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**EXPLORING CONCEPTS, THEORIES, DISCOURSE AND RELATED HISTORY:**

A BACKDROP TO THE STUDY

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CHAPTER 2: EXPLORING CONCEPTS, THEORIES, DISCOURSE AND RELATED HISTORY: A BACKDROP TO THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Hindi popular cinema acclaimed to be one of the most salient bearers and signifier of nation-ness and national identity, albeit in the realm of the popular, lends itself to be an imagined space of the nation, a site that is inscribed by the prevalent social, political and economic discourse of the nation. This chapter provides the blueprint for mapping the construction of Shah Rukh Khan (henceforth, also abbreviated by his initials as SRK, as also popularly known as) within the discourse of the globalizing nation. In doing so, though apparently lengthy and circuitous, it appears as an imperative to the textual reading and interpretation of films and the star (star–as-text) to locate the interrelatedness of the basic conceptual categories and discourse viz. popular culture, nation, globalization, post colonialism, post modernism, star system, body and gender. Mapping this interrelatedness is a logical correlate, to argue in favour, of the iconization of the star, his embeddedness within the discourse of post-liberalization nation. As the thick universe of media ecology is an intertextual realm, the star phenomenon is not discrete or disparate and its emergence is part of a historical continuum within the popular cultural realm of the nation, in particular Hindi cinema and its media-complex, popularly known as Bollywood. The understanding of the star phenomenon necessitates a re-construction of nation’s cultural, social and political past and this enables us to see Shah Rukh Khan as a trope of the nation containing its repressed and cumulative past and its contemporary representation. This chapter intends to see the braiding of the discourse of popular culture, nation, globalization, postcolonialism, body and gender (masculinity) within Hindi cinema as this is central to what informs the construction of the star within these cinematic texts. The star, as a confluence, as a representation of discourse of the nation, is also a figure of identification, as a personified, emblematic, figurative representation of a certain prototype of a particular national subjectivity conditioned by its spatio-temporal contingencies. The star is also a product of the very cultural industry of film production and like any other cultural product is shaped by its mode of production and circulation. The star is to be progressively traced from the text (the film), the industry (Bollywood) and the meta-text viz. the nation. This nation is not an all subsuming isolated disjunct category or an insulated cultural universe and is part of the larger global dynamics and transnational flows of goods, images, ideas etc. The chapter seeks to logically approach the theme by situating the broader framework provided by the following heads.

2.2 POPULAR CULTURE: AS A REGISTER OF NATIONAL IMAGININGS

Nation is a product of modernity, market culture, and industrialization: it is a political construction that seeks to produce a cohesive, collective entity and create a sense of totalization referring to the heterogeneous populace of a complex society within a shared territorial space
and thereby acquire legitimacy through institutionalized statehood (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). However, nation is neither a substance nor a natural way to subsume a conglomerate of people under the same concrete category. Political and historical explorations beyond the modernist and conservative Eurocentric paradigm has revealed, the deeper roots of nation anterior to modernity, its imaginable character: its emotive appeal and primordial qualities, its narrativities and even its banal dimension—all that which exceeded institutionalized trappings of the state (Smith, 1981, 1986; Anderson, 1983; Bhabha, 1994; Billig, 1995). Apart from being a political category, nation contains a meaning and is actively negotiated within forms of cultural representations as a discursively produced entity (Hall, 1992).

The idea of a nation is therefore not bound to its physicality or its sovereign territoriality alone but necessarily involves a certain consciousness, cultural sensibility, shared history, myths etc. The psychological component of the nation is corroborated in Giddens’ idea of nationalism as the cultural sensibility of sovereignty, the concomitant of the co-ordination of administrative power within the bounded nation state. The administrative and territorially ordered unity, Giddens argues, cannot remain purely administrative and necessitates a ‘conceptual involvement of the whole community’. (Giddens, 1985:219) In consonance with this is Gellner’s idea of the inventiveness of the nation (Gellner, 1983), the idea of symbolization of the nation and forging a sense of identification with the community through ritual, practices and ‘invented tradition’ (Hobsbawm et al 1983) and Anderson’s idea of nation as ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1983).

The idea of the nation as a problematic is therefore, a constantly re-worked category, finding and privileging variegated manifestations. It is this discursivity of the nation that enables its visual representation within a panoply of images across a wide spectrum that includes both the official and the hegemonic as well the popular and the kitsch (Davis, 2007). As Tiffin argues: “Not surprisingly, it is representation - the ways in which we represent ourselves to ourselves and to “outsiders” - which sustains and sometimes even constructs our nations, providing us with the very basis of communal identification. Accounts of heroic struggles against foreign incursion: inter-generational recounting of national myths and legends: the (re)-invention of the past:……the sharing of emotive symbols such as flags and emblems, are but a few of the various forms of representation which maintain the powerful fiction of the nation. Such representations need not necessarily have an ancient or historic lineage. While the novels of Sir Walter Scott…. Deliberately appealed to a Scottish past to unite a nation in the present modern Allegories sometimes serve the purpose of maintaining these established fiction….” (Tiffin, 2007, p. 21-22).

The visual iconography and the figurative expression of the nation, however, remains a contested terrain as there is no singular visual that can monopolize the representation of the nation. In a bid to re-assert its legitimacy the modern state in the realm of public domain and official pageantry upholds the iconicity of the nation via officially acclaimed and legitimated symbols of nationhood. The repertoire of official iconography of the Indian nation-state and its compliance to the much avowed principle of secularism with its claim to suture the diverse
elements of a pluralist nation is upheld, disseminated and enforced to reproduce and represent a particular hegemonising vision of the state (Davis, 2007 ibid) The modern Indian state has at its disposal a fully formed apparatus to symbolically reproduce the nation. Production, display and even exhibitionist sale of both religious and secular symbols in the nationalist public sphere is not unusual in addition to state sponsored celebratory programmes. The state-sponsored efforts are endowed with the purpose to suture diverse elements to produce the meta-narrative of the nation. Endowed with resources the state also seeks to appropriate various folk and various other cultural resources produced by artists, craftsmen and artisans and even performers. This is to enable itself with a command over them and in order to assemble a visual and symbolic nationalism authenticated by state-power (Rajadhyaksha, 2009, p.139).

At the time of independence the state re-discovered in the rural and urban artistic inheritance resources in conceptualising a national cultural policy as an idiom of modernity was traced in them. The power of symbolic resources came to align with the statist goal and vision of economic development to project an evolved and cultured nation. Conscious efforts by the state undertaken to institutionalise and harness various art forms (ibid, p.147; 151) informed state attempts to hegemonies symbolic representation of the nation.

The control of the state over the visual representation of the nation however is not hegemonically secured as the visuality of the nation has always lend itself to popular imagination that involves a diverse pantheon of images and expressions imbricated within various modes of popular dissemination like films, chromolithographs, magazines, calendar prints, comics, advertisements, vernacular architecture, religious ceremonials and so on. The Indian nation's popular imaginations is antecedent to the formation of the Indian post-colonial nation–state. The Indian nation from time to time has lend itself to popular appropriations since colonial times and even at times particularistic in character they have sought to counter the idea of an unified nation via expressions of religious nationalism or even of sub-nationalism.

The popular representation of the nation as a tradition that has continued even after statist construction following independence from colonial rule has often eluded the post-colonial nation-state and its official discourse. Supplementing or complimenting statist imagery of the nation popular iconography of the nation, produced outside the statist supervision, often run as a parallel competing discourse (Davis, 2007, ibid).

According to Sequira, the most effective way to study a nation is to study its popular culture, “the world in which people love, relax and have fun”. While defining popular culture is difficult as it encompasses many a things and is often caught between the debates of differentiation between, folk cultures, mass culture high/elite culture its relevance cannot be dispensed with. As a chronicle of everyday life, apparently nonsensical and obvious its post-modernist propensity allow it to de-canonise, carnivalise and blur the dichotomous distinctions between elite and folk, folk and popular or popular and elite. (Sequira, 1991) As a cultural commodity with its reflexivity towards the market and its endemic quality of malleability and prolixity (see Davis ibid. p16) allow the realm of the popular to engage in discursive representation of the nation.
In the context of new image mobilization in India – emerging from and feeding into resurgent cultural, religious and regional nationalism, political configurations emerging from changing ideological as well as the phenomenon of globalization, consumerism, diaspora etc. have rendered the visual circuit of image – production and reception of images in popular forms important. These visual images on billboards, calendars, film posters, religious paraphernalia, print media and television in myriad social, political, religious, cultural spaces intersect with the question of tradition, modernity construction of cultural, political, religious identities and strategies of representation. The mass produced images of the popular produced by technology circulate in the public domain as powerful vehicle negotiating the interstices between the sacred, the erotic, the political and the modern (see Jain, 2007, p 7-8). Contrary to the austere imagery legitimated by the state the alternative, unofficial realm of the popular suggest that there is no unitary consensual vision of nationhood, and that there exist popular alternatives of visions of the nation beyond statist versions (Davis ibid.). For instance in stark contrast to the state sponsored pageants and parades (ibid) or for that matter exhibitions mediating India’s civilizational legacy, popular cultural sites of the nation like globally circulating commercial Hindi films and its associated cultural assemblage provide an autonomous and alternative terrain of iconicity. Opposed to the cultural heritage and wealth exhibited by the state to represent the nation, popular cultural repertoire, in which Hindi films are an important component, lacking legitimation and authentication by the state as a visual register of the nation inscribes the symbolic nation on a popular terrain.( Rajadhyaksha 2009).

The relevance of the popular culture and its wide cultural repertoire that includes the Hindi commercial movies lies in its accessibility and amenability to popular cultural tastes of a diverse populace and in its unifying character and democratic appeal across the nation especially in post independence India. Despite a tapestry of an underlying civilizational unity, a bewildering variety diversity deeply divided by insular fealties the colonizers often dispelled the idea of India’s unity. Particularism along multiple axes precluded the consciousness as well cognizance of an overarching unity of the nation among the people against an identifiable basis for long. It ironically awaited the process of colonization whereby on one hand the colonial state apparatus and its colonizing state machinery administratively and politically unified the vast territorial expanse and on the other freedom struggle against the common oppressor viz. the colonial power created a national consciousness and a common identity for the colonial people. The latter process of unification was however, confined to the political goal of freedom movement. Post independence India in the early years united by the euphoria of building a nation was also faced with the task of evolving a culture of the present distinct and severed from past and pan-Indian in appeal. The creation of such a culture accessible to the common man and responsive to his tastes and aspirations is a development of very great importance in the years after freedom and is of defining value in the study of modern Indian persona. This supranational Pan-Indian culture cutting across class barriers is nonchalantly non-classical lacking the prosaic quality and sobriety of high-brow culture is low-brow culture-that has evolved in response to needs, displays an extra-ordinary ability to be hybrid, and often remain
at the lowest common denominator of conventional aesthetic standards, while continuing to be
unmistakably Indian. Riding on communication and media revolution this Pan-Indian widely
appealing cultural repertoire has given symbols and icons to India even in its remotest parts. It
permeates every aspect of the nation’s daily living: dress, food, art, language, entertainment etc.
binding them in an unprecedented way in a common language of the nation’s chore of everyday
life. Characterised by what Varma calls as arrogance of the upstart, self-absorption of the new,
irreverence in expression, dismissive ness of critics, lack of pedigree, its strength and
confidence lies in its support from the people. This dynamic popular cultural ensemble acts as
the lingua-franca of a diverse nation-state. This repertoire includes elements that are apparently
disparate yet popular, like cricket, Bollywood films, food like masala dosa or Tandoori chicken,
or dress like salwar kameez, evolution of the hybrid language of ‘Hinglish’ combining Hindi
and English, etc. In the absence of any organized pressure from the state, towards national
integration and homogenization, which has been largely tolerant towards accommodating or
deflecting parochial pulls countering overarching unity of India this cultural repertoire is not
the product of any blueprint and neither is stifled by state planning. The integrating factors of
this popular cultural assemblage functioned independently of any partisan biases.

While the political leadership and intelligentsia took the historical unity of the nation as a given,
the actual integration contests Varma, lies beyond the state’s proclaimed policy of social
education and information. Elaborating upon the popular role of radio broadcasting like the
Vividh Bharti, popular films, music and later television that a shared cultural idiom based on

The mass-produced popular cultural repertoire of contemporary India finds its acceptance
among a diverse nation on the strength of what may be called as its polysemic openness. The
presence of a pan-Indian popular culture needs to be explained through the idea of interplay of
hegemony and polysemy forwarded by Fiske. While all cultural commodities to a greater or
lesser extent bear the forces that we can call as centralizing, disciplinary, hegemonic,
massifying and commodifying in order to be in consonance with the disciplinary and
ideological requirements of the existing social order and the economic need of the culture
industry that produce them, they are equally subject to contradictory forces, viz. the diverse
cultural needs of the people and how they are reclaimed to their daily life. Cultural
commodities as cultural resources responds to the shifting needs of the people within a shifting
matrix of social allegiances that transgress stable social categories like class, gender, etc. These
popular forces transform the cultural commodity into a cultural resource, pluralize the
meanings and pleasures it offers, evade or resist its disciplinary forces, fracture its homogeneity
and coherence and render it to multiple modes of appropriations and re –creations. Discursive
reading practices by the people and their plural usage of cultural commodities while negotiating
with hegemonic forces and its preferred ideological encodings serves to explain the popularity
of the pan-Indian cultural complex including Hindi films as one of its major constituent (Fiske,
1989, p. 25-48)
Talking about the relationship between nation and the popular it needs to be stated that the realm of the popular subject to binary classification held as feminine, irrational, emotional was conversely opposed to the masculine and its concomitant categories that belong to the modernist paradigm informed by the European philosophy of Enlightenment. The popular conventionally held to be opposed to the categories associated to modernity viz. state and citizenship is a post-modernist departure. Recognition of the relevance of the popular comes through the understanding that citizenship and popular culture are mutually constitutive of each other and calls for a need to ‘re-brand citizenship’ in a more cosmopolitan, communitarian sense. Popular culture empowers the disenfranchised and its democratic potential to reach the marginalised also is directly related to its pleasure made derivable to all and thus leads to its community building capacity. With the boundaries of citizenship being re-drawn and no longer held hostage to an elite modernity leads to the idea of ‘cultural citizenship’. This idea of cultural citizenship lead to a mutual intrusion between the public and the private, it seeks a method to conflate the public and the private by articulating politics and pleasure at the level of everyday life (Hermes, 2005, p. 151-152).

Hermes’ idea is of particular relevance in the context of the subject matter of this research on the popular subject at a globalising moment of the Indian nation. Transnationalisation, global flows, diasporic communities has increasingly de-territorialised the nation in its imagined and discursivity In this context, popular culture offering an alternative domain of cultural citizenship that invite us to new imagined communities beyond self-enclosed enclaves of nation-states. Offering us new forms of cultural expression, it allow us to re-invent ourselves and escape the disciplining regime of subjection to citizenship( ibid. p.11)It may be said that the fluid zone of popular culture inviting us to a new sense of belonging to the nation through cultural citizenship makes the transnational circulation of the pan-Indian popular culture ,especially the popularity of Hindi films among the diasporic audience ,particularly relevant in the study of the nation and popular culture in a globalising context. Popular culture and cultural citizenship can re-invent the relation to the nation on imaginative grounds.

The manifestation of the popular in myriad forms that includes both the folk and the mass commercially produced forms, but it may be argued that the cinematic manifestation is of particular relevance. And despite being a Western technological import, it lends itself to enable exploration of indigenous experiences and cultural traditions. In the following section I shall elaborate upon the role of popular Hindi cinema and its relation to the Indian nation, nationhood and the state.

2.3 THE INDIAN NATION AND HINDI POPULAR CINEMA

The Indian nation is a political entity, its state dominated by a class of people extending their power over a determinate geographical boundary. However, it has its power and legitimacy won and sustained through a discursive apparatus deploying various modes of dissemination, through the fictional and literary imagination and historical writings made available through print, communication and the educational system. Popular realm, however, especially that of
mainstream cinema with its pre-eminence in the world of visual images, has been seriously under-represented and under-estimated as a potential locus of nationalist imagination and in creating a national imaginary. In India, films supplanted a long-standing oral tradition and assumed the status of the “national-popular”. Drawing upon the elements of the discursive nation-making apparatus films constitute the imagined nation in its own right Hindi films act as the insignia of the nation- the imagined community It provide the site wherein the nation is constantly re-imagined and resuscitated (Virdi, 2003, p.28).

The making of the Indian nation as a cultural construct has been largely contingent upon the “narrative contract” involved in the writing of a nationalist history and in the nationalist ideology that permeates every institution and its discourse. It is through ideological insemination of the print media, the political function of imposing a common political identity and cohesion through nationalist historical narratives that shapes the nationalist imaginary. The nation pervades every institution, mechanism, discourse and discipline and various cultural forms, including the popular forms like Hindi cinema. Its unique aesthetic regime, characteristic narrative themes, formulaic plots, stylistic conventions draw upon both literary and non-literary creative imagination, both contemporary and historical, history, myths, fiction, print media and various other discursive modes imbricated in nation-making strategies. The logic of the colonial Empire produced a nation concretised via political, economic and legal measures. But it is via cultural production that nation is imagined. As an abstract category toward which consent and loyalty are constantly secured and is incessantly re-mapped in the popular imagination in response to its spatio-temporal realities and various concerns.(ibid . p.28-31; 205)

Despite the phenomenal success of cable and satellite T.V. the erstwhile hegemony of Hindi films as a primary mode of entertainment and its large viewer ship has not dwindled. Cinema remains the popular cultural dominant, the dominant simulacra in the realm of mass culture through which all political struggles, especially in the post-modern era shall pass. Notwithstanding the cinematic construction of Hindi films around a pre-dominantly North Indian culture it remains the largest player in the popular realm to give rise to a sense of ‘shared experience’ of the nation and also the model for other regional Indian films. It is through these films that the people continually reproduce themselves as a national community and transform themselves into an abstract ‘national subject’. It is for this reason that popular Hindi cinema is considered to be one of the major shaper of Pan-Indian community and popular culture transcending pluralities (Mishra, 2002, p3-4).

Unlike nations like Egypt where de-colonization was in consonance with nationalization of the film industry, commercial Hindi cinema that remained in the “unorganised sector”, despite functioning outside the auspices or guardianship of the state unofficially shaped and formed a national cinema with a distinct identity and even subsumed regional cinema largely. It also successfully established an all-India domestic market , outperformed the mighty Hollywood films in the domestic market and also gained inroads into the overseas market.(Gopal and Moorti, 2010, p.1) Gopal and Moorti asserts that the claims of Hindi cinema as the national
cinema, albeit officially unclaimed, by sheer economic parameters of reception and revenue remain uncontested. Armed with a broad based viewer ship, pan-Indian distribution, revenue collection that singularly surpasses any other regional commercial cinema and a flourishing overseas market, Hindi films, though a constituent of the larger composite of Indian films, is justifiably the national cinema (ibid. p.2) As the largest film industry in the world with the most prolific rate of production[a staggering 800 films per year] screened for approximately 15 million people a day it remains the dominant mode of affordable entertainment for the people across class, linguistic and regional barriers besides resonating powerfully within the diasporic communities and often becoming the only connection with the homeland.(Virdi, 2003ibid. p.1) The stylistic convention of Hindi films paradoxically in complete disjunction with familiar everyday reality has a non-specific visual address that distances from ‘authentic’ portrayals of Indian life. In a diverse nation, Hindi films therefore emerges as popular cultural site that produces an unified cultural denominator at the expense of ‘authenticity’ The non particularity of its visuality accords it an unifying role.(ibid. p.2).Hindi cinema reproduces the fictional nation within its narratives. Inheriting and circulating notions of national identity, negotiating conflicts experienced by the imagined community, producing new representations of the nation, constructing a collective consciousness of nationhood Hindi films seek to imaginatively configure the nation and construct a nationalist imaginary. Its deployment of cultural referents as tropes of the nation provides a visual teleprompter for reading the script of the nation. Through a complex apparatus of metaphors, discourses, mode of address, stock set of symbols, and tropes, the nation is visually constructed and imagined in mainstream Hindi cinema. It is this that gives Hindi cinema a national-popular acceptance-as a popular cultural site identifiable by the varied constituencies of the nation. (Virdi, ibid p.7, 9)

At the heart of all Hindi films lies the ‘fictional nation’. The primary goal of these narratives is to imaginatively produce fictional resolution to all the moral contradictions, ethical dilemmas and various conflicts that threaten to rupture the nation. Its formulaic format lacking spatio-temporal specificities as already mentioned fulfils the narrative demand of this fictional nation (Virdi ibid, p.32) and acts as a popular unifier of a diverse nation. In fact it is this unificatory agenda of the nation fulfilled by Hindi films that help its claim to being ‘All-India films’ (Tyrell, 1999, p. 269) and the generic format also ensures that the entertainment value of Hindi films remain even amidst those with little understanding of the language. (ibid. p270).As the silent bearer of nation-ness and national identity and the ability to inscribe the imagined nation that provides Hindi films strongest legitimation to the claim of a national cinema. (Sen, 2011) Looking at the commercial Bombay films historically, with roots in pre-independence era, it may be claimed that its role was recognised even by the state as integrative and indispensable, though unwittingly, at a time when the state itself was not fully capable of entrusting full-fledged political citizenship.(Rajadhyaksha,2009, p.84) Chidananda Dasgupta, eminent film scholar and exponent of parallel film movement in India also conceded to the national reach of the mass-produced formula based Hindi films and saw them as “All India Films” and even argued, that the failure of modernist bourgeoisie to translate their modernising
agenda and rational vision to the large population of ordinary mass of people created a void in terms of cultural leadership for these people left outside the pale of this modernisation programme. The hiatus as claimed was filled up by Hindi films that translated modernity to the people and helped them grapple with the contradictions between modernity and tradition (Dasgupta, 1991).

Without undermining the pan-Indian appeal and ‘unificatory character’ of popular Hindi films, it may be said while maintaining a criticality in the analysis that this nation is however, utterly ‘mythic’ and ideological, it is a metonymic nation and is at the same time a selective representation of the actual nation. From the diverse range of things it selectively represents a ‘consensual nation’-simplifying vast complexities of socio-cultural realities. The three factors of metonymic selection, mythic centralising and ideological simplification may be said to be involved in producing the nation within a narrative coherence of these films. This ideological nation does not have to rely on factual accuracy or empirical validation as this nation being ideological renders it real in the Althusserian sense as the image of the nation while interpellating not only produces the subjects but also itself as the interpellative voice or subject. It is the nation that calls and interpellatively constitutes and addresses its subjects (see Thwaites et al. p. 167). In subsequent chapter my contention is that the interpellative voice of the nation seeks an embodiment, where the hero becomes the voice of the nation by embodying its ideological discourse. The role and appeal of the popular star can be activated successfully to produce the ideological nation and mythically unified nation and as the source of interpellation the unified nation speaks through him (ibid, p.169)

The post colonial secular self image of India despite being threatened by the deeply divisive and fundamentalist Hindutva movement, a sense prevails that within the country that certain sectors of Indian life have remained immune to the type of sectarian divisions that have become increasingly manifest in a number of political and social institutions. One such sector in popular perception is the Hindi film industry, which is routinely held up as an example of secularism. Iqbal Masud as cited observes: ‘It is in the domain of popular cinema that the diverse cultures of India met and negotiated their differences. They did not merge but worked in harmony. In fact, harmony is the key word in Indian cinema. It is the one Indian cultural industrial structure that has resisted separatism. It is because of this element that Indian cinema has become over the past fifty years – despite its many distortions and contradictions – a major instrument of national consolidation, a true unity in diversity’ (Chadha et al., 2008, p. 132). Shashi Tharoor, in a popular vein argued: ‘In India, popular cinema has consistently reflected the diversity of a pluralistic community. The stories they tell are often silly, the plots formulaic, the characterizations superficial, the action predictable. But they are watched and made by every community in India. The film world of Bollywood embodies the very idea of India’s diversity in the way in which it is organized, staffed and financed and in the stories that it tells’. And finally in yet another affirmation of the secular nature of Hindi cinema, Laleen Jayamne commenting on Mother India has written:
“That an iconic film embodying the struggle of a humble peasant woman who is allegorized as Mother India should be made and played by two Muslims is not so remarkable in that the Indian film industry has been immune to the kind of racism that has come to pervade wider social and political life in the wake of Hindu fundamentalism.”

Thus, the popular Hindi cinema is often cited as social microcosm a world where members of both majority and minority community work in unison to produce a staggering output of approximately films between 150 and 200 per annum. To testify the secular character of the film industry, it is argued frequently that not only are Muslims well represented with its ranks in the from of writers, lyricists, composers, producers and directors but that some of the most popular film stars of Hindi cinema, both male and female have been Muslims. In addition to acknowledging the on and off screen prominence of Muslims in the film industry, scholars have also pointed to the pervasive influence of a Muslim ethos or the Islamicate roots of Hindi cinema. In this sense reference is not to Islam in the religious sense, but rather to the social and cultural complex that is historically associated with Islam and Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even among the non-Muslims: Included among the elements of Islamicate. Muslim culture that have been believed to have influenced by Hindi cinema are Urdu, a language traditionally associated with Muslims in India and one that furnished countless Hindi films with its vocabulary and idiom, and a range of images and archetypes derived from 18th and 19th culture of Muslim elite in the northern Indian state of Awadh. (Chaddha et al., ibid. p.133-134)

Commenting on the secular unificatory role of Bollywood, a moniker for Hindi films Varma argues: “…. Indians found what they could share in common while being entertained, not while listening to the sermons of the government, whose ideologues probably looked down on such lightweight distractions as films and film music. But there is no doubt that Bollywood has been the single biggest integrating factor in the evolution of pan-Indian persona… Their characters speak a language the common person can understand. ……their happy endings…..provide a kind of entertainment with which all Indians can identify. Raj Kapoor as the vagabond in “Awara”, Dilip Kumar as the tragic lover in “Devdas” and Dev Anand as the stylish “Jewel Thief” were the national icons in the 1950s and 1960s. The dialogues from “Sholay” could bring a knowing smile to an Indian even in the remotest corner of the nation. Aamir Khan’s hair style in “Dil Chahta Hai” (2001) was emulated by youngsters from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. For their sheer reach, Indian films are the most popular secular feature of modern India. Their mass appeal and ubiquity have given Indians a common vocabulary and a means of recognising each other in a known and much loved framework not available to them on such a scale before” (Varma, 2004. p.155). The idea of India claims Rajadhyaksha is sustained by our popular culture and it is Bollywood with all its limitations that represent the prime vehicle of transmission of popular culture and values (Rajadhyaksha, 2007, p. 455).

An indexicality of its popularity and popular format is accounted by its unassailable dominance in the domestic market on one hand and secondly by its cross-class appeal via its complex
narrative format. A true popular cultural site it intervenes in the imagination of social perception and desires often in contravention to canonical aesthetic codes and practices and therefore enabling popular readings, identifications etc. As a popular form of art it was an anathema to an arts public seeking to cultivate institutions and aesthetic objectives in line with realist and modernist vision of the state (Vasudevan, 2010, p.94). The national-popular character of Hindi cinema is therefore further enhanced in its ‘popular’ format.

Historians concur that the dominance of Hindi cinema is also attributable to the official recognition of Hindi as the ‘national language’. (Gopal and Moorti 2010, ibid p.1) Hindi a regional language gained the status as a part of a deliberate nation-building agenda and involved some kind of coercion (Virdi, 2003 ibid). Hindi films towards whose integrative role the state remained largely apathetic (Gopal and Moorti ibid) was not part of the coercion involved in the state policy that instituted Hindi as the official national language of post-independence India. Consequently this popular cultural vehicle, Hindi cinema emerged as a constitutive force in popularizing the national. (Virdi, ibid p.31) It is nevertheless contested that the state policy of upholding Hindi has allowed Hindi films to derive gains from the state policy inadvertently almost. (Jacob, 2010 p.88). The adoption of Hindi as the official national lingua-franca by the post-colonial state and a generic, all-encompassing formula designed to overcome the linguistic and regional differences that remained benefited Hindi films to emerge as a powerful pan-Indian form of entertainment (Tyrell, 1999 ibid p. 270).

It also deserves to be mentioned that unlike the local appeal of regional cinema Hindi films have a dispersed pan-Indian appeal. Unlike the regional language films, Hindi films, in view of its national audience, seek to address the Indian identity and articulate national concerns. This allows Hindi films to transcend limits imposed by linguistic organisation of the states. The idiom of Hindi films responsive to nation and its spectatorial needs, tries to avoid ‘local’ influences to keep its appeal and reach widespread. Regional films in contrast is limited in terms of its reach. (Raghavendra, 2010, p. 174) Enjoying a wider circulation, Hindi films as India’s national cinema can also be credited to be a primary form of public culture. As a site of public culture it is seen to address the complex and fluid interaction that exists between the binary categories of high/elite and low/mass culture. The very nature of its close engagement with the people of the nation is what reinforces its national character. (Dwyer and Patel, 2002, p.8-9)

In a bid to re-invent local aesthetics and narrative tradition and also forge an independent national identity against the homogenising impulses of Hollywood over domestic markets, the discourse around Third Cinema in the Third World context has been of particular relevance. In its reference to international aesthetic protocol and filmic conventions the significance of Third Cinema lies in its ability to problematize the boundaries between the nation and its other. A substantial lacuna in this cultural project has been any sustained understanding of the role of commercial cinema in the Third World. This is of importance since in countries like India, commercial cinema since the dawn of the talkies have successfully marginalized Hollywood’s eminence in the domestic market. This is not to claim that Hindi commercial films operate
within a self-referential autarchy. The Indian popular cinema stylistically integrated codes of 'world cinema' and has been even successful in foreign markets while at the same time constituted something like a ‘nation-space’ against the dominance of Hollywood norms. Ironically enough, it has come to fulfil the role which avant-garde third cinema proclaims to be its own. Unlike many national cinemas that have succumbed to Hollywood hegemony, the peculiarities of Hindi commercial films as a popular mode of entertainment explains its ascendancy and influence over domestic national market. In the Indian context it is the officially and ideologically patronised art films that silenced the specificity of Hindi commercial films. (Vasudevan, ibid, p. 98-99) These autonomous national cinemas in the Third world societies were mostly creations of the Western educated Third World elite who functioned as prime movers in cultural production. In India the corresponding post-colonial national cinema despite official recognition fails to answer to the description of national popular cinema unlike commercial Hindi films (which has organically grown out of large-scale public patronage). Aligned to elite art cinema they fail to assume the national character (Raghavendra, 2010 ibid).

Extending Edward Shils suggestion(originally inspired by Durkheimian idea of religion) in locating sacral qualities of religion within the secular sphere linked to civic, political and popular life it can be said that the sacral unifying force reside in popular Hindi films that seek to culturally unify an otherwise diverse nation.( see Smith, 2001 p. 86).Nations as imagined communities are generally speaking reproducible by media and acts as an important tool to forge a strong sense of the national community and communal belonging through circulation of shared values based on this unity and moral fibre of the community in various stories and representations (Thwaites et al., 2002, p.145) Media texts are coded on the assumption of commonly shared values and experiences and thereby suggest ‘a phatic relationship of an imagined community’. This sense of an imagined community, an important effect of mediation, producing a sense of belonging despite vast inner differences and dissimilarities, creates a sense of belonging to a ‘media public’ (ibid. 155). Its phatic effects of discourse, viz. the ideological representation of the media binds the nation collectively through double interpellation that binds all those the media addresses. Extending this notion to Hindi films proves to be pertinent in the way they are nationally circulated and how their narrative address to the large audience both territorial and diaspora produces a phatic relationship of an imagined community on the terrain of the popular. Re-phrasing Thwaites term it may be said that Hindi cinema produces a ‘cinema-public’, a community of cinema watchers bound to a common cultural experience.

It also needs to be stated with respect to sociological interest in the question of nation where nation is seen to be a political expression of social integration. In fact, no theory of nationalism has ignored the integrative properties of the nation or their role in modernizing process. The Parsonian stance adopted by Tiryakian and Nevitte is a good example. Several scholars including sociologists like Giddens have convincingly argued that the nation-state understood as the political expression of the nation, is the historical reality behind the more or less abstract concept of society. The particular characteristics of national integration have thus been too
systematically sublimated into a general model of social integration for them to be thematised in their own right, and conversely the general theory of social integration has been too universally dominated by the special case of the modern nation-state. The nation-state is in other words, both pre-supposed and transfigured by the sociological tradition and this applies to those who were most concerned with social integration and also for whom nation-state is a matrix of modernity (Arnason, 2003, p.142)

It is relevant here to mention Giddens’ theoretical approach bears upon the national question, especially his idea of nation as a disembodied agency of integration at an abstract level. In his views through the practices of disembodied extension like media that the possibilities of abstract communities like nations are enhanced. Delineating an ontological continuity from the face-to-face level the disembodied national integration enabled by electronic media allow a form of mediation of the nation.(Giddens as cited in James, 1996) Cinema’s circulation amidst a diverse constituency of Indians, both territorial and diasporic, mediates the nation addressing an abstract community not bound by borders but a nation as disembodied.

The very idea of Hindi films as the unifier and integrative popular form of culture stand to be problematised with the increasing recognition of differences and pluralities acquiring legitimacy in contemporary times. The co-existence of multiple collectivities seeks to interrogate the hegemony of any hegemonic grand totalising identity and unifying narratives. The critique of a cohesive nationality has come from various oppressed plural groups, communities characterised by diverse distinct cultural and linguistic identities. Eminent Indian sociologist T.K. Oomen, dismisses the idea of India as a nation, instead suggests it to be a configuration of many nations co-existing within a single polity. Oomen warns that asserting of India as a nation tends to produce a hierarchical socio-political milieu wherein the dominant community colonises the agenda of the ‘nation’ and thus suppress other cultural and linguistic aspirations as parochial. Critical of the idea of India as a nation, despite its geographical territoriality and politico-legal status, and also the presence of economic and political mainstream Oomen sees Indian citizenship accorded by the Indian state to be independent of the Indian nationality that is claimed. This negation of an over-arching, broader shared Indian identity and a cultural mainstream (Oomen, 1990) does jeopardise the assumption of Hindi cinema as the popular version of India’s cultural mainstream. On the contrary there are arguments that sociologically favours the emotive, unifying appeal of Indianness that is inclusive and is part of our collective consciousness and provide us with a common cultural experience.(Pathak,2006 , p.129) The sociological optimism articulated in the ‘transcendence of identity’ ‘overcoming of little identities and striving for something more universal and inclusive’ give strength to the arguments supporting the role of Hindi cinema as an unifying experience of the Indian national community.

The idea of national community involves constitution of the people which however does not exist naturally as ethnically given in modern nation-states even when it arises out of a national independence struggle. The continuous production of the people as a national community, as an unity pre-supposes the constitution of specific ideological form within which the nationals,
despite inner differences which are either relativized or subordinated, are interpellated in the Althusserian sense (Balibar, 1991, p.93-95). Taking cue from Balibar, it may be argued how the ideological form of mainstream Hindi films and its address interpellates the national audience and constitute them as the people, bound to its imagined nation through a common cultural experience and ideological mode of its address.

The assertion of popular Hindi cinema as a vehicle of national integration, a cultural unifier and as a national-popular brings us to the question of hegemony and how this unity is ‘hegemonically’ maintained. Much of the path that led through critical tradition of social science towards an interest in culture, especially in the popular culture passes through Gramsci, and what is interesting is how Gramsci’s thought opens up the Marxist tradition of analyses to the question of culture and the dimension of social class in popular culture. The idea of hegemony is based not on class domination but that dominant class has interests which the subalter classes recognise as in being their interests too. Hegemony is unstable, a live process and not based on force alone but on shared meanings and appropriations of the meanings through power, seduction and complicity (Barbero, 1993, p.73-74). This takes us to the question of how within popular cultural forms, hegemonic power bloc negotiates with cultural populism to create the popular cultural form text, as is the case of commercial films. The popular as argues McGuigan was essentially a political discovery and related to the idea of nationhood; thereby linked to a third constitutive feature of modernity, the formation of national identity, in addition to industrialization (McGuigan, 1992, p.10) Popular culture as a hegemonic site, as argued by Hall, is most useful as it is partly where hegemony arises and where it is secured and is an arena of both consent and resistance. The materiality and the ordinariness of popular culture is because hegemony is not a matter of semantics fixity but one of perpetual negotiation between contending forces The popular is produced and consumed and the realm of the popular enjoys the active consent of the people.(ibid,p.21-23) Benett’s solution was to keep the popular (culture) definitionally open, not as an inventory of forms or essential meanings but as a field of continually changing relations between the “imposed from above” and “emerging from below” in effect to historicize the concept as a site of perpetual struggle, negotiation and transaction, inspired by Gramsci and mediated by Hall.(ibid.p.65) .

But this understanding of the popular requires a re-contextualization and re-formulation of Gramsci’s idea of hegemony and the national-popular in the realm of Hindi popular films. Exempting the brief period of influence of the leftist intelligentsia in the 1950s under the auspices of the IPTA (Indian People’s Theatre Association), Hindi mainstream films succumbed to commercial imperatives and soon began to serve bourgeoisie interests. Largely representative of the bourgeoisie interest it successfully straddles an alliance with the working class and thus fulfils a contextual re-application of Gramscian idea of hegemonic alliance. The articulation of bourgeoisie interests and its values notwithstanding, Hindi films claims a cross-class alliance especially the working class (Virdi, 2003, ibid p. 10-11).

The cultural hegemony achieved through cinematic representations of a coherent national identity comes about through naturalization of a particular cultural formation. Constructing an
imaginary homogeneity, Hindi films seeks to obscure inner contradictions, ideological strains and competing interests: uphold the interest of the bourgeoisie and represses inner differences of the Indian society marked by hierarchy in terms of caste, class, gender, and ethnicity and so on in an attempt to produce a universal audience-identification. While differentially privileging a limited range of subject position Hindi films though a national cinema produces a form of “internal colonization”(Virdi, ibid. p.33,34) As a hegemonising cultural site cinematic discourse articulate prevalent social values. Commercial success of these films leads to the further affirmation of these values as they have passed the crucial test of popular taste and mass-approval (Kumar, 2008, p.131).

While nation is an inescapable and pervasive component of our consciousness, it is paradoxically tenuous and its fault lines are often than not visible. Popular Hindi films deploying hero’s agency seek to provide amicable resolution to the inner strife of the nation. The otherwise vulnerable nation is hegemonically secured via heroic agency. However, while the nation mostly is vigorously reinstated through forceful hegemonic rhetoric the films do interrogate the status quo or at least reveal the precariousness of the project of an unified nation-state. (Virdi, 2003,ibid. 211)The Hindi film industry as a whole maintains the nation in the interest of the bourgeoisie hegemony instated since the bourgeoisie democratic state was established, in the passing moments different classes, collectivities and even constituencies have contested this hegemony- which in theory is unstable and in practice is never wholly attainable.. This can be seen in how the ‘old’ middle-class, upper caste male professional ceded ground to the working class briefly in the 1970s , and to the bourgeoisie woman in the 80sin gangster-cum-action genre and the avenging woman genre respectively. However, the strain at times becomes less visible and dominant or continues to negotiate with what appears as regained hegemony of the bourgeoisie. For instance even when in the 1990s romance and contestations in family politics continued to establish the hegemonic discourse, gangster action films successful in previous decades continued to explore crime and underworld politics with varying degrees of realism in films like Parinda (1989), Khalnayak (1993) and Satya (1996).

As already mentioned that within the realm of popular hegemony is secured through both resistance and consent and resistance and this truly applies for popular Hindi cinematic texts. There is no monolithic ideology or monological voice even within a largely status-quoist industry. Admittedly the commercial drive towards profit maximization prompts the industry to play it safe by not deviating from the dominant ideological current; most films only attempt to circumspect interrogation. What therefore emerges is a melange of images and polyphony of accompanying voices which responds, contradict or challenge one another in a creative inter- textual relay among films. There is a combination of contradictory voices and discourses from which films draw their narratives, and when taken together they offer palimpsest with traces of Indian ideology, culture and politics. The cinematic site is a contested ideological terrain and although the hegemonic forces privilege certain elements one does discern transgressive moments co-residing with conservative tenor.
The task is to identify the culturally favoured tropes that Hindi films deploy compared to popular regional or international cinemas, its specific ways of articulations and how it re-deploys them, and how shifting discourses about the nation inflect them, at various historical moments. Hindi films seek to deploy a whole repertoire of unstable signifiers or tropes like the heroes, the heroines, the villains, the family, romance, maternal love etc. in varying ways. Different auteurs mobilizing these signifiers in different ways seek to re-articulate, re-anchor and re-affirm the nation while engaging contemporary national discourses. The shifting emphases on tropes in changing contexts demand fresh readings and this is what renders Hindi films to a valuable popular cultural document or source for mapping Indian cultural politics and history. It is this instability of signifiers and the need to creatively re-deploy them make film pass through popular taste of the audience. Popular Hindi films are thereby veritable site for discursive articulation and re-articulation within a contestory terrain of discursive formations with competing discourses. The liberatory potential of popular culture and the polysemic nature of the texts allow us to see how an inter-play of signifiers takes place. But the cautionary reminder is that this does not supersede the force of the unchallenged market ideology because that informs the ‘pleasure principle’. Popular films thus reveal a complex interplay between hegemony and the challenges to it within the framework of the marketplace (ibid. p. 212-213).

