CHAPTER-VII

Summary and Conclusions

From *Shiela* to *Dharti* - Punjabi Cinema has progressed in leaps and bounds. Unfavourable circumstances and periodical disruptions could not halt the journey of Punjabi Cinema. It made its debut with *Shiela* in 1935 with a bang and continued to produce films till the unfortunate partition of India took place. Though, the partition affected the whole country, yet its scars were unprecedented in Punjab. The most fertile state of erstwhile Hindustan witnessed vertical split. This division resulted in enormous amount of blood shed during migration. In the process Punjab lost its nodal centre of film industry, Lahore to Pakistan.

Most of the film makers, producers and artists preferred to shift to Bombay, which promised great future to the people associated with cinema. Many Punjabi film makers and artists made Bombay their new abode and started making Hindi-Urdu films. The problem of resettlement of refugees further implicated the situation. It took nearly a decade for the people to resettle. During this period some daring attempts were made to produce Punjabi films from Bombay. The prominent films of this era include *Heer Syal, Gul-e-Bakawali, Puran Bhagat, Jagga Daku, Pardesi Dhola, Mangati* and *Gul Baloch*. As if the partition of 1947 was not enough, Punjab was again reorganized on linguistic basis in 1966 and the new states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh along with the Union Territory of Chandigarh were carved out of it. But it worked as a blessing in disguise as new producer-directors and artists of Punjabi origin started making Punjabi films in a big way. Actors like Prem Chopra, Dharmender, Prithvi Raj Kapoor, Dara Singh, Sunil Dutt, Rajesh Khanna, Pran, Rajender Kumar, Amrish Puri, Balraj Sahni, Madan Puri, Om Puri, Shatrughan Sinha, Raj Babbar, Prem Nath, Ranjeet, Naveen Nishchol, Johny Walker, Rekha and even Amitabh Bachchan worked in Punjabi films. This provided the much need impetus and a new lease of life to Punjabi Cinema. A number of films on socio-economic issues, love legends and themes of partition were made. The entry of Veerendra, Gurdas Maan, Mehar Mittal, Surinder Sharma and later on Guggu Gill and Yograj Singh kept the torch of Punjabi Cinema burning aloft. Daljeet Kaur and Preeti Sapru can be regarded as undisputed queens of Punjabi Cinema after Indira Billi and Nishi. However, the turn of the century saw the entry of Divya Dutta, Kimmi Verma and Bollywood sensation Juhi Chawla as prominent actresses. Similarly, Harbhajan Maan and
Jimmy Shergill contribute as new heroes in Punjabi films. The concept of antagonist is as good as over though at times one can see Puneet Issar performing as villain.

