third iconic thriller, scripted by Nasir Husain. A speeding car stops outside a building. A girl runs up three floors and jumps to her death. Suicide or murder? Every suspect is introduced before the titles are over.

Teesri Manzil, Jewel Thief and Johny Mera naam are pure noirs in premise. But they are the opposite of noir in the presentation. They

Goldie's Game



rank among the best of mainstream Hindi cinema when it was not called Bollywood.

Billy Wilder was a great admirer of Ernst Lubitsch....and above his desk was a note, which he would look to whenever he was stuck in a script. How would Lubitsch do it?

For a lot of us, when we are doing a song sequence, it's - How would Vijay Anand do it?

Waheeda Rehman in the upper birth of a night train. Nutan in a glass of whisky. Hema Malini at the Nalanda ruins. Mumtaz on a cycle double seat. Rakhee chasing love letters on a windy lawn.

Just the images evoke the passion of the picturization and almost magically one is inspired to do one's best. Let me list my favourites.

- **Dil ka bhanwar kare pukar:** Chemistry is as simple as walking down the stairs of the Kutub Minar.

- **Mile do badan:** Sexual electricity... Dharamendra and Rakhee consummate their marriage as they are hiding from the villains in a cramped log pile and forced by their proximity to touch each other. All this, while gunmen with dogs are hunting them, as a forest fire closes in.

- **Uparwala jaan kar anjaan hai:** A funny minimal location masterpiece. Dev Anand on the lower berth and Waheeda Rehman on the upper birth. Is he referring to her or the lord above?

- **Wahan kaun hai tera musafir:** It just sets the tone of the film for me... I love the images and the passage of time. The close up of the thorn on the barefoot impacts me every time I see it.

- **Pal bhar ke liye:** Music is the window to the soul...watching this just makes me happy.

- **Jaise Radha ne mala japi Shyam ki:** I just revisited Tere Mere Sapne whilst writing this piece. And for some reason this tender happy song made me almost burst into tears. And I wondered why? Was it the situation in the film...

Or was it because this beautiful film was made after his biggest hit Johnny and it bombed.

PREMNATH'S NEXT ASSIGNMENT: To steal the precious jewels from a Krishna temple and auction it to world art smugglers. Of course, Premnath has enough manpower and guns to mount a raid on the unguarded temple at night and do the job. But no...that would be a mere action sequence and serve no purpose. Instead, how does one make it a nerve wreckingly suspenseful sequence.

It's said that a film is written twice, once at the writing table and then at the editing table. The structure of this sequence is a fine example on how to avoid spoon feeding and simultaneously ratchet up the tension. GOVIND BOLO GOPAL BOLO... is a bhajan shot like a thriller.

Goldie wrote original scripts, adapted novels, worked on screenplays based on someone else's stories. His films are master classes in scene construction, dialogue writing, shot taking, character building and casting. Not to forget the creative credit title sequences.... especially Chhupa Rustom, which is not a great film but fun to watch. And as a bonus you get to see Vijay Anand tap dance on the bonnet of a car wearing a yellow hat. Something all of us writers must do once in a while.

It's not easy to watch many old films today. Most films sadly date and die quietly or live a little through their songs. But after watching over half a dozen of them over the last week I am happy to report that the best of Vijay Anand films are still alive and kicking - relevant and hugely entertaining. The alleged writers amongst us may also find clues in his films that'll help us crack the mysteries in our own scripts.

Knock gently on Kamra No 203. You know who's inside, don't you?

Sriram Raghavan is an Indian director and screenwriter who has made several gripping thrillers like Badlapur, Agent Vinod, Johnny Gaddar and Ek Hasina Thi.



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before a camera can capture it,
before an actor can perform it,
before a director can design it,
a writer must write it.”

– Farhan Akhtar



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