Virdi’s analysis of discursive articulation and re-articulation of signifiers in cinematic representation of the nation can be corroborated on the strength of the discourse theory associated with Laclau and Mouffe. Their position represents a significant attempt to take the perspective of discourse analysis in a way that allows conceiving of society as a complex ensemble of overlapping, mutually limiting and modifying discursive practices. Society as a category is paradoxically impossible, is never completed, closed off, unified reality and neither can it be organized around or derived from a fixed centre or point of origin. In the absence of such centre society neither can be explained in terms of some kind of single controlling principle. Instead of society there is the social, which is always in the process of being created through attempts to provide for it an anchor, an incontestable point of reference, that can join together and tie down various elements specifying what they are and how they relate. The theory of ‘articulation’ argues that when combined such phenomena are fundamentally modified. Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse analysis is interested in the way such articulations take place and how such articulations work to produce distinct social formations. It does not see these as naturally or necessarily given forms of society but as the temporary outcome of ongoing political practices and struggles that have sought to define society through combining its elements. Employing Gramsci’s idea of hegemony Laclau and Mouffe seek to define this process of fixing and associating elements and identities, imposing a dominant meaning on social practices in ways that limit the range of possibilities within a given structure (Finlayson and Martin, 2006, p.161. Laclau and Mouffe cited)

Virdi’s argument on how the nation is represented, through the co-existence of plural and even competing or conflictual discourses, within the cinematic text (while retaining hegemonic force of the dominant discourse) has its resonance in the argument from a post-colonial position: “If
people can accept the validity of a discourse without it affecting the way they actually inhabit the world, then discourse may itself may be presumed to be highly provisional in its “sovereignty”. This has far reaching implications for discursive analysis, for it demonstrates that people may live comfortably between competing and even radically contradictory discourses, negotiating those discourses at will. This is constantly borne out around the world where individuals have no trouble negotiating the apparent gap between the essentially secular world-view of global-culture and the mythic horizon of their own local culture” (Ashcroft, 2001, p.105). Emergent discourses, argues Ashcroft, exists along with entrenched ones and no singular episteme or world-view prevails universally in a culture in a particular epoch. Contesting discourses may operate alongside one another, either in conflict or, as in science and in most other discourses, in a state of rapprochement. This explains a state of shared level of dominance and also the co-existence and inter-relation, of many discourses. (ibid. p.109) The above arguments of re-formulated hegemony and its constant re-positioning in filmic texts; grounds gained occasionally by counter-hegemonic forces; articulation of plural discourses; and the shared dominance or co-existence of competing discourses are of extreme significance to my subsequent arguments in the following chapters. It can therefore be argued that competing discourses inform popular film narratives, for instance emerging discourse like diasporas, globality and transnationalism and they can exist along with discourse of ethnicization, militant cultural or religious nationalism. It may be further argued that the discourse of nation and the global negotiate as does disciplining corporal regime with transgressive impulses of the body. And further extending a derivation from Ashcroft’s position which holds that despite the post-modern, the philosophy of modernity enjoys a tenacious hold over people’s psyche it may be analogously said that despite the acceleration of globalizing forces the nation continues to frame narratives and subjectivities within popular cinematic narratives.

The other useful insight derived from Ashcroft’s position is the discursive mobility of subjects that enable them to straddle between competing discourses, leave and enter the other at one’s will, or derive selectively from among them as per contextual constraints and even negotiate or accommodate the apparently comprehensive demands of different discourses at will.(ibid ,p.109) The discursive mobility of subject is equally crucial to substantiate ‘subjectivity construction’ of the nation’s heroic trope within competing discourses. This position is taken up to explain how the same hero straddles between different discourses that have come to define the contemporary nation. As per post-colonial experiences heroic images have been constructed within the negotiability and provisionality of paradigms-both within that of modernity and tradition and that of the global and the nation and therefore exemplifying Shah Rukh’s construction articulated within plural and even competing discourses (as will be subsequently argued). As per this position, discourses do not immobilize subjects as discourses though comprehensive in effect is fragile in structure (Ashcroft, 2001, ibid. p. 111). This allow us to argue how in the course of his filmographic trajectory the star has appeared to straddle from roles of being as a diasporic/urban romantic hero to a mafia Don, from a patriotic army

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officer to a cyborg. And in all these along with other discourses have been the recurrent re-affirmation of the discourse of nation articulated and re-articulated variously with other discourses like globalization, consumerism, secularism, body and sexuality, and so on. The pre-eminence of the nation in cinematic texts bring us to the next question, viz. the representational mode of films to depict the nation.

The validity of conventional approaches that held popular Hindi cinema as mass-culture stands redundant in view of discursive approaches to the study of films. Even while conceding to the mass character of entertainment offered by such films one needs to qualify it in terms of what Barbero terms as the emergence of a new form of the popular in mass culture and the way how mass-culture becomes a new form of popular culture. The popular form of the mass culture served to re-constitute and re-position hegemony. This new mode of functioning of the bourgeoisie hegemony while reconciling class-differences, produces an unity resolution at the level of imagination and assures the active consent of the dominated.(Barbero, 1993, p. 120-122) Departing from the idea of a straight-jacketed notion of mass culture, Barbero’s position offers valid grounds to argue subsequently how bourgeoisie culture finds within Hindi films a strategic space for reconciling class-differences and produce a trans-class appeal for films. Hegemony re-constituted serves to re-absorb class differences and thus strengthening its appeal and in ‘popularising’ what is otherwise hegemonic.

A parallel drawn from Barbero’s Latin-American based study on popular films at its transnationalizing moment to read Hindi film’s relation to the question of nation allow us to see how at the cultural level, populism found expression via diffusion in films. If a nation is to dramatize in a certain way its existence in the theatre, then the role of the film was to be put at the centre stage- a form of mythologizing symbolization-the gestures and patterns of national reality. Films in developing nations gave national identity a voice and a face. The masses went to the movies not just for entertainment, but to experiment with their daily lives, to see how their codes, customs were represented on screen. Film created nationalism through melodrama at a crucial transitional juncture of transnationalization. Films appeared as a powerful sphere of mediation, a sphere of articulating populist nationalism and commercial practices under the imperatives of global capitalism (Barbero, ibid. p. 1187, 195). Barbero’s study strengthens understanding of how the nation can be popularly articulated, and revived within a global capitalist logic even in its moments of embracing the global. Barbero’s most significant contention, notwithstanding the arguments on ‘culture industry as commodified, vulgarised, homogeneous’, that consumption of mass culture and the people’s involvement as mediated via popular culture – with mass coalescing with the popular to give rise to liberatory experiences, realization of democratic ideals, cultural competencies and popular pleasures hold hopes for our argument to see how despite the advent of the mass, global culture, popular Hindi films can emerge as a perfect cultural site to negotiate the mass, global consumer culture with the popular, and the populist impulse of the nation (see, Barbero, ibid. p. 187).

As germane to most Third-World texts pre-occupied by the question of nation, a concern mostly mediated by their colonial experience, nation has been allegorized. And allegories in
such context are considered as one of the most privileged form of expressions. Fredric Jameson’s idea of nation as the dominant trope in all Third –World text and his suggestion that the entire world of arts can be encompassed within the national allegory is of extreme significance in contouring the cinematic representation of the nation in popular Hindi films. In defining it Jameson says ‘….our traditional conception of allegory….is that an elaborate set of figures and personifications to be read against some one –to-one table of equivalences: this is to speak, a one dimensional view of this signifying process, which might only be set in motion and complexified were we willing to entertain the more alarming notion that such equivalences are themselves in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text’ (Jameson, 1986 p. 73). Jameson’s term allow access, a means of translation and realignment of text to shifting location of meaning arising from dynamic social realities. Opaque texts from Third World become endlessly accessible to what Jameson call as global ‘polysemia’ of readership (ibid) which, eschewing one-to-one mapping allegory is an important tool to address problem of representation. An open, polysemic and multiple representational device allegorised form of representation acts as a discontinuous form of representation that highlights its disjunction from what it seeks to represent.

Larsen commenting on Jameson’s attempt to detect a latent national allegory observes it to do with the opposition between the public and the private sphere. Unlike capitalist modernity, the difference between the public and private is difficult to be instituted and maintained in the Third World societies. The private always is always on the point of becoming the public, and thus according to Jameson’s reasoning, the relation of Third World individual to the sphere of national life as a whole forces a break or leap in which the individual or private ‘ destiny’ takes on a directly , publicly ‘national’ dimension. This subsumption of the particular by the general, and not, as would be the case in metropolitan bourgeois novel, the reverse, is what Jameson chose to call ‘allegory’. Jameson’s prior reduction of every individual instance of ‘Third World Literature’ to a ‘latent allegory’ is identifiable as a structural tendency in narrative form of ‘peripheral modernities’. The narrative or symbolic medium reflects Third World nation as an abstract possibility-an unstable or volatile form of social identity; and attempts to represent this nation will capture this abstraction (Larsen, 2000, p. 38)

What therefore is seen to constitute various popular narrative themes of Hindi films, such as family drama, heterosexual romance, tales of re-incarnation, revenge stories etc, or even the different heroic roles as a masculine idol, as subsequently will be explored in the next chapters, are allegorised representation of the nation. Film as an unique audio-visual medium offers a degree of accessibility to the audience to read meanings, that are beyond the diegesis of the film, notwithstanding the auteur’s control of the medium, the audiences captivity to an edited product viz. the film and the influence of the directorial team in formulating the work. As a product emanating from a confluence of factors that combine to make and receive a film and the collaborative effort involved in film production render transparent its embeddedness within a certain social, political and cultural discourse of the nation. Bhugra argues with respect to mainstream Hindi films that the end product is political, and it is up to the viewer how to
interpret the political component. Both the political and social conditions that are prevalent may determine the context of art within which the film is being produced thereby privileging cinema’s association with the social, the political, the historical and the economic (Bhugra, 2006, p. 2-7).

The popularity of cinematic texts can also be explained by borrowing Fiske’s idea of producerly text, which does not impose the law of its own construction upon the readers and is open to reading practices and popular production. It exposes, however reluctantly, the vulnerabilities, limitations and weaknesses of its preferred meanings, seek to repress those meanings that contradict the ones it prefers, it has loose ends that escapes its control, its meanings exceed its own power that seek to discipline them and the gaps it inadvertently reveals are wide enough to produce whole new texts to be produced within them and despite its efforts to repress voices that contradicts its preferred ideology its meanings are beyond its control (Fiske, 1989, ibid. p. 103). In fact, it is the popular productivity that enables Virdi’s argument, though conversely whereby counter-hegemonic readings too become available to discerning academic explanations. It is the producerly character of Hindi films and the star-text (here, Shah Rukh) that appear to be a contested terrain of preferred disciplined hegemonic meanings and those popular indisciplined meanings that exceed the preferred ones. It is the presence of the contra-element of popular producerly texts as in the case of Hindi commercial cinematic ones that allow me to see how in the hegemonic representation of social, historical, cultural, economic and political conditions of the nation popular spaces offering contradictory meanings open up escaping the control of hegemony

Speaking about the relationship of the nation and popular realm of films it needs to be affirmed that the nation that resides in these films is the ‘popular nation’ what can be called as the peopled nation exceeding the state. Here I would state some of the ways by which we can locate the nation residing in the popular realm independent of statist trappings. Historically speaking, early Indian cinema that began during the colonial rule by the colonized Indians, as an indigenous enterprise had stirred their imagination in favour of a liberated nation. Nation as an emancipated site was rendered realisable by the anti-fascist political mobilization intrinsic to cinematic aesthetics (Mishra, 2006, p. 13). Films as sites of imagined nation is antecedent to state formation in India or in other words, nationalist imaginings of cinema in India pre-dates state formation. Hindi films’ set itself up as a national industry….in ways that actually precede and even anticipate institutionalised state functioning in this field’ (Rajadhyaksha, as cited in Gopal et al. 2010, p. 130).

The introduction of the cinematic medium arrived at a critical juncture in the region’s political history. The development of South Asian cinema in the hands of indigenous film makers paralleled the development of an Indian national identity in the minds of a handful of South Asian intellectuals who would transform the idea to coalesce and organise wide-spread popular resistance to the British rule. Cinema, as argued accomplished the primary agenda of the independence movement by igniting the sparks of national pride by modernising and valorising indigenous cultural and religious traditions. Nationalism found its cinematic form and
expression almost as a parallel development of Indian nationalism and national movement in years preceding state formation. Even in films with ostensibly mythological or historical themes subjects were given a sub-text of nationalist, revivalist ideology. Symbols of Indian nationalist movement at times were arbitrarily deployed into the main narrative of films. The popularity of nationalist themes, oblique references, though, was threatening to the colonial government that prompted the state regulation via censorship (Jacob, 2010, p. 83; 85-87).

The postcolonial ‘India’ is a substantial space left behind at the end of British colonial rule. While the successive nationalist occupants more or less precisely fit into a similar geographical space left behind by the British, in cultural terms there is a great schism between the spaces ceded. By the logic of narrative sequencing, the new independent state is seen to be a sub-set of a much wider definition of the formerly colonized nation. This implies that only a small segment of the nation’s overall narrative content qualifies for a symbolic representation under the aegis of the post-colonial independent state. This incongruity is articulated through the conceptualization of an ‘inner framing’ and ‘outer-framing’-whereby the inner frame is equivalent to the state’s imposition of a regime of intelligibility in the larger-context while inner-frame is the post-colonial representation of the nation. This ‘post colonial surplus’ eludes the state’s diktat and is all that the state’s restrictive reading fails to see. Popular Hindi cinema’s positioning within this post colonial gap, allows it to explore the post colonial nation. While the state hegemonically seeks to push outward and encapsulate or subsume the nation approximate to its scale and dimension, at the time of exerting this pulling back all its symbolic meaning within its fold and ensuring an unifying narrative, it seeks to produce a coherence that is authoritatively legitimated and authenticated. A schism thus develops between the two frames. While the state seeks to closely administer symbols of national authenticity and delegitimate or exclude alternative idioms and agencies to signify, display and present the reproducible form of the nation. The Indian nation, is a wider entity beyond the territory directly controlled by the state, ‘….a great deal of mainstream cinema exists precisely in such a space (the space within the national but outside the state’s ambit’) (Rajadhyaksha, 2009, p. 203-204).

Films, generally speaking, are mostly seen as implicated in nationalist ideology and in production of the citizen-subject within the new political boundaries of the nation-state. While it is true that the cultural practices, including cinema, have been effectively deployed in the post colonial states in the construction of national identity, as asserted by film scholarship, in India, popular Hindi films have simultaneously challenged these statist constructions through the mechanics of its production as well as consumption. It is this performative space of Indian popular cinema that the shared cultural memories of its people and these memories were not fissured even after Partition. Popular films produced a syncretic space as this space was equally reclaimed by all across various social divides of caste, class, ethnicity, gender, and creed and so on. As a result of this catholicity of Hindi films is its de-contextualisation and disengagement from the territorial nation-state and its consequent transformation into a free-floating signifier.
that can be appropriated for varied purposes across the world in multiple cultural sites of the nation (Gera-Roy et al. 2012, p. xxi).

Chidananda Dasgupta’s attribution of a nationalist function to what he said as ‘All-India’ cinema or Hindi popular films for enunciating an all-encompassing entertainment formula designed to overcome linguistic divides as a cultural unifier is further elaborated in the argument that sees films occupying a ‘blind spot’in the national culture. It has come to occupy a space unreachd by the state as the bureaucratic apparatus of the state failed to reach through its activities all those inhabiting its territory. As per Partha Chatterjee’s view on the incomplete project of modernity in non-Western states, and lack of a full-fledged civil-society, cinema argues Rajadhyaksha, comes to mediate the hiatus between the state and the civil society. Extending an analogy, cinema comes to occupy the space of what Chatterjee calls as the’ political society’ as a mediating institution between the state and the civil society. Cinema, as a ‘suturing agency’ par excellence creates a new public sphere for the ‘national public’ could gather in one place that was not socially divided. (Rajadhyaksha, 2007, p. 460-461)

Related to the above issue is the question Hindi cinema and the question of mediating modernity through cinematic medium. It may be argued that Indian cinema with its roots in colonial past is a cultural site that constitute what Partha Chatterjee calls the inner domain of national culture. Themes of nationalism mediated via early genres of myth and later action, stunt and socials can be seen as reflective of this significant creative project to carve out a ‘modern’ national culture in the realm of the popular that is not Western. The beginnings of films in colonial India, antecedent to state formation by the independent sovereign nation-state that came into existence on 15th August, 1947, allowed the nation to be imaginatively contoured within films that can be seen as a sovereign cultural sphere for a pre-state colonized nation. The inner domain of the Indian nation that Chatterjee claims to be the sovereign domain that has been the site for modern national culture free from and also resistant to colonial influence may be extended to include the sphere of popular cinema. Despite colonial influence in the project of modernization, there is an inner domain that is quintessentially Indian as the project of modernity was never a completely colonized enterprise. This modernity translated in cinema was seen in the earliest of films , mostly mythological when traditional motifs came to obliquely address modernist concerns, revolving around questions of liberty, justice, freedom etc.Beyond the ‘outside domain of the state’ marked by Western modernist discourse of colonial state , was the inner domain of the national culture.The history of nationalism as a political movement tends to focus primarily on the contest with the colonial power in the outside domain, viz the material domain of the state.It is within this outer domain that nationalism began its journey constituted by the process and forms of modern(colonial )state (Chatterjee,1995p.6-9).As the institutions of modern state were elaborated in the colony, it came to recognise the state as the legitimate domain of public opinion. After independence, it was seen that the postcolonial nation state was almost a continuity of the modern colonial state. ‘The dominant elements of self-definition, at least in post-colonial India, were drawn from the ideology of the modern liberal democratic state’(ibid,p.10). It may be argued that the domain of
popular films as an ‘autonomous form’ of imagination as derived from Chatterjee’s understanding that failed to gain the attention of the nationalist leaders and therefore also accounted for the ambivalence of the state authorities towards it for long, was the inner domain which developed its necessary narrative codes to enable it to become the adequate sphere of modern culture, an inner domain of national modern cultural identity that eluded the modernist outer domain occupied by the state.

The above argument takes us to another aspect of cinema and the nation. It is argued that, the historical and political significance of the films lies in its ability to extend field of rights of cinema-goers where the purchase of ticket afforded right to viewership. Cinema provided a space for public access and congregation that was symbolically significant in a traditionally hierarchical society where participation in spaces of public performance and spectacle have been restricted. The right accorded by cinema viewership exceeded the ensemble of rights disbursed by the modern enumerative state in relation to citizens who were entitled to vote and thereby gain entitlement to state’s welfare. In post-colonial states, popular cinema articulates the ‘messier dimensions of democracy’s bid for inclusiveness. (Vasudev an, 2010, p.340-341)

Looking at the contemporary scene of a trans-nationally present, global flows of ‘Bollywood’ it is observed that the cultural ensemble represented by the culture industry of Bollywood, comprising of various sectors of entertainment and consumption deriving from film, which is the central component of the cultural complex, is a popular’ unofficial sphere that exist independently of the state’s authentication. It is a popular cultural space of the nation much in disjunction to investment of national culture in practices of art, aesthetics, classical and folk art forms authenticated by the state (ibid).

2.4 HINDI CINEMA AND THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE NATION

Central to the consideration of popular Hindi cinematic texts as social history is Stuart Hall’s idea of ‘representation’. Stuart Hall’s idea of culture as representation and how through the language of representation meaning is produced(Hall, 1997, p.1-2) Cinematic language or cinema as a mode of representation, albeit couched in a popular commercial idiom, may be conceived as a privileged medium ‘to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings’(ibid) Shared meanings of a shared cultural space, viz. nation is relayed or represented through films representing a specific spatio-temporal context. Looking at representation from the semiotic view point reveals meanings signified within a system of conventions, that is shared historically and culturally within the universe of the nation, as a discursive entity, and Hall’s understanding of representation as a readable signifying system drawing from Barthes allow us to see how the nation is reproducible, readable and meaningful within the shared code of nation cultural universe(here, the popular Hindi film texts) What is also equally significant to Hall’s understanding is Foucault’s understanding of power and discourse, and how discourse provides a language for talking about a way of representing the knowledge about a particular society at a particular time or a historical moment (ibid, p.44-49)

Cinematic texts located within the discourse of the nation privileges reading of these text sas
representations of nation’s social history – contingently produced and inscribed by its spatio-temporal discourse.

Nation being a discursive construct produced by culture and history, it is the historical narratives that constitute the chief architect of that discourse. While significant historical and socio-political events of the nation finds documentation and recognition in what is recognised as “manifest history” its the articulation in cinematic texts, with the exception of those that are historical, is mostly indirect. Hence, Jameson’s idea of allegorical representation allow us to reach upon the idea of films as popular texts where the history of the nation is inscribed and the historical contingencies and events find an elliptical textuation or an allegorical manifestation. They function as narrative re-configurations of time. History however, is itself a contentious matter and under post-modernist scrutiny for its grand master narratives of historical progress, historical paradigms and historiography premised upon secular, imperious Western chronology implicit in officially anchored sources that eschew unofficial resource like folklore, legends, myths, ballads, rumours, history from below and so on. The recent drive towards revision of history text-books, expanding of archival sources and historiographic methods might act as good openings towards recognition of popular films as part of these changes (Virdi,2003, ibid. p.16-17).

Genres and texts are not static structures of social meanings and both production and reception of texts especially popular mass-media texts are historically shaped and through them the history or the histories of society unfolds. Genres and texts being located in time allow us to use this diachronic angle to supplement our analysis of their synchronic structures. Texts and genres are not only situated in social time but also as a register of passing time. Time being a semiotic element in many genres, working both syntagmatically and paradigmatically, is deployed as a sign as well as in the structuring of signs. Time acts as a metonym that affects the meanings in the text, and the way signs are arranged within the texts. Time is a structural and meaningful component of texts operating along its syntagmatic and paradigmatic aspects. This whole process of representing time in texts is called narration. A narrative is the text structured by the sequence of events it represents. (Thwaites, et al. 2002. p.117-118) Such is the historical relevance of texts as important cultural and historical documents that to read the social history of a period’s institution one read literature, poetic writings, prose fictions and even pornographic texts besides philosophical, historical and religious writings (Milner, 2002). The temporality of cinematic texts and their narratives are thus to be seen as valuable socio-historical documents of the nation – a rich source of its unofficial history.

The immense flexibility of the Indian cinematic form functioning as a grand syntagmatic can be seen to produce instantiated aesthetic engagement with the historical growth of the nation state.(Mishra, 2002, p.viii-ix ) As a public discourse, as a textual site, Hindi films intersect with the history of the nation and the issues that concern it.. As already said how cinematic texts involves a hegemonic struggle between ideological discourses, one can locate how within films different ideological impulses representing various lobbies seek to represent the social history of the nation. Issues like gender, representation of man and woman, heterosexual
romance, family are the various important elements of popular Hindi cinema and are important issues in the representation of the nation’s social history. It is along the topos of the film that one can also read the cultural politics involved in such popular representation of the nation’s history and how certain representational forms are privileged over others. An intensive genealogical studies of concentrated periods of film history, argues Virdi, yields a homology between the text and the context in which the film is produced.( Virdi, ibid.24; 205; 211)

Also, the very episodic nature endemic to the structure of popular Hindi cinematic text, allow for simulating a comprehensive world view and incorporate the most recent and contemporary trends and happenings within the Indian society, give shape to the latest objects of daily living including fashion, technology and modernity .(Saari, 2009. p. 11)

Hindi films like all other forms of cultural production are a product of a certain social, political, economic and historical context. In post-independence India, Hindi film making can be broadly categorised into three main eras which correspond to the three key moments of the nation which shaped the social and political context of life in India. Each era has generated certain narratives, conflicts, protagonists and antagonists typical to the concerns of that period or emblematic of the wider socio-political forces and concerns of that epoch. Within the prolific scope of Hindi films one can trace the influence of a given period in the films in terms of its defining trends and characteristic conventions typical of its times. These trends though predominant in an era are not exclusive enough to preclude others.

Also relevant to the understanding of cinematic text is the political dynamics and the political element of the text and therefore we seek to draw from Jameson’s idea viz. “political unconscious” Jameson [1981] in his book ‘The Political Unconscious’, as a classic account of ‘narrative’ as a key formal element in Marxian analysis that seeks to synthesize Marxist and Freudian perspectives into a powerful critical methodology, provides an important theoretical framework to arrive at a symptomatic reading of the text to gain an access to the unconscious reality. The assertion of a political unconscious proposes that we undertake an analysis of texts whereby everything is “in the last analysis” political. This enables an exploration of multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts.

The first era was marked by the early years of freedom marked by Nehruvian vision of optimism of nation-building and its agenda of planning and economic development. The second phase was marked by the widespread social and political unrest and growing dissatisfaction with the state authorities that finally culminated in the declaration of Emergency by the Prime Minister in 1975. The films of this era differed significantly from the earlier era in the male protagonist as the anti-hero representing the crisis of his times. The third era or the contemporary begun with the process of India’s policy of economic liberalization, and also the emergence of Hindu religious –nationalism within the mainstream of Indian politics.(Ganti, 2004. p.23-24)

Treating films as socio-historical texts necessitates looking at these texts as ideological representations of a period. The designation of ideologies as “systems of representation” acknowledges their essentially discursive and semiotic character and as per Stuart Hall’s
position the systems of representations are the systems of meanings through which we represent the world to ourselves and one another. It concedes that the ideological knowledge is the result of specific practices involved in production of meaning. (Hall, 1996, p.23) Borrowing Hall’s idea of ‘representation’, allow us to argue Hindi films as the discursive semiotic domain of ideological representation are inscribed with meanings through which we can make sense of the time and the context in which it is situated historically, materially, politically and socially. The filmic narratives of the nation located within this discursive domain also can be seen to lend itself to be sites of constructing the heroes as ideological representation or embodied representations of this nation.

The representation of the nation’s history is not subject to any determinate mechanism as nationalism is a contested and conflictual terrain on which competing power blocs compete for hegemony. Nation being discursive is reconstituted in historical projects. The formation of nations thus remains dynamic in this sense and can not be seen as fixed entities. Rival power blocs compete for hegemony over the process of formation of the nation. In this conflict of hegemonies, varying political ideologies, cultural practices and organised social forces arise with quite different understanding of the nation’s historical past and what it is to become in the future. Unlike in advanced capitalist countries where the formations are more stable in the post colonial states it is rendered more complex by a colonial past of domination. (see, Ahmed, 2007) The representation of the nation’s social history in filmic texts takes place within a fluid matrix of competing discourses seeking hegemony. Various ideological impulses are contained within the cinematic address though it is the dominant most strongly seek to represent the nation within the text.

The domain of the popular represents the ‘left over of official narratives’ (Radhakrishnan, 2010, p. 26) and in this sense may be seen as a document of a nation’s ‘unofficial history. As an expression of the excess beyond rational political discourse (ibid) eluding the rational political discourse, Hindi films serve to be important popular sites of ideological power-struggles relevant to read and reconstitute the nation, and the forces that shape its history albeit in the domain of the popular. And so a hero like Raj Kapoor is seen to embody the socialist tryst of the nation under the influence of Nehru and Amitabh Bachchan embodies the anti-establishment force rebelling against the authoritarian state forces. Cultural forms like cinema as already stated is a contested terrain of ideologies seeking hegemony. The resurgence of cultural nationalism and revival of the same in cinematic texts can be read as cultural forms that appear to be ‘tribal returns’ reflecting counter-movement of globalisation towards greater homogenisation. And on the other hand a nation seeks re-invention by disengaging from territory and makes it serve as a covenant term for imagining it as a collectivity.

This history captured within the popular text of Hindi cinema as chronicled by scholars of popular culture runs parallel to the statis, officially recognised history which does not recognise the classic melodramatic phase of the silent era as early beginnings of Bollywood or ancestors to what became the industry of Hindi cinema. The state’s attempt to discipline the film industry also involved its intervention in the domain of historiography by allowing the
‘official history’ to accommodate the 1950s Hindi cinema. The official historiographic devices of the state remained contested as the industry refused to accept this kind of history and its omissions at the behest of the state. (Rajadhyaksha, 2009, p. 77-78; 82) Treating these popular texts as social history of the nation interestingly parallels the political and economic history of India.

The controversial claim that is crucial to the Hindi mainstream film as a repository of national cultural values and nation’s history certainly has its roots in years preceding independence of India from colonial rule. Ironically, the official statist historiography’s erasure of the early pre-independence years tantamount to a sheer failure or reticence to acknowledge how commercial films was able to simulate the conditions of a national market or an audience prior to the formation of independent, sovereign Indian republican state. Notably the nationalist imagining and integrative role was performed by the commercial film industry at Bombay (now Mumbai) ostensibly sans state-support. Hindi film’s role as of constituting a national cinema public comprising the spectator-citizen went on much beyond the state’s recognition (ibid, p. 83)

Positing Shah Rukh as a representation of the global moment necessitates a certain brief retrospectively understanding of how the various commentaries on the social history of the nation identify parallels in the rise of certain epochal traits within film narratives. Considering the early years of independence i.e. the 1950s, the problems of migration to cities, unemployment, rise in urban crime, exploitation of the poor comprising peasants, urban middle class by exploitative money lenders, rural landlords, corrupt businessmen, idealistic middle class heroes characterised Hindi mainstream films. The hero suffered social and economic injustice, though the state represented as benevolent arbitr of justice and progress symbolised the optimism of nation-building. Conflict in these films mostly emerged from family dynamics, generational gap, or tradition and conservatism opposing modernity. This was also the period that witnessed the rise of patriotic films in the wake of independence from the colonial rule and subsequent wars with Pakistan and China. The statist discourse on ‘national integration’ had its valorisation in films that too upheld the pan-Indian identity over diversities. (Ganti, 2004, 29-30). The decades of 50s and 60s reflected eminently the Nehruvian vision of socialism and his nation-building agenda that envisaged the construction of dams and factories. (Bhugra, 2006, p. 87) These decades are particularly significant because cinema veered away from the depiction of wondrous miracles and incredible stunts to an emphasis on realism. The unequivocal commitment to urban development, modernity and industrialisation and modernisation unleashed variety of problems that became central to filmic plots. (Jacob, 2010, p. 89)

The decade of 70s sought to displace the earlier spirit of hope and optimism that characterised early years of independence. The euphoria of independence begun to wane. (Virdi, 2003, p. 41, Ganti, 2004 p. 30) If films like Upkaar exhorted the nation’s citizen-soldier peasant to the national cause, the Machiavellian strategies of Indira Gandhi’s authoritarian rule to remain in power and the declaration of National Emergency in 1975, unleashed a cynicism that encompassed films projected on the nation’s screen. The impact of 1965 war, the cost of the
war against Pakistan in 1971 leading to the creation of Bangladesh, the burden of refugee relief on state funds, acute droughts and chronic food shortages in 1972 and 1973, peasant rebellion, student unrest, sharp rise in commodity prices and spiralling inflation, world energy oil crisis in 1973, the protracted All-India Railway workers’ strike, Jaya Prakash Narayan’s anti-corruption movement, among others cumulatively was building a popular opposition against the state (Virdi 2003, ibid, p. 108, Ganti ibid p.30). In addition to this was the crisis within the Congress party that led the state. In 1969 the party split and breakdown in the body politic set off similar reactions in the broad social fabric. For the first time the ‘monolithic power’ of the hegemonic Congress party came under challenge in successive defeats in various state-elections. Criminalisation and use of violence in politics became common. (Saari, 2009 ibid, p.116) There was massive civic disenchantment due to these problems and extensive state interventions in the state economy counterproductively created opportunities for corruption, smuggling, black marketing and widened social disparities. (Virdi, 2012 p.227)

The state’s attempt to control these crises through violence failed. The deepening political and economic problems led to political protests and demonstrations as people took to streets. The state to curb them increased its disciplining force and perpetrated violence. The state authoritarian culminated in the declaration of Emergency curtailing all democratic rights and suspension of civil liberties guaranteed constitutionally. Media, activists and intellectuals were rigidly controlled, censored, arbitrarily subjected to detentions etc... Coercive state measures of sterilisation and demolition of poor urban settlements in the name of population control and ‘beautification’ had an unpopular backlash. Despite several populist measures to curb corruption, bring in fiscal and agricultural reform, social welfare policies, nationalization failed to restore people’s faith in developmental agenda of the state. (Ganti, 2004 ibid p31)

These developments had a resounding influence upon films. Change in the political culture, wars, conflicts gave rise to a different consciousness in films. Melodramatic sentimentalism was replaced by violence as the ‘new lingua franca’ of popular Hindi films. And despite an official ban on it during Emergency, censorship was circumvented through sleight of hand in discrete ways. Violence, discontent seemed to express the popular sentiment much against the authoritarian yet anxious state. The outlaw emerged as the crusader-hero, who delivered justice. The collapsing state legitimacy saw the rise of such saviours who battled for justice. (Saari, ibid.p.116-118). According to Saari, the beginnings of violence in the 1970s on screen of commercial Hindi films represent ‘The sociology of the modern Indian state’. This paradigm shift wherein all ingredients of the basic formula became subsidiary to the predominance of violence represented the audience collective psyche. The film ‘Johny Mera Naam’ of Dev Anand and Vinod Khanna’s ‘Mera Gaon Mera Desh’ were forerunners to the trend that opened up cinematic possibilities to portray organised crime(Saari 2009, ibid, p. 113-114) saw a culmination in the cult films based on violence revenge and protest viz. Sholay, Deewar, and Zanjeer. Starring Amitabh Bachchan, he came to personify the genre of the ‘angry young man’. The success of these films are attributable to the deep crisis that afflicted urban India in the form of urban crime, corruption, sectarian politics, price rises etc. The arrival of a marketable
violence departed from romanticisms that reigned earlier decades. Political turmoil and social upheavals evidently had its repercussions in films. And against the backdrop of Emergency, one can posit the rise of Amitabh Bachchan-almost as a cinematic parallel to Indira Gandhi’s political authoritarianism. Bound to his times, Bachchan came to represent the decadence that had set in. By the seventies, the contradictions of socialist path of development were evidently sharper. Bachchan as the protagonist the angst-ridden rebellious marginalised hero, the wronged and exploited man was the cinematic prototype of the “Indian self” who assumed agency to amend the social, political and economic crisis faced by the nation. (Bhugra, 2006, p.88-89)

In the body politic of the nation, these films showcased working class disenchantment mostly, as a subaltern figure-coal miner, dock worker, porter, slum dweller, factory worker etc. The Bachchan figure, embodying violence and vendetta against the corrupt men like industrialists, mafia don, capitalist bosses challenges from his downtrodden location or rises to the top to vindicate past humiliation. Structurally these narratives re-visited the socialist realism of Raj Kapoor’s films and its sense of suffering and disenchantment. Unlike Kapoor’s characterisation of an idealist, earnest unemployed youth, Bachchan, an urban ghetto product barely concealed his simmering rage beneath a self-assured melancholic persona. In addition to his star power, the screen plays inscribed by a trenchant critic resonated powerfully with a disillusioned post-Emergency nation. (Virdi, ibid, p.107)

One of the most significant changes in Hindi films emerged in the turbulent era of the 70s, where the action of the vigilante, outlaw brought in a complete change in heroic persona. His immediate predecessor, the reigning super star Rajesh Khanna, achieved success by playing the soft, vulnerable, middle class, romantic roles. The hero popularised by Bachchan, a disaffected, cynical, violent man was far removed from family utopia. Films in this period shifted focus to the state, the society, public spaces, streets etc. In contrast to the catharsis provided through ‘happy endings’ of earlier era the 70s saw a melancholic twist in the films through grey characterisation and tragic consequences of the anti-hero of the 70s. (Saari ibid, p. 120-123)

The 1980s was marked by an unimaginable fiscal deficit and spiralling inter-national debt. This was also the decade when Indira Gandhi was re-elected and even assassinated. De-stabilizing separatist movements took roots in this period in various states like Punjab, Kashmir and Assam. Parochialism in politics supplanted the idealism of independence. (Bhugra, ibid, p.90) Popular films re-iterated the sentiments the fear of the terrorist in films like Karma. (Virdi, ibid. p.110) Cast within revenge narratives, the decade explored the theme of avenging women, who had to protect themselves, as their men had paradoxically turned impotent and less virile. Locating the oppressed viz, the woman within a sub-ordinated position, the narrative authority of films secured an interpellation based identification with the protagonist. (Bhugra, 2006, p.90-91).

However, certain changes in this decade had the premonition of the market despite the prevalent temper of violence and revenge that persisted since the seventies. One was the increased access of the middle class to the privacy of watching films at home in-home video
players and did not have to share the public space of cinema halls with the urban lumpen class.

The second was two very successful romantic films ‘Quayamat Se Quayamat Tak’ and ‘Maine Pyar Kiya’ that had two very younger heroes in the lead Aamir Khan and Salman Khan who allowed to re-imagine the heroic prototype beyond the confines of the ‘Angry Young Man’ mould. Third, the proliferation of cable and satellite T.V. and the engagement of the urban middle class with it and also the two televised epics ‘Ramayana’ and the ‘Mahabharata’ that was highly popular served to re-kindle Hindu cultural nationalism. (Bhugra ibid. p.91).

The 1980s can also be seen to bear the antecedents of reforms and can be said to be the decade of India’s ‘take off’ during which the country grew almost twice as fast as an average rich industrial nation and almost thrice as fast as the typical poor developing country. This sustained growth had its correlates in policy reforms, capital efficiency, technological improvements, consumer spending, migrant remittances, state’s disbursements and certain reforms in the budget of the Rajiv Gandhi government that adumbrated deregulation. This era known as the ‘Rajiv Effect’ though had a limited impact (Corbridge, 2001. p.181)

2.5 THE INDIAN NATION-STATE AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMERCIAL HINDI FILMS

The historical experience of South Asian states is both illuminating as well as instructive. Till the advent of the colonial powers the waves of migrants as well as invaders seemed to enrich its civilizational diversity and eventually became integrated into the age old civilisation which had within its ambit the Indian subcontinent. Such a sub continental civilizational thrust was not statist. A contiguous swathe of territory, it went beyond to encompass multitude of principalities and states. Added to this sub continental civilisation was the re-structured state-system the boundaries of which were arbitrarily delineated during the colonial period. The arbitrary structuring and re-structuring of territorial boundaries during the British rule and during the transfer of power led to porous boundaries with ethnic group and communities overlapping and criss-crossing the state boundaries. This ethnic overlapping had the great potential for intra-regional dissonance. This explains the anxiety among South Asian states to evolve symbols and institutions to cope with cross-border ethnic affinities on one hand and manage ethnic pluralities internally with a view to build a state-centric nation. Irrespective of the nature of political systems the ex-colonial nation states in South Asia asserted nationhood as cultural embodiment of the state. A recurrent theme of national unity or national integration informed the state policies of these South Asian ex-colonial states. In order to arrive firmly at their statehood they needed to build their nationhood both ideologically as well structurally with an imminent urgency. (Phadnis,2001, p.31, 33, 247) The choice of symbols and structures to underline nationness of the state in India reflected the secular and modernist choices of the ruling elite. The choice of symbols for buttressing national-identity for India was secular-plural in nature.(ibid,p.248) Phadnis’ idea of state driven nationhood is supported by Wallerstein,s affirmation that: ‘….in almost every case statehood preceded nationhood and not the other way around, despite a widespread myth to the contrary….nationalist movements did arise in many
zones demanding the creation of sovereign states……These movements with rare exceptions, arose within already constructed administrative boundaries. Hence it could be said that a state, albeit a non-independent one preceded the movement. And secondly it is debatable how deep a root ‘nation’ as a communal sentiment took before the actual creation of the state’. (Wallerstein,1991. p. 81) The state-supported nationhood according to Wallerstein is maintained for two reasons; to maintain cohesion against internal differences or disintegration and external threats or aggression. The state seeks to forge a national sentiment to allay these threats and has an interest in forging an administrative uniformity to increase their legitimacy, efficacy of the policies implemented and also maintain its rank in the hierarchy of state-communities. (ibid p. 82)

Looking at the history of nation-formation in India, Balibar identifies what is described as ‘nationalization of society’ (Balibar,1991. p. 92) that took place under the aegis of a ‘national bourgeoisie’ (ibid. p.90). The initial years of independence was marked by a socialist policy of state intervention, a welfare state and mixed economy that explains how national formation took place through state apparatus held by the national bourgeoisie, the nationalist leaders. The nationalization through state intervention, argues Balibar sought to ensure the relative stability of state formation and resolve the conflictual issues faced in order to produce a consensus of the national state. The contradiction of capitalism was brought in even when the nation making was not completed, and consequently the social inequalities of class etc. made the institution of the national social-state, ie. the state, to intervene in the very reproduction of the economy, and particularly in the formation of individuals, in family structures, the structure of public health, and more generally in the whole space of private life. This subordinated individuals of all classes to their status as citizens, to the fact of being ‘nationals’. (ibid, 92)

In this state-driven agenda to build a nationhood within a modernist framework there was little or no scope for the mass produced popular films and this section seek to explore the trajectory of the relationship of the Indian nation-state with Popular Hindi films. The industry for long was unable to translate its cultural value into a viable financial plan largely due to the apathy of the state. (Rajadhyaksha, 2009, p.75) which at times have been even antagonistic towards it. It warrants a separate study to explore this relationship between the state and the Hindi film industry and film production. This discussion is highly significant to this study as this would enable us to locate the global turn in the subsequent change in the state disposition towards Hindi popular films against which the emergence of the star-subject Shah Rukh Khan becomes largely explicable.