On the lines of Hindi cinema, Punjabi Cinema also started with mythological and love-legend movies but its journey has been quite different from that of its other regional counterparts. The same year, there is the release of romantic, comedy, devotional, love-legend and heroic films. Hence, the chronological study of Punjabi cinema is not possible because the thematic trends keep on changing. At no point of time did one witness a particular trend enjoying sweeping success. A peep in its growth makes it crystal clear that films on social issues have been in vogue since its inception. Romantic genre has also been found making its presence felt. There have been abundance of romantic movies but above all, it is the music of Punjabi films that used to decide its fate in the past and it is equally true in the present. The film with hit musical symphonies is assured of success. One can give its credit to strong foot hold of folk lore and folk music in Punjab. Almost every Punjabi film gets studded with at least one beat song. Even a classic like Marhi Da Deeva which is otherwise an enormously serious movie with a highly serious theme in the gloomiest circumstances has the ingredients of traditional wedding song "Jaago" for 45 seconds. Every successful Punjabi movie has hit music. Right from the first film, music has been the backbone of Punjabi films. From Noor Jehan to Miss Pooja, scores of singers not only performed as play back but also showed their acting skills. In the beginning, singers like Noorjehan, Shamshad Begum, Asha Bhonsle, Mohammad Rafi, Mohinder Kapoor, Suman Kalyanpur, Usha Mangeshkar and Manna Dey nurtured Punjabi playback singing and later Kuldeep Manak, Mohd. Sadiq, Surinder Shinda, Suresh Wadekar, Savita Sathi, Mangal Singh, Sarbjeet, Gurmeet Bawa, Ranjit Kaur, Anuradha Paudwal, Shabbir Kumar, Alka Yagnik, Anwar, Gurdas Maan, Hans Raj Hans and Palwinder Dhami kept the high standards of Punjabi Music in tact. Infact, an average Punjabi film can safely be called a typical "Masala film" which contains romance, action, music, comedy and family drama in divergent proportions. The songs of the films produced just after independence still regale the audience. Therefore, no particular theme can ever be seen as taking the Punjabi Cinema by storm. If there is a devotional super hit, the same year there is an equally hit romantic film. Even when trend of films based on the themes of “Jattism” were at its peak one witnessed many hit films like Ucha Dar Babe Nanak Da, Mamla Garbar Hai, Patola, Bholekha, Jeeja Saali, Aasra Pyar Da, Sarpanch, Reshma, Chann Pardesi, Gabru Punjab Da, Mirza Sahiba and Tabahi, which had nothing to do with Jattism.
The vortex of “Jattism” was so powerful that many films used to contain the word "Jatt" in the title itself but even during that era non-Jatt centric films won National Awards and ensured housefuls. Even in 1969, when devotional hit like Nanak Naam Jehaz Hai got sensational and unprecedented success, there were still some devotional and other films which can be regarded as hits. They include Kanka De Ohle, Mele Mitran De, Man Jeete Jag Jeet, Shaheed-e-Azam Sardar Bhagat Singh, Mittar Pyare Nu, Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam, Teri Meri Ik Jindri, Daaj, Yamla Jatt, Mai Papi Tu Bakhshanhar, Nachdi Jawani, Laadli, Udeekan, Jai Mata Sheranwali, Dhyanu Bhagat, Lambardarni, Gori Diyan Jhantran etc. Hence, there is no denying the fact that Punjabi Cinema has always been an amalgamation of films based on divergent themes. No chronological study can serve the purpose for looking deep into the films based on a variety of themes.

The pilot study done on one hundred cine goers in five different big district head quarters of Punjab gave ample proof about the choice of audience regarding films made on different and divergent themes. A critical, analytical and intensive study of the twenty four films under lens reveals some highly pertinent points.

Irrespective of the themes, Punjabi films revolve round the farmers because being an agricultural state its economy thrives on farmers. Farmer is the person who owns a piece of land and depends on agriculture for earning his livelihood. Though most of the big farmers and land lords in Punjab happen to be Jatts yet cutting across narrow castism certain other people also indulge themselves in farming. They may be Gujjar, Saini, Kamboj, Prajapat, Brahmin or even people covered under the SC category. Agriculture is the chief occupation of the Jatts but it is not their jurisdiction only. People in Punjab feel proud to be called a Jatt. A lot of dignity, grace, honour and proud is attached to this very word. That's why a time came when many Punjabi films contained the word "Jatt" in the title also. But it was the story and not the word "Jatt" that ensured the success of such films. Only very few "Jatt-centric” films could succeed. But Jattism has been one of the prominent themes of Punjabi cinema.

Among the 24 films selected for intensive study Jeeja Sali, Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam, Nanak Naam Jehaz Hai, Shaheed Udham Singh, Mahaul Theek Hai, Waris Shah, Sassi Punnu, Dulla Bhatti, Jatt Jeona Morh and Lakh Pardesi Hoiye contain no signs of agriculture or agricultural community. Even those who revolved around agriculture and farming e.g. Maml Garbar Hai, Chaudhary Karnail Singh, Shaheed-e-Mohabbat Boota Singh, Tabahi, Des Hoya Pardes, Marhi Da Deeva, Chann Pardesi and Sarpanch do not
have any iota of Jattism in them. They talk about agriculturists and meager farmers but certainly not Jatts. Thus, Punjabi movies based on the lives of farmers can not be regarded as portraying Jatts. It underlines the fact that Jatts may have got great acclamation but there is no dearth of non-Jatt movies. Occupations other than agriculture are also mentioned in Punjabi films.