Tracing the trajectory of this relationship, I would draw attention to some of the key issues around which the antipathy and even apathy of the state gets reflected around several issues The antipathy of nationalist leaders is the legacy that informed the state’s attitude towards popular films for long. Although the father of Indian cinema, Dhundiraj Phalke, was explicitly nationalist in his motivation towards film making and wanted to create Indian images for the Indian audiences through what he believed to be a completely indigenous or Swadesi enterprise in times of the colonial rule, the Indian National Congress, the principal organisation fighting
the colonial rule did not accord the medium much value. Most leaders saw it as ‘low’ and ‘vulgar’ form of entertainment. Gandhi’s disdain towards it as a sinful imported technology and Nehru’s emphasis on the pedagogical role of films as a tool supporting state’s modernizing project disqualified the entertainment based commercial films from being part of state’s official agenda and recognition. Soon after independence myriad of ministries, academies and state supported institutions were established soon after independence to deal with visual, performing and literary arts and in an effort to revive and support traditional art forms. But the state consciously excluded cinema from these categories and placed it under the purview of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting than the Ministry of Culture. Instead of acknowledging the economic significance of film as an industry and the dominant mode of film making as aiding the economy the Indian government and its state policies subjected it to taxation comparable to those imposed on vices like gambling, horse racing and so on. And despite the fact that it was the second largest industry in terms of capital investment and fifth largest in terms of the number of people employed in it and having the distinction of being one of the largest film industries in the world, the Indian state for long refused to grant it the legitimacy of an industry. Apart from imposing taxes the state has repeatedly refused to concede to grant concessions and any kind of fiscal protection.

The attitude of ambivalence is marked by the state generated discourse on cinema. This idealist discourse exhorting a model of ‘socially relevant’ films engendering positive effects upon society, in accordance with state ideologies also justifies censorship. Censorship initiated by the British who feared the popularity of films and its nationalistic moorings, continued as a practise even after freedom. The anxiety and distrust continues to haunt the state which seek to control, regulate and discipline films and film making. The state instituted cinematic bureaucracy was instituted to foster ‘good cinema’ through various institutional apparatus of film making, financing, archiving, training and so on. But popular films with its aesthetic and generic convention did not fit within the state ideology on films. (Ganti 2004, p.43-50) The failure of the mainstream cinema to be a potential partner in state’s modernising project and denial of industry status that prevented it from availing privileges of a successful industry on one hand was contrasting to the parasitical benefits the state derived from the industry through compulsory screening of state propaganda, taxation etc. (Prasad, 1998, p.33-34)

The issue of state’s non-recognition of film industry is related also to its past rooted to colonial times and the scepticism and ambivalence of the colonial government towards the content delivered; and this suspicion led to the censorship policy by the colonial authorities in an attempt to control the message disseminated. Although, early cinema contained oblique allusions to nationalist cause that through myths, social dramas circumvented colonial regulation, this popular medium failed to capture the imagination of the nationalist leaders who either remained apathetic towards it or were apprehensive about its intent. The ambivalence of the colonial state was almost transmitted as a legacy to the post-colonial state. (see, Kaul, 1996).

In effect, the statist internationalist history inaugurated in the 1950s, which in a bid to establish what it saw as Indian Cinema, ensured an omission of the early Indian cinema as one of the
national cinemas of the silent era. Periodised by the famous Post Pather Panchali (PPP) this nationalist history of Indian Cinema perpetuated the widespread assumption that nothing worth or of significance preceded Satyajit Ray’s debut classic. (Rajadhyaksha, 2009, ibid, p.77) Indian Cinema was seen to appear only in 1956 with Ray’s film. Prior to this the evolutionary thrust of film historiography does not allow for consideration of early Indian cinema as one of the national cinema of the silent era. Influenced by a developmentalist ideology these narratives fail to tell the whole story. (Prasad, 1998, p.14-15) In almost a rebuttal to this throughout the 90s Indian Cinema’s bypassed this history entirely to name an exclusively Hindi cinema as its legitimately direct and valued predecessor. By early 2000s, Bollywood’s army of popular historians were commissioned at a conscious retrospective evocation or re-visitations of an earlier epoch consisting of the classic period of melodrama that followed the post-World War period and the early years of independence. Over-turning statist history it sought to revive the pre-war nostalgia and the entrenched history of studio production. (Rajadhyaksha, 2009 ibid p77-78)

The question of historical domain as a site of contestation between the state and the industry is crucial to this work as it serves to substantiate how the popular nation captured in cinematic space eludes state discourse that seeks to control knowledge production about the nation through its official history. The inclusion of those omissions in popular tracings of Bollywood trajectory is crucial to argue that the social history of the nation in popular texts falls largely beyond the state’s disciplining regime of knowledge production.

The paradox to the state’s attempt to hegemonies the history of Indian films and several attempts to fiscally control it via measures of taxation lies in the fact that the state has been largely apathetic to the integrative role of this popular form. The film industry largely by default performed the unifying role, an integrative nationalist function. This popular cultural form had a presence largely unacknowledged by the state. The statist agenda of cultural unification was purportedly fulfilled by the All-India Radio and later the Doordarshan. Ironically, while the industry failed to be financially self-sustaining and was unable to garner much support from the state, it counter-balanced its inability by promoting an all-encompassing formula, an integrative contemporary popular cultural discourse that could transcend the linguistic and regional diversities of the nation (Rajadhyaksha, ibid, p.83).

The state perhaps was anxious about the role played by films and the potency of the medium of large reach and circulation, provide new visual experiences and shape new sense of identity. These possibilities generated the intent of the state to regulate the cinematic medium and in a certain sense was forced to accept that the state rivalled the film’s claim over its own citizen. (Bhattacharya et al 2010, p.107)

World cultural models of sovereign identity assume a concrete form in specific state structures, programs and policies. While there are models for rationalised nation-state actors in the form of structures, policies, goals, etc. there are standard cultural forms for depiction of national identity. States take to models of constructing national culture lodged at the world level through museums, traditions, tourism, national intellectual culture etc (Meyer et al., 2000, p.88)
‘Orientation to the identity and purposes of the nation-state model increases the rate at which countries adopt other prescribed institutions of modernity. Having committed themselves to the identity of rationalizing state, appropriate policies follow….’(ibid) After independence the new de-colonised Indian nation-state followed the world cultural model of modernist, sovereign nation-state that followed the standardised normative pattern to define its cultural identity in which its cultural identity and its representations were authenticated by these modern rational forms. As the policies and institutional practices were governed by modern, rational paradigm and drive for nation-building was high in early decades of independence, realist cinema can be seen to be one of the cultural and technological vehicle for instituting the ethos of modernity.

After independence in 1947, the newly formed Indian state engaged in the task of nation building enthused the commercial film industry of Hindi films which was willing to participate in this task of nation-building and requested the state to confer upon it the legitimate industry status as this would make available the infra-structural and credit support that the economic policies had already promised for other industries of the country. However, the developmentalist state reserved its economic aid for projects like heavy industry, agriculture etc. that would more tangibly contribute to the goal of nation’s progress.(Bhattacharya et al. 2010p.107) The modernist state instead looked towards the technology of cinema in its capacity to enable certain kinds of signification and in privileging certain kinds realist expressions. The state saw in films the ability to be carriers of narratives that can be appropriately utilised by the state-led aesthetic programme in showing the national culture. The state sought to regulate the textual content of the image as it was considered to be able to articulate statist discourse through realism as its chosen mode of representation. The much vaunted technique of meaning production of realism was envisioned by a policy that sought to give this form of realism a role as a cultural counterpart of the economic policies associated with India’s early planning initiatives constituting its much proclaimed socialist policies.(Rajadhyaksha,2009 ibid, p.140)

Nehruvian vision committed to scientific and technological modernism saw in films the capacity for realist representation. And it goes without saying that such a vision of realism that inspired state policy held no scope for commercial films. Held with much disdain and alleged to escapist and formulaic was deemed unsuited for realising state’s modernising agenda. (ibid p.147;151) In fact, the very space that mainstream films came to occupy disqualified it from the range of concessions and state support, most importantly institutional finance. The various forms of institutionalised state support was mainly directed to benefit what Partha Chatterjee calls a ‘pedagogical mission of civil society and its modernist vision.’(Rajadhyaksha,ibid p.462)

The state in order to discipline the industry proceeded to define the film industry’s products as luxurious and imposed heavy taxes on them. In addition, the state as a conservative authority emphasised upon the pernicious potential and baneful influence of such cinema upon the so-called Indian culture and after its role was discussed and debated at the Parliament in 1954 it was held responsible for declining moral standards. In fact it was the state’s suspicion about the moral role of the films that informed statist regulation via mechanism of censorship.(Bhattacharya et. al 2010 ibid p.107)
The policy of liberalisation adopted in 1991 was an important event and subsequent developments testify the growing anxiety of the state to stem further alienation with the industry. In fact, the grant of the industry status without requisite fiscal support marked an ambivalent statist positioning. (Bhattacharya et al. ibid. p, 112)

The industry gained the status from the state in 1998 and was met with mixed response as very few qualified for funding from the institutions of financial capital. Attempts were made by the then minister of the Information and Broadcasting Minister to make the industry qualify for financial assistance from the banks and to rope in the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce to attract as well identify financial funding under the guidance of institutions of financial capital. (Rajadyaksha ibid.p.76) The Indian state’s immediate reason for granting industry status was to wean it away from its dependence on ‘black money’ or unaccounted, untaxed money from its nexus with the underworld-the domain of organised crime. (Ganti, 2004 p.50)

The dyadic relation between the neo-liberal economic rhetoric and the rise of an emergent cultural nationalism signified by the Hindu nationalist and pro-business Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also contributed significantly towards the Indian state’s shifting attitudes towards the Hindi film industry. Quiet unsurprisingly, it is the BJP Government that granted the industry status since the party’s support base is heavily drawn from petty traders and small businessmen who also constitute largely the vast distribution, exhibition and finance apparatus for production of Hindi cinema. The other area is that of post liberalisation narratives, celebrating Hindu rituals and having elaborate weddings in large spaces of wealthy families. Such themes of nostalgia upholding vision of Indian culture and family values were much in agreement with the conservative rhetoric of the BJP. And it was the latter that probably led the government towards the move to accord a state derived legitimacy to its industry status—a long awaited claim fulfilled. (Ganti, 2004 p.51)

There is a deep cultural politics involved and taking advantage of liberalisation of the economy, the cultural nationalism of BJP was quick to turn Hindi films as a vehicle of this nationalism that served its purpose of delinking nation from the state. The Indian state was itself negotiating a transition from an earlier era of de-colonization and ‘high nationalism’ as it was moving towards newer times of globalization and finance capital. The BJP’s own investment into the policy of ‘cultural nationalism’—a relatively more free form of a civilizational belonging, clearly delinked from the political rights of citizenship and even from the state itself has had its cinematic articulations in several diasporic-themed films with the ‘NRI investor support’ as a ‘prime candidate’ in films. (Rajadhyaksha, 2007 p.458)

The fact that Hindi films and its popular cultural complex of music, video, magazines are enormously popular in the neighbouring South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan though made available through a thriving piracy and video culture, it nevertheless reinforces the Indian state’s regional cultural hegemony, albeit in popular Hindi films, to a certain extent. This popularity of Hindi films in the sub-continent is seen by the Indian press and the state as a manifestation of India’s ‘soft power’ within the region.
One of the significant aspects of the changing relation between Hindi films and the state is due to the fact that the Bombay film industry is the only other dominant, globally circulating film industry and that Hindi films are registering equal or higher box office grosses than Hollywood in several wealthy countries like the u.s., Britain, Japan and has come to be a source of national pride and even distinction. Several Western governments are trying to entice Hindi film-makers to shoot in their countries, and this certainly points at a significant reversal of the typical relationship that existed between First World and the Third World.

In an age of globalisation media has gained a new significance as a symbolic vehicle of the nation and its cultural identity. Unlike the 1950s, where debates centred on if cinema could ever be an authentic, indigenous cultural expression, since the late 1990s cinema is being touted as part of India’s cultural heritage. With increased presence of Hollywood through dubbed versions, Hindi films have acquired the mantle of cultural authenticity and Indian-ness vis-à-vis Hollywood films. This combined with an increased circulation and successes of Hindi films outside India are leading to a positive change in the disposition of the state towards Hindi films. Though India has been exporting films from the 1950s, film exports are now seen as a potential source of foreign exchange earnings. In an era dominated by the neo-liberal rhetoric of free markets and competition and the dismantling of the state’s economic barriers, the Hindi film industry suddenly emerges as a symbol of indigenous and native ingenuinity and success.(Ganti,2004, p.51-52)

As mentioned earlier that popular film viewership extended the field of democratic right through open viewership of films as public spectacle. The state, contending this popular domain maintained its authority either through censorship controlling its content or through taxes. However, with films coming under corporate finance and production, gaining industrial status etc have made films gravitate towards an elite modernity. Gaining of state accorded legitimacy contends Vasudevan, has robbed films of being an inclusive form of mass-entertainment. Concurrent changes in state policy and in film making and entry of cinema into corporate forms (Vasudevan,2010 ibid,p.340-341) have been a significant reason in the improved relation between the state and the industry.

Cinema is now part of a new global consumer economy, urbanisation and urban planning and interestingly, and the state itself following the policy of liberal reforms have taken up a reconciled stance towards the Bombay film industry. Besides this, the new context has been marketed by an accelerated availability of communication and media forms and much of this involves both state supports along with corporate initiatives. Cinema is to be located as a repositioned cultural domain on a new firmament and exploring cinema in a global regime also offer an interesting understanding of the new relations between the state, corporate enterprise, media and public life. This new context for cinema since the 1990s contrasts sharply to its official status during the decades following freedom. While in the 1950s, cinema in its dominant commercial format was understood by the state as that which did not warrant sympathetic policies, and was to be taxed and regulated in order to control its dubious attraction for a mass audience the situation since liberalisation onwards have changed substantially with.
one of the major issues being the emergence of a significant market, getting high returns in the Indian cinema’s export oriented sector. This phenomenon went hand in hand with the reframing of the nation-state and national imaginary. Departing from the earlier policy directed primarily to the territoriality of nation and protection of economic boundaries and cultural protocols, there emerges a global-nation where Non-Residential Indians (NRI) increasingly come to occupy importance as symbolically was expressed in the annual prime ministerial meetings with success stories of what is now referred to as the People Of Indian Origin (Vasudevan, 2011, p4-5). As by the early 1990s the growing economic power of the NRI came to be recognised by the state and the Indian government actively began to woo them with attractive investment schemes. This was already a part of the Reserve Bank of India’s policy on foreign exchange reserves. The other important development in the stance of the state was the introduction of a consolidated media bill that integrated the merger of satellite communication with cable, television and internet and all of which featured film production prominently in their output. This convergence attracted good financial investments from a range of investors (Rajadhyaksha, 2007, p.458). It needs to be stated that in the absence of state official narrative governing popular culture, the state’s attempt to reclaim and govern its diasporic subjects has its popular mediation in the transnationalised content of Bollywood. It is also reflective of the state’s anxiety and sullen recognition once again of nation being represented by films even beyond its territorial confines (Bhattacharya et al, 2010, p.118).

The other reason is that cinema is also now a part of the Information Technology (IT) driven export and market driven migrant culture. The increased importance of the high-end migrant culture along with an incredible rate of movement of software engineers into different sites of the world economy serves to project the idea of India as a world power with greater aplomb. Instead of yoking such a newly found pride and expansionist logic to a national art cinema, the state’s relative reconciliation to the cultural, political and economic importance of popular Hindi cinema marks a change in the relationship between the two. And whatever the complex and differentiated qualities of contemporary film culture, a trend is clear, viz. the state is no longer idealistic about projecting an authentic culture through a national aesthetic programme as was after independence. There was earlier a constant nationalist anxiety to avoid the derivative trap of foreign culture especially influence of American culture and fear of depletion of values of traditional art and craft. It is contested that the high success of Hindi films in the export market leads to the displacement of the nation as an art form by nation as a brand, adding and deriving distinction and profits from its widely circulated products, serving the global-nation to uphold its identity triumphantly in the global scene and earning substantial profits. Contributing significantly in converting the nation to a globally circulating brand, Hindi cinema’s role in representing the nation globally is widely acknowledged (Vasudevan 2010, ibid p. 5-7).

As the state embarked on a globalising agenda and made attempts to gain access to its successful migrant communities in an environment supporting financial investments and foreign capital; it may also be argued that the trans-territorialized affinities claimed by the state
not only explains diasporisation both ‘aesthetically and thematically’(see, Vasudevan 2010)) but also accounts for the films gaining respectability, as a cultural artefact that for many years have been popular amongst the diaspora.

Films took a lead in resurrecting the concept of nation against the threats the state faced as an institution of legitimization, particularly following its disinvestment policies. The brand of a Hindutva cultural nationalism that constituted the political ideology of the then political group that led the state was able to find in films an ideological articulation.(Rajadhyaksha, 2007)Thus the new interest of the Indian state in the industry was not just for its financial export returns but was also was an attempt to hegemonies ideologically the meaning of national identity. Taking the benefits of a de-regulated and privatised media and the transformation of the cinema industry into a culture industry, the BJP –led state was now anxious to harness Bollywood towards the goal of cultural nationalism. (Gopal et. al 2010, p35;39)

It is pertinent to mention that although the film industry for long survived state antipathy, lack of institutional support or funding, its popular character derived largely from this ‘illegitimacy’ that represented the people’s desires and elided the state. The grant of industry status, the corporatisation of film production and institutional funding etc might militate against the mass-popular character of these films. The old movie spectator, the member of, what Partha Chatterjee, calls as political society does feel distinctly uncomfortable in plush new foyers with Pepsi soda fountain. (Rajadhyaksha’s views, cited by Vasudevan2011,2010) This proves to be an extremely important aspect of changing profile of film viewership. In the subsequent sections, the changes in the political and cultural economy will allow us to see how the change in form seeks to hark back the interests of two categories, first the successful migrant Indians abroad as potential investors and second the upwardly mobile middle class Indians, the prime addressee and benefactors of liberalisation agenda. The state’s interest in these two groups and the film industry’s interest to revise its form to attract the attention and the imagination of these two groups are informed by the same logic of reaping benefits from the opportunities unleashed by a liberal economic regime.

Although the state has remained aloof to the functioning of the film industry and derided its content, except some occasional moments of disciplining via taxation and censorship, one cannot see it to be an institution holding the film industry at abeyance. Stuart Hall’s position clarifies this as he concedes to Foucault’s idea of power to state that ‘I agree that one can no longer think of the state in that way. The state is a contradictory formation which means that it has different modes of action, is active in many different sites: it is pluricentric and multidimensional……state remains one of the crucial sites in a modern capitalist social formation where political practices of different kinds are condensed. The function of the state, is, in part, precisely to bring together or articulate into a complexly structured instance, a range of political and social discourses which are concerned at different sites with the transmission and transformation of power-some of those practices having little to do with the political domain as such, being concerned with other domains which are nevertheless articulated to the state, for example, familial life, civil society, gender and economic relations. The state is the
instance of performance of a condensation which allows that site of intersection between different practices to be transformed into a systematic practice of regulation, of rule and norms, of normalization. The state condenses very different social practices and transforming them into operations of rule and domination…The way to reach such a conceptualization is not to substitute difference….but to rethink both in terms of a new concept-articulation’ (Hall, 1996. p.13) Extending Hall’s understanding allow us to argue that just as the location of the Indian state on the trajectory of passive revolution and a hegemonic bourgeoisie transformation complicit with pre-capitalist, backward capitalist enclaves of power had its resonance in patriarchal, feudal romance of Hindi films in the early years of freedom, as argued by Madhava Prasad(applying Partha Chatterjee’s view on the post-colonial transformation towards a bourgeoisie state)(see Prasad, 1998) the Indian state’s policy of liberalisation too had its articulation in cinematic discourse-its production practices and its narrative forms.

2.6 THE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF FILMS
The need to study the political economy of films derived from the understanding that the method of manufacture is an important component of form, the end product, viz. the film, as the signs or marks of its production as well the ideology of the financiers does affect the form.(see Prasad, 1998 ibid ;Mishra, 2002 ibid) A specific film moulds itself around economic interests and conditions of production as much as it has to mould itself around the presumptive demands and expectations of its envisaged audience. The cinema has a place in contemporary popular culture as long as it remains financially profitable. (Elsaesser 1976 p. 173). The political economy and the production dynamics is clearly evident in the cinematic form and ideology that has informed popular films in the post liberalization era, holding it to be different from the earlier forms Cultural materialism is concerned to explore how and why certain meanings are inscribed at a certain moment of production and engage certain signifying practices. How liberalization has altered film semiotics thus need to be tied to the question of political economy. Ownership of means of cultural production, its distribution, mechanisms and consequences of those patterns of ownership tend to control the contours of the cultural landscapes.(Barker, 2000 p 9).
To be able to understand the impact on the global and the difference it has made in cinematic form we need to see how the mode of production of films was influenced by the state’s attitude of ambivalence on one hand and partly by the state of the polity. The mode of film production tied to the state economy and polity also had its impact upon the cinematic form as well the narrative.

2.6.1 Pre-Independence Political Economy - Studio Era
The history of Indian cinema is relatively coterminous with film making in the West. Existence of technological, aesthetic, creative and entrepreneurial infrastructure allowed for the easy incorporation of motion pictures into Indian life and society. Photography, the most immediate
antecedent to motion pictures technology was introduced in colonial India soon after its invention in 1840 and pursued by enthusiastic amateurs, aspiring professionals and individuals with scientific agendas. By 1850s many Indians began studios in cities like Bombay and Calcutta and within three decades many emerged all over the country. Motion picture technology was introduced by representative of the Paris based Luminiere brothers on July 7, 1896 in a cinematographic show at the Watson’s Hotel in Bombay a few months after its premiere in Paris. The invention was enthusiastically received by Indian photographers who purchased cameras and started filming shorts that never exhibited in tents, play grounds and public halls in Bombay Calcutta and Madras.

Besides being the site for the first screenings of motion pictures in India, Bombay was also the site of one of the first films made in India – a wrestling match shot in the city’s Hanging Gardens. Bombay’s development into the centre of film production in India is integrally linked to its history as a colonial city and based on its position as the main centre of commerce and manufacturing in British India.

The economic base of Bombay allowed for film technology to develop roots and flourish, as capital from other industrial and commercial activity flowed into film making. Besides the supply of necessary capital base for film making, Bombay possessed the creative infrastructure as it was also the centre of Parsi Theatre, a commercial theatre movement originating in the mid 19th century sponsored by the Parsi traders, the dominant business community in Bombay Presidency. The Parsi theatre groups provided the initial pool of performers and writers as nearly all of them shifted to film. It is the Parsi Theatre that served not only as the immediate aesthetic and cultural antecedent of popular Hindi cinema but also that Parsi capital supported the film industry in India until the 1930s and had a significant role to play in early film distribution, its infrastructure and three major silent and sound studios: Imperial Film Minerva Movietone and Wadia Movietone.

The Father of Indian Cinema, Dhundiraj Govind Phalke’s socio political context was significantly shaped by anti colonial struggles against the British Phalke nurturing nationalist intentions as evident in his concerns for an indigenous film industry. He made explicit links between filmmaking, politics and Indian statehood asserting that India was unfit to claim Home Rule if film making did not gain the support of Indian business and political leaders.

His early initiatives were financed by funds privately mobilized from loans, etc. against his insurance policy and after his training in London in film technology, in 1912 Phalke established Phalke Films in Bombay. In 1913 Raja Harischandra commonly regarded as India’s first feature film was made by Phalke. In 1914 Phalke again went to England and after his return he closed down Phalke Films and set up Hindustani Cinema Films company 1918, which was the first purely indigenous film studio with corporate backing. While Phalke was its major filmmaker, there were at least six other directors who made films under its auspices. It was also the first studio to have its own distribution operation with offices in Bombay and Madras.

The increased profitability of the cinema enabled film makers to reinvest their gains in their new productions and additional infrastructure such as studios, laboratories, theatres, and by
1925 Bombay was already India’s film capital. By 1930s film industry was competing with textile industry as the most important local industry in Bombay – by passion it soon after with over 60% of India’s film production units located in the city (Ganti, 2004 ibid, p.6-11).

What comprises the famous Studio Era involves the film production in the 1920s and 1930s which was organized along lines similar to Hollywood where a studio bore the entire cost of a film’s production and had actors and technicians as full time contracted employees. Studios became known for specializing in specific film genres. However, unlike Hollywood a handful of studio did not succeed in monopolizing film business and the majority of Indian studios did not control distribution and exhibition like their Hollywood counterparts. The lack of integration between production, distribution and exhibition accounted for high mortality rates of studios where a scenes of commercial failures or even one major disaster frequently led to disaster. What is referred to as studio era was therefore a short or a brief episode/chapter in the history of Indian cinema.

The form most important studios of this era were Imperial Film Company in Bombay Prabhat Film Company in Pune, New Theatres in Calcutta and Bombay, Talkies. Though there were two other noteworthy studios based Bombay –Ranjit Movie Tone and Wadia Movietone (ibid, p.19).

Decline of the studio system was largely responsible for the backward capitalism and the disaggregate mode of production that came to prevail in film making. According to Prasad’s views the decline of the studio system in the 1940s had led to a radical disintegration of the three sectors of the film industry – production, distribution and exhibition. The production end passed into the hands of independent producers who make films on an adhoc basis – outsourcing and then reassembling the various components – with the star functioning as the one steady source for attracting finance. Thus Madhava Prasad has noted that while this mode of production is capitalist it is not fully rationalized such that ‘precapitalist ideologies in which relationships based on loyalty, servitude, the honour of the khandan (clan) and institutionalized Hindi religious practices’ structure relationships within the industry, the production process and the cultural content of cinema. (Gopal, 2011, p.22)

2.6.2 Post-Studio Era

Production Process: Although both Hollywood and Bollywood are large, commercially driven film industries, they are not similarly organized nor do they operate in the same way. The Bombay film industry is highly decentralized, financed by entrepreneurial capital, organized along social and Kin networks and governed mostly by oral and informal contracts than written contracts (Ganti, 2004 ibidp 53). The film industry for long remained disorganised, chaotic and perennially unstable yet had a functioning economy with a ‘rough- and-ready system’ of funding for its production. (Prasad, 1998) The open-ended form of Bombay Cinema grew out of disaggregated, unorganised, heterogeneous production practices that governed its form. Not necessarily grown out of a filmic script, these films are manufactured out of ‘pre-fabricated parts’The script, often a loose idea grows as the film continues to be manufactured in a
disintegrated manner-in parts-with pre-recorded songs, erratic shooting schedule etc (Mishra, 2002 ibid, p.14)

To understand the political and cultural economy of the Bombay film industry one need to understand the fundamentals of the structure of the Bombay film industry, the basic grammar of its production process, it’s system of financing and distribution, the practice of adapting Hollywood films. This would entail also simultaneously tracing the political trajectory of the nation, the industry’s relation with the state, economic policies of the government and so on.

The most remarkable transformation in the film industry followed liberalization and since 2000 major changes have occurred in financing and distribution structure and this was especially so after the granting of industry status by the government in 1998 and growth of satellite T.V. and media growth.

However, what preceded the post-reform changes needs to be looked at to understand the present form and narrative content. The organization of production, as Prasad, observes is crucial to the format of cinematic text. Production practices, socio-economic base determine technology and ideological forms. The factors of production have various modes of combination and are differently constituted in different periods of film history. There are a series of system production. Historical condition determine the production practices that are deemed best for particular style of film making In order to understand the system of production we need to understand the relations between different sectors of film industry and the way production is organized within network formed by these sectors. The industry, however, failed to develop a firm capitalist basis owing to a weak internal organization of production, economic disorder and fragmentation (Prasad 1998, ibid p 36-39).

The most striking feature of the Bombay film industry is its entrepreneurial and fragmented nature in all three sectors: production, distribution and exhibition. The industry comprises independent producers, distributors, financiers’ exhibitors, and independent audio companies. All three sectors are run by family firms, which is a hallmark of India’s business activity. The production sector of the industry is primarily made up of individual production companies, referred to as banners, which were started by actors/directors who subsequently became producers. During the silent era (productions by) producers negotiated directly with exhibitors, but the coming of sound witnessed the emergence of the distributor as a mediating agent between producers and exhibitors leading to a particular trait of Indian film making – the dominance of the independent distributor and distribution system. The hundreds of nationwide distributors came to assume an important economic role within the film industry.

The industry is neither vertically nor horizontally integrated in the manner of the major Hollywood studios or multinational entertainment conglomerates. Studios within the Indian context are merely shooting spaces and not production and distribution firms. Despite move towards integration and points of convergence-some stars have ventured into production and distribution, some audio companies into production, some producers into distribution, some audio companies into production, and some distributors into exhibition and so on. But these instances are not systemic and do not preclude others from making forays to ventures into film
business. Essentially the industry is sufficiently diffused, chaotic and anyone with large capital and right contact can enter into the business.

Although both the Western and the Indian press use the metaphors of factories and assembly line production to characterize the Bombay film industry, that claims that the “Bombay’s dream factories churn out hundreds of films a year, in reality the industry is extremely decentralized and flexible and more apathy comparable to business company financed with venture capital. Each Hindi film is produced by a team of people operating as independent contractors or free lancers and work together on a particular project instead of being permanent employees of a particular production company. Films are often financed simply on the basis of a star cast germ of a story idea, and a director’s reputation. The lack of a well defined division of labour among the principle players mean that people play multiple roles. So that industry is filled with people who are both producers and directors, writer and directors, editors and directors, actors and producers, actors and writers, or even a combination of actor director producer. Power resides in stars directors and producers. The industry contains very few non-value added people such as executives, lawyers, agents, professional managers, i.e. the suits who do not directly contribute to film making process. There are also intermediaries such as casting agents, talent scouts or agencies like ICA and William Morris. The Hindi film industry is very diverse in terms of the linguistic, regional, religions and caste origins and identities of its members, but what is striking is the intensification of kinship networks within contemporary industry (Ganti, 2004, ibid p.53-55).

Prasad observes that the distribution sector was born with the coming of talkies and the proliferation of small and short lived production companies with no fixed capital and limited working capital implied that distributor’s profit emerged as an important source of finance for film production. Separate existence and the relation of independence between production and distribution sectors ensure that capital remains disassociated from production. This dependence on distribution for capital investment in film industry appeared to be akin to the putting out system of early capital where production was subservient to distributor’s capital which is advanced to producers All this points to the dominance of merchant capital, fragmentation and heteronomy of production sector.

Prasad argues that unlike Hollywood films having serial mode of production Bombay’s Hindi film is an assemblage of pre-fabricated parts. Unlike Hollywood films where organized production leads to a narrative integrity, in Bombay’s Hindi film, the heterogeneous from of manufacture or production is ineluctably linked to the narrative structure lacking integrity the characterizes Hindi films. Each of the component elements of Hindi film is capable much internal variation not demanded by narrative as for example, the lyrics, dialogues, sequences, etc. are drawn from stock register or repertoire of images. These component elements having a separate existence are not subsumed under dominance of cinema committed to narrative integrity. The heteronomous condition under which production sector operates is paralleled by a textual heteronomy whose primary symptom is absence of an integral narrative structure (Prasrad, 1998, ibid p 40, 42-45). In view of the nexus between the economic, ideological and
political forces that shape the conditions of possibility of cultural production in India, Prasad argues, that since films are produced by a heterogeneous form of manufacture, instead of social or organic form as seen in Hollywood, various segments produced by specialists are assembled than focusing on development of central material, which is argued to affect the story of Hindi film. (Prasad, ibid, p.264)

Pre-Liberalisation and the pre industry status was largely characterised by personalized arrangements, adhocism, disorganized schedules, oral commitments, informal culture and the importance of male star or the hero are the defining pre-capitalist mode of production that have characterised Bombay film industry for long. The dominant representation circulated by the Indian media, audience, as well as Hindi film makers, is that Bombay film industry is ad hoc unorganized and works on a non standardized manner. Industry members constantly bemoan the lack of professionalism, organization and discipline within the Bombay industry. This has been a consistent narrative throughout decades, from 1930s to the present. These characterizations of the film industry by industry members offer a particular way to assert Hindi difference from the norm.

The actual process of making a Hindi film is marked by a high degree of flexibility and variation from one production company to next. Due to the diffuse of the film industry, instead of one set process, there are multiple ways of initiating a film. Story ideas can be generated by a number of or variety of people e.g. writers, actors, directors, producers, assistants, but how an idea for a film mange to become a film reveals the sites of power within the industry. Apart from producers and directors, male stars enjoy power to influence and initiate projects and often the first ones to be consulted about a project. If aspiring writers, producers or directors, i.e. individuals who are new and have not yet made a place for themselves in the industry – can persuade a male star about their story idea or script, the chances of turning into a film are very high since casting a leading male star is usually the foremost criteria for initiating a production of a Hindi film. A star’s willingness to participate signals to producers, financiers or directors the viability of a project. While producer/Directors with standing and power in the industry initiate their own film projects, these projects are conceived with a particular star or set of stars in mind. Some producers consider themselves as star makers and try to by pass stars but often their introduction of new actors is balanced by presence of established ones.

An important characteristic of Hindi film making process is its emphasis on face to face interaction. Films, deals and commitments are made on the basis of interaction and discussion between by players, rather than intermediaries or written materials. For example if producers want a particular star for their film, they will communicate directly with the star rather than go through his or her agent. In fact, in the Bombay film industry agents do not exist in the same Sense as they do in the Western entertainment industries Hindi film stars have people known as secretaries who primarily keep track of and also manage a stars work schedule. Acting mostly as gatekeepers’ vis-à-vis the media, public and people of lesser power most secretaries are marginal in negotiations between a star and a producer.
The negotiation between the star and a producer is a matter of power equation or a status game and asymmetrical either in favour of the star or the producer. In a complex inter play of status and power the personal interaction takes place wherein it results in a highly verbally oriented work culture and verbal commitments become equivalent of contracts. Discussions of a project by a producer with a star can fairly lead to affirming the assumption that a star is to be cast. In a prevalent culture of vial commitments, stars are approached by producers one at a time to prevent confusion/misunderstanding and verbally confirm the deal.

The star factor is crucial in film production and acts decisively as a site of power when the film is being made or discussed. The other example of importance of personal interaction and oral working style is that the key cast and crew in a film are usually told or narrated the script. Commonly it is known that members of industry as told in interviews decide to do a film after leaving the script rather than reading a script. Key members of the production team gather together to hear the writer e.g. director relay the film’s story. Throughout the pre production processes, these sessions known as ‘narrations’ within the industry are conducted and acts as a way of bringing cast and crew on board of a particular film.

Another important production component is the ritual of maharat. Once producers finalize the basic cast and crew such as directors, lead actors, music directors and writer, they usually announce the film to the industry and press by way of mahurat. It is specific date and time chosen as auspicious to announce the making through a ritualized inaugural ceremony as a customary practice. It primarily serves as a publicity occasion for producers especially in their efforts to raise finance for their project of which selling distribution right is significant. From the true of the mahurat, producers start selling their film that includes the package, viz the film with its director, male star music director, male star, music director lured for the project – to the distributors. The pre-production process is an informal collaborative one where script music is finalized by the entire team in what is called in industry parlance as sittings. Details of screenplay, dialogues, script lyrics melodies, music, locations, sets, props, costumes and other production details are discussed by director and key members of productive team. Shooting logistics are worked out post setting up of sets and once shooting commences. Much of directorial plan are visually discussed and it is commonly asserted as their mental plans running in their heads. Films are completed in a continuous schedule as a characteristic feature of Hindi film production phase but are usually shot in discontinuous segments over a length of time. Fund constraint often limit continuous schedules from start to finish, instead schedules intermittently) span over a span of months or years and the time utilized by producers to raise funds. The…the elapsed time from commencement of production (shooting) to theatrical release can take several years. Due to discontinuous and fragmented nature of production actors do not rehearse before hand and everything is learned on set. Dance steps, dialogues etc. are received, learnt and memorized on the film set. Rehearsals prior to shoot are rare and not for stars generally. Scenes are rehearsed on sites on long 8 hr shifts and are approved involving minimum takes as this avoids wastage of raw film stock that are exported and are expensive by retakes reshooting or extra shooting.
Another distinctive feature of production process is that films are not shot with synchronous sound, as use of old cameras are not technologically enable to record sound simultaneously. Sound from dialogues to music and sound effects are added in post production phase through recording in dubbing studios where dialogues/lyrics are matched with on screen performance. Dubbing has the advantage to saving re-shoot and limit consumption of larger raw stock. Despite exhibiting high production values and elaborate visual spectacles, production conditions are surprisingly simple and use unusual technology Manual operations of machines, non electronic equipments are common. However, films stated being digitally edited on computerized editing systems only in 1998-99. While means of visual production are relatively simple, filmmakers now use state-of-the-art sound recording and mixing technologies and most Hindi films are made in Dolby Digital sound (Ganti, 2004, p.66-74)

**Distribution:** Like production, distribution is not integrated in the Bombay film industry, and Hindi films are distributed throughout India and the world by a decentralized network of independent distributors. These five major territories based on regional divisions are part of Indian territory while the sixth is overseas territory an undifferentiated category with some rough continental subdivisions Hindi film producers finance their films primarily through the sale of theatrical distribution rights to their films. Producers start trying to sell the distribution rights of their film from the moment it is launched or its particulars announced at its inaugural eternal known as mahurat. Distributors bid fraud purchase the right to distribute a film for 5-10 years in their particular territory, usually while is under production. Distributors also raise money via alternative capital markets, as well by subdividing territories and selling off their rights, and by receiving advances from exhibitors. There are three main types of distribution arrangements, outright sale, commission basis and minimum guarantee.

Outright basis entails the distributors buying a film on an outright basis, and they pay the producer for the right to distribute a film for a certain amount of time. All expenses incurred in film distribution as well as all income earned are solely the distributors. Although not commonly practiced in India, outright sale was the most common arrangement for overseas distribution until late 1990s. When a film is distributed on commission basis, distributors bear least amount of risk because the most they invest in a film are in its publicity and print costs. Distributors deduct a certain percentage (25-50%) box office receipts as a commission and to the producer. The most common distribution arrangement in the film industry is the minimum guarantee or ‘MG’ system where the distributor guarantees the producer a specific sum which is disbursed in instalments from onset of production. Distributors normally pay 30-40% of contracted amount during the productions phase and the remainder on delivery of prints. Even if a film’s rights have been sold for all of the territories, a producer still requires finance to bridge the gap between the advance and the final payment. When a film is released, distributors pay for the print and publicity costs as well as theatre rental. After distributors cover their costs – rights, prints publicity theatre rental – and take their 25% commission, any remaining box office collections are shared equally with the producer.
In such a system distributors bear majority of risk since producer is guarantee a certain price for rights. Producers try to clout price their films in order to make a profit, as success of a film in the box office is highly uncertain. Even though this system ostensibly accrues profits for producers once there is an overflow, which is a term used for remainder of box office revenues after distributors cover their cost and earn their commission, the chance of one’s film generating an overflow is limited. The other factor in producer’s pricing decisions is that they cannot trust distributors to share this overflow as distributors utilize revenue from successful films to recover losses from unsuccessful films. Such a scenario is result of a consequence of absence of transparent system of data collection as distributors are far from Bombay. In addition, to the division of distribution territories and sub-territories, the distribution network also subdivides each territory by revenue-earning potential into ‘A’ – B- C-class centres. The class centres, unlike the other two are more populated large cities and tower with many cinemas and capacity to generate large revenue for distributor. Once exhibited the film are allowed to be released in B and C centres where it is difficult to accurately track a film’s earnings (Ganti, 2004 ibid. p.57-59).