In the Jatt-centric films, honour, glory and revenge are the main issues. Music plays a great role in the success or failure of Punjabi films. A number of films are known for their music than any thing else. Usually there are 7 to 8 songs in an average Punjabi film. If the songs appeal the audience, touch their hearts or enthrall them, they ensure the success of the film. Although, Punjabi cinema is yet to produce its first Musical movie in the real sense of the term yet music has been the backbone of the Punjabi films.

A wide range of social issues such as dowry, intoxication, second marriage, prejudice, vindictiveness and castism etc. have been addressed in Punjabi films. Sarpanch deals with the twin problems of dowry and intoxication. It castigates these problems and makes a vehement appeal to shun them. Chann Pardesi deals with the menace of the fall outs of landlordship. The landlords are answerable to none. Their false proud makes them indulge in targeting the dignity of tenants. This film underlines the fact that every human being has dignity and reserves the right to protect it.

The devotional films express unflinching faith in the deeds of God. The devotees undergo traumatic circumstances but it is their faith that wins in the end. The detractors of God are taken to the task. In Nanak Naam Jehaz Hai the hero is devoid of eye sight. Even the doctors declare the ailment as incurable but it is the unflinching faith and devotion in God that brings back the eye sight. In Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam the heroine is married to a lunatic. It happened during those times when lunatics were incurable. But here again, the faith in God comes to their rescue and the lunatic is cured after a dip in the holy pond.

In feudalistic movies bravery, rivalry, proud, dignity and vindictiveness are always at the forefront. Putt Jattan De deals with the dignity attached to the female headgear. The cause of Jatt rivalry, as depicted in this film, happens to be Zar, Zoru and Zameen. The second film Badla Jatti Da depicts a female Jatt taking revenge of the genocide of her family at the hands of a Zaildar. Revenge is the motive of her life. Here also the cause of rivalry is a female who transcends fake man-made restrictions on love.

Punjab, being a border state, had to wage battles against the foreign invaders who would loot and ruin them. This developed love for their motherland and a great amount of dignity is attached to it. Thus, the seeds of patriotism dwell in their blood itself. Shaheed-
e-Azam Sardar Bhagat Singh is the portrayal of deeds of the great martyr who abandons every thing to liberate his motherland from the clutches of foreign rulers. The loose threads of plot are duly arranged by songs glued in the hues of patriotism. Shaheed Udham Singh is the only attempt made so far in Indian cinema to reveal the life and sacrifice of the martyr Udham Singh. He shuns his country to avenge the massacre of Jullianwala Bagh. He kills General ‘O Dwyer in England who is being facilitated for his commendable services in India. A great amount of fiction is attached to his life. Here also the songs help a great deal to enhance the effect of this patriotic movie.

Yari Jatt Di and Mamla Garbar Hai are out and out romantic films. The former emphasizes the faith attached to the Jatt friendship. Jatts are known to be fast friends and sworn enemies. The ensuing trend of marrying off daughters to mismatched grooms settled abroad is also portrayed at length. It also shows the treatment meted out by step-mothers and describes that nothing can be as caring as the real mother. Like other movies of this genre, music plays a significant role in boosting its popularity. Mamla Garbar Hai is named after the super hit audio cassette of Gurdas Maan who happens to be the hero of this film. Almost all the songs of this film are taken from that cassette. This film brings home two vital messages. One, no work of any magnitude is good or bad and one must perform one's work with dignity. Second, love knows no poverty or distinction of any kind. Numerous hurdles are put in its path by the detractor of love but true love conquers all.