**Finance:** The long drawn financial problem in the industry was largely due to the incommensurability and the schism between what it was culturally producing and what was financially required in order for it to qualify for embracing globalisation. With the exception of a few Non-Residential Indian directors who acted independently or a few successful production houses most of the Hindi films failed to translate its product with a certain cultural value into a viable financial plan (Rajadhyaksha, 2009. p.74-75)

Despite the relatively recent grant of industry status, few sources in the few funding sectors were open for film production except a small segment of the high-end sector. As a result the dependence on box office largely continues. (ibid) With regard to the question of financing it needs to be mentioned that it is well-known that the industry for long have remained dependent upon dubious sources like powerful under-world dons of the Bombay criminal domain. (Mishra, 2002, ibid, p.14) The reason for this long-acknowledged nexus of film financing with laundering of black money also lies in the risk involved in investing in film making. Cautious investors are averse to such investments. However, the opportunity to launder money and the opportunity to associate with the industry’s glamour proves an irresistible proposition. (Dwyer et al 2002, p. 24)

Unlike Hollywood, where mainstream films are produced finance & and distributed by a handful of integrated media conglomerates (such as) News Corp Walt Disney, Viacom. Time Warner NBC Universal and Sony, in Bollywood films are produced by hundreds of professional specialized and independent producers each owning a small scale production company. (Launrenger and Taenbe cited). These films are also being distributed and financed through strategic alliance established between independent producers, distribution and finance firms. Moreover the alliances are temporary rather than long term something more typical in Hollywood (Karan et al. 2012, p.240-241). Financing of film production dependent on unorganized sources have made it a problematic issue.
The production sector can be broadly divided into two broad segments consisting of a tiny group of established producers and large number of independents, War-led financial crisis and, under capitalization is believed to have led to an influx of black money that hired away from studios (Prasad 1998 p 37-38). During the 1950s and 1960s there was a marked period financial transition for the Bombay film industry. Business shifted from financially self contained family run studios that produced on modest budgets and kept their technicians and their actors in their long term employ to independent producers who sought outside investors for big-budget productions and lured on short term contracts. Many of these film producers were inexperienced in the film business. Flocking for quick profit they exited the business after producing just one film. The transition from studies to independent producers was hastened by several factors, including the outmoded business practice of the studios that was based on family connections, the rising expenses involved in films production, particularly with the creation of the star system, and the changing situation of money in Indian society. Indian businessman who had accumulated illegal wealth in the war time black market found entertainment films to be convenient vehicles for laundering their black money – the term South Asian use to describe unreported profits. Entertainment films continued in this role, as businessmen sought to hide profits from high meteori taxes imposed under Nehru’s version of socialism. The financial connection between Hindi film industry and organized crime’s black money, the product of illegal business has been a problem for the industry ever since ( Jacob,2010 ibid p 91). In the bad old days those who funded films were suspect. From bucket manufactures and horse breeders to real estate developers, failed politicians and underworld dons anybody who had money that could not be legitimately accounted for headed towards Bollywood. They arrived with suitcase filled with currency notes to bunch a Bollywood film. It was gamble that worked wonderfully. If the film was a hit, their status in the public eye went up to that of movie mogul. If the movie flopped, it was that much money laundered. It was a nexus between dishonest box collectors and the filmmakers. The production team was paid in cash. Despite flops, films were made by unsuccessful directors repeatedly as work did not cease for ‘just burning unaccounted money’ ( Bose, 2006. p.20- 21).

The finance capital for filmmaking India is thus linked to the vast unofficial or black economy which scholars estimate as nearly half of the size of official economy. One of the results of the high rates of taxation in India is the creation of a parallel economy with high amounts of unregulated economy – mainly cash transactions – and large sums of unreported and thus untaxed income, commonly referred to as black money. The Bombay film industry is one of the main places to invest unreported income in India. As most financial institutions such as banks have shied away from financing film making due to the high risk nature of the enterprise, finance is raised in alternative finance/capital markets. There is an established network of film financiers for filmmaking, and their members fluctuate contingent on economic conditions. They have been also found to have made money in a variety of other fields such as construction, jewellery diamond trading, real estate, manufacturing, as well as organized crimes. Producers borrow money at monthly rates of interest of 3-4% which works out to an
extortionary 36-48% per year. The nature of finance means that the majority of financial transactions and business dealings in the film industry are in cash where accounting is highly secretive and most contracts are oral. Though most films fail at the box office and the Bombay industry represents itself as being in a state of financial crisis, it is sustained by few incursions of capital from people within India and ..who are drawn by glamour and potential for colossal profit – if a film is successful it can double, triple and even further multiply one’s investment(Ganti, 2004, ibid. p.56-57).

Black money as ready source of finance film were thus channelised to film making to convert to white. A significant reason why there has never been a slump in feature film produce in the country is finance often from new sources – is still readily available for concern films independent of recession. As film makers rightly believe, there will always be people ready to invest money in popular commercial films because the Indian film industry was one of the few avenues open to the medium and small scale investor to convert his black money funds into legitimate money. Film financing remains one of the best means to invest black money and reap white money returns. Since film production in India has evolved a highly specialized method to cover up black money investments, the commercial film industry continues to attract such undeclared capital generated in other business without fear of repercussion. Most of these investors prefer to remain anonymous. They operate through a regular film financier who invests their money in various feature films and offers lucrative returns to his depositors. These investors come from various walks of life. They could be businessman and professionals. While many traditional film financiers have come into the business from real estate and building construction or from traditional money lending families, during last decade professional chartered accountants and income tax consultants have come in prominently. For it is through them a very large clientele of depositions has been making undeclared investments into films, turning into legitimate returns. (Saari, 2009 ibid p 142).

This vicious cycle of conversion to white money coming from unrelated fields had been for long an inexorable reality of the industry. Black money laundering was almost a survival imperative in industry. Conversion of laundering , as termed of black money into clean money is critical to a film producer’s job, without knowing this practice of laundering through the process of making a film can hardly survive in commercial industry. Saari observes: ‘Broadly speaking this process of conversion operates along the following lines. A major percentage of a film’s budget is the payments made to the leading star and other members of the cast, the music director, the playback singes etc. Fifty percent of these remuneration is made with black money. But when the film is being sold to distribution the cost of production stated by the producer, along with his fee for launching the film, incorporates the legitimate and undeclared investments made by him. The incorporation of black money in the film’s cost of production is through many ingenuous methods. The most common is through fake accounts for publicity expenses’ ( ibid p 143).Saari accounts how black money is used to pay artistes, how black money invested by film producer/financiers are converted into white while selling it to distributor or same against hoax loan payment ( ibid p 144).
This realm of the popular for its alleged links with illicit financiers failed to evolve a systematic and well-integrated mode of manufacture. This could plausibly explain the state's apathy towards it for long. Conversely, it may be argued that the state from the very beginning pursuing the policy of planning and development realised the inappropriateness of this form to realise its aims of nation-building. This site of the imagined and popular nation caught in the popular trappings sustained itself by exploring grey financial resources.

As this study focuses upon the post-liberalisation narratives of films it is important to understand how this form was concomitantly influenced by the changes brought into film production and its economy. As economy is deeply implicated in all forms of aesthetic production, the economy of films is crucial to this study and changes in it has its repercussions on narratives, its content, style, aesthetics, etc.

The state form and ideological dynamics of the Indian polity and nature of film production had cast its influences upon the Format. Hence, we need to locate Indian cinematic institution simultaneously on two overlapping grounds. Firstly the socio-political formation of modern Indian state determining the cultural production with its internal structure and second, global capitalist structure within which the modern Indian nation state and film necessarily enter into a relation of dependency, antagonism, heteronomy etc. The format of film explicates a binary co-existence of both tradition and modernity as the organizing device of popular films. This ideologeme of co-existence owes to both production and the polity. While within production economy of films there is an uneven combination of modes; at the level of polity the state is caught within an uneasy equilibrium between two dynamics. There is a disavowal of modernity on an ideological plane that co-existed with the contrary drive to modernist project of passive revolution that the modern Indian nation adopted at birth. The struggle over state formation continues even in contemporary times and is seen in format and nature of the filmic text with political spectrum expanding with Hindi nationalism and Globalisation on two ends. In advanced capitalist countries where an achieved hegemony manifests itself through subordination of all internal conflicts to the overall dominance of state, in a peripheral modernizing state like India, the struggle continues to take the form of contestation over the state form. Cultural production too registers the reality through reinvent allegorical dimension of the dominant textual form in popular cinema. Through all allegorical scaffolding cinematic texts register instability of their ground of practice and signification as well continuing possibility of struggle over the state or struggle to reconstitute the state. Indian cinema is thereby a site of ideological reproduction where state form is reproduced (Prasad 2006 p. 6-8).

Prasad's analysis of film's textual forms derives from Marx and Marxist scholarship. From a Marxian vantage point mainstream cinema appeared as an invested representation of social reality that serves interests of a class. Cinema is seen as a materialization of state ideology and seen from Althusser's conception of ideological state apparatus and interpellation is veritably a site of subjectification where ideological influences facilitate a self recognition and acknowledgement of its condition of existence. On the other hand Prasad sees a differentiated hegemony in combination of different modes of film production. Prasad seeks its explanation in
Gramsci’s idea of passive revolution and Marxian idea of formal subsumption. The contradictions involved within India’s state formation where power is not exercised by the bourgeoisie alone but ruling coalition where it is one of the partners (Gramsci) and there is a co-existence of pre-capitalist ideology with bourgeoisie ideology (Marx). In light of such a conception of modern Indian ideology – Hindi cinema exemplifies an aesthetic of formal subsumption (ibid).

Prasad observes that the relation between popular cinema and the cultural community that converges around it as its privileged addresses is mediated by market. The functioning of capitalist industry which produces and markets these films is determined by a variety of factors that includes political structure and the hegemonic project of the modern state. And there can be no simple and unmediated reproduction of tradition, myth or any residual substance by any cultural institution based on modern technology and relies upon the audience created by the industry itself (ibid p 16). A political ideology circulated influences the cultural content of film. It is born of an interesting overlap or intersection between economic, ideological and political forces. The nexus is shaped India’s cultural production like films. For instance the feudal family romance that constituted the dominant form flexibly incorporated contingent ideological elements that include the state propaganda and did not remain only a bearer of feudal values alone (ibid p 31).

A lack of adequate capitalist means of production, heterogeneous form of manufacture and the ideological struggle within the industry with the modernist project committed to state led nationalist agenda of state-controlled capitalist development counterpoised against the pre-capitalist culture of the industry’s prevalent mode of production characterised the Hindi film industry for long. (ibid p 31-32). The textual form of film reflected the ideological conflict that influenced state formation and its power structure and the disaggregate mode of production of films. The heteronomous conditions of production was paralleled by a textual heteronomy lacking narrative integration (ibid 42-45). This, Prasad traces to the transition from studio era to a production system marked by dominance of independent producers, He argues that during studio era there was a weak but discernable tendency towards generic differentiation. But post independence history shows a decline in this tendency. Heterogeneous form of manufacture that emerged after decline of studio era, led to the pre-eminence of a dominant form, commonly known as social that came to reign supreme. The social not only subordinated other generic tendencies to itself externally (i.e. by restricting the number of films with a distinctly generic identity and/or by relegating them to the more provincial or sub-cultural exhibition outlets), but also functioned as a broad and large category including within themselves fragments of different genres. The dominance of few studios yielded to the new extraneously backed power of multitude of independent one film producers leading to a fragmentation of this industry. On the other hand, in a parallel and contrary development a tendency to generic differentiation, which was reversed and a super genre viz social swallowed up the rest. Conception of film as single unit and its comprehensive singularity with a product specific to particular combination of financier – producer director stars is not seen in Bombay films. The fragmented mode and
materiality of production and diverse and multitude combination characterizes the Bombay film. Thus arose the ideology of an all inclusive film whose vision of the world tends to be multifaceted, episodic and loosely structured.

The structuring of film text around a single strand of narrative with one dominant affect such as pathos comedy action mystery music romances or horror indicates a definite logic of production process based on product differentiation and development of special needs. Prasad contends that in cases where such a process have not advanced beyond elementary stages, where an industry is composed of large number of industrial capitals, the conditions for planned differentiation of products, in terms of genre do not exist. These two modes of capitalist production thus result in two diverse modes of commodification. In Hollywood mode, the commodity unit is the individual film wherein each film displaying a high degree of internal unity values and skills that enter into its production are organized into a stable hierarchy whose primary effect is tightly organized coherent narrative. By contrast, the independently produced Bombay film is marked by relative autonomy retained by various elements that flow into production process. This means that the process of fragmentation operates along lines determined by unevenly developed market capitalism, fragmenting therefore the film text into several component parts. Thus the individual film tends to function more as a space for exhibition of a combination of autonomous talents or values. Prasad argues that disaggregate or haphazard mode of production that has survived in the Bombay film industry is necessitated by the kind of ideology that the filmic text disseminated (ibid p 46-49).

As Prasad’s analysis rests on presupposition on economic realities and production system acting as a determinant on type of the film industry produce question can be posed that Hollywood assigned itself a certain ideological task for its development of a certain mode of production is it is also true Bombay films.

Taking cue from what Prasad understands of the relation between the cinematic text and the politico-economic context of production, it is argued that it was as early as 1970s that generic differentiation had begun. The decline of the ‘social’ with the rise of the aesthetics of mobilization in the angry young man films of the 1970s and the middle cinema that strived to balance between market and realist codes in the 1970s as well the 80s was informed by larger changes. As introduction of special effects technology and greater finesse in making encouraged production of gangster films, the rise of a new middle class audience and the competition brought in through state apparatus of film production within realist tradition encouraged a middle cinema (precursor to today’s reflexive, niche-audience targeted multiplex cinema). However this generic differentiation was not very powerfully backed by any substantial changes in the film’s production economy and had to await the momentous liberalization that took over in the early 1990s. (Gopal,et.al. 2010 ibid, p.20)

Post-liberalization corporatization of film production led to greater generic differentiation. Coalition of power stakeholders cease to be dominated by pre-capitalist interests and forces. Perpetuation of a backward capitalism in production and pre-capitalist ideologies constituting
core cultural content of films were impediments that did not allow production process serve a
determinate ideological project based on modernity. The prevalent mode of production is able
to perpetuate itself since the dominant aesthetic form of cinematic text does not require the kind
of integrated production process. Such a conception of aesthetic process is inconceivable
without historical process of capitalist expansion (Prasd, 1998,ibid p 49). Political and social
condition that prevailed and production economy of films conditioned the dominant textual
forms of films in post independence era. The three mutually reinforcing failure that served as
conditions to render possible this textual form. First, the backward capitalist condition of the
film industry second, the transitional state form determined by the interest of dominant
coalition and third persistence of pre-capitalist ideologies and continued authority of traditional
elites (ibid p 117).

Against the above discussion on the relationship of the film industry with the state, the pre-
capitalist, backward, disaggregate mode of production and the influence of ideological
contradictions within state formation affecting narrative format of cinema, it may be argued
that the state-led policy of capitalist development and policy of liberalization has given rise to a
change in the narrative patterning of cinema and also its production practices. This enables us
to locate the star within a changed political and cultural economy of its films,a changed
narrative format, with changed ideological concerns. The star’s construction within a spatio-
temporal frame necessitates looking at him as a product /phenomena emanating from the
confluence of political,cultural,social and economic currents.

As the earlier certitudes of nation states and national borders, the need to protect local
economic production and cultivate a secure market for it, appear to have receded under the
globalizing agenda, the driving imperative was to secure circulation of Indian branded
commodities in the international markets, to build linkages and seek investments from Indian
abroad, and to cultivate foreign investment in domestic production, infrastructure and markets.
This has also led to the deregulation of the state control over television, and later radio, leading
to a remarkable change in what the Indian audiences could see and hear. The drive to open out
a protected nation emerged in the wake of the huge debt accumulated by the Indian economy in
the 1980s. This gave the World Bank an opportunity to press for the opening up of the Indian
markets on the premise that it would galvanize the economy through competition, collaboration
and foreign investment. And paralleling this development was a new status for Indian capital
and professional groups in the metropolitan West, which brought Indian cinema out of its
ethnically segregated niche into a wider domain of multi-culturism and made it more visible in
the markets of Britain and the United States (Vasudevan 2010 p 1- 2). However, it is the also
the Government support for the film that have propelled the globalization of Bollywood cinema.
The government accorded film making the official status of industry in 1998 allowing for new
types of private investments to enter Bollywood. These forms included financial institutional
capital and corporate investments from other Indian industries, which required increased
standardization (Karan et al 2012 p 240).
The sea change in the industry was brought about through the gaining of industry status in 2001. Two reasons can be cited to account for this. Just, is the recognition of film making in Indis succumbed the pressure of the film federation and other interested trade groups lobbying for a legal status for the industry, under the Industrial Dispute Act of 1947. Originally, the idea was to draw concessions from the government on procuring raw stock taxes (particularly excise and customs duty) and power consumptions as applicable to other manufacturing processes such as production of textile, cement and steel. What came as added bonus was offer to some tight fisted nationalized banks and financial institutions to fund production of film. Such a move was unprecedented in the annals of Hindi cinema. (Bose, 2006, p.22)

Vasudevan enumerates certain current changes, which have explicitly and or implicitly addressed constraints that have dogged the institution of cinema since independence. Firstly the industrial recognition by the government in 1998 and by 2000 banks was formally instructed ‘that the central government had listed the entertainment industry including films as an approved activity under industrial concern’. Further while the onerous burden of entertainment tax was not reduced a number of state governments waived it for the periods when multiplex cinemas were being introduced normally for 3 years period. Many states also pursued flexible municipal policies allowing land allocated for single screen cinema to be redeployed for mall and multiplex construction, receiving statutory cheap ticket classes to target upper class cinemagoers and more important to make cinema into a crucial dimension in the fashioning of new urban vista and consumer economy to attract corporate investment. And while the National Film Development Corporation, the state owned funding agency continues to fund art cinema, it is noticeable that several well known art film makers have turned to private finance, i.e. new corporate investors for cross over films (Vasudevan 2010 ibid, p. 345).

Looking at the relation of Bollywoodization to globalization it may be argued that it is not a disparate sphere and is not insulated from the impact of global market capital and the global media. In the context global insecurity, this situation has led many cultural analysts to conclude that the global networked media is the political affiliate of other dominant (hegemonic) organizations. Authors Mc Chesney, Keller and Chownisky equate the volume and prevalence of global media with a form of cultural imperialism. The global corporate media works with the US based political hegemony to ensure the spread of western interests through the ideology and practices of free-market capitalist economics. Thus the meanings and products that are generated through the new form of capitalism are supported by a dominant ideology – which itself is distributed through western based signs and symbols. While the ubiquity of US based cultural products is clearly evident, the standardization arguments have nevertheless been widely challenged. And globalization theorists like Arjun Appadurai, David Held and John Urry have maintained that the move to greater economic and cultural consolidation has necessarily involves counter moves towards local transformations and forms of social fragmentation. Roland Robertson refers to these counter flows as globalization: the process by which local communities and cultures absorbs and transform the globalizing elements of culture and economy. That is, the corporate media and other powerful groups generate their
products ideologies and texts across the globe, these materials and meanings are consumed by different local communities but their inscribed values and meanings are changed in relation to the interests, history, values, institutions, beliefs, identities and practices of the local people. These groups then produce their own meanings and texts out of the hybrid of cultural elements. ‘Perhaps the most spectacular example of this is the Bollywood phenomenon, which has adapted Hollywood movie styles, production systems, technologies and financial models into Indian expressive forms. Thus, the Indian movie industry has been constructed through hybridization of western cinema and local customs, narrative styles and preferred modes of entertainment’ (Lewis, 2008 p.12-14).

What is important to be seen is how one can locate the influence of Western capitalism and free market ideology in other dominant hegemonic cultural organizations, even of non West as in Bollywood as a political economic correlate of Western market capitalist ideology. This relationship, I would argue was never so well stated defined before the turn towards Bollywoodization that came only with liberalization. The state though remained ambivalent towards the industry had cast its ideological influence in this art form – which reflected a developmental state in passive revolution aligned with entrenched feudal enclaves. This had a determining influence in the production and formation of this art form. Bollywoodization, is a more recent and pronounced transformation – that is more open to global cultural influence possible through liberal reforms and the changes that followed it.

2.6.3 Post-Liberalization Era

The Hybridity of Popular Hindi films – as an adapted Western form of culture and ideology was always present but counterveiled by insularity of market and state policy and influence of backward capital and feudal. Expansion of democracy and the opening up of the market perhaps allowed for lesser restraint on the pleasure drives of an individual, patriarchs turned more negotiable (DDLJ, Pardes, K3G, Kank, Mohabbatein) and states can be transgressed defied and questioned (Swades, Veer Zaara Chak De India, My Name Is Khan, Don) as will be seen in the subsequent chapters and it may be argued that they are all part of ideological transformation of the new Bollywoodized form – a part of change in production economy of films. These changes I argue are not unrelated to Bollywoodization.

The Diaspora Calling: Overseas Market Expansion and Diasporization of Themes: The Bollywood travels in new global process differ from past routes of old trade and migration. Riding on new technology at moment of cultural globalization circulating across new super highway, it is different from colonial productions of 1930, Ray’s film in 50s and 60s. and the Bachchan and Rajesh Khannas films in 70s and 80s. Therefore the cultural economy of circulation in which films of Kharan Johan, Mani Ratnam on Sanjay Leela Bhansali have been travelling are ones produced after and 1990s. (Gera-Roy, 2012, p.xi) Widening viewership supported by large production: is part of global changes. As the biggest movie industry in the world in terms of the number of film produced, Bollywood’s growing share in the global film industry signals (India’s) determination to become a cultural as well as economic powerhouse.
On an average 900 films are produced every year and are watched by more than 14 million or 1.4% of the Indian population everyday. Exported to over a 100 countries, these films are watched by the growing Indian diaspora across the world (Karan and Schaefer, 2012 p238) Diasporic reception is expanding and that in overseas markets where Indian diaspora is too geographically dispersed to fill in cinemas, recent technological advances like home video and internet streaming have made it possible for Bollywood to reach this huge and profitable export segment (ibid, p.239) In fact the factor contributing for the international popularity of Indian commercial film is for the huge spread of the Indian diaspora that has led to the growing global acceptance of Hindi cinema. Diasporisation of filmic context in this regard is an important change. For maximal box-office returns as part of marketing also filmic content is seeking diasporisation. Besides, emergent factors of global economy have led to internationalization of popular cinema whereby film producers are deliberatively drawing upon international/global trends. A relationship is thereby being forged between indigenous India focused and exogenous globally focused content for attracting huge audiences. This is part of changes produced by the liberalization of the nation-state and Bollywoodization of Hindi cinema. (ibid p 241) The 1990s thus prompted this Bollywood from of industry. It addressed the diasporic imaginative to capture the worldwide burgeoning market (Mukherjee, 2012 p 39). Financial impetus for diasporisation was largely noticeable since the organized attention to overseas markets since the 1990s. It was Yashraj Films DDII by director Aditya Chopra that brought home to the Bombay film industry the vast potential of the diasporic market and ever since the non-resident Indian audience has been actively cultivated by the Bombay film industry, while the circulation of Hindi cinema in the Indian diaspora in many parts of the world is not a new phenomenon such circulation was unorganized, informal and sporadic – fed by a desire for homeland and its culture or by Hindi films accidentally arriving in and connect by with viewers in transitional societies. The industry did not pay much attention to these overseas networks. However, starting in the mid 1990s, the industry became alert to the revenue potential of the market. Now it is a common occurrence for big budget movies to be released simultaneously in upwards of 50 screens in the US while Hindi movies often feature in the top 10 in the UK, box office (S Gopal 2011. p. 18) The other factor associated with diasporisation of themes and diasporic interest is that of ‘NRI Funding’ ie. ‘Non-Resident Indians patronising Indian film abroad is old hat’ What is new is the huge resource pool they have come to represent, followed by the US based IT baron. Kanwal Rekhi investing in Bollywood. Today financing Hindi movie is ‘a rage among Silicon Valley professionals and their families and friends’ Despite a sense of films produced by these fund few have been successful but what is significant is the recognition of Bollywood’s potential as an attractive investment destination is an indication of better times to come for our film makers. Once these overseas investors come to learn the way of film making India, it is hoped that floodgates of finance will open up for all (Bose, 2006, ibid p 56).

The changes precipitated by the liberalization of the Indian economy have also facilitated growing internationalization of the production and distribution of Hindi films. Film makers are
shooting a significant portion of their films in Africa, Australia, Europe and North America. While Hindi films have been circulating internationally since the 1930s and have been popular among African, Eastern European, Arab and Central Asian audiences for many decades, only recently have Bombay film makers been able to reap revenues from the international circulation of their films Hindi filmmakers are now consciously seeking wider audiences outside India by opening distribution offices in New York, New Jersey and London creating websites to promote their films, dubbing films and subtitling them in foreign languages like English, Spanish, Jewish, Hebrew and Japanese in order to expand their markets to include areas without significant South Asian diasporic populations. Hindi films have become a visible part of media landscape in the west as evidenced by the premiers of films in prestigious international film festivals like Cannes, Venice and Toronto, the screenings of films in mainstream cinemas such as London’s Leicester Square, New York’s Time Square and even the IMAX in Indianapolis cross collaboration in productions etc.

Since 1998 the international or overseas market has become one of the most profitable markets for Bombay filmmakers with certain Hindi films enjoying greater commercial success in Great Britain and the US than in India. While Hindi films had a theatrical presence in the US in the early 1970s, with the advent of the VCR the circulation and consumption of Hindi cinema retreated into the domestic sphere. However 1990s witnessed a worldwide boom for Hindi cinema with theatres springing up to screen Hindi films in foreign locales like Moscow, London, Singapore and Toronto. Within US theatres devoted to first release Hindi films were established in places like New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C. Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, San Francisco and their metropolitan areas. The box office success of Hindi films places them regularly in the UK’s weekly listing of top 10 highest grossing films in the US. The success of Hindi cinema outside of India highlights the growing significance of the South Asian diaspora as a market for the Bombay film industry (Ganti, 2004 p.37-39). Greater financial returns from overseas markets act as an incentive to tap them and it is encouraged primarily by the multiplication factor of foreign exchange vis-à-vis Indian rupee. The returns on screen being several times higher are encouraging film producers to send many print to foreign markets. (Bose, 2006)

**New Marketing Style:** Propaganda and publicity is crucial to the new economy of films, and the expansion of marketing devices have proliferated opportunities for the same. The available entertainment options places producer in a particular piquant position that stresses on propaganda and electronic publicity through means like billboards, new paper ads, publicity blitzkrieg, trailers, posters, radio spots, TV promos, music launches, contests, merchandising deals prior to release. (Bose, 2006 p 24). Marketing strategies have sharpened and to this effect, several innovations have been introduced. Firstly pan Indian marketing was adopted. The age old practice of operating within artificial carved out distribution territories has been discarded. Second consumers are no longer seen as distinct individuals but as distinct groups targetable on the basis of common peculiarities preferences and prejudices. Prior planning and strategizing prior to release all over Indian metros is a part of changed calculations. Publicity campaigns
and promotional exercise build up momentum prior to release, course correction provision left open through response and even passive consumers involved (ibid p 36). A part of marketing is brand building of films. As the life of a film extends beyond box office market savvy producers try to turn films into brands/products. Brand building invariably begins with creating a look for the film that audiences (ibid p 37) can easily relate to. Publicity reinforces this and raises aspirational levels and cine goers are enabled to differentiate brands in the marketplace (ibid p 38). Electronic Marketing according to a Yes Bank report on Indian entertainment industry opined the expansion of cable and satellite TV broadcasting in 2001 as the main decisive factor to have brought about a boost in electronic marketing of Bollywood films. Marketing costs rose between 2001 and 2005 (p 176) almost doubly and two third was claimed by publicity via TV while other means of publicity were mobile telephony and Internet. The rest of the advertisement was divided among outdoor publicity via banners hoardings posters press radio road shows and events. Films producers came to benefit from this support and active cooperation of other popular media players of the entertainment industry (ibid. p. 177).

Realizing the potential of global markets and gaining popularity of Indian films overseas producers have leveraged on these factors in terms of investments, internal and external factors in production financing and the introduction of global themes, as well as the use of global marketing strategies in distribution and marketing overseas, which has resulted in boosting earnings and exports Though the bulk of revenues come from India, an important marketing strategy is internationalization of productions, story themes as thematic shifts in content reflects the use of Indian and diasporic values to generate large box office reforms, and use of new technologies Heavily influenced by Hollywood Bollywood producers have altered their themes to attract wide audiences. This has led to the portrayal of feudal romances within Hindi patriarchal contexts in a much more stylized manner (for example Devdas in 2002 by Bhansali is different from Bimal Roy’s Devdas in 1955). Besides reworking and readopting Hollywood themes and stories to make Hindi films. Hollywood formats with shorter length less drama same music and song are also being produced. These are setting new trends in production and marketing (Karan et al ibid. p.239-240) Increased Budget is a feature of the global turn and in addition to greater investment in film making to entice audience, salaries have increased dramatically for stars, directors, technicians and distributors are paying higher rates to purchase distribution rights. Film makers are paying more attention to marketing and promotion of their films before and after release and since 1997, have been using the Internet as another venue to promote their films. The dramatic measure in budgets since 1990s generates potential for greater profits as well as the risk of greater losses, leading to the near disappearances of the average earning film(Ganti, 2004, p.37).

New channels of distribution and exhibition: In face of increased competition from cable TV and Internet, the Indian film industry has embraced new technologies and modes of distribution. In example, many theatres across India have been converted into multiplexes and digital cinema halls are being constructed all over India. Along with these films are being distributed across countries with intensive marketing and advertising strategies, international releases,
premiers and merchandizing. (Karan et. al ibid p 240). Distribution was expanded beyond narrow territorial confines to an ever expanding market. Buying of film rights via public funds allowed to reduce earlier risks associated with sole proprietorship of private limited companies (Bose, ibid, p. 35-36).

Change in producer audience relations – Focussing in on the current Global Era, we can identify three trends in producer audience relations. First, the increased use of new technologies and investment approaches for the global distribution of Indian films (as already said as part of marketing) coupled with the rise of the Indian middle classes and Western globalized audience, led to changes in business practices and themes as a means of attracting global audiences (including increased adaptations of such themes from Hollywood productions (for eg. The Western (p 243) superhero model as in Krish and now also in Ra One). Bollywood producers/campaigns began the practice of world releases, simultaneously opening films in ten or more countries to maximize revenue returns. Indian companies opened offices in the US and UK; UTVand Eros Entertainment were listed on London’s Alternative Investment market. These strategies helped them to control video piracy. In 2007 the Indian government encouraged media firms to step up foreign markets by making overseas entertainment earnings tax free. Producers like Yash Chopra and Karan Johar started using in house marketing and distribution networks. In the move towards corporatization, production houses like Mukta Arts and Pritish Nandy Communications went public giving producers greater access to wider investments for experimenting and expanding the scope of Indian cinema (Karan, et al. ibid p. 243-244).

Producers like Yash Chopra and Karan Johar realizing the constraint in dealing with prejudices against foreign distributor, started distributing their films on their own strength. They have forged independent tie ups with global distribution Majors to ensure that their films secure a mainstream release, rather than be confirmed to sub-standard. India centric theatres abroad Market agents facilitate mediate to forge alliance with leading distributors worldwide (Bose, 2006. p 206).

Producers used more sophisticated mixes of digital (satellites, subscriber lines, mobile telephones, Internet/websites/blogs, VDCs/DVDs) and analogue (broadcast (radio), print and cassette) technologies to globally market and distribute Bollywood films. Promotional tactics utilizing advertising, trailers, media coverage, ring tones, SMSs and web downloads raised public interest. Film stars because brand ambassadors for Bollywood. International releases were also supported by award functions, musical nights and star tours in many parts of the world that drew extensive media coverage. Indian films subtitled or dubbed into local languages were screened in cinemas or sold as VCD/DVDs. Merchandising included non film products like clothes, accessories and jewellery.

Second, growth in exhibition and distribution outlets to cater to the expanding worldwide growth of the international market comprising the diaspora which relied upon cable and satellite broadcasting of Indian television channels video cassette and VCD/DVD distribution to stay linked to home –e fuelled international demand for Bollywood movies. Non-resident Indians (NRIs) were among the fastest growing Indian communities in the world. Spread across
America, the Middle East, South Africa, and Europe. While UK and US constituted the largest overseas markets, numbers continued to grow in Southeast Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Phillipines Indonesia. Om Shanti Om (2007) a black buster released in 2007 starring Shah Rukh Khan was shown in more than 114 screen in the USA (p 244) collecting $ 1764,131 (&15, 475/screen) during its opening weekend, in the UK, the film earned 518 845on 52 screen during same period. In 1990s a trend began to produce films adopting diasporic themes, with characters expressing their love for their motherland despite living in Western world as DDJJ. Pardes and so on. Satellite channels like STAR ZEE and SONY were available to audiences in move than 50 countries, providing popular news, entertainment, film based programmes and soap opera which often became talking points for the diaspora community.

Third the emergence of sophisticated indigenous- exogenous, intertextual thematic marketing strategies for promotion of films at national and global levels (for instance Lagaan (dir. Gobarikaer 2001) and Rang De Basanti  (dir.Mehra 2006) allowed producers to deliberately mix Eastern and Western narrative and character elements in their films to attract hybridized audiences. This was supported by international ad campaigns run by various media partners; sponsorships film festivals, international releases advertising promotions and star launches. (Karan et al 244-p 245).

Immersion in Branding and Marketing and widening of the Media Ecology – There are at least two movements of cinema implied in the term Bollywoodization One refers to the film’s immersion in a media ecology including branding etc and the other is an active cultivation of the overseas market. In each case the term Bollywood signals a shift from the object that Bombay cinema was – whether we understand the shift to be a dispersal of the cinematic object and its assembling with other practices and commodities or whether we interpret the term more narrowly to refer to a film product created for overseas consumption which would imply a form of branding. These leads to what is called as Bollywoodization, a process by which the inherent and informal tendencies of Bombay cinema are intensified and turned into capital. Bollywood as a brand involves diffusion into TV stage shows award ceremonies, fashion video games, comic books and even lecture tour. The category of Karan Johar or KJO (films) screens to epitomize this process of Bollywoodization and is a brand name in diffusion and branding of cinematic style ( Gopal 2012 p 18) into standard reproducible codes and formats ( Gopal ibid p.19).

The liberalization of economy set the stage for the entry of satellite television by reducing red and providing more incentives for multinational companies to set up their operations in India. Satellite broadcasting radically altered the nature of Indian television. Television did not become significant in India until the mid 1980s. The spread of cable TV networks unofficially and later gaining of satellite access altered the landscape of Indian TV by 1990s. Launching of Hindi and local language satellite channel transformed the experience of television for Indian viewers – from watching single channel state broadcasting network to a large option of channels depending on the cable operator. Since the entry of satellite television, Hindi film makers have been operating in a very different media landscape where a vast array of options,
including films is available to viewers at home. Although the Bombay film industry initially perceived the new channels as a threat, the industry has settled into a symbolic relationship with satellite television. These channels offer filmmakers new avenues to publicize, promote and market their films and seen as another source of revenue since they are willing to pay large sums for the telecast of popular films. Many of the satellite channels are hugely dependent on Hindi films, film music film industry news celebrity gossip film award shows and stage shows featuring film star shows as a steady diet of programming. Even MTV, in India, otherwise symbol of global youth culture, is heavily reliant on Hindi film music and stars for the bulk of its programming India. Rather than diminishing the presence of films in popular culture, satellite television reinforced the dominance of Hindi cinema and its stars, in the Indian media landscapes. (Ganti, 2004,p.33-36) There are a dozen of other ways by which Bollywood seeks to gain from TV be it as powerful medium for publicity or for sharing a common pool of talent and infrastructure or as a revenue resource for content it provides. In this synergy it is TV that benefits a great deal (Bose, 2006. p. 85).The marketing of films underwent the most significant transformation with Sooraj Barjatya’s Hum Aapke Hain Kaun(1994) that introduced the innovation of an astute use of the T.V. that had along with the video, and later cable T.V. alienated the middle class audience from the mass-crowded cinema hallsTelivision was used for publicity of the films through selling programmes on making of the film(later DDLJ followed HAHK), video-hold back, montage of publicity video,etc.Besides large production house like Yash Raj Films set up its own websites in 1998 with information on its current products/releases, special features of particular films,music excerpts, interviews, reviews, stills.Interactive internet fansites, archive of production housewere the other marketing strategies to project its own image, albeit to a limited section of the audience, English speaking and access to internet.(Dwyer, et alp.2002p.25-26) This change in marketing style addressed towards the television and video watching middle class audience was instrumental largely to popularize film watching as well cinema hall viewership amongst this client base.

**Coping with competition from Television:** Hindi film makers acknowledge that they face competition from television as a rival outlet for films and with the increasing popularity of certain prime time game shows and soap operas, as an alternative source of entertainment Producers assert that the pressures on the film industry are different since the advent of satellite of television, because audiences cannot be taken for granted any longer. To entice audiences into theatres, filmmakers spending and inventing great deal of money and effort to project a cinematic experience and spectacle unavailable to people on television. Since the mid 1990 Hindi films have vastly improved production values that include digital sound foreign locations, extravagant song sequences and lavish sets(Ganti 2004, ibid, p. 36-37).

**Post Industry Status and New Modes of Finance Resources and Corporatization** –Since 2000 certain changes have been introduced in the financing and distribution sectors of the Bombay film industry as a result of industry status and the growing influence of satellite television. Industry status has paved the way for greater variety in financing within the industry. Both the banking and corporate sectors have (p 88) begin to invest in filmmaking either by
providing loans or by creating production companies. Some of the largest Indian industrial houses and corporations have created media subsidiaries which are entering into television and film production. Another source of finance is the stock market and source of film production companies which have become public limited companies and their stock listed and traded on the Bombay Stock Exchange. Industry members hail these developments as positive steps to bring about greater discipline, efficiency and financial transparency into filmmaking. (Ganti, 2004, ibid p 88-89) What followed the gaining of industrial status was financial assistance from nationalized banks and financial institutions to find film production. However, like any entrepreneur applying for an industrial loan a film maker had to undergo formalities following elaborate procedure to avoid which several are dissuaded and persist with compliance with anarchic ways. This left them out of the new dispensation. Meanwhile, angel investors and venture capitalists showed up taking cue from government funding agencies. Encouraged by these developments several corporate houses also jumped on to film making bandwagon. Although these agencies set preconditions for releasing finance, they are mostly unacceptable to old timers of film making. However, institutionalised private film financing has begun. ‘Corporatisation’ happens to be the second most powerful reason that disciplined the industry and brought in a semblance of order in Bollywood. The advent of corporatization of leading production houses like Mukta Art and Pritish Nandy Communications that went public. This reduced personal liability of producer promoter and simultaneously gave him access to large sums of shareholder’s money to invest. This slackened the stronghold of illicit financiers, the proverbial shylocks including the underworld dons. Moreover fresh directorial talent, earlier deprived of fair chance to experiment with unconventional ideas and firms were now able to see their ideas realized and taking shape as reflexive/hatke films under new corporate banners. Producers now non averse to risks with public money at disposal allowed for production of avant garde films like Chandni Bar (2001), Jogger’s Park (2008) and so on. The complexion of Hindi cinema is therefore, transforming ‘Gone are the days when loaded money bags, sitting ..in the darkness of preview theatres, could dictate terms invariably insisting on forcing a wet scene here or rape there. The arbitrariness associated with film making has also disappeared. Everything has become business like. Budgets are now apportioned in advance, duties clearly defined payments made by cheques deadlines stipulated and everybody is accountable. Nevertheless, through all this regimentation and structuring Bollywood film makers have not lost their spirit of adventure. (Bose, 2006 ibid p. 22-23). Corporatization is in fact the favourite term branded about Hindi film makers and the Indian press to describe these efforts of the Bombay film industry to become more organized and less dependent on dubious source of finance. As older system of finance are still dominant it is till to early to determine the overall impact of corporate and institutional financing on the Bombay film industry. However with more consistent financing films can be produced in shorter amount of time. This reduces costs significantly and enhances the chances of a film’s commercial success (Ganti 2004, p.88-89). Another associated change in the production system is the closing of ranks and merging of roles At various levels, actors producers distributors, exhibitors, lab owners are
closing ranks and growing simply by taking advantage of emerging opportunities Intermediaries down value chain removed and with digital technology turned obsolete. Cost enhancing practices and connections. Revival of studio system: A positive indicator whose best instance is the case of Ronnie Screwvala, one who set up one stop shop to handle all aspects of film making under one single roof from scripting to production and direction to marketing and distribution. This led to exploiting advantages of providing integrated solution to film business. (Bose, 2006 ibid. p.35-36) Corporate Film Making has thus begun to replace the old disaggregate mode of production economy of Hindi film industry. Ever since film making was recognized as an industrial activity banks and credit institutions have been fairly liberal with loans on easy terms, but mainly to mainly to corporate film makers. Between 2001 and 2004, almost 100 films had availed of institutional funding to around Rs. 7 billion. Corporate film making began in South as a disciplined and organized approach. Notwithstanding Bollywood’s limited understanding of modern corporate dynamics, productions of Ram Gopal Verma and Yash Chopra have taken these ideas forward to strike economics of scale with multiple productions launched simultaneously. Instead of producing single blockbusters, they are utilizing same available resources for portfolio production of cost effective films every year. Essentially they are reducing risks by blending films of different genres and budget segments amend at different markets and different audiences. This is a pragmatic approach open to bigger producers who have funds and are particular about dissipating their risk profile and this allows mitigating pre and post production, distribution, publicity and other costs through planned strategies of budgeted allocation. Introducing the logic of scale of operations cost cutting devices applied and revenue inflow augmented through multiple sales of rights and leakage of revenue plugged in corporate film making. (ibid p.201-202). With the portfolio approach being thus forced on film makers by banks and others, rating agencies now feel encouraged to undertake independent evaluation of projects and in effect, feel encouraged to facilitate the availability of specialized guarantee funds to mitigate the risks of financial institutions. Such so-called credit enhancers are expected to improve the financial structure of the film industry.

Bank and government lending institutions taking larger share of risk almost 70% of project budget and with interest rates for such finance reduced sharply the risk of the lender is reduced considerably (ibid p. 204). Commenting on the much publicized corporatization of film production, a note film magazine writes: ‘Bollywood camp is no longer the same as before. Camp rivalries are no longer dependent upon the egoes of heroes. Corporate styles have begun to influence film production, Market surveys precede the making of films to understand the market demand…Strategies vary from one production camp to another. While some target the ‘desi’ (home) audience, others target the overseas market. Corporate camps have professionalized film trade and film making. Film production, promotion, distributorship and selling of rights are getting corporatized Transactions between corporate camps is also a feature of these changes. For instance all Karan Johar films from Kuch Kuch Hota Hai to Kabhi ALvida Na Kahna to My Name Is Khan has been under the distributorship of Yashraj films. Among the other corporatized film producers
are UTV, Adlabs, Mukta Arts, Films Craft of Rakesh Roshan, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Manmohan Shetty etc... (Anandolok ) The reasons for corporatization though are largely informed by global economic forces of market principle the immediate reason that precipitated it following certain events like extortion threats from the underworld, exposure of illicit links to the Mumbai dons, arrests of key figures, assassination attempts, have increased the desire for major producers to restructure the industry and in 1998 the top fifteen producers of Mumbai formed the super-league of producers, called the United Producers’ Forum. Besides safeguarding of their interests the league was instrumental to negotiate with the government that brought forth the industrial status in 1998 and made available the benefits of bank finance and insurance. Organized business ability, professional image before the state, increased control of corporatized production houses gave greater bargaining power to the industry and also a respectability. (see, Dwyer et al, 2002. p 222)

Multiple Sources of Revenue Streams beyond Box office: Not Halls Returns Alone. Things are changing and parameters of success also changing for films produced. It is no longer dependent on continuous running and financial success yielded even with few weeks of running in the halls. The economies of film trade has become complex. Earlier it was relatively simple. A producer raised money from film financiers and merchants and sold it to distributors. On release people flocked to halls and returns from ticket sales profited (p 188) distributors, producers and other sundry elements. Success of films no longer dependent on tickets sold in halls. Now profits are reaped even before release of a film due to proliferating channels of media convergence like overseas publicity, music right sales. Telecasts rights overseas returns and soon (p 189) . Overseas distribution rights bring larger profits in comparison to Indian market and domestic viewing public. (Deshpande, 2005. p.188-189) No producer or director big or small any longer today depends solely on box-office collections – both domestic and overseas – for recovering his investments. Hosts of rights like telecast, dubbing, subtitling, merchandising and release of promotional material, in film advertising and co production and distribution treatises etc are the various sources and returns which can gross up to more than anything a theatre release through conventional distribution channels right possibly could generate. This is allowing Bollywood film makers never before opportunities to keep up with global trends in the entertainment sector (Bose, 2006. p.13) As the industry matures and entertainment consumption stabilizes Bollywood seeks to explore and identity alternative revenue opportunities. This includes marketing and promotions with definite targets assigned to generate revenues. This includes taking films to newer geographical territories, in film advertising and strategic use of commercial brands within cinematic content exploring merchandising options or supplementary programming such as publishing a booth or documentary on making of film etc (ibid p.180 -181).

Media Convergence is a close corollary to the above aspect. Apart from multiple revenue system, media convergence is a contemporary reality. Mobile phone, FM radio are popular channels providing access to entertainment content from Bollywood. Broadband Internet is another unfolding opportunity and, besides like entertainment and home video (DVD and
VCDs) that is part of home entertainment segment. These are part of the expanding spectrum of possibilities Bollywood producers are being exposed to. Technology driven media convergence allow recouping of revenue from myriad sources and this has reduced dependence on box office. Bose observes, banking on the collection of first day, first show has become a practice of the past. There has been therefore a paradigm shift wherein from FSS factor and planning and strategy that goes into maximising box office receipts, revenue is generated from the other sources that includes radio and television, sale of music rights, mobile ring tones, CDs mobile telephony, broadband Internet, animation gaining. Bose argues that even a flop film is allowed to make up for the losses, and for hit films the gains are infinitely multiplied. Bose says: ‘In fact, it is very hard to lose money on films these days’ (Bose, 2006 ibid p 14)

Media Convergence enables beyond box office returns as multiple channels provide avenues represent robust revenue stream with the potential of turning ‘a confirmed box office dud to an eternal money spinner’. These are described by marketing analysts as delivery platforms. Besides allowing for multiple sources of revenue earnings, media convergence also provides a break based entertainment opportunity beyond film viewing. Technology has made it possible for him to opt for film entertainment outside the cinemas (ibid p 30). The challenge cinema faces is therefore, not of being obliterated amidst a ..of presumably competing activities, but of integrating (p 34) itself with these very media. Bollywood has found its strength from this integration and is getting the audience back into the theatres (ibid p34- 35).

Disciplining of the Industry: Financial Constraints removed is facilitating legitimate returns and change in the mode of production. Privacy and leakages being thwarted is augmenting earnings. Due to prevailing trend of moving away from analogue entertainment packages – particularly in cinema, thanks to a rise in Mumbai of digital cinema, much of revenue leakages are being plugged. Top Bollywood producers are venturing into individual distribution arrangements so as to claim their share which was earlier lost to piracy. The number of Hindi film prints being released overseas is rising steadily. Moreover, the emergence of professionally run international companies, who are exclusively handling Indian movies, has contributed towards an increase in legitimate revenue of film makers. Greater transparency, vigilant media and less racketeering: By and large, directors and actors are showing caution in disassociating with dubious people in public. An unsparingly alert media has taken a firm stance against racketeers. Till late 90’s stars could get away with unexplained indiscretion, though it is not so now. Greater transparency in Bollywood’s production and work culture too has stabilized. The industry’s functioning largely. A certain order has been restored and stars now often bulk dates for shoots and are increasingly restricting themselves to doing one film at a time. Present day shows there is greater transparency proliferated production units and less time consumed for production (Bose2006, ibid.p 17-22) Productions loss and the vagaries that plagued the industry and often flops leading to penury of producers are currently reduced. Producers like other businessman adept to spreading losses mostly through common method of invested in several films simultaneously in anticipating that at least one will work to compensate for losses in other. This law of probability mostly favoured big banner film makers.
with ample resource and the courage to risk by undertaking multiple projects at the same time (ibid p.29-30). As part of financial prudence and common sense dictates that for any enterprise to survive, costs must not exceed returns. Earlier producers gambled with their savings and invested without prior planning regarding viability of their proposed projects. Firstly such uncertain plunges are avoided. Personal savings are rarely invested at high risk big budget projects without basics being cover. Films are now being pre sold to distributors at budgeting stage and smarter producers out of this kind of an arrangement are being able to even make table profits. Risks of film making are now spread out and in eventuality of a flop no single producer, distributor or exhibitor has to take the responsibility of the burden of loss. Finances are prudently utilized and incidence of risks being reduced. (ibid p.43).

**Emergent Technological Opportunities** – After liberalization, the industry observed the first generation changes or the first wave of growth in the entertainment sector following the opening up of the economy in the early nineties. The changes were unleashed by the introduction of new satellite television channels entering our homes, the Internet redefining our lives and mobile telephony making communication so much simpler. The world shrunk and we became suddenly integrated into a part of a large global community (Bose ibid p 174).

Bose also argues that the future of cinema lies in the development of digital technology. Heightened picture resolution and quality minimal distribution costs and quicker print delivery promises to raise box office collections exponentially. Despite financial constraints on investment faced at the beginning the efforts of entrepreneurs have been indication of how fast celluloid is being replaced by digital points and changing the way Indians take to cinema. Closely related to digital cinema is digital film making. Despite limited initial cost advantage, improved film print quality and prevailing trend towards digitization is encouraging film makers to opt for it. Apart from these a whole array of technology as part of media convergence like EDGE Technology, Animation, IMAX etc are part of Bollywood technological face lift.(ibid p.52-53)

Rise of new age/multiplex films – In 90s with gradual economic liberalization emerging both in the media, through access to satellite and cable with reduced control and through importing of consumer goods, societal attitudes have been changing and found its reflection in films The expanding middle class and their changing consumption pattern seen in rise of multiplexes, with producers and directors targeting this niche audience of multiplex. The multiplex market held by burgeoning middle class patrons is a significant change. (Bhugra,2006, p.119) In this context it needs to be stated that harking back of the middle class to film-viewing had its effect upon the form of film and its content, aesthetics etc. As it is argued that with the emerging of new age film making talent the general impression gaining ground is that more than star cast, it is the content that is becoming important and determines the success of films. Much of these new age films are being targeted at multiplex audiences in urban centres, indicating that the very dynamics and standards of film-making in Bollywood are being relooked (Bose 2006, ibid,p 22). Ever since the multiplex revolution swept the country most trade analysts have come up with the expression of mathematical hits. It means nothing beyond the fact that the
producer has not run into losses. By their standard if a film generates a good initial by outlasting FSS (Friday Saturday Sunday) criterion, it is destined to be a success. One or two weeks of at theatre is good enough to recover costs. Going by the number of prints in circulation the rates of tickets and a few tax relief (earlier not available), the economies of film making no longer is dependent on silver or golden jubilee any longer. Without taking into consideration the additional revenue earned through sales of music or video rights, and other ancillary media exploitation bring it. A good movie now depends on good content (ibid. p 40).

**Overall improvement in Film Making** – The dynamics of the industry has changed dramatically. The quality of film making, both conceptually and technically, has only improved over the years, not deteriorated…the scale of film making has expanded so much and opportunities for distribution have multiplied to such an extent. Bollywood’s improved and planned economy can handle large budgets and produce profits (ibid. p 46).

**Film Literacy Growing and Genre Differentiation:** The answer to good film making in Bollywood lies in the death of the formula. Films can no longer be made with one size fits all approach because audiences are sharply divided. Growth of film literacy and exposure to overseas cinematic trends through the electronic media has created a strange scenario. While on one hand is that section of the public that still abide by principle of wilful suspension of disbelief while watching films and on the other is the section that is not only discerning and demanding but has built an intellectual firewall around itself. In the past, an intelligent film maker could successfully (ibid. p 46) penetrate the firewall (whenever and whatever it existed) with a formula that appealed to the collective consciousness of the masses. So films like ‘Hunterwali’ (1935) type of Fearless Nadia films, the Rajendra Kumar kind weepres. Manoj Kumar’s patriotic sagas, Manmohan Desai and Prakash Mehra entertainers, and even the David Dhawan sort of course comedies successfully entertained. These were all formulaic stuff that had a homogenizing emotional appeal on audiences and formulas worked even better before as film literacy had hardly set in.

Film literacy, diversification of taste, preferences of audience on sharper lines and the advent of film makers like Karan Johar, Ram Gopal Varma and Mahuur Bhandarkar, have segmented the market into mainstream and niche. Today any film maker unsure of himself can recoup his investments by targeting the niche markets. While movie ambitions and confident ones like Yash Chopra and Karan Johar continue to make film for the masses and are pulling off bigger hits. Both niche and block buster have their own success formula through the risk element of latter is higher because it entails huge budget and the focus is diffused it addresses a more heterogeneous populace with a homogenous formula. Niche films in contrast allow film maker to play safe with ideas and feeling not to be compelled to make either spectacular or feel good films. However, rarely does a niche arise above the level to become mainstream hit like Lagaan (2000) or Dil Chahta Hai (2001) (Bose, ibid. p 47).

**Changing Audience Profile and the Multiplex Revolution:** Audience Categorisation in cinema needs to be understood before understanding the present trends that followed especially after 2000. As the finance for Hindi films is generated from all over India and all over the
world, everyone involved in production distribution, and exhibition of Hindi films strive to reach the widest possible audience. While Hindi film makers aim for mass rather than niche appeal, with audiences as an undifferentiated whole but classify them in various ways with accompanying tastes. One of the main ways of classifying audiences is regionally along the geography of the distribution network so that taste is related to place, thereby implicitly mapping film viewing preferences onto ethnic and linguistic marches of identity. Audiences are also classified into terms of age, residence, (city, town, small town etc) gender and class. These categories however, are not highly differentiated, excessively demographic categories of American market research. The categories of ladies audience, youth or youngsters and family audience are broadly encompassing and highly imprecise as are the two other ways of classifying audiences: the binaries of classes and masses and cities and interiors.

These binary classifications of audiences are based upon perceptions of how education, occupation and residence shape people’s personalities and tastes. These perceptions are also grounded in long standing government discourses in India which designate the vast majority of the population as backward and in need of upliftment or improvement. The city interior binary maps onto the division of distribution territories into A-B-C class centres with B and C class centres comprising the interiors. Each territory and sub-territory has its interiors, but there are entire sub-territories in central and northern India that are regarded as the interiors from the perspective of industry members in a cosmopolitan city like Bombay. Interior audiences are perceived by film makers to be less educated and sophisticated than city audiences.

The classes’ masses binary is the dominant mode of representing audiences. The masses are vaguely defined in terms of occupation – such as domestic workers, manual labourers, rickshaw drivers, factory workers – and characterized as illiterate and having little or no formal education. The terms commonly used for masses are labouring classes or the common man in English or Janta (people) in Hindi. Film makers claim that the Janta or masses judge a film by its entertainment value which allows them few hours of escape from their harsh lives, and they are entertained by spectacle, slap stick comedy bombastic dialogues, titillation etc. Mostly men, they do not have access to alternative means of watching films than in cinema halls. The Bombay film industry’s attitudes towards its mass audience especially is overwhelmingly patronizing and reveals the vast social distance between industry and the majority of its audiences.

The diversion of viewing audience is integrally liked to spatial hierarchies present in the cinema hall. Film exhibition practices in India are akin to theatrical or concert performance practices in the US with advance reservations, assigned seating and differential admission connected to seat locations. Cinema has seating assigned in terms of ticket prices in ascending order of stalls lower and upper stalls, dress circle and balcony. The masses are those who sit in cheaper seats located in stalls while classes on the more elite educated mostly English speaking sophisticated people occupy the balcony. The balcony is also associated with women and family audiences and have higher ticket prices.
The masses also known as ‘front benchers’ ie, those occupying cheaper seats in front constitute poor working class male viewers whose tastes in cinema are perceived as prurient and distasteful to other segments of viewing audiences especially the class women and families.

The goal of every Hindi film maker is to make a superhit or universal hit film which appeals to everyone. Since a film has to widely appeal, these audience categories operate more as boundaries, rather than niches for whom specific kinds of films are made. What is currently stressed is that film makers need to transcend audience categories or discover what appeal to all of these categories to achieve true success. Members of the film industry frequently feel a need to negotiate the extremes of tastes and find a middle path which can increase potential audience for any film.

Since 2000 certain changes in exhibition conditions have introduced a new audience category into Bombay film industry’s vocabulary with the emergence of multiplexes in major metropolitan areas such as Delhi and Bombay a subset of the city or class audience referred to as the multiplex audience has become a niche audience for third film makers. Smaller budget off beat films are now becoming economically viable due to smaller sizes of theatres within multiplex. Since filling small seat theatres is much easier than filling bigger halls (Ganti, 2004. p.63-65).

However departures from the staple the diet and familiar the formula of Bollywood is also gradually attracting all kinds of new audiences. The predominance of younger lower class males in cinema halls up and down the subcontinent was the case in era of the angry young man and this no longer applies ‘Nowadays one is likely to see families driving into multiplexes in their flashy BMWs….’(Kaur and Sinha, 2005 p 29). But this is not just to blandly celebrate transnational but also to read the changing role, stations and relationship of Bollywood to various constituencies (ibid p 30). It is further asserted that :‘Those who think that the money disliked out by the rickshaw puller, the industrial worker, the vegetable vendor, the domestic servant, the urban unemployed, is what accounts for the turnover of the Hindi film industry could not be more wrong. What matters today are “A” grade centres about 15-20 big cities – and the overseas centres, points out direction Azeez Mirza. Who cares about the rest ? Even Pune is now a “B”. When the overseas centres gross around 15-16 crores.. .why would a town like Bhatinda be important. The time is past when people made films for the Chavanni (25 paisa) audience Hindi cinema is funded today in overwhelmingly large proportions by the rich, whether in India or abroad. The rise of multiplexes is part of this development. Multiplexes have numerous benefits for the few: Socially targeting and catering to a niche audience, the multiplex become an extensive of the home theatre, where the rich can watch films in the privacy of their own class. Increasingly, Hindi cinema is turning into a party of the rich and the rest of Indian is invited as voyeurs’ (Deshpande, 2005 p 192).

With subaltern chavanni audience that constituted earlier the mainstay are being overshadowed by metropolitan middle class, viz the multiplex audience and the overseas centres. The rise of multiplex is part of this development. Multiplexes have numerous benefits for the few: exhibitors and distributors earn more film because of higher ticket prices, by breaking the one
film per week model, and shuffling the number and things of shows of particular films, investment is made to yield the highest possible revenue, a certain kind of niche film now is commercially viable, by exhibiting 6-7 films per week the chances of flop resulting in big loss exhibitors is minimized, and socially by targeting a niche audiences, the multiplex becomes an extension of home theatre where rich can watch films in the privacy of their own class.( ibid p 192). The growth of these multiplexes might have been negated (in number terms) by closure of single screen theatres, but as a cinematic experience its appeal to the young urban Indian is very encouraging. It has opened the market for small budget movie catering to niche tastes and has ensured healthy returns for film makers. Moreover with their ability to drive footfalls consistently into large formal malls, multiplexes have fuelled an unprecedented retail boom over India. But the biggest blessing they hold (through largely unexplored) for exhibitors is the new opportunity for non film entertainment sporting events, award functions music concerts and beauty pageants. It is only a matter of time before producers and distributors are able to devise ways to leverage this opportunity to promote their films ( Ganti,2004 ibidp 56).

A major component of this new audience for films and film music was formed by the new middle classes, who emerged with economic liberalization in the early 1990s. They enjoyed different patterns of leisure, consumption and spending power, and were soon targeted by astute film producers, usually quick to seize on indicators of social change. They were among the audiences who returned to the cinema when the VHS rental market was killed in 1990s by cable and satellite Asian TV channels and the practice of video hold back. There was also a return to cinema in the west at this time, so other considerations such as technical advances, modernized cinemas and have been instrumental in revitalization of cinema going. The rich metropolitan audience in India now pays up to Rs. 100 for a cinema ticket, this making the lower class cinema halls, which charge much less of little interest to producers such as Yash Raj Films. These elite producers also want their expensive productions to be screened in the upmarket cinema halls which do justice to the Dolby digital soundtrack, and which are associated with a more affluent and a pedant audience referred to a classes rather than masses.

Although family audience remains the major target for the producers, the 1990s saw the college crowed, a new young audience flocking to the cinema halls. Hindi film became cool even among the most Anglophile students at the elite colleges. They were mainly the family audience attracted by the music which was no longer regarded as crass but as hip and enjoyed alongside western popular music and gradually the films became fashionable among the middle classes and elite. The other attraction was the rise of new stars who became the pin ups and role models of younger generation. Among the male stars. Shah Rukh Khan was particularly popular in the 1990s, being perceived as ‘cool and sporty’. The clothing and lifestyles of the film stars became increasingly advanced, counting as a major attraction in the film viewing (Dwyer,2002, p.191-192).

2.7 THE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES IN THE CULTURAL ECONOMY OF FILMS
At a time when globalisation is gaining grounds, in the Indian context, there has been a renewed interests among scholars in Benedict Anderson’s seminal work on nation as imagined community and its applicability to popular Hindi films to reclaim the nation (Virdi, ibid. p.6). Theorists of South Asian cinema have made a compelling case for the retention of the category nation despite challenges to the nation and nation-state by showing that the homogenizing drive of globalisation has failed to disrupt the affirmation of national identities. An important area is how the culture industry of Hindi films have resiliently withstood the attacks of global market by rendering it more marketable Rajadhyaksha terms as the ‘bollywoodisation’ of Hindi films (Gera-Roy, 2012 xix-xx).

Saskia Sassen argues that ‘the global economy concerns declining sovereignty of states over their economies. Economic globalization does indeed extend beyond the boundaries of the nation state’ (Sassen, 2000, p.71) Hindi films was quick to embed itself in the new politics of global capitalism in which the category of the nation was sustained in the face of transnational global flows of goods, people, and images. As the global flows of Bollywood films require a new visual idiom for imagining the ‘nation’ that is no longer rooted to the territoriality of the state. With the impending threat of demise of the nation-state in face of rise of sub-national separatism, formations of large unions, growing global connectivity and inter-dependence casting its influence upon political, economic or ecological spheres it is bound to have its repercussions in the realm of culture as well. The cultural is integrated into the global networks of production, market and consumption intricately that often appear to problematise state-centric bounded nes to imagine nation. The nation and its culture can be construed as discontinuous as implied by the notion of national cultures bound to state and its space of modernity. (Gera-Roy et. al, ibid p.xix-xx) Diasporisation of themes and identities, visual aesthetics inscribed by consumerist ethos etc. concedes to a pre-dominant market idiom that also enables a linkage with metropolitan global urbanity.

The transition unleashed by neo-liberal policies and its concomitant culture saw a productive period for Bollywood as it co-ordinated and re-arranged its various generic orientations. The most conspicuous was the’ naturalizing’ the free-floating Non-Resident Indian as the essentialist signifier of culture. As a concomitant to this Bollywood popularised several capitalist-driven phenomena and practices like basketball (as was popularised in Kuch Kuch Hota Hai) or Valentine’s day (as was seen in Dil To Pagal Hai) to open up the market for the new ‘cultural merchandise’ Multinational or global brands such as Nike, Addidas, Diesel etc. was brazenly displayed on screen following liberalisation. All inhibition against product advertisements were removed. Display of brands was seamlessly tied to the narrative. The open market economy embraced foreign brands which till 80s were illicitly available, the proliferation of satellite television bringing images of the world to homes and a progressively upward mobility seeking audience keen to vicariously savour the image flows related to global capitalist consumption sanctified the celebration of a culture of affluence and consumption. In fact in a number of post-global films of Bollywood, affluence rising out of globalization and India’s presumed success in the same became turned to a diegetic signifier for national value or
pride. Interestingly, Bollywood also popularised regional, parochial, ethnic traditions like Karva-Chauth of Punjab or Dandiya dance of Gujarat and also turned them to commodities. (Bhattacharya-Mehta, 2011, p.4-5) The most striking feature of post-globalization narrative is the erasure of tropical realities from the mis-en-scene of the films. Critics have repeatedly pointed at the aesthetics and glamorous ‘look’ of these films with designer labels, immaculate interiors, beautiful people, urban milieu from which all dirt, poverty, crime is erased. It seeks to produce a consumerist desire within the audience and immerse them in its utopia. This visual sojourn into a pleasure-driven world of thing is justly related to India’s foray into the free-market capitalism in the 1990s and the sudden flow of images and commodities into a nation that for long avowed the socialist principles. (Gopal, 2011, p.26) A new terrain of visuality and visual idiom was primarily aimed to the Indian middle class aspiring for good living and the diasporic audience who had to be interpellated as an Indian subject within filmic fantasy (Sen, 2011, p. 148).

The U.S. has generated a ‘veritable avalanche of artifacts’ that are now taken –for-granted features of life around the world. This constitute an entire repertoire of varied products of consumption and daily use. These carriers of an Americanized consumerist culture though primarily derived from the American market on crossing borders does subject itself to negotiation with the indigenous culture and acquire syncretic and hybridized forms (Hunter, et al. 2002, p.323-325). The visual aesthetics and the mis-en-scene of post-liberalisation Bollywood films are to be seen as ‘cultural elaboration’ upon the received objects of consumption mediating a certain cultural accommodation of the global. The advent of the global facing market reforms had led to the entry of foreign firms and thus expanding domestic consumer industries and choice. Clothing brands like Gap, Polo, Tommy Hilfiger, cars by Honda and Ford, drinks from Coca-Cola and Pepsi etc were made available to the Indian consumer. (see Guha, ibid, 2008)

While the economic, and socio-political pre conditions for a changed code of visual aesthetics were laid down by the global inflow of goods, the liberalising of the market with a burgeoning consumerist middle class, the diasporic clientele and the need to address their sensibility, nevertheless the very ideological legitimation came from two sources: romance and cultural nationalism purveyed through family. Talking about the consumerist visual aesthetics and changing political economy of films is incomplete without explicating how this new idiom of commodity aesthetic ideologically formed a hegemonic alliance with romance and cultural nationalism and the latter seeking articulation through the ploy of the family. (see, Sen, 2011, ibid; Mazumdar, 2007; Gopal, 2011)

Interestingly, the eruption of the romantic genre coincides with the increasing liberalization of the Indian economy. While the ‘western’ presence maintained itself throughout India’s post-independence era, it was accessible to the needs of a small middle class which also realized the ‘time lag’ in products, fashions, cultural trends arriving from the West. With liberalization the pace of transaction with Western style production and consumerism was accelerated in the 1980s partly due to the half-hearted reforms or what came to known as ‘Rajeev Effects’ and by
the 1990s with the official institutionalization of full fledged liberal economic reforms the time lag was replaced by a dramatic simultaneity in the inflow of global, Western style goods and products of consumption. This was also estimated that the ‘consuming class’ or the new middle class doubled in size to 12% in the 1980s and 18% in the 1990s. Liberalization enabled the middle class to access plethora of consumerist goods, comforts, privileges and strengthened their aspirations for good living and the consumerist items availed through global flows and circuitry. The ascent of the bourgeoisie lifestyle had its imprint on the romantic genre of post-liberalization films. This advent of the global consumerist culture in other words asserted a hegemonic influence upon Hindi films especially mediated through the romantic genre. Rachel Dwyer observes rightfully observes that ‘It is in the commercial cinema that the new middle class are establishing their hegemony, their depictions of lifestyle becoming those to which the lower classes aspire’ Promoting the market as a site of plentitude and unlimited consumption, the romantic couple’s agency and desire entwine commodity culture, new middle class tastes, and egalitarianism associated with the freedom of choice in intimate relations.(Virdi, 2003 ibidp.201)

Romantic films became convenient cultural sites for market driven capitalist forces and witnessed ‘a symbolic penetration of romance by the market’. The romanticization of commodities intersects with the ‘commodification of romance’. Within these films ‘romantic practices (are)… interlocked with and ….defined by the consumption of leisure goods and leisure technologies offered by the nascent market…’. Using commodities as props’fetishize(s) consumption…transpose(s) erotic desire onto goods, which in turn (become)…the very object of desire’ argues Illinois as cited. Combining a visual utopia of affluence, glamour and leisure with romantic fantasy, the films focus on and encourage pleasure,’ creating islands of privacy in the midst of the public realm’ The occasional telephone or radio used as props in the song and dance sequence in the 1950s is replaced in the 1990s with fast cars, water scooters, shopping arcades, luxury farm houses in rural settings, or palatial homes, all prominently displayed in the mise-en-scene. The ploy is to make ‘romance give voice to a new language of commodities’, observes Illinois. And in the romance genre diasporisation of themes have been particularly convenient. Consumption aligns most convincingly with romance amidst the plentitude and opulence of Western life style, exotic locales and all of this is mediated through diaspora. Opulence in the form of leisure spaces, travel and tourism are well accepted protocol for romantic encounter and its progression. The fetishistic gaze of the camera on the ‘iconography of abundance’ like posh resorts, exotic locales, dazzling array of consumer goods, plush houses, rich interiors besides creating desires for the material bliss and abundance serves as a celebratory backdrop for romance. Material consumption or pleasures savoured out of consumption holds the promise of romantic fulfilment. This not only appeals to the sentiments of the diaspora community and attracts the promising overseas market of films but also captures the middle class imagination at home. In the romance genre therefore, the diasporic subject and his habitat provides an imaginative terrain which enable films to visually explore the’ iconography of abundance’. It adds an added dimension to the ‘trajectory of commodity
fetishism’ in the years of economic reforms. Commodity culture propagates itself by trying to produce an Indian identity suited to the contemporary ethos of global consumerism. Appeal to consumerist appetite is thus more often than not conflated with the bourgeoisie romantic inclinations and commodity fetishism (ibid, p.202-203)

Visually romance also sought a close affiliate in and legitimation through travel and travel to exotic foreign locales was seen as an important component of courtship in films. Liberalization saw travels to foreign places as integral to narratives and not limited to providing the mis-en-scene. Travels not only provide scenic locales, privatized spaces but are a part of consumerist culture also. Dwyer claims ‘(T)ravel is one of the many ways in which Hindi films depict space and place, in particular places suitable for love and romance, and the idea of transnational Indian….Travel and romance have been linked to Western culture from shopping in duty-free shops, eating out…’(Dwyer, 2002) In addition to romance and courtship being a correlate of travel, the transnational flows characterising global exchange also involves the actual movement of the people. To be a part of the transnational family is now regarded as a hallmark of being ‘middle class’ in India. Every middle-class household in South Asia can boast of at least one of their extended family member residing in the Diaspora. Besides travelling overseas have become more affordable for the upwardly mobile new middle class and is no longer the sole preserve of the super-rich. Travelling overseas for leisure, now a real possibility visualised in films well captures the imagination of the aspiring middle class. Unlike the earlier escapades to foreign locales in pre-liberalisation era that provided a visual respite from the nationalizing regime and codes of socialist austerity, travels in post-liberalisation India function to appeal to the fantasies of the desirous class.(see, Dwyer, 2002, p.196). In addition to the aesthetic shifts in post-liberal films being informed by the logic of adjacent economies like consumerism and tourism, the production of films abroad are also influenced by the production incentives offered by the various governments of the places where films of Bollywood are being shot. These host governments in a bid to promote its tourism, gain in terms of inward investment, and business migration from among the growing Indian middle classes encourage Bollywood film makers to shoot their films in their countries.(Hassam, 2012, p.264-265)

An important aspect of the cultural economy besides travel, romance and display of commodity ensemble is the lavish, simulated interiors in family films that provide perfect site to negotiate globality of life style and Indian ness. As perfect sites for commodity consumption and brazen display showcasing the material prospects of globalization these interiors act as virtual cities and are seen-upholding promises and consumer dreams for the upwardly mobile new middle class. These interior spaces are ‘hypermodern landscape of commodity excess’( see,Mazumdar,2007p.140) disembedded from territorial inscriptions carry the insignia of designer aesthetics. These designed spaces are meant to attract the diasporic audience base with its global, urban look. Such a cultural economy seeks to create a consumerist bliss that is oblivious of the stark realities of the real nation. Unlike earlier films the real Indian city its roads, bridges, docks, tea shops, traffick, crowded bazaars, buses, slums, and all the squalor and dirt of the tropics are erased. The grim realities of the ‘real nation’ are obscured, physical space
is denied and obliterated, and happy interiors are upheld. These interiors do not reflect the real nation but are constructed fragments of exclusively stylized privatized spaces. The narratives moving from one aestheticized interiors to another serve to make the journey from national to global appear seamless as these interiors retain a global, urban look. (Mazumdar, 2007 ibid, p.117-118, 136, 140)

The dyadic cultural formation that conjoins liberalization with Hindutva came to inform diverse components of public culture and naturalised their ideological investment in seemingly unrelated aspects. And one such site is the consumerist, neo-traditional Hindu joint family. Romantic narratives ensconced within the family set-up, the site of pleasure and consumption also, saw a deliberate erasure of class differences and a focus on wealth or affluence. Erasure of signs of poverty, economic hardships and struggle, absence of poor, lower middle class protagonists enable a visuality of abundance and consumerist bliss. (see Ganti, 2004, p.40; Sen 2012, p.145-146) The cornucopia of fine food, clothes, jewellery, home décor often are integral to traditional ritualistic celebrations like weddings or ‘puja’ (religious offerings).

The change in the cultural economy of the post-liberalization films is best explicated through the category of K-Jo films—with cultural and visual encodings that serve to illustrate the influence of the hegemonic socio-cultural and economic forces. K-Jo films the popular name for Karan Johar films have introduced the global consumerist aesthetics into the surface culture of commercial films and any discussion necessitates a look at this category and the changes it has brought in the cultural economy of Bollywood films. K-Jo is a particular shorthand for Bollywood director Karan Johar films and today K-Jo represents the successor to the mass or commercial variant of Bombay films and is seen to be as opposed to films of limited commercial value, also known as Hat-Ke films bearing a morphological affinity with what Rajadhyaksha calls the Ray film. These two categories seem to rewrite as the binary between mass class/commercial art films. While Satyajit Ray came to be an exemplar of certain kind of cinema a certain tendency in Indian Cinema, K-Jo comes to displace the earlier category of Bombay cinema. The K-Jo film shed on the seismic changes that the Indian film industry has been undergoing since the 1990s—changes that have led to the transformation of popular Hindi cinema into Bollywood and allow us to trace what film scholars have come to describe as the Bollywoodization of Hindi cinema. In other words it represents a certain departure towards a particular style and form of films.

What is K-Jo films? Johar’s reputation rests on the three films of which he is the director viz. Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998), Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham (2001 also called as K3G) and Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna (2006 also called as KANK) and the fourth Kal Ho Naa Ho (2003 also as KHNH) of which he is writer producer and though directed by his former assistant Nikhil Advani bears close aesthetic and thematic links with Karan’s other films and his close association with it merits its nomination as a K-Jo product. Karan Johar films carry standard features and most importantly here that K-Jo films are always fronted by Shah Rukh, India’s most globally renowned male actor and along with this have some combination of leading stars of past decade almost constituting a stable catering anew for his films. These films boost big
budgets, gorgeous production value and carry cheesy subtitles, like It is all about loving your parents. Set in splendid sets, K-Jo films explore the lives and love of the rich and the beautiful and are driven by melodramatic plots, extravagant emotions and fabulously picturised song dance sequences. In brief the K-Jo film assembles several features commonly associated with post 1970s popular Hindi cinema – melodrama elaborately staged musical numbers, fair tale endings and a big star cast – and then proceeds to exaggerate these features, making big glittering films that return their weight in gold at the box office, particularly the overseas box office comprised of the diasporic Indians in the UK, United States, Australia and to some extent Figi, Trinidad and the middle east. The K-Jo films supposes a different public – viz. the nostalgic diasporic and employs a different aesthetic strategy (codification) to stage a departure from Hindi film. These films are based on a certain repetitive value unlike the Hat-Ke films or a reflexive, experimental, avant-garde film that seeks to introduce a new form and fresh content. The K-Jo film invents a kind of excess over formulaic Hindi film and overdoes it. Gopal argues: ‘So if Hindi films are notoriously long, the K-Jo film is even longer, if the relation of Hindi cinema to reality is weak, the Ko-Jo film intensifies this artifice, if Hindi cinema is star driven, the K-Jo film is star crazy. If the fragmented form of Hindi cinema enabled it to connect with adjacent economic like music and fashion, the K-Jo films strengthens this dispersal and activates multiple revenue stream by turning itself into an intermediary phenomena, and if the Hindi cinema sought to conquer the nation, the K-Jo film is set on world domination and so on and on’ and also the. ‘K-Jo appeal lies in its global brand equity and appeal to a globally dispersed cinephillic community’ (Gopal, 2011 ibid p 15-17).

The need for a change in the cultural economy of films lies in India’s intensified global exchanges where it necessitates a comprehensible definition of what India is and within the changed visual idiom of popular Mumbai films one can discern its expression. Such an idiom seeks to negotiate the neotraditional spaces with the global, cosmopolitan and also uphold, popularize and market the lifestyle based commodity culture.

Here it needs to seen that in contemporary cinema where the most significant development has been class-based market segmentation, regional fragmentation and the rise of genre picture. K-Jo film, like the Hat Ke represents a minority position. Both representing two district trends, appealing to district taste and sensibility are two positions informed by the common underlying principles of transformation within the industry’s political and cultural economy.

2.8 CHALLENGES OF TRANSFORMATION WITHIN THE FILM INDUSTRY: NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW FORCES OF PRODUCTION

Challenges of Transformation faced by the Hindi commercial film industry sees it trying to grapple with the old forces of production bases and the demands of new energies unleashed by the advent of neo-liberal economic changes and the opportunities that have been available to the industry.

First, media synergy has been thwarted by differential growth as things do not change overnight. In typical Indian conditions, changes do not occur gradually, but in fits and starts,
affecting each sector in varying degrees, depending on its level of organizational maturity; In other words, while cinema and radio are the most matured segments of the entertainment industry, there are other that are maturing. Differential maturity of variegated components in entire media and entertainment industry make synergy and change slower than desired. The other components include music producers, corporatized content producers, multi system operators and are the growing or maturing ones. The relatively least matured ones include clusters of local cable operators, theatre owners, music retailers and movie distributors. Nevertheless they all as significant players in the value chain that contribute significantly towards growth of the entertainment industry (Bose, 2006, ibid p.175-176).

Second, the continuity of old practices and slow adoption of technology has retarded the pace of transformation greatly. Technology as well known has a dual role to play in the entertainment business and its adoption in the last on can drive demand and in turn industry growth. Advent of interactive television, digital cinema mobile devices and so on have served the process of improving efficiencies and competitiveness. However the potential remains largely unexplored as core processes of film production distribution and marketing are still conducted using archaic and primitive application. Such lack of sophistication limits organizational effectiveness.

Third, the constraints on disciplining the industry is because corporatisation is largely curtailed due to the fact that entertainment business in India are typically family run enterprises lacking in professional management, transparency, financial discipline and reporting. These factors adversely affect investors’ confidence thereby perpetuating financial problems. With large corporate bodies and financial institutions evincing interest in aligning with entertainment producers, it is highly needed that the latter set their houses in order (also see S Gopal 2011; Dwyer 2002). As a result the remnants of the old disorganized and disaggregate system continues to prevail. Inefficiencies across value chain lead to anomalies which severely damage credibility and lowers profitability. Smaller content providers or media players lead to inefficiencies due to lack of resources to upgrade their service. As a result the financiers are often dissuaded from investing due to these (ibid. p.186).