None than the Punjabis know better the pangs of partition and the blood shed that followed it. The historic migration sees unprecedented inhuman carnage in Punjab. Chaudhary Karnail Singh shows how the houses of Muslims are set on fire by Hindus and even the women are disgraced. At this juncture, the Chaudhary comes to their rescue and ensures peace in the village. He disowns his son in order to save the dignity and life of a Muslim girl and treats her as his fostered daughter. Shaheed-e-Mohabbat Boota Singh is a story of a retired army person, who saves a Muslim girl from disgrace at the time of partition. He marries her but has to yield before the law of land that separates them. He stakes his claim for his love in a court in Pakistan but denied the due. He commits suicide. Thus, both the films on partition give a vivid description of those horrible times.

Militancy is the outcome of high handedness of public authorities and atrocities of Police. It is the awe for survival that compels youth to take to arms. At times it turns fanatic and threatens the very existence of the other communities. The decade of terrorism
in Punjab threatened the very fabric of the unity of the country. *Tabahi* describes the causes and outcome of militancy. It fairly and squarely puts the blame on Punjab Police and fake encounters to eliminate innocent youth in the name of terrorism. *Des Hoiya Pardes* talks about the ordeals which ordinary people have to undergo during militancy. The helpless commoners find themselves entwined between public authorities and militants. The law enforcing agencies nab them if they are found helping the militants in any way. Militants lynch them if they refuse to accept what they command. Police torture them and demand ransom for their release. That’s why many youth made a bee-line to settle abroad and those left back took to arms. Policemen kill innocents in fake encounters for the sake of promotions. Thus, the theme of militancy deserves accolades as it brings to light the reasons of militancy.

Classics in Punjabi cinema sound to be absurd to a novice but it is true that some great classic movies have been made in Punjabi language also. *Marhi Da Deeva* matches any better movie of Shyam Benegal, Govind Nehlani, Satyajit Ray or any other film maker of parallel cinema. Produced by Film Finance Corporation of India, it is the best depiction of poverty and the treatment of a tenant at the hands of landlord. Poverty is the mother of many ills in the society. The hero dies unmarried just because he has no wealth to show. People take stock of wealth and not the qualities of a person for marriage. There is also the depiction of unsatiated youthful yearnings of the wife of an impotent. She suffers because of social taboos. *Waris Shah- Ishq Daa Waris* is a big budget film which illustrates the life of legendary Sufi poet Waris Shah who immortalized the love legend of Heer-Ranjha. There is the minutest possible detail of his life and the ordeals, he has to undergo. It’s a classic in every sense of the term.

Punjab is the land where love is the essence of life. Love, friendship and brotherhood are in the air. Love legends are synonyms to Punjab. *Sassi Punnu* is the vivid description of the legend. Barring some technical errors and low budget, the film reveals the saga of *Sassi Punnu* and underlines that the forecasts of the astrologers seldom prove wrong. All man made attempts prove futile and the inevitable happens. The lovers become immortal in death. *Mirza Jatt* is a story of another legend in which the male counterpart throws to the winds all man made institutes and obstacles put in his way. Unlike other love legends, he succeeds in eloping with his beloved but his haughtiness and youthful yearnings bring about his demise. His undue proud of his impeccability in archery and his bravery brings the doom's day. It underlines that Jatts, be those Muslims,
Hindus or Sikhs, have always been proud and they attach too much importance to their love and dignity.

Punjab is dotted with public heroes whose heroics render them immortality. Despite some glaring theatrical and directional shortcomings along with loose plot, Dulla Bhatti portrays the thankless Mughal ruler Akbar who forgets the indebtedness of Ladhi and orders Dulla to be taken to the gallows whose only fault is that he plunders the royal booty and distributes it amongst the poor and the needy. Akbar is jealous of his growing popularity and due to this jealousy he puts him to death. Jatt Jeona Morh is the story of a revered public hero of Malwa region of Punjab. His brother becomes a victim of treachery of a fostered brother. He takes to arms and avenges death. A devotee of goddess Sheranwali, Jeona is a friend of friends. His is innocent but the Britherers are after him. Dulla Bhatti flopped in the absence of good music but Jeona Morh tasted success with commendable and enduring music.