Fourth, the persistence of black money and funding of dubious lifestyle prevails within the industry to a large extent Accounting and auditing in Bollywood is limited and not transparent. Informality speculation and verbal culture prevails. Money laundering, extravagant gifting, lavish lifestyle, undeclared income, are common among industry producer stars, musicians, playback singers etc. This accounts for suspicion that surrounds them. Lack of culture of fiscal discipline in Hindi film industry is from the beginning a common feature. Commercial lending agencies have constantly shied away from being part of their enterprise. However, private funding has poured in even in lean periods and industry has been able to generate sufficient funds and returns despite high financial costs. But absence of proper accounting procedure and reliable costing data, the costs of production may have been grossly overstated. This probably explains why some banks and financial institutions had decided to stick their necks out the moment the government granted recognition to the film industry in 2000. To an extent, the
organized funding reduced average financing costs. But what usually gets overlooked is that when compared to the lending rates in other sectors, institutional finance for film projects is significantly higher. Banks are therefore relatively more stringent and less generous and insist on higher stakes to ensure repayment. Additionally stipulations like completion bonds, insurance and well-defined contracts have come into play. The banks typically finances up to 50% of a project and retains the negative rights as collateral. The producer puts in the rest of the money from his own (Bosse, 2006 ibid.p 203) services. The bank also insists on a completion guarantee from the producer and insurance against possible delays. Risk taking is thus shared equitably (Bose, ibid p.202-204).

An important example of the negotiation between old and new forces of economic changes occurs at two levels: first, is the family romance melodrama at the level of the form (at the narrative level of films) and second the influence of familial networks over production of film. Family at the level of both narrative as well production related component is the site of confluence or negotiation of the old and the new. Family formats is reflective of the fact that the film industry in India has always functioned like a family business. Family links of younger generation of film makers is undeniable who avail opportunities provided by the emerging conditions of post-reform political economy as well the advantages of belonging to entrenched positions within the industry. The film industry functions like a family. Young directors like Karan Johar, Aditya Chopra and Farhan Akhtar all come from families engaged to the film industry.

Johar’s explaining of historicity of industry in terms of its informality/family ties is also a relevant at its global collaborator. Karan Johar’s description of how the Bombay film industry functions in comparison with Hollywood seems to echo Prasad’s views on the nature of the film industry’s political economy and its family network controlled backward mode of production. In our film fraternity, relationships are stronger than contracts. Recounting the involvement of families within the trade Johar says how family based equations are nurtured for years and how it is done informally sans agents and managers and assistants. Those of who have been raised within the industry have the word of our fathers, our siblings and those friends that night as well be family. Johar narrates how the industry has been raised bit by bit through informal yet familial mode of functioning. ‘We’re small and ….., but we’ve sat in each others living rooms, and we’ve built this industry to what it is. This blog post is addressed to foreign media grants with their big corporate presentations and their pie charts who seek to do business with Bollywood. We might be a little old fashioned in our pitches, but we make films because the nation’s heart thumps for it. Appeal to that sentiment, and understand our culture. Employ people who understand this about us as an industry, and as a country. We’re emotional and we’re more connected than you’d think but we have our patterns. Try to understand who we are as an industry, what works for us and more importantly for our audiences’ (Gopal, 2011, p.22-23) What Karan Johar identifies to as unique to the Bollywood mode of production is indeed social relations modeled on the family business dealings structured by sentiment and he draws a figurative relation between the sociology of the industry, audience expectation and the content
of cinema. This familial mode of functioning Johar stresses must be reckoned with as Indian cinema globalizes for it has not only historical value but renders fiscal advantage. The specificities of the familial mode of functioning is to be considered even at its crucial moment of global collaboration. (Gopal, ibid 22-23) This attitude to the family is seen in films themselves, where lovers destined by fate or by family never pursued romance in opposition to family values. The sanctity of family values is upheld (Dwyer, 2002 ibid, p. 214). Family metaphor, has a dual use, not only as being a diegetic format but also a productive ploy for industry’s social legitimacy in crisis and allowed it to change as it a worked as a re-adapted model when the studio system declined and the situation was yielding to a new mode of production, albeit adhoc and backward, and when also the independent star-producer relation came into existence. Ravi Vasudevan has traced the long history of this link between a diegetic investment in the creation of a joint family and industry’s own use of this metaphor to enhance its social legitimacy, especially in times of crisis. Family is invoked not only as a narrative form but as a referential and normative value within the political economy which in turn also comes to influence the form. Although the industry scenario is controlled by a few powerful families it is a value that negotiates between the old mode of production and the transformative changes within the industry and this figuration of the industry as family also provides argues Johar social, and, global legitimacy to a certain mode of production even as it is undergoing transformation.

A recent study of the industry revealed that there is an ongoing partial shift in this mode of production with greater horizontal integration of sectors of distribution, marketing and exhibition, while the creative product still remains largely in the control of specialized production companies. The main trend seems to be towards an industry model based on alliances that take advantage of scale economies in distribution and financing while retaining creative and managerial advantages of small firms in production. This model continues to be profitable because it is based on tight social networks such that business relations among different roles in film projects (actors, producers, directors, scriptwriters) are likely to be influenced by family relations and other types of informal ties, typical to Indian and likely to be absent in film industries located in countries with other national institutional fields like Hollywood. Business relations to a relatively large extent are trust driven than contractual. In a rapidly revolving environment, as many entrants enter the field, these production companies have to professionalize, investing in management process and planning. Companies like Johar’s Dharma Productions and Yashraj Films have emerged as market leaders as they have derived strengths of family model and refunctioned it to meet new professional standards taking hold in the industry (Gopal, 2011, ibid, p.23-24). Another evidence of primordiality that is part of the industry’s production economy is its caste networks. The Indian film industry although an international and seemingly modern company, is still run on family principles and connections which form a variety of pre-modern networks throughout the film industry. Most powerful figures in the film industry are Punjabis and a large number come from Khatri Caste (names include the Chopras, Kapoors, Khannas, Tandons). These caste links are subordinated to family
links, with Yash Raj Films being no exception. An interweaving of familial and professional relationships is key to the production unit, providing a level of closeness and understanding that helps the unit function well. (Dwyer, 2002 p.213- 214). Family networks and links continue to remain and adaptively respond to the new conditions of the film economy besides being an ideal or a principle that influences the narrative imaginings.

It is also contended that the feudal family romance narrative as a form that largely emanated from its production dynamics was a vehicle to reproduce the traditionally regulated relations within the society as well the production economy of film making .This form was known to be derided by the cultural policy of the state and its avowed realist protocol instituted by an art cinema intelligentsia. It was believed that ‘narrative reform’ necessitated a reform in the fundamental re-working of this popular format as well greater organisation of the industry’s mode of production. The re-invention of the family format was also reflective of this being an identarian reformism. The change in state policy, recognition of the industrial status and corporate initiatives have re-organized the industry towards an elite modernity, where the family narrative format served not only to lay claim indigenous authenticity by upholding family values on one hand, to hark back the family audience as well the nostalgia ridden diaspora, and also because this format is a veritable site to commoditize Bollywood through lavish ensemble of interiors, fashionable jewellery, designer costumes, etc. The ‘feel good’ happy-ending romantic tales and their Bollywoodization through commodity ensemble was able to negotiate economic forces of capitalist forces on one hand and thecherished Indian ness of values on the other that was most successfully mediated via these films(Vasudevan,2010, ibid.p.342). As already stated that one of the best illustration of the renewed family romance format comes from K-Jo films, or the Karan Johar films that memorializes the old, represents the ‘new’ without endangering the conservative ideology. Spectacularizing tradition, it re-invents a hybrid convention or give rise to a ‘transitional genre’. (Gopal,2011 ibid. p20)

The construction of the star therefore while being explored needs to take note of the fact that filmic narrative format as well mode of production contain both old and new socio-economic and political forces especially during the transitional moments of change . The construction of the star’s image is subject to the intersection of the old and the new ideological forces. This also would allow us to understand why and how hybridity and liminality of his roles, especially in the transitional genres that includes family romance diasporic films and middle class narratives, are actually influenced by the criss-crossing of contradictory currents of the nation and the global, the traditional and modern, and so on. The star provides the prime vehicle to this transitional genre who makes amenable the duality of these narratives through its appeal to family sentiments and values as well its contemporary re-codings via a commoditized aesthetics.

Here it needs to be mentioned also that Bollywood’s steady generic differentiation and the rise of varied spectrum of movies and also many experimental movies indicate the entry of corporate capital into film production, rise of middle class viewership and so on. And that family romance is not the only dominant popular format of narrative to which all forms are
What is significant is how with the emergence of new configuration of business and parallel generic differentiation the family romance format emerged to have a spectacular presence in the narrative of India’s globalization. (Vasudevan, 2010 ibid., p.344-345). The casting of the star, SRK, recurrently within these family romance narratives conjoining diaspora and consumerist ideology allowed his image to become nearly emblematic to the nation’s globalizing discourse.

It needs to be stated that the transitional genre of revived family romance format while provided a format of negotiation between the old and the new co-existed with the incipient changes that were surfacing both within the mode of production or the film economy on one hand and the changes in the text or the content it disseminated under changed conditions. Surprisingly SRK himself acted in negative roles and directors like Mani Ratnam and Ram Gopal Varma made forays into relatively untreaded terrains within the domain of popular films beyond themes of family romance. Following, them several new directors joined the brigade of reflexive film making for the middle class or the niche audience. (see Bose, 2006 ibid; Gopal, 2011 ibid., p.21) These new formats rising from the new changes are also part of the nation’s globalizing discourse. We need not see these generic differentiations as disparate from the ld, revised or transitional formats of family, romance melodrama. Besides acting in these films the star was also seen to be performing roles beyond the transitional genre of diaspora family romance. Tracing the construction of SRK is to take into consideration his simultaneous or sequential casting within multiple genres emanating from the same underlying social realities that constitute the globalising discourse of the nation and its cinematic expressions.

2.9 THE DOMINANT THEMES AND CONCERNS OF THE NATION AND ITS EXPRESSIONS IN THE CINEMATIC NARRATIVES OF POST-LIBERALISATION INDIA

Broadly looking at the themes that dominate the films and its plots in post liberalisation era, in which we intend to locate the star-subject, one can discern at the substantive level certain themes or issues and how, applying Jamesonian idea of the political unconscious, the text discloses its engagement with these very issues and themes..

2.9.1 Resuscitating the Nation and Nostalgia and the Revival of Tradition and Family

Firstly, the films, especially the diasporic films, are marked by a search of fundamentals viz. family and cultural nationalism a pursuit that typifies globalisation. Sociologist, Roland Robertson argues that this search that proceeds in various parts of the world and within various societies in terms of globally diffused ideas concern issues like tradition, home, identity, indigeneity, locality, community and so on. Even the notion of nostalgia has been reflexively upgraded (Robertson 1992, p.166) This search must be regarded as basically a modern or post-modern phenomenon. It involves a significant degree of reflexivity, via. invention of tradition and choice, increasingly global bricolage. The modalities of reflexivity are contained within the global discourse of fundamentals. Alienation, homelessness, rootlessness are all related to the question of ‘loss of community’ and ‘decline of fundamentals’ The major contribution of
Robertson argues that the theorization of nostalgia is the ‘flip-side’ of globalisation. Locating the ‘Nostalgia Paradigm’ as endemic to classical sociology in its foundational years, Robertson observes how Tonnies idea of the Gemeinschaft and the Gesselschaft as part of conceptualizing the modern museumized the pre-modern within the project of modernity. Globalization has been the primary root of the rise for ‘wilful nostalgia’. Accelerating pace of globalization witnessed the ‘flowering urge to invent traditions. Wilful nostalgia as a form of cultural politics-as well as the politics of culture-has been a major feature of globalization’(ibid, p.155)

While nostalgia had interested the classical sociologists with respect to diffusion of modernity in Western societies and ‘the problems of integration and meaning occasioned by the new kind of relatively standardised national society’ presently, observes Robertson, it is a ‘politically motivated nostalgia’ on part of actual or potential national elites as arising from a mixture of the perceived need for national integration and the threat of relativization of national identity by the compression of international society.’(ibidp.155). He adds that ‘we are currently in a new phase of accelerated, nostalgia producing globalization…which is currently related to the rise of postmodernist thinking’ Under these circumstances, we see post modernity generating a somewhat different, diffused kind of ‘wilful’ and ‘synthetic nostalgia’ amounting to a kind of ‘global institutionalization of nostalgic attitude”'(ibid, p.158)

Citing Jameson, Robertson delineates a shift in late twentieth century wherein nostalgia becomes intimately bound to consumerism. Compared to wilful, synthetic nostalgia as an ingredient of late nineteenth and twentieth century cultural politics of contemporary nostalgia is more economic and is in a sense being a major product of global capitalism. Unlike the existential nostalgia, arising more ‘naturally’ from estrangement and alienation that was later nationally incorporated into wilful nostalgia; which is now being incorporated within for the most part capitalistically –into consumerist, image-conveyed nostalgia.(ibid p.159-160)

Extending Robertson’s idea of the nostalgia paradigm one can see how post-global, institutionalised, image-driven nostalgia finds recurrent expression in post-liberalisation filmic texts. Family providing the favoured trope of the nation in popular Hindi cinema, is re-invented in a nostalgic bid to re-produce the imagined nation and claim affinity to the diasporic transterritorial community through diasporisation of the family or the territorial family claiming back the nostalgia-inflicted diaspora emotionally. This allow to cinematically produce an experience of a ‘collective nostalgia’ in which family as the ‘symbolic object’ with a widely shared and familiar character, with ‘symbolic resources’ from the past based on tradition ‘can trigger wave upon wave of nostalgic feelings upon millions of people at the same time’(Fred Davis, cited, ibid p.160-161) Cinema can be seen to be the ‘sociographic space ‘ of nostalgia that seeks to re-envision the relevance of the nation during times of the global. Celebrations of rituals, weddings, traditional rites performed ostentatiously within large united families are nostalgic ploys to evoke unity and solidarity within the imagined contours of the nation.
Recalling, Foucault and his observations on subjection to the normalizing discourse of rationality, and to the ‘disciplinary regime of modernity’ or its ‘administrative totality’ it is argued that modernity fails to deliver the grand promises via its techno-industrial enterprise and rationalized institutional apparatus. The modernizing discourse despite being empowering has its own story of surveillance and control mechanism as also resonated in Weberian idea of the ‘iron cage’. Amidst the enormity of technology and rationality there arise a quest to escape the pain, anguish and deeper suffering of the soul. Modernity while offering new opportunities for livelihood had led to large scale migration, dislocation and displacement of people. Beneath these mass movements in search of better living was the experience of heightened loneliness. This leads to existential anguish called homelessness that is part of modernizing process. The modern world comprises of individuals uprooted from their social milieu and continues to suffer from sense of homelessness and nostalgia. It is this search for home – ‘land filled with warmth, intimacy, spontaneity and informality that finds its cinematic expressions in DDLJ, Pardes and much later in Swades…’ (Pathak, 2006, ibid.p.43) The deep rooted feeling of absence finds a cinematic resolution in the form of revival of family or the village that recurred in many of Shah Rukh Khan films of diasporic themes. ‘… as we are seeing in our times, Hindi films try to reconstruct the ‘homeland’ for the rootless NRIs!…’ (ibid.p.43)

With the post modernist turn and globalisation, one begins to grapple with the insurgent interrogation of the nationalism and the rise of very different kind of identity politics. The integrative secular project of nationhood that so far remained repressive of the primacy of the more primordial identities of religion, ethnicity, etc. It is the modernist legacy bequeathed to the post-colonial state that came to represent the hegemonic official discourse of the nation after freedom. (Ahmed, 2007, p.38-40) The nation however continues to remain significant in cinematic imaginations especially within the nostalgia paradigm that re-invokes it and powerfully reconstitute it within an acutely private space of psychic identity. (Virdi, 2003 ibid. p.6)

Even in the era of global therefore, the nation has not receded and exerts itself differently. In fact the issues of globalization and diasporisation on one hand and emergence of cultural fundamentalism on the other are not unrelated to the question of nation and has its manifestation in the filmic narratives. ‘….the process of globalization and international migration have not necessarily weakened the powerful connection between the boundaries of the Andersonian(1983) ‘imagined community’ and specific territory. On the contrary, while diasporic communities get social and political legitimation in ‘multiculturalist and pluralist societies, quite few of the political projects which have emerged in various diasporic communities….are seen as ‘projects corresponding to the rise of cultural fundamentalism’. (Yuval-Davis1997, p.66) Nations and boundaries continue to dominate collective imagination and even the modern , supposedly globalised imagination of the transnational intelligentsia is not an exception. This belonging to the nation continue to be important to anchor themselves. (Banaji, 2008, p.173)
Cultural forms like cinema as already stated is a contested terrain of ideologies seeking hegemony. (Virdi, 2003 ibid) The resurgence of cultural nationalism and revival of the same in cinematic texts can be read as cultural forms that appear to be ‘tribal returns’ reflecting countermovement of globalisation towards greater homogenisation on one hand. And on the other hand the nation seeks re-invention by disengaging from territory and make it serve as a covenant term for imagining it as a collectivity. At a time when globalisation is gaining grounds, in the Indian context, there has been a renewed interests among scholars in Benedict Anderson’s seminal work on nation as imagined community and its applicability to popular Hindi films to reclaim the nation (Virdi, 2003 ibid. p.6) Theorists of South Asian cinema have made a compelling case for the retention of the category nation despite challenges to the nation and nation-state by showing that the homogenizing drive of globalisation has failed to disrupt the affirmation of national identities. An important area is how the culture industry of Hindi films have resiliently withstood the attacks of global market by rendering it more marketable which Rajadhyaksha terms as the ‘bollywoodisation’ of Hindi films (Gera-Roy, 2012 xix-xx).

All societies have traditions but few have traditions that are central, overpowering and vital. In these traditional societies, these pasts being highly powerful have a stranglehold on their presents and futures. These traditions are not only dominant, living and active but sufficiently pliable, complex and self-confident to accommodate the society’s efforts to redesign its major institutions. Being extremely resilient these traditions do not allow themselves to be ‘supplanted by modern inputs; instead they continuously try to give old meanings to new experiences.’ (Nandy, 1998 p.47) Ostensibly such societies are not open and they selectively draw from their tradition which is a source of their strength and discerning cultural politics of a society allow one to see how it struggles to both learn from history when required and unbind itself when required. Elaborating upon this as ‘Political Culture of Choice’ to say that at different times in their political history, people choose to remember different features of their past and to emphasize different elements of their culture. A protean civilization like India has many pasts; depending on the needs of each age, the nation brings a particular past into consciousness. There is a variation and selective eclecticism in drawing from the cultural tradition. And cultural history as argues Nandy is a projection; of reading and selective drawing as per present day needs. In recent times, the Indian society has been forced to either emphasize or de-emphasize while building the political community in recent times. It is a certain selective process where certain subcultures, traditional skills and idioms have been given a salience by changing the political needs of the community. Contemporary, culture of Indian politics is not a simple accumulation ‘of the society’s self-defined political values, but also a collection of phase-adequate modalities of reaching, changing or rejecting these values. The critical dynamic is the manner in which the values and the modalities have been structured into temporary gesalts by the typical problems faced.’ (ibid. p.48) Nandy’s argument provides support to a similar vein of revivalism and reworking of the traditional Indian joint family in popular Hindi cinema. Family dramas in films and its revival can be seen as a ‘phase adequate modality’ to re-assert traditional values of filial loyalty, familial hierarchy, rooted ness to culture etc. This
revival of the family drama for long characterised popular films after liberalization especially till early 2000. In transitional societies, ‘...family filters global trends...Religion plays an important role in providing a sense of continuity in the midst of change, and in general attempting to strengthen the family....the family perceives itself as something that is meant to intensify and strengthen the proximity and sense of belonging...This concern for family is new, it is modern, it is not simply the inertia surrounding traditional view of family. There is anxiety over plural choices available in the modern world regarding marriage and sexuality beyond conventionally prescribed options. There is thus a concern to preserve religious and cultural inheritance, and also save identity.’(Bernstein, 2002.p.290-291). Revival of tradition in response to the fear and anxiety generated due to globalization explicated the value of the old.

2.9.2 Re-Defining of the Post-Modern Nation and Diaspora

The idea of the classical modern nation is being reconstituted and giving way to the idea of the ‘post-modern nation’. As old, conventional forms are being interrogated that had once given strength to formation of the nation, national sentiments are becoming more pronounced. A number of grand narratives, though always contested, were relevant to modern nation-state: viz. notions of boundedness and sovereignty as nation was imagined as being bound within particular conceptions of time, space and embodiment. The post modern state being deregulated, nation becomes more of a 'mediated nation'- disembodied, reflexive, fragile, seeking extension in abstract national community. National symbols in nations of late capital appear as pastiche. It is culturally managed whereby time and space no longer bound to the idea of nation. It is the post-modern nation that has thinned out its ‘ontological depth’(James,1996 p.35-36)The imagined nation, the nationalist sentiments, transterritorialised diasporic communities, cultural nationalism are various cultural inventions, ploys or templates of the post-modern nation countering and at times negotiating the global.

The post-modern nation exceeds the state, and in face of global assertions seeks to re-define and re-establish the nation as a new sense of belonging. Nation, is a reconstituted open cultural space beyond state borders.it is in constant flow, a cultural flow, a horizontal reality in contrast to the vertical state authority. It is what is called as the ‘transnation’ and the metonym of the Indian transnation is most appropriately Bollywood films. Having deep roots in Indian culture and myths, accommodating and addressing the plural identities of national subjects this popular domain of the nation seems to dwell in some where but beyond the state as it becomes globally expanding via its circulation. This re-invented nation resides in the cultural domain beyond state confinement.(Ashcroft, 2012) In conjunction to this it may be pointed that as economic liberalisation de-stabilised the territorial borders and space-compressing media and technology proliferated we began to witness a re-constitution of the diasporic members as Indian nationals, as these changes served to re-cast nation as deterritorialised entity and hence the cultural gesture as represented in the move to re-territorialise hybridized diasporic subjects as pure subjects of the nation. (Bhattacharya et al 2010, p.115)

2.9.3 Erasure of Class-Conflict
The most apparent contrast between films of post-liberalization era is the renewed interest in family and romance providing the context for complete erasure of class differences and the ostentatious display of wealth and affluence. All signs of poverty, economic hardships, and struggle appear to be nearly eliminated with rich or affluent protagonists coming to the scene. The near absence of the typical villain and the agents of state enforcement like the police, judges, court etc.indicate the obscuring of class conflict and the retreat of the liberalizing state. Wealth and wealthy are rarely typified as avarious and exploitative, and often shown as loving, benign, generous and indulgent fathers (Ganti,2004,ibid p.40).The changes probably marks an ideological shift in the state discourse from socialist ideals of equitable distribution of wealth to the laissez-faire spirit favouring an open market economy.

2.9.4 Rise of Fundamentalism: The Obverse of Globalization

The category of nation is subjected to two strong de-nationalizing forces of firstly; globalizing homogenous culture at the level of commodity and popular consumption and secondly the counter-pull of particularization. The two forces appear dialectical when tendencies of two sets of forces initially appear so ‘intractably antithetical’. The two forces of ‘Jihad and McWorld operate with equal strength in opposite directions, the one driven by parochial hatreds, the other by universalizing markets, the one re-creating ancient subnational and ethnic borders from within, and the other making national borders porous from without. Yet Jihad and Mc World have this in common:they both make war on the sovereign nation-state…’(Barber,2000 ,p.23) Jihad , for Barber is a more generic name for particularism, while McWorld is a product of popular culture driven by expansionist commerce. Its goods are as much material as images. It is about culture as a commodity, apparel as ideology-comprising of symbols of icons of lifestyle.(ibid). The two distinct themes or genres that characterised post liberalisation India viz.the Hindutva inspired cultural nationalism or a belligerent Hindu militant nationalism as an expression of particularism that parallels the ‘Jihadi’ zeal on one hand and while the diasporisation of narratives within a global consumerist visual vocabulary represents the incursion of the McWorld commodity culture within the ‘nationalist space’ of films thus allowing the nation to negotiate with the global.

Drawing upon Stuat Hall’s idea of double articulation, (Hall,1996) it may be said that the two apparently opposed forces of McWorld and Jihadi(more generically a fundamentalist upsurge that is also extendable to other forms of religious extremism beyond Islam) appear to be conjoined in the Hindutva –liberalization dyad. This dyad contained within itself a plethora of ideas and meanings and not all of these were immediately discernible. The national public sphere-all terrains for the dissemination of properly national discourses, including obviously popular films was brought into its dyadic orbit of influence. This ideological dyad managed to perform a super structural overhaul as the ideological matrix of the national public sphere became completely enthralled by this all-pervasive and permeating influence The large national public sphere was recast by this dyadic formation. That stems out of a politically, culturally and economically expedient ideological articulation. (Sen, 2011, p.148) Alternative to this view of
dyadic cultural formation or ideological articulation is the idea to keep culture and economy as two relatively autonomous domains. Like the ‘national cultural project’ that retained core cultural values while encountering colonial modernity as observed by historian Partha Chatterjee, a parallel situation is noted in the way Hindu cultural nationalism while reconciling to economic globalization re-invents cultural symbols, searches its roots and this can be seen in cultural goods like Hindi films, argues Pathak, especially in the NRI/diaspora phenomena. These films sanctify the norms of the joint Hindu family, arranged marriages, religious practices amongst those who otherwise reside in a global corporate world, and are extremely wealthy and mobile. (Pathak, ibid, p.79)

While economic globalization seek to undermine the authority of the nation-states by creating a ‘borderless global marketplace’, cultural globalization is giving rise to ‘alternative modernities’ and cultural identity claims, and even allowed for religious revivalism. (Ozbudun et al 2002, p.296) The Indian situation besides illustrating a dyadic cultural formation between the Hindu right wing politics and neo-liberal economic rhetoric shows how the very politicization of the Hindu right wing nationalism gained prominence at a time that coincided with the advent of economic globalization in India. The co-existence of the two affirms the multi-dimensionality of cultural globalization and resilience of primordial values and categories. This concurrent resurgence of the Hindutva brigade is not a disjunct event but related to the larger issue of globality. The failure of the modernist state led developmental policies, emergence of the critique of secular-rational thinking as exclusive source of modernity led to the gradual decline in ‘strong-state tradition’ (ibid) The global announcing of the retreat of the state, provided renewed opportunity for traditionalism like religion to assert itself which was earlier denied under the modernist secular statist ideology. This clearly explains the emergence of ‘neo-traditionalism’ (ibid)

2.9.5 Romance and Consumption

Another pre-dominant ideological articulation or alliance that capitalism ideologically sought was with that of romance. Romantic love has been viewed as ‘accompanying or even facilitating the rise of capitalism… Love become central to the capitalist entrepreneur’s cultural ideals of privacy and the nuclear family’ argues Eva Illouz as cited. In the American context pre-modern love moved from the religious to the secular domain, and its most powerful mythology was the new equation of love – and marriage – with personal happiness. The systemic association between love, marriage and bliss was different from nineteenth century representations in which love was more tragic rather than a happy feeling argues Illinoiz. This parallels the Indian context, especially in Urdu poetry where love is equated with pain and is the quintessential element of love. But over the twentieth century love has become increasingly important in the pursuit of individual’s happiness. It has attained hedonistic connotations and has come to be seen in ‘individualistic and private terms’. Love is entwined with the idea of marriage, conjugal bliss as true happiness of married life. The capitalist market discourse sought an ideological alliance with romance whereby romance acted
as a tool to express hedonistic desires of consumption. (Virdi, 2003 ibid) The ideology of free market economy on one hand, greater democratization of the polity on the other allowed romance to be a preferred template of individual’s expression of the self and his indulgent consumerist choices and desires.

2.10 THE BRAIDING OF GLOBALIZING DISCOURSE, THE POST COLONIALITY OF THE NATION AND BOLLYWOOD

The career of sociology has been coterminous with the career of nation-state formation and nationalism, and from this followed the constitution of the object of sociology as society and equation of society with the nation. In response to globalization the career of sociology is retooling itself and global sociology is taking shape around notions of social networks (instead of ‘societies), border zones, boundary crossings and global society. Sociology conceived within the framework of nations/societies is making space for post-inter/national sociology of hybrid formation. While acknowledging state and national societies, sociology has turned attention towards globalization, and issues related to it like transcultural dynamics, diaspora, migrations, etc. (Pieterse, p.104). Citing Albrow, Robertson notes that this current concern of globalization in sociology has developed within a five stage developmental chronology of the discipline of sociology, viz. universalism, national sociologies, internationalism, indigenization and the final concern with globalization. The sociology of globalization has grown from internationalism and nationalism and indirectly from all preceding stages of sociology. (Robertson, 1992, ibid p.21)

Globalization has come to mean various things and has been associated with ‘well-nigh every contemporary social change, including as emergent as information age, a retreatist state, the demise of traditional culture and the advent of postmodern epoch’ (Scholte, 2000p.14) The differences around definitional issue have found consensus around five broad definitions (a): internationalization designating a growth of international exchange and interdependence leading to accentuated flows of trade and capital investment on a cross-border scale and enlarged movements between people, messages and ideas; (b): liberalization meaning removal of governmental restrictions on cross-border movements and thus enable a ‘borderless’ world economy. This refers to some kind of economic integration of national economies with the global economy through widespread reduction of or even abolition of regulatory trade barriers, foreign exchange restrictions, capital controls etc.; (c): universalization means spreading of world-wide spreading of objects and experiences or a planetary synthesis of cultures; (d): modernization or westernization of an Americanized culture that is at times described as Neo-Imperialism or Americanization involving a dynamic that leads to destruction of all indigenous cultures; (e): de-territorialization or a reconfiguration of geography so that space is not mapped in terms of physical space, territorial distance, and borders and embodies a transformation of spatial organizations of social relations and transactions, rise of alternative cartographies of transborderness and transworld, emergence of a supra-territoriality and end of exclusivity of territoriality in social geography. Marking a distinct erasure of distance, a certain ‘space-time
compression’ in global transactions and mediatized transborder flow of ideas, images through global media, satellite television that escapes the limitations of state-imposed boundaries. (ibid.p.15-16, 20,42-43,46-48)

Social forces associated with globalization and postmodernization of culture (eg. the media, consumerism, tourism, the transnational corporation) have played an important role in generating a world that is more and more interconnected, and by drawing cultures into contact globalization has encouraged recognition of relativisation, reflexivity, difference and even critique of modernity. As a multidimensional process it unfolds in multiple realms of existence simultaneously. Globalization concerned as a process involves three key dimensions: economic globalization that is associated with the rise of world finance, markets, and free-trade zones, the global exchange of goods and services, and rapid growth of transnational corporations. Political globalization is about the way that the nation state is being superseded by international organization (like the United Nations, the European Union) and the emergence of global politics. Cultural globalization is about changing identities, the flow of information, signs and symbols around the world. While discourse on globalization took off in social sciences during the 1980s, it is an ongoing millennia old process. The trajectory from small-scale hunting societies and gathering societies towards modernist nation-states, can be seen as a journey towards global society. It is for this reason that much of the orthodox socio-cultural theory can be understood as relating to the issues. Classical theories of Durkheim, Marx and Weber provide accounts of how forms of social organization extending over a wide expanse of time and space evolved over a large expanse of time and space in historical terms. Notwithstanding the fact that we can reconstruct past theoretical traditions to realize their relevance, most attention in globalization is focussed on contemporary settings. In the field of cultural globalization, in specific themes relating to capitalism, commodities, time space distantiation and information flows lead to an inevitable convergence between issues like globalization, postmodernization and postcolonialism.

Much writing on the cultural impact of globalization centres around, two contending hypothese models. The first model suggests that we are living in a world characterised by increasing Americanization, Mc Donaldization and homogenization. Early arguments in this genre were proposed by Leftist academicians and featured denunciations of Americanization as a mode of exporting globally its free-market ideologies with specific attention to the influence of media and entertainment forms. More recent deliberations of this proposition have argued how local differences are being eroded by global cultural preferences and administrative systems that are tied to generic, rootless, and ever-expanding rationality, and its associated commodities and technologies, instead of a distinctively ‘American’ value system. The best known proponent in this tradition is George Ritzer and his ideas of McDonaldization, that extends the principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control of fast-food organization of engulfing other sectors of society throughout the world leading to a Mc Donaldizing of activities. During the 1980s and 1990s such a pessimistic stress upon uniformity, homogenization, standardization, loss of authenticity came to be increasingly challenged and a
second model emerged that emphasized upon the incredibly complex interplay of the global and the local. Broadly speaking “the global” refers to the spatially extensive, socio-cultural forces associated with globalization (e.g., consumerism, satellite communications, cultural industries, migration); while the local refers to small scale, geographically confined traditions and ways of life (ethnic traditions, language, religion). Scholars in this tradition holds that globalization as a process involves an encounter between the global and the local culture, where the interactions are complex and produce outcomes that includes both homogenization and hybridization and even further differentiation and re-affirmation of the local. In cases of homogenization there arise many common tastes, preferences and lifestyles among the affluent middle classes of all developed nations. This has tended to diminish or eliminate the influences of local cultures and lifestyles. In many cases the findings in this segment correspond to the mainstream sociological theorizing on modernization process which suggest that that the ‘rest’ catches up with the West. Hybridization as the next broad outcome of the interplay can arise from the mixing of cultures and lifestyles. This theme is exemplified by Lyotard’s image of the urban, cosmopolitan or Homi Bhabha’s idea of post colonial migrants depicting shared qualities of both core and periphery. A major thrust has been that global forces are modified by or adapt to local conditions. Differentiation and reinforcement of the local through globalization, as a clear distinct phenomena, whereby ethnic revivals, struggles for indigenous rights, religious fundamentalism and racist backlashes are seen as defensive responses to counter globalization in a bid to conserve traditionally valued ways of life against the baneful influences of foreign sand global forces. Over the recent years the scholarly focus have shifted upon the issue of difference as the major outcome of cultural globalization. Postcolonial scholars have argued that the process have opened up space for the periphery to have a voice, with the monolithic power and authority of the centre subject open to question from plural competing centres. Proliferation of voices, decline of entrenched hierarchies points of reference destabilized, affirmation of differences providing the only common ground characteristize. Western cultural values upheld as superior are relativized as just another form of the local that has been brought into contact with others via globalization. (Smith, 2001, p.229-232)

Anthropological evidence of transnationalism have shown that the emerging global culture is marked by diversity with evidence of appropriations, indigenization, and the issue of ownership of global culture and its originating source in the Western culture subject it to local non-Western transformations (Yan, 2002, p.33) Globalization is the result of negotiation between globality and locality and involves a globality of locality. Beyer cites Robertson’s views that speaks of a simultaneity of ‘the particularization of universalism’ and ‘the universalization of particularism’. (Beyer, 2003)

Global culture that emerges, is unbounded, overlapping performative flows, marked by knots and nodal points with no clear demarcations or limits (is chaos culture), translocal, creolized, hybridized, flowing via routes than fixed roots. Unbound from territoriality global culture is neither national/ethnic and neither s coterminus with nation’s political borders. Metaphors of
uncertainty, contingency are replacing earlier notions of culture as ‘a whole way of life’, national culture, cultural order, stability of culture, and so on (Barker, 2002). The culture of globalization offers a creative possibility of adaptability, innovation, and experimentation. It is argued that global culture creates scope for openness, cultural diffusion, hybridity, and also a display of resilience and selective adaptation by indigenous cultural forms giving rise to what Robertson calls, as cited, as glocalization. Creating the possibility of creative interplay between the global and the local, there is dynamism and innovation in global culture. Far from being puritan, it is open to experimentation and hybridization. However, cultural globalization does not obliterate cultural memory, and local/national cultures far from being erased survive, innovate, and co-exist with the new (Pathak 2006, ibid. p.81-86).

The renewed understanding of de-territorialized does not preclude the relevance of territoriality or territorial logic. Although territoriality places no insurmountable barriers on global flow, it does have to engage at some with territorial identities and governments through an intricate interplay of globality and territoriality (Scholte, 2000, ibid. p.59). Giddens observes Robertson, in defining globalization serves to posit the linkage of state, the basic territorial unit to globalization. He says that it is ‘the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distinct localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa.’ Giddens identifies four basic dimensions: the nation-state system; the world capitalist economy; the world military order; and the international division of labour. These four dimensional image resulting from a rough transplantation of the four basic institutional features of modernity to the global scene, as ‘consequences of modernity’ (ibid. p.141), as an enlargement of modernity from the societal level to the world, it is modernity on a global scale. Specifically, societal surveillance becomes the nation-state system; societal capitalism becomes the world capitalist economy; societal military power becomes the world military order; and societal industrialism becomes the international division of labour. Giddens says ‘modernity is inherently globalizing’ and despite being a western project, its diffusion and global spread does lead to a diminishing grip of the West. Closely related to this problem is the issue of time-space distanciation; disembedding, defined as the ‘lifting out of social relations’ from local contexts of interaction and their re-structuring across indefinite spans of time-space and reflexivity (Robertson, 1992, ibid).

Instead of viewing the transnationalization process as one that leads to the weakening of the nation-state, Saskia Sassen views global to be one embedded within the national with serious implications for the state. Eschewing the demise of the state, the state is seen to emerge as a key player, negotiator, and even facilitator that revises frameworks to encourage globalization. The latter is anchored to the nation-state’s territoriality, and she argues ‘The strategic spaces where global processes are embedded are often national; the mechanism through which new legal forms, necessary for globalization, are implemented are often part of national state institutions; and the infra-structure that makes possible the hyper-mobility of financial capital at the global scale is embedded in various national territories. This partial embedding of global dynamics in national territories in a context of exclusive territorial
authority by the national state signals a necessary engagement with the nation-state. The
national –state could not be a mere bystander or passive victim. It had to participate through one
or another of its instantiations in setting up the new legal frameworks and in legitimating the
new norms. In this process, it has weakened many of its authorities,….but it has also gained
new powers….Some of what we code as national because it takes place in national territory has
become the global. And some of what we code as global is contingent on the national state as
an administrative capacity and as a source of legitimacy’(Sassen, 2003p.184-185)
Nations lend to the tendential singularity of globalization a plurality of meanings, and instead
of being a singular process, it is to be seen within a ‘appropriate frame of reference’, which is
thus a ‘plurality of systems’. The nation and national imaginary internalize the global horizon,
and the image of the nation as a cultural totality imposes a unity on the diverging orders of the
global.(Arnason,2003 p.145) In the context of globalization, Robertson as cited, suggests does
not lead to the withering of the state and stresses the emergence of the nation-state as itself a
product of global diffusion that organises the global field. He stresses that the particular is itself
an aspect of globalization rather than its complementary opposite. (Friedman,
2003,p.398)Globalization, is a double, paradoxical process, because there is no common and
dominant model to which each societies can conform, each national societies constituting sub-
units of the global system, constitute themselves with reference to the encompassing whole.Each national societies have produced selective response to globalization which
Robertson calls as particularization, recreating its own image of the global order by promoting,
or even inventing its own national image of the global order.(Beyer,2003,ibid, p.169 citing
Robertson)The complex negotiation of the global and the nation is succinctly captured in
Sassen's views : ‘…the global and the nation are therefore not discrete conditions that mutually
exclude each other. To the contrary, they significantly overlap and interact in ways that
distinguish our contemporary moment…Each sphere, global and the national, describes a
spatio-temporal order with considerable differentiation and growing mutual imbrication with
the other. Their internal differences interpenetrate in ways that are variously conflicting,
disjunctive and neutralizing…a textured understanding of dynamic spaces of overlap and
interaction’(Sassen, 2001,p.260-261)
The cultural features of Western modernity are deeply embedded as an epoch or a discourse
concomitant of European colonial expansion. Western modernity has been tightly linked to the
political concept of state, to the discourse of imperialism and to its practice of territorial
expansion. The inevitable effect of holding Western modernity as coterminus with capitalism
and imperialism was that globalization came to be seen as a homogenous, unifying programme
of development. But such a conception fail to take note of globalization as multidirectional,
operating rhizomically than hierarchically or centrifugally. Global influences are locally
adapted. Globalization does not imply a homogeneous spread of the hegemonic economic and
cultural influences of the United States as a super-power. It is instead argued that there are
plural globalizations whether it rises from the West or comes from everywhere.(Ashcroft, 2012
ibid,p.1-5) Although the process of ‘globalizing modernity’ have its roots in the West and may
have begun in an extension of Western institutions, the current ubiquity of these institutions through successful dissemination by the West, lead towards a decline in the differential between the West and the rest of the world. It leads to a gradual decline in Western hegemony and the declining privileged position of the West. (Giddens as cited in Tomlinson, 1999, ibid. p. 25)

The discourse of modernity has deep congenital ties to the imperialist project. The globalizing discourse instead of a rupture with the imperial past as anachronistic, is continuous with the colonial trajectory of modernity and its transformative quality. Globalization like modernity though initiated as a Western project is simultaneously transcultural and pluralized in its articulations. There is a transcultural complexity that informs the global as global is contingent on transformations and appropriations by the local. Post colonial reading position on globalizing discourse exposes an imperial dynamic, a continuity and embeddedness of modernizing project in colonial past. Colonial history cannot be denied while speaking on globalism. (Ashcroft, 2001 ibid. p. 30)

Crucial to the discourse of globalization and nation is the issue of cultural identity. Globalization undermines stable, essentialist notions of tradition and culture. The proliferation of interactional contexts and sites notions of homogenous ethnic or fixed, stable national identities are being replaced by ideas of hybrid cultural identities. The disembedding of cultural practices manifested in journeys, border crossings, dispersion of ethnic diasporas, transnational networks of identification are giving birth to fluid, contingent, indeterminate identities that are, creolized, syncretized, hybridized and impure. Hybridity seen in the context of global transcultural flows and intermixing within and between various locales of the diaspora acts as an important category or tool to temporarily freeze the culture change and capture the emergence of the ‘new’. The concept of diaspora identities directs our attention to its contingent, indeterminate character and its transnational identifications. Lid within questions of travel, journeys, dispersions, borders, diaspora identities are both local and global, discursively constructed within shifting discourse of subject position. (Barker, 2002 ibid. p. 75-76, 147-150)

As nationalism constituted the dominant paradigm, culture was routinely ‘nationalized’ or ‘territorialized’. A historical perspective on diaspora, colonialism, migration bring to fore the histories of hybridization of metropolitan culture concealed by national, imperial and civilizational chauvinism. Countering introverted notions of culture underlying romantic nationalism, ethnicism, racism, religious revivalism, hybridization unsettles essentialist notions of culture. Hybridization is a contribution to a sociology of the in-between, a sociology from the interstices. It involves a merging of endogenous/exogenous cultures and releases reflection from the confinement of national, racist class, ethnic, religious boundaries. (Pieterse, 2000 p. 105)

The hybridization of culture characterised by mixes and permutations is best explained through the concept of transculturity. Unlike the categories of multiculturism and interculturality that fail to go beyond notions of separateness of culture within autonomous, insinuated homogenous forms, and ghettoized spheres of particularistic identity, transculturality seek to articulate the altered constitution of culture. Migratory process, diasporisation, economic dependencies, increased communications have given birth to cultural entanglements and hybridized forms.
Global circulation undermining indigeneity and authenticity of forms give birth to hybrid, transcultural formations, a mode of diverse inventory of cultural forms. Emerging out of cultural exchange of both overlaps, distinctions, and complex interchange, transculturality negotiates the global and the local, the universal and the particular, the cosmopolitan and the local affiliation. Transcultural combines both the cosmopolitan and sense of ethnic belonging in which one grew up and seen at micro individual as well macro-collective level, transculturality allow people to make choices with respect to their cultural affinities. (Welsch, 1999 p.194-198, 203-205)

Resistance to imperial hegemony has been seen as a cultural strategy to respond to subservience, as an ambivalent transformation through mimicry (see, Bhabha, 1990)

Transformation as a central strategy of colonial culture is seizing of self-representation, as a resistance, a struggle over representation in all forms of cultural production. Globalization and globalizing modernity in continuity with the imperialist project has undergone similar transformation and adaptations in its engagement with the local, thenation and migrant cultures, hybridization of identity is the resultant of transformative, transcultural global modernity.

There is an increasing shift from the binaries of Orientalist perspectives. Countering Western superiority as the source of progress, is the trend to focus on instances of disruption, fluidity, transgression, excess that disrupt the metaphorical and mythical binaries of colonial West. Numerous alternative formulations have shown how the colonial and its continuing trajectory in the global have negotiated the local, with the local assites of transformations/resistance. Approaches like the global-local dynamics (eg.glocalization), a Deleuzian problematic (de-territorialization /re territorialization), or Giddens idea of ‘disembedding’ of modernity evades definig of a ‘centre’. Entering the local cultural matrix do not displace or obliterate the elements encountered at the local sites, but instead reworked or transformed in the new milieu. (Bartolovich, 2000 p.136-138)

Tracing globalization discourse as plural, differentiated, hybridized, syncretic and transcultural, allow for a negotiation between the global and the nation. The re-constitution of the nation beyond statist paradigms lends itself to mediate the global. The engagement of the nation with the global, has also problematized the conflation of the nation and the state. The modernist nation-states under the siege of the global, as a dominant form of rational-legal apparatus of political administration and based on inclusivist model of political identity and citizenship, have failed to uphold the essentialized notions of political identity based on nation-state model. The separation of the nation and the state (O’Byrne, 2001 p.141) allow for the discursivity of national identities, de-territorialization of the nation, national identities beyond state.

The intervention from post-colonial theory in seeing globalization as plural or as non-Western transformation and resistance to the Western hegemonic model parallels the debate that concerns the relationship of empire and the colony. Bollywood and broadly all South Asian film industry are powerful examples of transformation and cultural resistance. Bollywood is a clear example of reciprocal influence of the global and the local. As a dynamic example of
transformational and transcultural process that constitute globalization, it clearly explicates that contemporary modernity is not a linear and universal process. Modernity in the age of the global is multiple, rhizomic, erupting differently in different cultural sites. Bollywood, with its origin rooted to a colonial past, from the beginning has been a model of ‘alternative modernity’ and emerging out of its relation to the modern it has appropriated, adapted and transformed modernity encountered from the Western colonial influence. It has been a metonym of postcolonial transformation. With the advent of global and transnational exchanges increasing, Bollywood as ‘hybridized’ cultural form provided a popular cultural site where global cultural forms were appropriated and transformed to local needs. (Ashcroft, 2012 ibid. p. 2-3, 6-7) The study of Bollywood allows an unique opportunity to counter the homogenising thesis of globalization and contour the contrasting move of globalization on popular culture. Countering the homogenizing and imperialist influence of Hollywood and the West in general, Hindi films fragments the unifying narrative of globalization and cultural homogenization. Its transnational flows, global circulation, provenance among the diaspora, hybrid form etc. illustrates a case of the interdynamic relation between the global and the local. Its technology, production, circulation, reception etc. located at the intersection of the global and the nation make it an exemplar of global moment. (see Kaur and Sinha, 2005)

The well known circulation and popularity of Hindi films globally, especially in the non-Western countries of Africa, Arab states, South East Asian countries, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Guyana, Barbados etc., despite the fact that the content was not purportedly made for the foreign audience and neither promoted by the state driven export gives support to the view that holds that popular Hindi films struck the chord of a non-Indian transnational audience in a non-Western world for reasons that were both political and cultural and related to the issue of alternative, non-Western-modernity. Hindi films as apostcolonial transformation of technology translated modernity within a popular cultural site that served as a model for the non-Western, several post colonial transitional societies. It emerges as a site for transformative modernity, as a vernacularization of modernity, as alternative cosmopolitanism. Bollywood for the audiences of the non-developing erstwhile colonies mostly was reclaimed as a popular expression akin to their cultural sensibilities and experiences. Bollywood as an exemplar of popular transformation, appropriation, translation and signalling of modernity, made it a bearer of alternative cosmopolitanism in the global South. (Gopal et al 2010, p. 28, 40)

Bollywood provides a classic case of a cultural site that offers a coalescing of the nation, the global, the postcolonial and the popular. Popular Hindi films offers at the globalizing moment of the nation cultural production that is essentially embeds within its discourse hybridized cultural markers, to cater to audience that are simultaneously indigenous and exogenous via four thematic dialectics: East–West Local–Motherland–Diaspora, and Traditiona and Modern. The colonial freedom struggle, postcolonial legacy, the modernist state and the contemporary globalizing discourse—all have inscribed upon the themes of Hindi films across decades. Therefore a study of Hindi films need to be be situated within the negotiation between these discourses. Liberalization as a new turn, a new mode of film marketing, production and
aesthetics, adopting global stylised representation negotiating with the existing cultural paradigms and indigenous traditions offer us an opportune moment to study the popular heroic construction that has always remained the favoured trope of the nation. The new mode of identity and subjectivity is related to the nation’s liberalization and globalization discourse. Bollywood popular culture complicit with the hegemonic expansion of capitalist networks and consumer culture, participates in the ideological construction of globalized subjectivity. The expansion of global culture and capitalist economy is ideologically dependent on defining new sensibilities and global consumerist culture of living. Bollywood’s complicity with the globalizing capitalist consumerist culture is seen in the ideological construction of globalized cultural subjectivity (such as the diasporic, hybrid hero), or the privileging of a certain ethics of globalized consumerist living through the chosen subjectivities. Bollywood emerge as an ideological and discursive popular cultural site for the construction of new subjective sensibilities conducive to nation’s globalization. Bollywood seeks to forge a link between the pre-globalized cultural consciousness of the nation with that of contemporary discourse on globalization. Popular cinema attempts to establish a social connection with the globalized ‘First’ world for defining an ethics of living in a globalizing community. Lacan’s definition of ‘social link’ allow for an appropriate understanding of Indian popular films’s function to realign and reconstitute cultural conditions. In other words, films try to forge or link the particular and peculiar local (national) conditions to global/Westernized consciousness. Film seeks to re-envision, reconceptualize and represent Indian social history, socio-cultural reality and subjectivity within a globalized condition of existence. The construction of new subjectivities in films parallels and complements the reconstitution of the nation-state at the global level. (Thakur, 2011, p. 75-76, 78)

The present study seeks to locate the articulation of transformative modernity and globality as represented through the heroic subjectivities performed by Shah Rukh Khan and how his construction parallels the re-conceptualization of the nation at its global moment. However a star, posited to be emblematic of the nation, as representative of a temporality is constructed within the confluence of social, political, economic and cultural forces. As a phenomena emanating from the larger matrix of cultural production of films necessitates understanding his stardom and his heroic roles is to be seen to be informed by the cultural dynamics of the culture industry within which he is discursively constructed and the intersection of the industry’s cultural production with the social history of the nation, with a colonial past and a current globalizing agenda.

2.11 POST-LIBERALIZATION SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE NATION – THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBALIZING DISCOURSE

The chronological trajectory of globalization pre-dating the colonial can be re-worked and re-contextualized in the Indian situation. Periodizing 1991 as the year of India’s entry into the globalizing regime introduced by the state policy can serve to be a useful approach to study the influence of globalization in India in recent times. The approach of periodisation, as argued by
Scholte, is only ‘artificially neat. In practise socio-historical developments cannot be divided into wholly discrete phases’ however. ‘the historical shorthand of periodization gives us helpful general bearings’. (Scholte, 2000, p.63) And while there can be alternative chronologies suggestive of global exchanges, influences, and historical transactions in the form of goods, ideas, artefacts, etc. that even predate colonialism, it is liberal reforms introduced by the state sanctified the entry of the global at the institutionalized level of India, as a post-colonial sovereign state. This also significantly marked a shift from the socialist policy of rigid state controlled economy and planning. The material inputs of globalization required through transborder arrangements in the area of communication, market, finance, production and organization was either absent or de-limited within a state controlled regime. And all that may be discerned as cultural or ideational influence of the global was equally confined within an elite, literati, upper class section and often sporadic in nature. The adoption of the policy of reforms in 1991 opened up the economy to foreign capital investment, multi-national firms, global media conglomerates, and its concomitant influences upon people’s ethos, culture, values, lifestyle, etc. The institutionalized and the official entry of the global under the aegis of state policy of economic reforms enable us to discern the changes unleashed by the globalizing forces and delineate its pattern in clearer terms following a temporal divide, viz. the year 1991 i.e, post liberalization.

This chapter seeks to argue that popular Hindi films, as always have been, represents the social history of the nation and that the new globalising discourse of these films is intimately bound to the contemporary social history of the nation. However, the understanding of this post-liberalization nation calls for revisiting the decades that preceded it. These decades were marked by the Nehruvian vision of modernization, development and industrialisation on socialist lines and an overall pacifist or reconciliatory stance in inter-national politics. Despite certain professed ideals, the developmentalist policies failed due to inner contradictions and anomalies in implementation. The bureaucratic state apparatus and its socialist regulation of the economy curbed the growth of wealth and capital on one hand and also failed to deliver as per its progressive, secular and socialist rhetoric to ameliorate the masses (Bhattacharya-Mehta, 2011, p.3-4) The drive towards nationalization and an economic autarky under Indira Gandhi government took a ‘left turn’ further. In the 80s however, the state did began to lose some of its antipathy towards private business and some key sectors were de-licensed. These pro-business policies to encourage private enterprise however stopped short of being ‘pro-market’ in removing impediments to entry of foreign firms and thus enabling competition and expanding consumer choice. It only took a crisis for the state to work towards fuller liberalization. The crisis was linked to the growing external debt of the country taken as short-term loans or financial aid from multi-lateral institutions like the World Bank. As the borrowings grew and foreign exchange dwindled and this led to the change. (Guha, 2008)

Facing a deep economic crisis, the Narsimha Rao government almost compulsively deregulated the economy, unleashing unprecedented structural reforms. Liberalization heralded
the biggest transformation in the nation’s social, economic and political history. This called for a departure from Nehruvian idealism that kept us hostage to a statism and its protectionist regime. (Das, 2002 p.214-215:p.349). While growth was ushered by the pro-business reforms initiated in 80s, it was the pro-market reforms of the 90s that ushered the change, and the earlier Hindu rate of growth that for long constrained the Indian economy was overcome. (Guha, 2008). The tentative pro-liberalization rhetoric that had already started, under heavy pressure from international monetary agencies, finally concretised. Supported by a powerful consensus within the elite bourgeoisie, economists and the ruling bloc the agenda of reform was seen to be the hope to conjure away failure and stagnation of planned economy. (Sen, 2011, p.145) It was in the 1990s that India’s protective economic policy gave way to liberalization, embracing a new market economy. The economic change was coeval with the parallel rise of Hindu nationalism in its most virulent manifestation. The changed economic policies of the Indian state allowed investment of foreign capital, establishment of manufacturing or service centres and all these gave birth to a new class of workers and renewed realms of bourgeoisie consumption. (Bhattacharya-Mehta, 2011 ibid, p.4)

To be able to understand the social significance of liberalization we need to understand what did it depart from and what its agenda entails. Firstly it may be seen as a break from the past that was crucial to the de-colonizing process and critical in the making of modern India. The idea of freedom and the value of independence became the dominant principle in determining the political, social and economic goals of post-independence India. The centrality of ‘decolonisation’ and India’s sovereign assertions were solidly grounded to economic policy of self-reliance, import substitution, economic planning, industrialisation, development and so on. This also had its corresponding extension in the realm of India’s foreign policy of non-alignment, popularly known as the Panchsheel based on principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference, equality, mutual benefit, peaceful existence –as a safeguard against power bloc politics. The model of economic planning and self-reliance and non-alignment were pre-requisites for ‘autonomy of state actions’ and crucial to the making of modern India. This zealously guarded the hard won spirit of national freedom and sovereignty. Departure from its vaunted ideals meant a shift from autonomy to dependence and its reconciliation to the realities of Post Cold-War International Order. On one hand, the demise of socialist ideologies and state-led model of economic planning and the failure of ideology of national growth to deliver its promises on the other ceded grounds to a triumphant free-market economy and liberal democracy. Liberalization entailed a retreat of the state from autonomously managing the economy, re-construction of its capabilities to facilitate free working of the market and collaboration with the global operators. This both subordinated to, and integrated, the national economy with global capitalism. This led to an expansive role of the bourgeoisie capital, both global and national. (Bhambri, 2005) Liberalization entailed a significant departure from post-independence India’s policy of autonomous state control over national capitalist economy and autonomous status vis-à-vis global capitalist state system. This meant embracing the New Economic Policy based on
globalization, liberalization, privatization, disinvestment and deregulation. The Indian state at the behest of North and global institutions like IMF and the World Bank entered the programme of structural adjustment and control over fiscal deficit. The policy rendered India into a willing candidate for global integration. This meant the entry of transnational corporations into Indian markets and international forays of Indian Big Business to launch its own business through investments or acquisitions.

The retreatist state and the dominance of market while abandoning the Nehruvian model meant a shift towards a new dispensation, of neo-liberal classical economic ideology, lying in the proclamation of the ideology of Western democratic values of individualism, liberalism, freedom for the market and free competition at the global level. The central position occupied by the state with respect to the national economy is replaced by the free market economy as a mediator of economic transaction at both the national and the state level. (Bhambri, ibid)

Radical changes like devaluing the currency to make exports competitive, relaxing export restrictions and import duties, reducing subsidies of certain sectors and industries, abolishing the industrial license system, relaxing rules for foreign investments, encouraging foreign technological collaboration, removing restrictions from large private companies, reducing emphasis on state-owned enterprises, relaxing regulations to encourage and facilitate the starting of new ventures. (Ganti, 2004)

In India, the expansion of the service sector has led to a burgeoning professional middle class that has boosted consumption pattern and aspiration for good life. The Information Technology (abbreviated as IT) revolution in post-liberalisation India has created wealth and jobs have been vital to this economic expansion. The shift towards knowledge economy held several opportunities and rewards like employment, better standards of living and altered lives of the ordinary both socially and politically. The IT-Telecom and electronic sector provided a competitive advantage to the country opening up myriad opportunities in the electronic industry, software export and market capitalization of the IT companies. Besides this industry is open to venture capitalism and entrepreneurial investments that hold the potential for job employment in the knowledge sector. This growth of IT sector have successfully opened up new vistas in software entertainment, Indipop fashion, cricket mania, Indian novels (in English) satellite television, greater links with the Indian diaspora, internet, films, global food, fashion etc. As important components of the global economy and communication revolution complex, the IT sector enables what Arjun Appadurai calls as ‘global flows’ The social significance of this transformative force lies in its ability to informatively empower and diminish knowledge divides and democratise access to information. Unlike the disruptive forces of factories and transportation of the industrial age the soft industrialization unobtrusively unfolds profound changes in the heart of the Indian society. It is like a ‘soft drama’. (Das, 2002, p.336-338, 340-342)

India’s emergence as an IT super power armed with a vast intellectual capital and a potential to provide ‘knowledge workers’ to the global economy has significantly accorded a favourable global image of the nation in its enthusiastic embrace of high-technology. The new icon is the
software-techie’, the high–tech whiz who challenges traditional, stereotypical image of India in his engagement with global technology and key symbols of global consumption. The enormous pool of English speaking skilled professionals, an expanding middle class, a large consumer market, India’s encounter with the technology revolution is an important episode in the social history of India marking its foray into the global market. This also holds immense democratizing potential in terms of upward mobility for a large pool of skilled, English educated human resource and the promise for upward mobility for India’s expanding new middle class. In addition to this, was the exponential growth of an Indian technical workforce that found overseas employment opportunities as the IT sector expanded. Large scale immigration led to a strong Indian technocratic community also called the superstars of the ‘Golden Diaspora’. The success of the diaspora had a direct relation in the wake of liberal reforms and the diminishing protectionist tendencies of the Indian state. They began to see India as an investment destination, a site opening up with business opportunities towards which they are beginning to channelise their entrepreneurial strategies. The relevance of this diasporic community has risen manifold times not only for their engagement in one of the most advanced sector of the world economy but also for their well known affluence and prosperity (Greenspan, 2004). They serve to uphold the dream of a global standard of good living for the upwardly mobile middle class Indians at home. The dismantling of protectionist regime opened the nation-state to immense transformation in terms of entry of technological innovations and consumer goods. This progression unlike in capitalist metropolitan centres leads to an ‘anachronistic rupture’ meaning a certain leapfrogging to catch up with the advanced West.(Greenspan, 2004. p.6) At the wake of liberalization the market opened up to myriad possibilities of consumerist pleasure and technological innovations accessible to the people and also empowering in effect. Reforms signalled a decisive rupture with the dogmas of the past. The lofty idealism of the socialist policy that ostensibly protected the larger public good and curbed private initiative, though supported by the state interventions and idealism of the nationalist leaders failed to deliver its promise. The departure from socialist rhetoric of austerity unleashed the suppressed aspiration for better living and desire for riches. Liberalization effectively removed the stigma and guilt associated with acquisition of wealth. This led to a collective exorcism from the nation’s psyche of the Gandhian idealism of self-denial and repressive idealism. The exposure to the availability of expensive cars, consumer gadgets, designer clothes provoked desires though they remained beyond the reach of many. Pursuit of wealth and consumerism gained sanctification with socialist rhetoric being purged out of official policy at the state level. It also excised guilt from gratification. A culture of desirous pleasure and drive for consumption came to pervade the Indian society and this was indulgently supported by the plethora of consumer items that flooded the markets and the proliferating advertisements that encouraged these consumerist choices. Large global consumer giants arrived and the satellite television beamed the objects of desire into people’s homes. The ad campaigns aggressively targeting the consumerist drives...
encouraged the spirit of hedonism among the young especially their tendency towards instant gratification (Varma, 1998, 2004)

The Indian middle class, given its dominant traits, on account of liberal reforms was liberated from the pretence of any notion of restraint or reticence in unbridled pursuits of its consumerist aspirations. The professed bias of state policy was oriented towards the moral imperative to benefit the poor under state protection. Now, with the state policy to open the economy, sanctified consumerism and the ability to consume was a sign of material progress for the middle class. Economic liberalization rendered the economic legacy of Gandhi and Nehru almost redundant, especially for the middle class weary by now of ineffectual socialist rhetoric of past governments. There was a pendulum shift from ‘self-reliance’, ‘protectionism’ socialism’ towards opportunities for greater material gratifications for those who could benefit under the new economic dispensation. The middle class aspiration for good life had no ceiling.

The lifestyle of the Indian elite replete with signs of opulence and luxury became the role model for the middle class in the heady hedonism augured by reforms. The urge to ascend the ‘consumption ladder’ was already there but now it had the official sanction of state policy and a justification of ideology. The impact of liberalization sweepingly altered the lives of the Indian middle class in terms of their outlook, attitude and lifestyle that became more liberal, and cosmopolitan. While the ‘psychological legacy of Nehruvian era’ had perceived consumption of the affluent as vulgar and sinful, the new regime sanitised them as the middle class became flauntingly indulgent in their consumption and leisure. The hedonist consumerist buoyancy was appealed to in advertising catchlines like ‘Zamana Badal Gaya Hai’ (Times Have Changed), or ‘Wear your Attitude’ or ‘Isme Hai Mazaa Unlimited’ (This has Unlimited Fun In It), or ‘Pepsi, I, Me, Enjoy’ or songs like ‘Meri Marzi’ (It Is My Choice). Despite limited purchasing power or modesty of their means and cautious spending habits of the Indian middle class it appealed in a way to render them more desirous of a lifestyle of opulence and luxury. There was optimism generated in favour of the middle class due to reforms. New technology based opportunities, new ventures, introduction of new jobs and multiplying opportunities for gratification was a reassurance for the middle class. In an environment as such, confidence and aspiration for good living and good earning were legitimated as routes to success. However, this class in their obsessive self-fulfilling pursuit was oblivious of the abysmal state of the millions of poor in India. Demonstratably seduced by the charm of well-being; they surrendered all pretence of idealism in self-seeking drives. The policy of reform deepened the socio-economic divide—separating a vast world of destitute and deprived. It provided a brazen justification for creating two Indias: one aspiring to embrace the global and the other hopelessly marginalised. In a bid to project a favourable image of the country to attract foreign investment certain imperviousness developed was maintained to the travails of the poor. On the contrary a small segment celebrates the ‘heady possibilities’ released by reform that have come to pervasively characterise middle class thinking. The interest in the middle class was mainly due to its ability and proclivity towards consumption. The Indian government displayed the strength of its larger
untapped domestic market to attract the financial capital of developed countries and the latter saw it as a potentially lucrative market. (Varma, 2004).

The upwardly mobile entrepreneurial and business managerial strata of the bourgeoisie along with the big business houses of India are a critical constituency for integrating India with global capitalism. They are the supporters of global integration as it has opened up new opportunities for lucrative profits and incomes.) While every strata of the ruling classes extended its support to the new economic regime of the 1990s, but the real and most enthusiastic support came from the very powerful upwardly mobile new middle classes of India. Socially delinked with India of the poor, this middle class professionals in the bureaucracy, media, intelligentsia are the sole beneficiaries and legitimizers of India’s global integration and is crucial to the entry of the successful entry of foreign capital. This ‘new middle class’ is socially as well culturally ‘foreign oriented’ and provides support to any system of political economy that serves to increase its income. The basic struggle of this ‘new middle class’ is to ascend the social class ladder. Their frames of reference oriented towards the West makes them aspire for foreign tourism, shopping, education, health etc. (Bhambri, 2005).

The rise of the new middle class is not a discrete, isolated Indian phenomenon but typifies all post-industrial nations and their socio-economic changes that grow from the enlargement of field of operations of the state and other institutions and occupations. Though the growth of the middle class may take different cultural forms, it is to some extent predetermined by the socio-economic developments in the global sphere. Post-liberalisation India’s burgeoning segment of the new middle class and the social history of its emergence is not unrelated to the larger sphere of socio-economic transformation from industrial to a post-industrial society. The formation of this class observes Leela Fernandes, as cited, is tied to the new liberalising economic policies. They represent a certain moral temper in conjunction with a certain social and economic capability- a certain perception that is in the same spirit of liberal reforms. (Savaala, 2010).

What is striking about the new middle class is that the ‘new’ refers to the fact that their social status has a recent origin in the sense that they or their parents have experienced upward mobility. (ibid p.11)

The merit-based new middle class are the first generation-achievers with no inherited support. The IT-industry and the rise of the entrepreneurial class along with several professionals have largely contributed to post-reform India’s burgeoning middle class. Post-reform India has witnessed the rise of the newly rich who are no longer objects of derision and scorn. Representing a new meritocracy- the entrepreneurial class and the professionals are creating value by innovating in global knowledge economy without support or inheritance of wealth. Acquisition of requisite technical skills prized by the market economy has opened up avenues of mobility for thousands of IT-professionals, and the internet has rendered the market place more democratic. The testimonials of entrepreneurial success in post-reform India were supported by the unleashing of new economic forces. The reforms of ‘91 enabled young entrepreneurs to acquire requisite skills and respond to the new challenges of jobs and wealth created; and money making became respectable replacing the old Brahmanical culture that was
averse to business and the socialist bias of statist policy based on planning and austerity. A new horizon opened up comprising of a vast number of commodity business, many globally competitive companies in software, IT-enabled industries, generic pharmaceuticals, media-based firms opened up. (Das, ibid., p.262-268)

This new class of middle class is energetic, full of drive for entrepreneurship and material achievement and are uninhibited, pragmatic, and amoral in nature; rising from bottom they are also manipulative. The older bourgeoisie that emerged with response to the spread of English education in the 19th century stepped into the shoes of the departing English in 1947 and since then had monopolised the rewards of society. Characterised as educated, liberal, idealistic, humanist, alienated from the masses, unsure of identity, this old middle class had entered the ranks of position on the strength of education and capability and carried the old baggages of colonial ideas. The ‘new middle class’ on the contrary have no such colonial baggage or social responsibility and neither had the snobbery. This ascending class was eager to reap the benefits of the reform. This new ‘middle class’ is characterised by a new lifestyle, marks, and signs of its identity. It is free from inhibitions that shackled the old bourgeoisie. Non-ideological, pragmatic, result-oriented, the new middle class do not seek endorsement from the West and prefers what works to yield. (ibid, p.280-281;285)

The rapidly growing class of the twenty-first century pushing the agenda of liberalization, have been primarily pre-occupied with social mobility and rising standard of living, and has enthusiastically embraced the consumerist lifestyle and values. This new category no longer upholds the idealism and the hope of new nations. Today’s middle class holds no illusions. It accepts affirmative actions and has no clear ethos beyond money. Often seen to lack in values and idealism unlike the old middle class, they are self-centred, motivated by avarice for wealth and possession and are driven by brazen self-interest, aggression, drive, optimism and self-confidence. Their heroes are cricketers or Bollywood stars. The earlier socialist idealism are seen to be replaced by aggressive capitalism as seen in films. The new middle class heroes are now changed from Gokhale and Tilak, from Nehru and Gandhi to Ambanis and Azim Premji, the new achievers of material possessions-those who attained success. (ibid, p.287-288, 290)

In parenthesis it may be said that the driving argument of this research is to posit Shah Rukh Khan as a representative achiever of this category of the new middle class. Having no genealogical antecedent in the film industry, the tale of his ascendancy and achievement and the interestingly uncanny intersection of his star-biography with his filmic roles render him to be an icon of post-liberalisation India, albeit couched in the idiom of the popular.

It is not sufficient enough to explain the social history of post-reform nation by explaining the rise of the middle class and their value orientations alone. These value departures are inextricably associated with concrete index of the nation’s economic growth, new sectors of the economy, rise in consumption statistics, disposable income, the consuming constituencies and so on. Research reveals that the income levels and spending habits of Indians has been growing and the international Goldman Sachs report (October 2003) revealed that in next 50 years, India
among other form countries Russia, Brazil and China (BRIC economies) will become one of the key players in world market place. The report also revealed India’s potential to emerge as the world’s third largest economy and of these four countries, it has the promise of fastest growth in next 30 to 50 years. Rising income on the other hand are likely to favour the growth of economies and is likely to alter changing patterns of living. This can significantly benefit the local economic growth as this cyclically sensitive industry grows faster when economy is expanding. Rising income has also allowed for proportionate disposable resources to be spent on leisure and entertainment, which is beyond basic necessities. The leisure spending in India, as per Nasscom- Mckinsey study of 2005, stated that it will increase or be stimulated largely due to the IT industry. The IT- industry with the potential to generate millions of jobs is projected to enhance this spending and in addition to this employment is likely to grow in parallel support/services industry. Besides on an average 30-40 million Indians are joining ranks of middle class every year, triggering huge spending on mobile phones. Television sets, music systems and other similar goods, following a consumption pattern that is typically associated with rising incomes. There are other reports as well of retail consultancies which attribute consumption spending to increasing disposable incomes on account of sustained growth in income levels and reduction in personal tax. The rural market so far untapped offers huge opportunity with less restricting accessibility and rising affordability. Growing affluence fuelled by good monsoons and increase in agricultural output, have created a potential consuming class constituting 40% of India’s middle class and over 50% of total disposable income (Bose, 2006 , p 15-16).

Since the early 90s the government emphasis on economic reforms has created a healthy environment for foreign investments and ensured a steady growth of the GDP beyond the benchmark 80%. Today India ranks among the top free economic of the world in terms of purchasing power parity. The estimates of leading global investors predict that Indian entertainment industry will soon overtake China. This is primarily due to its 300 million strong middle class populations who are increasingly allocating a (p 154) higher percentage of its disposable income on entertainment products. Certain concrete indicators related to sale of consumer goods like automobile, mobile phones or colour television sets are proof of rising consumerism and index of growing number of the new middle class.

Consumption spending is directly related to increasing disposable incomes on account of sustained growth in income levels and reductions in personal income tax since mid nineties. Consequent changes in lifestyles have led to companies allocating higher budget for advertising and marketing of discretionary products and services. Increased investments in such promotional activities automatically provide a boost to the entertainment industry for further growth. In fact, it has been observed that globally this cyclically sensitive industry grows faster than the GDP when the economy expands.

There has been a considerable growth in rural markets. Fuelled by good monsoons and an increase in agricultural output, symbols of affluence are showing. Today rural India boost of over 40% of India’s middle class and over 50% of the nation’s total disposable income.
Companies and business are recognizing the potential of this consuming class and have accordingly managed to differentially cater to varying segments. Their prosperity holds valuable lessons both for multinationals eyeing the Indian market and for the domestic entertainment industry.

Another significant aspect that has led to the rise in consumerism is the average Indian spender is getting younger. Not only does he show a greater propensity to indulge and entertain himself, he has the means to do so as well. He marries late, is better informed and above all, capable earning more than his father and uncles did at a comparable age. The quantum of disposable income at his command is also much higher than expected. Increased life expectancy, education, exposure to the media and a booming economy together have made this possible. Never before has the nation’s youth played a more decisive role in determining the fortunes of companies dealing in anything from speciality food and fashion wear to travel and tourism cell phones, home video systems, perfumes and beauty products. Because of India’s status as a good IT hubs for outsourcing by the US companies young Indians between 20 and 24 years, who ordinary would not be able to work easily are securing jobs with call centres straight out of college. This is a consumer base that typically lives at home with the family. Their essentials have already been taken care of. So much of what they earn is disposable income. It is almost entirely discretionary and significantly about 20 to 30% higher than prevailing wages in other industries. This money is being channelized into huge spending on books, movies, music, cell phones, food and branded clothes. From the point of view of elders in the family these are not strictly essentials and could even be considered luxuries. But the fact that the demand for such non-essentials is continually rising explains why it makes more sense for advertisers of discretionary products to target the youth (and even kids) rather than the older generation. This spirit of youth is being reflected in the content and treatment of Bollywood cinema as well (Bose, 2006 p. 155-157).

Though the influence of the global is unevenly spread, and benefits the rich and the upwardly mobile classes, its significance in transforming India’s socio-cultural landscape cannot be denied. Looking at globalization as continuity of modernizing project in the post-Cold-War or the post Socialist era, one can locate its influence in the various practices of everyday living and consumption. Global aspirations and symbols are entering everywhere; Pepsi/Coke can be seen at every village tea-shop, cable TV constitutes an important aspect of the slum culture, and beauty parlours are no less popular in small towns and this is how a translated modernity in the era of the global acquires a new meaning. Economic and cultural globalization has thus freed ‘culture’ from territorial nationalist boundaries (Pathak, 2006). What is also sociologically relevant is the overcoming of the time lag in matters of flow of Western goods of consumption and a marked dramatic simultaneity in the inflow of consumerist goods, items of fashion etc. The information technology revolution serviced by a considerable number of Indian software engineers abetted this simultaneity in the flow of goods, services, information and cultural products. Global flows and cultural imports in the form of novels, films, T.V. programmes, internet promoted a prolific growth of consumerist culture, which is itself distinct from the rise.
of consumption and rise in the standard of living of the new middle class. (see, Virdi, 2003 ibid, p.201)

The freedom of culture from statist boundaries also gave birth to a cultural nationalism. India’s socio-economic and political trajectory that underwent unprecedented transformation over the course of the 1990s resonated too with it. The most salient and powerful transformation entailed the conjoining of the two processes: the advent of liberalization and the resurgence of Hindu nationalism. The Congress government initiated the process of reforms yet ironically was unable to capitalise on the changes that liberalization both implied and concretised. The party that led the freedom movement, was associated with Nehruvian vision of socialism, had a public image that was tenaciously linked to its ‘past’ political legacy which the policy of reform was seeking to overcome. The Bharatiya Janata Party or the BJP, the political party of Hindu nationalism seized the public terrain and the rhetoric of reforms as a force that could galvanize both the economy and the Hindu majority of the nation. Thus, Hindutva or Hindu-ness in its latest incarnate, came to be constitutively tethered to the exultant discourse of liberal reforms. Arvind Rajagopal, as cited, provides an incisive analysis of this uncanny appropriation of the rhetorical terrain unleashed by liberalization. ‘Hindu nationalism worked at two levels, on the one hand offering the cultural and ideological accompaniment to liberalization for middle and upper classes, and at the same time translating it into a religio-mythic narrative that would win popular consent….The alliance between economic and Hindu nationalism was opportunistic and unstable, but nevertheless, in the context, developed a considerable force and momentum.’ Sen argues, that this curious alignment between the mandate of liberalization and Hindu cultural nationalism was premised upon a mutually re-in forcing and legitimising symbiotic alliance. While liberalization was accorded a legitimacy as a cultural imperative to revive the ‘national economy’, conversely Hindu nationalism quite consciously lend itself to the free market ethos that came to characterise the period. The dyadic formation encapsulates the post liberalised nation’s social, economic and political history. (Sen, 2011 p.145-146)

The two dominant tendencies therefore that came to define India’s future in the wake of market reforms involves, firstly, the relentless push of the global economy buttressed by growth in communication, a rapidly growing middle-class in tandem with an unprecedented spread of market economy, a renewed interest in diasporic links, and an expanding social democracy. The nation’s foray into the global regime is marked by a pre-occupation with rising living standard, social mobility, pursuit of middle-class values and culture and influence of a global homogenous culture. Second, is the growing consciousness of religious identity leading to fundamentalism and separatism (see Das, 2002. p.307-309). In the subsequent sections, I seek to map the construction of the star within these broader themes engaging the new middle class, the diaspora on one hand as the two important addressees of liberalization policy and the hegemonic secular discourse that re-asserts itself around the star-image in opposition to the cultural nationalism and the fundamentalist ideology that was gaining grounds in order to claim their stakes over defining ‘Indian nationhood’.
It is a critical sociological observation may be stated as a caveat to the idea of post-liberalization social history of India. According to Indian sociologist Dipankar Gupta in view of an uneven and skewed pattern of economic reforms, and stark inequalities one can locate plural India-not actually unrelated but hermetically sealed. The ‘Resurgent India’ and the rich and affluent Indians removed from grim realities as a world class represents the myth of the boom and the anomalies of growing prosperity. (Gupta, 2009, p.33-34; 37-38) The bulk of the poor are mostly excluded from the benefits of liberalisation. Food supply problems, water scarcity, farmers’ suicide, poor conditions of basic services like health and education, displacement and impoverishment continue to haunt the myth of consumer boom and reforms. Liberalization marked the entry of private capital which, in contrast to the pre-reform state, had no social obligation, and to maximise best returns from its investment looked for better infra-structurally better endowed states and opened up opportunities for the better enabled human capital. As a result, developmental disparities and divides deepened and came to be marked by class and region differentials. The expansion was anomalous and was mostly confined to the software industry and industry growth was mostly geared towards the overseas markets. As export and employment grew in the software industry, the latter came to be projected as the ‘Poster-Boy’ of reforms. Entry of foreign firms in the consumer sectors and the opening up of the international market were significant changes. (Guha, ibid, 2008) The market reforms had limited percolation that was far from being inclusive. Thus the narrative of liberalization that sets a celebratory note addresses the rich, the super-rich, the middle class, the successful diasporic community and so on. With this cautionary note, it needs to be stated that the study seeks to engage itself how this change affected and appealed to the popular imagination of its prime addressees through cinematic mediation.

2.12 THE STAR DISCOURSE

2.12.1 Star Systems

Defining as to Who are stars? Richard Dyer as cited argues the star is the focus of the dominant cultural and his historical concerns, thus creating interest in the life of the star and his/her whole off-screen existence, to produce a star-text which is an amalgam of the real person, the characters played in films and the persona created by the media, which has an economic and institutional base. Christine Gledhill as cited sums up to say that stars ‘signify condensers of moral social and ideological values’ (Dwyer, 1979. p 94). Richard Dyer’s search for Paul Robeson’s cross over appeal among white audiences from 1920 to 1945 shows how star phenomenon includes everything the films and publicity about star’s private life – the performance and the person. Dyers identified stars as commodities, labour and the thing labour produces. First the star is a person, a body, psychology with skills to manipulate with the help of industry personnel – the director, screen, writer cameraperson make up artiste, costume designer, publicists and gossip magazine columnists who produce the image –and second, the star has personhood and a social reality (Dyer 1995, p.2-3)
Stars as charismatic persons, embodying in their existence a given time, are signifiers or condensers of certain ideological, moral, social values. In Hindi cinema’s melodramas where stars perform are also sites where the star-texts are constructed. It is a cumulative process where each film draws upon the previous image(s) (Dwyer et al, 2002, p.32)

According to Moinak Biswas, a hero defines an era and exemplifies a paradigm. When society goes through a transitional phase, there is a constant conflict between desire and morality. Stars, in their own way, help to resolve these conflicts. Every decade has its heroes who define and redefine the aspirations and demands of their times. (29-7-2012, Sunday Times Of India: ‘The Superstar Phenomenon’, Times Life (Sunday Times).

A sociological study of stardom necessarily involves an enquiry into the following factors or the condition for production of Stardom
(a) The general social conditions favouring stardom
(b) The role of forces of production and consumption shaping stardom and stars
(c) The ideological functioning of the star phenomenon

Looking into the condition for stardom Francesco Alberoni and Barry King both have suggested various structures that have led to or help to obtain phenomenon of stardom to exist. These conditions are necessary rather than sufficient, that is, they automatically do not produce stars but are grounds on which stardom may be produced. (Dyer, 1986, p.6)

Alberoni is concerned with stars as social phenomenon and not just film stardom this definition of stardom centres on the fact that stars are a group of people ‘whose institutional power is very limited or non-existent, but whose doings and ways of life arouse a considerable and sometimes even a maximum degree of interest’ (Alberoni as qtd in Dyer) The basic conditions for this phenomenon Alberoni suggests are (i): a state of law, (ii) an efficient bureaucracy and (iii) a structured social system.