Diaspora is the term given to the localities of Indians abroad. South Indians are found in good numbers in South East and Western Asia. So, one comes across Tamil Diaspora, Telgu Diaspora or Gujarati Diaspora. Similarly, Punjabi are settled mostly in the USA, England, Canada, Australia and the UAE. So, Punjabis Diaspora is found there. The dawn of 21st century saw the first Punjabi Diasporic film by Manmohan Singh in 2003. Jee Aaya Nu takes up the predicaments of the NRI families. Its hero refuses to marry an NRI girl just because of his love for his motherland. The NRI children find it difficult to settle in India because they dislike this rearward culture. The life abroad is really tough where the family members meet only at the weekends. The film advises youth not to migrate overseas. The plight of Punjabi girls married to NRIs is pathetic. This film is a miniature picturisation of Punjabi Diaspora. Lakh Pardesi Hoiye mourns the lost moral values amongst Indians living abroad. Parents have no control over their grown-up children who fall astray. The outcome of Internet friendship is discussed at length. The people of Punjab hesitate to marry their daughters abroad as great amounts of forgery exist regarding the conduct of NRIs. Both films show the seamy side of an otherwise bright looking sumptuous life of NRIs. Jee Aaya Nu happens to be a big budget film of Punjabi cinema.

The comic element is found almost in every Punjabi movie which works as a catharsis of emotions. Attempts have been made to produce chaste comedies. Jeeka Sali has the honour of being the first superhit comedy in Punjabi cinema. It is full of mirth, humour, laughter and joy. It is a mixture of comedy of manners and comedy of errors.
Even its songs are comic in content and treatment. Mehar Mittal has played his roll to perfection. *Maula Theek Hai* is a satire on the deeds of Punjab police. It lays bare the real and cruel face of rank and file of Punjab police and makes scathing comments on the deep rooted corruption in Punjab police. It is a comedy of manners by great satirist Jaspal Bhatti. There is wit and humour. Belly aching laughter is missing. It shows how the innocents are made to accept the crimes which they have never committed. Police treats ordinary people as lifeless objects.

A cursory look at the development of Punjabi cinema makes it clear that there have been many phases of thematic change but the span of each phase is not fixed. There may be many phases existing at single point of time. Some events usher a new genre in Punjabi cinema which starts as a new thematic phase. For example, partition of India resulted in the films produced on the theme of partition, the success of *Nanak Naam Jehaz Hai* instills producers for devotional films, eruption of terrorism in 1980s triggers the production of films on the themes of militancy, sensational success of *Putt Jattan De* started an era of feudalistic films and *Jee Aaya Nu* depicted the polished NRI life and it provided a new theme to Punjabi film producers.

The off shoot of feudalism in Punjab is represented by Shahukars, Baniyas, Zagirdars and later on big landlords. As the business community and landlord Jatts have been money lenders, so the life of other castes depends upon them. That’s why there is dominance of Zamidars, Landlords and Jatts in Punjabi movies. Punjabi is by and large spoken by rural people while the urbanized Baniya, Brahmin and Arora communities speak Hindi also. Therefore, Punjabi films depicting the rural life are big hits with the masses while those depicting urban life are not given due response by the audience. It may be because the economy and even industry in Punjab depends heavily on agriculture. Even the life of Jatts as shown in Punjabi movies is far away from the real life of Jatts. It is rather the lifestyle of landlords with scores of acres of land. One rarely observes a Jatt boy ploughing or harvesting even with mechanical equipments in Punjabi films. As in landlord families tenants do farming for their masters so the idle young men are shown as play-boys. But it is not the depictions of Jatts who have are reduced to meager farmers owing to the shrinking size of land hoardings. It is enigmatic to note that cinemas are located in cities and most of the frequent cine-goers are urbanites but still Punjabi films depicting rural lives manage to do good business and even celebrate Jubilees. "Jatt" is the buzz word in Punjab where every farmer feels proud to be regarded as a Jatt. Great
amount of dignity, glory and glamour is attached to the Jatts. One needs to understand
that every Sikh is not a Jatt as every Hindu is not a Brahmin.
The following points of hypotheses have proven right:
1. There can not be any clear cut chronological demarcation of thematic phases in
Punjabi Cinema.
2. One hit movie of a particular theme gives way to many others made on the same
theme.
3. Most of the Punjabi films do not offer any variety of locations. They are shot in the
mansions of big landlords.
4. Films depicting Jatts in traditional attire are well received by cine-goers.
5. Films portraying vengeance and revengeful tendencies of Jatts celebrate Silver
Jubilees.
6. Though the Jatts comprise just over 24% of the population, their socio-economic and
political dominance ensures them heroic treatment in Punjabi Films.
7. Punjabi movies do not portray the real life of an average Jatt family.
8. Jatt boys are presented in the films only as play – boys who have nothing to do but
indulge in love.
9. Irrespective of various phases most of the films represent the feudalistic tendencies.

Limitation of Research:
1. Due to the non-availability of old movies, the films of pre-independence era could
not be selected for intensive analysis.
2. As the VCDs of most of the earlier movies are not made, there is a dearth of such
movies in the market so much so that the researcher found it hard to find the VCD of
Shaheed Kartar Singh Saraba in whole North India.
3. The poor quality of pirated VCDs also makes the task difficult. Original VCDs of old
films are scarce while the pirated don't run more than once or twice. It needs to watch
one film for atleast four or five times for proper analysis.
4. There was not much choice in the genres of partition, patriotism and love legends as
not many films have been made on such topics.
5. No prior research work on Punjabi cinema whatsoever was available to guide the way
through.
6. No body has treaded the virgin lands of Punjabi cinema, therefore, no foolproof
document on the development and history of Punjabi cinema is available till date.
Therefore the researcher had no option but to rely on redoubtable sources of
Wikipedia which is replete with self-contradictory dates of historical occurrences. No tangible and trustworthy cross-checking was insight. The bewildered researcher had to depend on the support of this data with other unpublished work and undocumented sources.

7. Even an exhaustive list of Punjabi films is not available on Internet. There are glaring mistakes in terms of years of release and the star cast. The star cast of the films made in pre-independence era is not available even on Internet and there is no other documented source from where it can be had.

8. Modern day Punjabi films don't show the certificate issued by Central Board of Film Certification. As a result, one finds it difficult to know the exact date of release of film and number of reels of the films in hand. Even film maker Manmohan Singh was at his wits end when contacted to enquire about the exact date of release of his first film *Jee Aaya Nu*.

**Suggestions for Further Research:**

No research is an end itself. Rather it opens more opportunities for further research. The researcher has made sincere efforts for a critical analysis of selected movies. A beginning is made and new avenues are opened for further researches. Some suggestions for further research are made as follows:

1. A study of chronological developments of Punjabi films needs to be done so that the development of Punjabi cinema and its contributing factors can be discussed in detail. It may well serve as documented source for reference work.

2. A semiotic analysis of Diasporic movies can further lay bare new information and reason out the ways, they behave.

3. A comparative study of *Ghadar-Ek Prem Katha* and *Shaheed-e-Mohabbat Boota Singh* can be done as *Ghadar* was a remake of this Punjabi movie. Such study will also make new ground about the improved cinematography, music and fiction added to the imported plot.

4. An in-depth research of the classics can open new horizons. A survey of cine goers about this indifference to classics will further enrich research on Punjabi cinema.

5. Case studies of the films of Veerendra, Manmohan Singh and Iqbal Dhillon needs to be done. Such studies will throw a flood of light as to why they persisted with almost the same star cast, themes and styles of film making.

6. Genre-vise analysis of Punjabi cinema is sure to be a boon for further research.
7. Public opinion about the reach and impact of the Punjabi cinema can be sought through a survey. It will provide authentic inputs to the film makers about the pulse of cine goers.

8. Punjabi literature is replete with huge variety of themes. Films can be made on literary themes. For this, a survey research on the views of public about the portrayal of literature of celluloid tape can be done.

9. A research on the working, problems and prospects of film makers is bound to bring to the notice the happenings behind the curtain.