These three factors ensure that social roles are de-limited and assessed as per ‘objective’ criteria e.g. efficiency. In this situation, stars operate only in their own sphere and there is no danger of their ‘charisma’ becoming important ‘from a political view point’. Stardom can exist under conditions as follows:

* a large scale society where stars cannot know everyone but everyone can know stars.
* economic development above subsistence (though this is not always relevant as in India states Dyer).
* social mobility (anyone can in principle become a star).

Alberoni, mentions that stars as remarkable social phenomena-an elite, privileged group do not excite envy or re-sentiment (as anyone can in principle become a star) and on the other hand have no access to political power. However, stars though cannot become crucial decision maker and lack political significance in conventional sense Alberoni like some ignores the conditions of significance for stars. (ibid. p.7) Because of this belief, the ideological significance of stars is often marked or unaccounted. And some suggest that it is due to this marked character that values their political power of greater significance than resisted.
King following Alberoni argues that ‘stars have a major control over the representation of people in society-and how people are represented as being in the mass media is going to have some kind of influence (even though of only reinforcement) on how people are in society. Stars enjoy a privileged position in definition of social roles and types and this must have real consequences in terms of how people believe they can and should behave.

King suggested certain preconditions that facilitate emergence of stars

* production of surplus (i.e. commodities in excess of basic material needs)
* development of a technology of mass communication
* extensive penetration of the cultural sphere by industrialisation which leads to a separation between a system of action committed to instrumental goals (utilitarian and predominant) and a system of action committed to expressive goals (moralistic and subordinate).
* rigid separation of work and labour division of role structure between expressive and instr*
* decline of local cultures and development of mass culture, transformation from specific to universalistic modes of evaluation.
* The organisation of the motion picture industry around commodity production and the progressive centralisation of control over production.
* Relative rise in social industry into expressive role positions unconnected with sacred institution (which in feudal society constituted centres of power). (ibid,p.8)

The success of stardom and stars has been attributed to the manipulation of the market, analogous to the ‘manipulation’ of advertisements. This forms an extension of the economic argument on stars. Thomas Harris , as cited, argues that star images are manufactured and that the star system lends particularly well to the manipulative thesis since the industry invests enormous amount of resources in building the star image in addition to the various publicity mechanism like promotions, fan clubs etc.Harris’ description of this process of star-construction was premised on the two instances of Hollywood stars:Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe. Commenting on the basic mechanisms for promoting the stars Harris observes as cited : ‘….a preliminary publicity build-up are a ‘discovery’ usually concocted by studio publicists, a series of glamour pictures sent to all the print media, a rumoured romance with another star already well known to the public, or a rumoured starring role in a major film.This publicity finds a primary outlet in syndicated Hollywood gossip coloumns and movie fan magazines.When the actor or actress is usually cast in a film, the studio assigns a ‘unit man’ to ‘plant’ items about the personality in these places as well as national magazines and Sunday newspaper supplements. A network television appearance is also a highly coveted plum in the studio ‘pre-sale’ campaign for both the picture and the personality.Prior to and during the filming of a picture all publicity emanates from Hollywood…..Especially important in this total process is the perpetuation of the star stereotype…’(Harris as cited in Dyer, 1979,p.13) Harris’ arguments bring to fore the manufactured nature of stars-an elaboration of the film production apparatus. Dyer also notes the arguments of Edgar Morris who in similar vein says, as cited, :‘The internal characteristics /of the star system /are the very one of grand-scale industrial, mercantile and financial capitalism. The star system is first of all fabrication. This is
the word chosen instinctively by Carl Laemmle, the inventor of the stars: ‘The fabrications of the stars is the fundamental thing in the film industry’. He further adds: ‘…(this merchandise) is the very type of grand scale capitalism: enormous investment, industrial techniques of rationalization and standardization of the system have effectively made the star as a merchandise destined for mass consumption’ (as cited in Dyer, ibid. p.13)

Out of this emphasis on manufacture, as brought forth by Dyer, there develops a view of the star systems as ‘pure manipulation’. This kind of an argument holds that both stardom and particular stars are seen as owing their existence solely to the machinery of their production.

Also citing views of Daniel Boorstin from his book ‘The Image’ that holds stars as ‘pseudo-events’ of contemporary culture and empty of meaning, Dyer illustrates the contractedness of the star phenomenon. Devoid of any intrinsic value or meaning, the ‘star is well known for her or his well known ness and not for any talent or specific quality’. They are instances of marketing of ‘celebrity’, on the strength of trivial differences of appearances. Stars, as Boorstin observes, notes Dyer, do not possess a strong character, ‘but definable, publicizable personality: which can become a nationally advertised trademark’. He adds that the ‘qualities which now commonly make a man or woman into a nationally advertised brand are in fact a new category of human emptiness’. Boorstin’s arguments are close to that of Herbert Marcuse’s concept of the ‘One Dimensional Man’ where the culture of late capital is characterised by thin, pseudo, fabricated elements which Boorstin describes in the book.

Notwithstanding the objections to the manipulation thesis, Dyer cogently argues that stars are constructions, or are manufactured. In addition to the views that considers stars as constructions or as manufactured, that there are views that hold ‘that stars are stars because they are exceptional, gifted, wonderful etc’ An extreme version of this was forwarded by Samuel Goldwyn, as cited by Dyer, he argues: ‘God makes the stars. It’s up to the producers to find them’. Citing I.C. Jarvie, a sociologist Dyer quotes: ‘…striking photogenic looks, acting ability, presence on camera, charm and personality, sex appeal, attractive voice and bearing’ wherein for Jarvie stars carry an intrinsic talent. Molly Haskel, too points Dyer argues that stars have ‘some special qualities’ and so ‘…in the midst of mediocre material, they rose to the surface and projected, through sheer will and talent and charisma, images of emotional and intellectual power’ (ibid. p.18)

Dyer does not favour a complete reliance on the constructionist view of stardom and prefers it to be complemented by the view on star-charisma and argues in favour of a more balanced sociological approach. ‘The enormous economic importance of the stars, the elaborate machinery of image-building and film’s importance in establishing character-types all suggest the potential power of the forces of cinematic production for creating the star phenomenon. However, these explanations of the star phenomenon are not sufficient in themselves, and we need to see the phenomenon in its cultural, historical and ideological context, to understand where the producer’s ideas and images of stardom and of specific stars themselves come from…’ (ibid. p.19)
One can raise a sociological polemics between Durkheim’s idea of social fact, the constructionist view and Weber’s idea of charisma. The star can be seen as an irreducible social fact, embodying the collective conscience as an extension of the same. The star can be said to be a representation of the society, an emblematic representation of the collective conscience, the spirit of his times, or a ‘human totem’-an object of secular deification, worship, valorization and veneration for upholding the collective ideals(myths) of the society. Alternatively from a constructionist perspective the star can be said to be a par of a discourse, produced and reproduced discursively. While on the other there are views that uphold stars for their intrinsic worth and charisma, their innate charm, ability to perform, their talent that attracts admiration, love, adore and following. If seen as Durkheimian social fact, embodying the collective conscience it creates difficulty over the question of stars as ordinary and stars as special. They enjoy the status of an extraordinariness compared to the Durkheimian sacred. Violette Morin, as cited, in Dyer suggests that in the case of superstars (in an article entitled ‘Les Olympiens’) they are thought to be distinct in kind from the other people. Morin sees this to emerge from the fact that ‘stars are treated as superlatives’. ‘Stars are always the most something or other in the world—the most beautiful, the most expensive, the most sexy. But because stars are dissolved into this ‘superlative’, are indistinguishable from it,…hence they seem to be of a different order of being, a different ‘ontological category’. Their image become gradually generalised, so that from being the most beautiful, they become simply ‘the greatest’ (ibid, p.49).

2.12.2 Origins of Stardom

It is hard for us today to de-link cinema from the production of celebrity. Yet in the early years of the medium in both Hollywood and in India, stars were not dominant in the industry. In Hollywood, the systems to produce film stars—to elevate film actors and actresses to the level of social icons-developed over decade during the early years of the American film entertainment film industry. At the inception of this industry, the discourse around cinema focussed primarily on the cinematic apparatus rather than people involved in film production. As documentary films yielded to fictional films as the principal cinematic format, around 1908 publicists in the cinema industry attempted to augment interest in the medium by stoking public curiosity about the off-screen lives of film actors. Initially publicists focussed on professional aspects of these individuals, but by around 1916, publicity agents had begun to divulge information to audiences about the personal lives of film actors and actresses (Jacob, 2010 ibid. 120).

‘The history of movie stardom as an institution is a familiar one’, states Richard Schickel in ‘His picture in the Papers’ and illustrates a very useful brief history of origins of stardom in Hollywood: ‘…how the producers had resisted giving billing to the actors who played in their little films; how the actors themselves, regarding appearance in a medium that robbed them of what they regarded as their prime artistic resource their voice, had been glad to hide their shame in anonymity; how the public had begun singling them out of the crowds on the screen, demanding to know more about them, and more important, demanding to know in advance,
which pictures featured their favourities; how a few independent producers grasping at any weapon to fight the motion pictures trust (composed of the major studios) had acceded to public opinion and had been rewarded by the most deliciously rising sales courses; how the demand of stars was quickly perceived as a factor that could stabilize the industry, since this demand was predictable in a way that the demand for stories or even genres was not; how, as feature length films established their popularity and the cost of producing these longer films required bank loans, star names came to lead the list of the collateral that bankers looked upon with favour when assistance was sought; how certain actors achieved unprecedented heights of popularity prosperity almost over night in the period 1915-1920, and how this phenomenon, this beginning of a new celebrity system destroyed or crippled almost everyone caught up in it......(Schickel, cied in Dyer ibid. p 9).

The key event in this narrative of history is usually taken to be Carl Laemmle’s action of planting a story in the St. Louis Post Despatch to the effect that Florence Lawrence who till then was known as biograph girl was killed by a trolley car in St. Louis and following it a day later with an advertisement in the trade press denouncing the story as a vicious life. This was the first occasion that a film actor’s name came to be known in public. This was the first instance of deliberate manufacture of a star’s image. Another argument, runs is the first example of film producers responding to public demand, giving public what they wanted. It is at the point of intersection of public demand (the star as phenomenon of consumption) and the producers’ initiative of production (the stars as phenomenon of production) that stars emerged. Within the confines of the industry and market, there is little doubt that film stars are a phenomenon of consumption initially resisted strenuously in the first instance but mightly capitalised upon it once it was under way. The demand of audience for stars probably stemmed from the fact that it was already a part of popular theatre. As stars were part of the business of show, it was naturally that the same expectation would be there in cinema as a demand from the audience of entertainment industry as a whole (Dyer, ibid.p.9-10).

2.12.3 How Stars (Star System) Emerged in India

In contrast, the dominance of stars in Indian cinema industry arose in the 1930s long after American and European film actors and actresses had achieved stardom. The development of star system in India coincided with the spread, to the subcontinent, of global economic depression, the decline of family operated film production houses and the proliferation of new independent film producers. The promise of making quick profit lured independent producers to the industry, often with little knowledge or interest in the cinematic medium. And these independent producers proved more willing than family owned production houses to pay popular film actors’ lucrative wages. (Jacob, ibid.p.120) In Bombay Cinema, therefore, stars began to come into their own, the moment they were used by these independent producers to undermine a burgeoning studio system which, by the mid 1950s had either closed down or taken over by mercantile investors for hire to independent producers. From around 1950 onwards they were wood away from these studios, where they were engaged as salaried
employees, through the offer of vast payments to appear in films made by independent producers. From this disaggregated moment of film production, stars became stars- and became the single most aspect in production, circulation, and exhibition of films. More than so in Hollywood, popular films in India became cinema of the star than cinema of the studio. (Mishra, ibid.p. 126) Thoraval notes that the collapse of the studio system and strengthening of the star system were related to the entry of black money into the industry. The primary aim of star system is directed towards monetary gains. After the break up of studio system, the political economy of films altered. By the new rules of the game, from 1960s formulaic films came to be made targeting the urban poor, the migrant labour force and lumpen elements and played an unifying role in the “new” urban society. Thriving on illicit funding these films were didactic tales rather than coherent plots. (Bhugra, ibid.p81) The independent financial investment in actors combined with their industry dominance fuelled intense publicity competition which shifted to high gear in the 1960s, producing a “veritable torrent” of media images of the stars and gossip about them in all languages spoken in the subcontinent, including English. This transformation of actors into comodified stars creating a “star value” – for ever changed film production equation for Indian entertainment cinema, and has since guided the instrument decisions of producer distributors, and exhibitors (Jacob, ibid.p 120-121)

The black money that brought in the economic boom in the industry during the war years saw the rise of independent producers who were mostly Punjabi, mostly migrants or refugees from Lahore. These independent producers who emerged at this time saw stars as a critical box office factors and pursued them assiduously for their movies. These stars represented idealized forms of masculinity and feminity, whose images circulated in film magazines, photographs, advertising and movie publicity to become national icons. The operation of the star system was further re-inforced by the films specific requirements for their heroes and heroines to appear as ideals, rather than as natural, psychologically plausible characters. (Dwyer, et al. ibid.p.20)

2.12.4 Predecessors of Today’s Stars in Hindi Films and How it Emerged

While early Indian films were mainly mythological, by 1950s two other forms emerged, one was the stunt films and the other centred on melody and song that came to be associated with names of stars. Antecedent to the star system one can name a few Actors like Master Vithal, a professional wrestler with some skills of Douglas Fairbanks Jr. The Billimorria brothers (Dinshaw and Eddie), Master Nissar (the early singer actor), and Jairaj. In the second phase i.e. in 30’s and 40’s there were actors like K.L. Saigal and Ashok Kumar. Saigal was perhaps the first real superstar, not particularly good looking, nor especially gifted as an actor, but the could sing, and in a style that has remained unique. The other name associated with this period was Ashok Kumar, the very antithesis of impulsive hero Saigal. Others Mishra mentions includes Surendra, Shyam. Motilal, Pahari Sanyal and Prithiraj Kapoor.

In the 1950s, the star system was completely reigned by three names: Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand and Raj Kapoor. Among them they qualified as three distinct heroic types: Dilip Kumar the tragic hero, Raj Kapoor, a romantic tramp, who know for in his Chaplinesque acting, displaying
pronounced melodramatic style, also directed his films, and Dev Anand a consummate urban hero, a kind of ‘postcolonial dandy’ pandering to contemporary middle class aspirations. The domination of three leading males was such that few films which did not have any of them could become successful. However, in some remarkable films, certain actors could bypass the hegemony of this triumvirate like Kishore Kumar, Bharat Bhushan, Shammi Kapoor who began the tradition of a dancer hero and consummate initiator of Western rock stars, notably Elvis Presley and heros like Balraj Sahani, Sunil Dutt, Raaj Kumar and Rajendra Kumar. In the 1960’s actors like Dharmendra. Manoj Kumar, Shashi Kapoor,. Jeetendra entered the industry as heroes. (Mishra, ibid. p.xi-xii)

The dislodging of the triumvirate came rather dramatically with the success of Rajesh Khanna in the film ‘Aradhana’ (1969), Kishore Kumar so far eclipsed by his predecessors could lend a disembodied voice to produce a new style for the ‘repackaged romantic, becaara complex’. By early 70s the Rajesh Khanna effect was waning and finally the pent up desire for cinematic hero exploded in the angry young man figure Amitabh Bachchan from the film Zanjeer (1973). Subsequently hero came to be defined in terms of the angry hero in rebellion, more in consonance with ‘Slum aesthetics than with the staid expectations of middle class’. The old staple of formulaic cinema with melodrama, comic interludes, music and romance gave way to the idea of a hero in control of his ends. His composite film personality combined heroic Rama with antiheroic Karna and stoic Yuddhisthirsa’. Amitabh in many ways undermined the importance of the triumvirate (Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand) as he combined in his own cinematic self all the traits that made the triumvirate rule in the 1950s : ‘quite melancholy, comic self-reflection, and urbanity’. Despite some difficult moments in his acting career Bachchan has been ‘the superstar extraordinaire of Bombay Cinema, reaching insurmountable heights unparalleled by any of his predecessors. Like the triumvirate Amitabh consumed the entire space, thereby allowing scant chance for his contemporary heroes. However notable among those who reached stardom is Rishi Kapoor, Vinod Khanna, Mithun Chakraborty and Anil Kapoor. ‘The fanzine rated Amitabh as number one (numero uno ) for several years. Despite the success of the film’Hum’ (The Collective, 1919), 1990s witnessed the rise of younger generation, likes of Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Sunny Deol, Sanjay Dutt, Akshay Khanna, Govinda, Hrithik Roshan, and ‘above all Shah Rukh Khan, an actor who combines the aggressiveness of Amitabh Bachchan with the quiet detachment of Dilip Kumar, and, most important, is the first Indian star to play some of his best roles in Bombay’s over version of films about the Indian diaspora’. (Mishra ibid, p. xii-xv).

The star system in India traceable as a historical continuity continue to persist as it has succeeded in remaining crucial to films success. The economic dominance of the star within the industry and the importance conferred upon them as the most successful of those individuals with the power to ascertain, determine or influence the very structure of the film itself. Besides the insistence of stars that all mechanisms of cinematic medium be directed towards aggrandizing their image was seldom at odds with the intentions of directors, producers, who are anxious to ensure good returns on their lofty investments in star’s salary/remuneration. All
player in the business of entertainment and film production concurred that it was necessary to accord prominence to the stars was to enhance its commercial value and add glamour to the same. (see, Jacob, 2010 ibid, p.121)

2.12.5 Approaches to the Study of The Star System

In the Indian context the approach to the study of the star systems has its roots and its mobilizing authority in indigenous/Indian context. The star image of Indian cinemas is a hybrid phenomena with origins both in ancient, indigenous theories of theatrical performance and aesthetic appreciation, referred to by the Sanskrit term, navarasa, or nine basic emotions, and in the Western tradition of melodrama that developed from the late 18th century. These two traditions of theatre, rasa and melodrama, structure the connotational dimensions of the cinematic image like poses, gestures, expressions and compositional lay outs.

There are points of intersection in theories on charismatic leadership and traditional Indian concepts of kingship. By welding these theories with these concepts, one can understand the strategies obfuscating boundaries between off-screen and screenplay that allow stars to acquire certain divine like authority. To understand the passionate intensity bordering religiosity in public reception of their film star leaders, Jacob compares two particularly intense modes of gazing at cult images—the practice of darshan or gazing upon an image of divinity in Hinduism. From a comparison of these two ways of seeing images Jacob suggests that the viewing of Indian cinema encourages a dissolution of boundaries between the secular space of modern electronic media such cinema and the religious space of puja, or worship. Such a fluidity of perception is also essential to the realization of the charismatic power of the star or political image (Jacob ibid, p.12-13).

However as suggested, by Dyer, generally speaking there are two broad approaches to the study of stars— one is sociological and the other is the semiotic. The sociological approach centres on the stars as a remarkable, and probably influential as symptomatic social phenomenon, as well as being an aspect of film’s industrial nature. It is a perspective, wherein films derive their significance from stars. The semiotic concern reverses this, wherein stars are of significance for being cast in films and therefore are part of the way films signify. However, both these concerns are mutually interdependent that is to say that sociological concern can only make a headway when informed by proper engagement of stars in various media texts (that includes films, news papers stories, television programmes, advertisements, etc.). This is because, sociologically speaking stars do not exist beyond texts or outside them, therefore such texts need to be studied with reference to its specities and significations. Equally, on the other hand, semiotic concern need to be informed by sociological factors because stars besides being significations in textual formations are also social facts (Dyer, 1979p.1) and that textual assumption are grounded in society.

The study of stars therefore entails a dialectical approach and a constant people are known to us as mediated phenomena, in terms of their signification and have to be seen in terms of their boundaries to the texts in which they appear. It is important to see them as social realities,
signifying certain relationship to other aspects of social structure and values, the meaning of their images and values they embody, their function within texts and in relation to other aspects of texts.

The study of star phenomenon necessarily involves an understanding of ideology to affirm that there is no reality outside it (in an Althusserian sense). As a set of ideas and representations in which they live, ideology, characterises every human society, though is specific to a particular culture and at a particular moment in history. All ideologies are developed in relation to concrete, material circumstances of human life and are means by which knowledge is made out of those circumstances.

Our society is characterised by divisions along multiple dimension like class, gender, religious, cultural. Within these divisions which complexly intersect one another, sense is made out of the world, both collectively as well differentially. In other words all ideologies are rooted in the life activity of any given social groups within a given particular society, but that any group may produce several contradictory inflections of its ideology. In any society-and therefore in the ideas and representative of any given society – one can discern contradictions of two orders-between ideologies held by various groups in conflict (both actual and potential) and within each of these ideologies.Any dominant ideology in any society presents itself as the ideology of the society as a whole. Its task is to deny the legitimacy of alternative and oppositional ideologies and to construct out of its own contradictions a consensual ideology that will appear to be valid for all its members of society. The operations of the dominant ideology are therefore a ceaseless effort to make or displace its internal contradictions and those arising from alternative and oppositional ideologies. This dominant ideology tends to enter into the channels of popular and mass medium due to the fact that the medium engage with audiences who are not always situated within dominant positions of society. It is an attempt to secure hegemonic control that is under threat both from outside and its own contradictions.

The study of stars in Hollywood has been primarily located within an ideological understanding that seeks to situate the industry in a hegemonic position and whose ideological function lies in ‘management’ of this uneasily secured ‘hegemony’. From ideological perspective analysis of stars existing in films and other media texts focuses on its structured polysemy, that is the finite multiplicity of meanings as foregrounded while others are marked or displaced. The concern of such ideological analysis is not to determine the correct meanings and affect, but to determine what can be legitimately may read in them i.e. the ideological manipulation of the meaning and affect, to secure hegemony. (Dyer,1979)

The study of stars as vehicles of hegemonic ideological formations as a general model also serve to explain the star function in Hindi films and several studies on stars have associated them with political regime or its discourse. For instance Raj Kapoor(Dissanayake,et al 1989) and Dilip Kumar(Desai,2004 ) have been read as Nehruvian heroes, while Bachchan(DasGupta) as the cinematic parallel of the authoritarianism of Indira Gandhi.I would also like to include the indigenous theorization of Vasudevan on the secular function of star-text within Indian cinema, in particularly Hindi commercial films.
Vasudevan argues that in the context of popular Indian cinema there can be a different locus to think of sources for the outline of a transcendental subject. The non legitimate cultural form, often the object of elite derision and anxiety of state, posits a crucial problem for its power that images can exercise in circumstances of low literacy. This anxiety is also captured in the state’s hostility, and indeed of elite public discourses, regarding the characteristic narrative forms of the popular cinema. Such hostility was manifest for long period in terms of crippling financial exactions and low cultural status. This non-legitimate cultural form nevertheless is a crucial vehicle of mass publicness. In occupying this position that of the mass public which lies beyond the borders of institutions legitimated by the state – the cinema’s function is to provide a distinctive route for social imaginary. Its imaginary is composed at once of the reality of perceptual processes, the dematerialized nature of what is perceived, and perceiver. Cinema thus provides a fertile ground as a distinct field for the emergence of a transcendental subject.

The spectator is transcendent not because part of civil social discourse but because he/she access a distinct imaginary publicness. The spectator is invited to be out there in that imaginary domain of cinema, and to constitute a public not only as an addressee and audience, but as imaginary component of the fictional world. There is an imaginary in relation to discourses of secularism and cinema addresses the public as a critical fictional component (of this distinct imaginary publicness) via logic of co-living, spectator subject as an undifferentiated virtual entity within the fiction and third, what is most important to this discussion is the exceptional agent, i.e. the heroic entity who will provide a model for transcendence a figure who is both a type but also disseminate into individuated, psychologized character. Crucial to this is the discourse of star image. The star mobilizes a strategy of transcendence premised on screen biography and the interpretive charge of performativity. The star constitutes a distinct component of the cinema’s dematerialized imaginary. S/he is a virtual biographical entity who can only be made sense of in and through the screen constituting the spectator as a special vehicle of knowledge and interpretation in a metafiction of the star. Critical here, is the question of star performativity, where the compendium of actorly attributes – the repertoire of gesture, speech and bodily dimensions – may suggest both the distinctiveness of the star sign and possibilities of arbitrariness and interpretation. In the uniqueness of the star may be deployed to emphasize the non-identity of actor and character, making of the actor’s body an arbitrary signifier not clearly attached to the social referent it may inhabit. Such arbitrariness may operate either through the armature of the individual film, or more complexly, across the screen biography of the actor/star. Vasudevan suggests two models, the first is the one where it is governed by consistent iconography, one where the casting of the star may extend its foundational thematics into new territories of explorations without compromising the original codification, a stable secular iconization is thereby attained. The star an unanchored persona, dispenses with consistency of psychological characterization, facilitates transcendental drive while showing a consistent virtual screen biography that can be easily recalled from spectator’s memory. The second model of secular transcendence is opposed to the consistent logic of thematics and extension of the persona into
different fields. It ruptures the screen persona and its continuum in what is a performative de-
stabilization to produce a secularization through a differentia casting(often as the ‘other’) (Vasudevan, 2010 p.134-136)

2.12.6 Theories of Identification with the Star on Screen

Psychoanalytic Discourse on Identification: Cinema links the auteur with the audience through the medium of the story, and the analysis of the story is therefore not direct, first hand or even second hand, but as Metz (1982) argues is possibly third hand. Metz argues that Freudian psychoanalysis and its emphasis upon oedipal complex is a delimited, singular approach of psychoanalysis to study cinema. Other types include the nosographic approach (treating film as symptoms or as secondary manifestations from which one can work back), where the film maker is of primacy than the film or its fit into a typological classification on. In a psychoanalytic study of film script has its focus on manifest content and covert message. Cinematic signifier is perceptual along visual as well as auditory axis. The film as per Metz, is like a mirror where the viewer “sees” familiar household objects and perceives their significance. The viewer though not in the mirror, ie the cinematic frame, is able to recognize “his” world despite himself in it. This is most noteworthy aspect of cinema that turns it into a symbolic medium where the individual identifies with the fictional character and situation, yet within this setting is able to recognize the “other” who is externalized. That “Someone else” on the screen allows the viewer to place his or her ego in the imagination of the signifier. Any engagement with images arises from the collective unconscious (Bhurgra, 2006, ibid. p. 132). This allow us to argue how the heroic “other” i.e. the star in the form of fictional character in cinematic text allow for a collective identification through the reflective medium of cinema. It may be added that the intrinsic quality of a star’s performativity and persona enables a broad and inclusive identification on the strength of its polysemic quality and also suitably personify the prevalent values of society and successfully express the desires and aspirations of the nation’s or its collective psyche.

Identification with the actor and the director, or the story, is viewed in the context of how such information is secured. In describing pre cinematic identification, she argues that the assimilative relations between subject and object and their interactions are the key to the identity formation. Applying Freudian concepts of displacement, primary identification (the original tie with the ok object), secondary identification (the regressive way in which it becomes a substitute for libidinal object tie) and tertiary identification (the perception of a common quality), the patriarchal identification allows a degree of reliance on perception.
Lacan’s re-formulation of Freudian and post Freudian object relations insisted on the primacy of the visual and de-emphasized other routes of introjections (Freidberg, as cited in Bhugra ibid. p 137) Fenichel as observes Bhugra considers the process of ocular introjection incorporation through the eye in addition to oral anal epidermal and respiratory introjections. Two directors of identificatory relations are identified by La Plancha and Pontalis (as cited by Bhugra ibid. p 137) heteropathic/centripetal (the subject identifies self with the other) and idiopathic/centrifugal (subject identifies other with self). The first type of identification is introjective and the second is projective. It is on the introjective identification the cinema plays upon while providing the illusion of projective identification (Freidberg as cited in Bhugra, ibid. 137).

Friedberg suggests that the film star is simultaneously (acknowledged) recognised as “other” and misrecognized as self. She calls the film star an “institutionally sanctioned fetish”. This identification allows the receiver to peel layers of the story and understand by establishing confirming and learning to live with its message (Bhugra, 2006 137-138).

2.12.7 Political Discourse and Identification on Screen (and citizenship) and Democracy-Enabled by Film And The Film Star Beyond The State

Post – World War decolonization set into process the firming of new nation states in the Southern World accompanied by instituting individuals as rights bearing citizens. The new nation states replaced earlier communitarian structures and the new citizen was upheld as standard bearer of an unambiguous, universally applicable principle: that individual as bearers of rights and are legitimated as citizens of a modern state a principal embodied world wide by 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the Unites Nations.

‗Among the major locals that first defined the properties of this citizen ‘bourgeois in its social origin’-was inevitably the direct antecedent of the twentieth century film exhibition sector : Habermas’ (1991:43) ‘great public’ that formed in the theatre, museums and concerts of Europe. As their logical successor in the public sphere, the specifically cinematic construction of the new rights bearing individual as film going citizen.....both in Europe and in the USA, the extension of ‘spectatorship’ theory into a rights discourse, ……, has typically located the right to the cinema as right of access deriving from for example, the UNESCO sponsored ‘New Information Order’ that lays done many of the post-war characteristics of an open democracy’ (Rajadhyakha 2009. p 86).

Scholarship in film studies have acknowledged spectatorial rights that film goers require to possess to enter movie theatre and the responsibility to be delivered by cinematic system to produce these rights as part of their apparatus for narrativized meaning production via story telling practice. Cinematic production and the site of the ‘viewing individual’ is of crucial significance in the numerous former colonies of Africa / Latin America and parts of South/South East Asia as a part of citizenship rights in the context of decolonization and pan national development. The founding of local production infrastructures revealed not only an economic programmes of self reliance but an additional political reorganization of cinema’s
role in producing the cinema viewer as ‘new member of the public’. It also furthered role of
spectatorship as a process of initiating film going citizen into layer protocols of democratic
action in new national spaces (ibid,p. 87)

The properties of this ‘film citizen’ allow for a radical repositioning of the relationship of
citizen to state and also perhaps as a result of consumer to market : a process of cultural
commoditisation that necessarily bore political significance. The role of cinema in defining
people’s rights and ability to make choices, to strive for, to claim and signify was of crucial
significance in India. The intrinsically democratic form of reception unleashed by collective
gazing of the screen privileges subjective-identification with the screen personality.
Unlike the classical Indian theatre, dance, and music performances—where access has been
restricted by class, gender and caste affiliations—cinema had no Indian cultural heritage. Outside
the traditional purview of priestly castes, elaboration of the institutional rules of access to
cinema fell to entrepreneurs. Against payment of a modest feeentry to cinema hall and viewer
ship was ensured notwithstanding the fact that ticket prices did maintain a hierarchy among the
viewers. Democratization through film viewership was enabled beyond states confines and its
arrangements. (Jacob, 2010, ibid.p.83)

The notion of entitilements of fans derives from Rajadhyaksha’s formulation of cultural role of
cinema. Cinema as a public sphere emerged as a prominent institution of Indian
neighbourhoods by 1940s-1950s and crucially accounted for the fact that the ticket –buying
spectators automatically assumed certain rights that were symbolically relevant to the emerging
nation –state . These rights to enter the movie hall, to act as its privileged addressee, to have
rights to fandom both outside and within the movie theatre—went along with a host of political
rights that defined the ‘describable and enumerable’ aspects of population, like the right to vote,
receive state welfare etc. Film historians in the early years of independence asserted how in
several parts of India cinema provided the first instance where the ‘national public’ could
congregate without being divided along primordial lines of caste, class, gender etc. Although
these rights were not necessarily enforced on the ground, claimed Rajadhyaksha that it is
recognisable that the spectators were and symbolically continue to be aware of these rights,
aware of their political underpinnings and constitute the active or vocal Indian spectators.
Rajadhyaksha’s argument on ‘spectatorial rights’ is founded on understanding of the ways in
which Indian cinema illustrate Christian Metz’s famous formulation of the cinema existing for
the spectator.

The viewpoint of the camera and the projector is the view of the actual viewer and cinema
technique’s ensuing need to allow the viewer recognize this, and reassert and acknowledge this
at various points in narrative suturing process. Cinema going spectator purchasing a ticket is
‘incarnate one of the most fundamental, if ambiguous at times, rights of democracy’. He is a
democratic subject citizen sutured to camera projection.

Rajadhyaksha’s understanding argues Srinivas leads to two understandings first, is the political
significance of film viewing, in general and far activity in particular in Indian context where
cinema has functioned cultural front end, as it was of the new political system. Second, history
of publicnes specific to Indian context but also a consequence of the manner wherein cinematic institution present itself as existing for spectator.

Apart from questions of the regime of public/citizenship entitlements is the issue of space. Public sphere and K Sevathamby (1981) as cited famously proposed that cinema hall was the first place in modern times where viewers belonging to diverse backgrounds assembled under one roof to witness the same programme. That such an institution would have social and political implications in society like ours cannot be denied. Sevathamby’s understanding can thereby be read as a formulation suggesting the democratic potential of film in India or as Srinivas suggests, ‘democratic possibilities of cinema’. The relative absence of explicit restrictions on entry into this space allow us to conceive cinema hall as a kind of public institution that has no precedence in India. As one of the few egalitarian space, cinema hall as public institutions is an alternative sphere that renders pleasures and fantasies realisable that still remain beyond reach of many as it is open for all.

Unlike the contrast case i.e. of course print, which required a degree of social and cultural capital to which a majority of the population did not have access. Further strengthening of the conception of cinema as a democratic form is the evidence that stage performance by amateur drama troupes at times explicitly prohibited members of certain lower castes from entering the performance venues. The democratic potential is not limited to relative ease with which people could access it. According to Miriam Hansen (1991) as cited, cinema constituted ‘alternative public sphere’ an understanding that is substantially based on American nickelodeon an institution that has acquired legendary status in film industry history for its accessibility to subaltern customer base. Hansen argued that cinema emerged as an alternative public sphere against backdrop of decaying bourgeois institutions. However in India and in some parts of the world including USA, cinema was not an exclusively working class or lower class entertainment. With reference to India, Stephen Hughes point out in early years cinema was a colonial and upper class entertainment form. Hughes argues that there is a tendency among industry figures and scholars alike to represent cinema in India as poor man’s entertainment. One formulation, in this vein, proposed by Ashis Nandy sees cinema as ‘slum’s eye view’ of society and politics. Argument about cinema’s democratic nature is not tenable, if based on the assumption that we are dealing with a lower class entertainment firm. Cinema in India as argued facilities social mixing. However it needs to have a qualifier and unlike the celebratory accounts of American cinema, cinema in India despite drawing diverse audience hierarchised the exhibition space. But what is worth stating that cinema viewing entails purchase of ticket, investment in the possibility of ‘transubstantiation of experience into commodity’ Although it did not allow for transcendence of social barriers like caste, it is the formation of a collective that was to be entitled to be present in the spare of the hall despite internal obvious differences, which were suppressed. Rajadhyakha suggested that the gathering of collective as film audience helped to acquire certain secondary entitlements that go on to make a series of demands on the nature of the commodity (film).
Rajadhyaksha’s argument help establish a possible correspondence between film viewer and modern political subject as both are beings of entitlement. The surfacing of the notion of entitlement in the sphere of cultural consumption is a necessary part of the formation of what Prasad called enthusiastic communities. These are mobilizable groups that inevitably find causes/excuses-no matter how trivial they appear-to display their collective strength. The shared ground of cinema and politics, is not just by the star linking and straddling the two but the formation of groups as ‘mobilized at both sites’. (Srinivas, 2009, p.39-45)

2.12.8 The Discourse of ‘Bhakti’ and Fanhood

The Dravidian leadership’s political mobilization, which was geared to appeal to a latent cultural ethos of spirituality, was derivative of indigenous Hindu tradition of bhakti—from Sanskrit, meaning an intuitive emotional expression of faith and devotion (as opposed to intellectual firms of expression). The term references wandering Hindu and Jain ascetics, who communicating through music and poetry from 7th century onward, built cult following for radial reforms in religion and society. Later this discourse had its several ramifications in social and political activation and reform (Jacob, ibid. p. 193).

This discourse of bhakti has been subjected to a re-articulation within the discourse of fandom of stars and celebrities. The charisma of stars often sacralised become objects of “devotion” or bhakti.

M. Madhav Prasad, as cited by Srinivas, offers interesting insights into fandom when he argues that there is a relationship between fan bhakti and what he calls as subaltern sovereignty. The larger issue he argues has nothing to do with stars or with fans, but the crisis of sovereignty in the Indian republic which gives rise to various phenomena, including the political power of film stars. Fan- Bhakti argues Prasad is a community forging response by the subaltern. Rather than assume that bhakti pre-existing the fan in the relationship between people and gods, Prasad states ‘enthusiastic communities can form around a variety of entities and the nature of the community thus formed will have to be addressed to it, the nature of satisfactions derived from these acts, etc.’ Enthusiasm is a particular form of devotion. Prasad draws on David Hume’s notion of enthusiasm which is characterised by the independence of devotion and contrasted to superstition which in turn is favourably inclined towards priestly power. Like other forms of enthusiasm fan bhakti too is a sign of unbound political passions in search of an object. Prasad argues that the disconnect between political passions and their object is caused by the incomplete nature of the transition from older princely sovereignties to republicanism. What is most attractive about Prasad’s argument is that it allows us to move far beyond simplistic claims about the manipulation of fans by stars or vice versa. Further fan activity assumes tremendous political significance because of not stars contesting elections but because it is part of broader phenomenon (subaltern sovereignty). Prasad suggests that it is not so much the agent that rouses these passions (star, celebrity, politician etc.) but the most accidental discovery of
the ‘idol’ (to continue with the bhakti metaphor ( Srinivas,2009 ibid.p30- 31)Fan activity as anthropologists claim is an extension of or a variant of religious cult that speaksof devotion and engages in irrationalities that can be held to be proto-religious emotions towards the star.(ibid.p.46)

2.12.9 Charismatic Leadership, Theories of Kingship and Darsanic Gaze

Preminda Jacob referred to theories of charismatic leadership and traditional Indian Kingship to explain the symbolise of political and religious authority to explain the emergence of popular cinema stars as iconic expressions of Tamil sub national identity and mobilizing figures around which Tamil identity politics cohered. The leader-constituent relationship in populist politics of the Southern States bears similarities in fundamental ways to religious worship, to explain which Weber’s idea of charisma; theories of kingship and darsana provide appropriate analytical frame work.

Charisma as a word is etymologically descendant from Greek, meaning a “divine gift” was first described in an analytical context by Max Weber as a “certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional power or qualities.” Weber’s characterization of charisma as an “expression of the creativity of the human spirit” draw from Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of the ubermensch (superman) that celebrated the creative frenzy of the artist or visionary. As a Dionysian breaker of social, moral, and aesthetic taboos, such an individual possessed the power to challenge and eventually heal (dysfunctional modern society). But Nietzsche’s theory did not distinguish between the good and evil purposes to which power might be directed. Likewise Weber acknowledged that the potential effects of charisma on society could range from highly beneficial to deeply destructive.

Weber emphasized that charisma is innate; the quality derives from an individual’s “personal heroism or personal revelation” and cannot be acquired (like a set of skills). An individual’s charismatic power, however, can become manifest only through the strength of faith of a group of followers. Unless the latter recognize charisma in an individual, the quality remains dormant. Charismatic leadership is thus essentially an inter-active relation between an individual and a group of followers, wherein the latter’s enhanced perception of the former causes him or her to be extraordinarily influential.

In a political context, charisma describes a particular type of governance. In the Weberian typology modes of governance in most human societies fall into one or three dominant types of systems: legal (bureaucratic) traditional and charismatic. None of these are found in their pure forms, for each system retains elements and characteristics of the other systems. In a system of legal domination which is also described as “rational” or bureaucratic all participants are subject to a set of rules that are historically and culturally defined. No single individual, not even one elected to the highest office, is considered above law. Traditional domination is a
system wherein an individual or a group derives authority on the basis of custom. The lesser officials in such a system are usually intimately connected with the ruler, whether as key or political allies. In charismatic domination, all authority stems from a single individual who is believed to produce extraordinary powers. Charismatic leaders typically (but not necessarily) gain power and visibility during unstable social conditions, when widespread questioning disrupts existing mores and traditional codes. A charismatic leader is therefore usually a radical whose words and actions challenge a society rationality and routine. Possessed with a “mission” be or she acquires a devoted following through the performance of miracles, revelations or heroic deeds.

Weber provided only a rudimentary discussion of the analytical applications of charisma. Others scholars, such as Douglas Madsen and Peter Snow, have taken the theory to task for its lack of specificity about context – conditions, demographic causes and effects – arguing that a single theoretical explanation cannot adequate illumine historically and culturally distinct instances of charismatic leadership. Another problem in extrapolating this theory to a modern context is that Weberian description of the charismatic relationship was confined to an individual with a small band of followers where the contact was direct and personal. But when it is applied to study ‘charisma’ of stars and politicians in contemporary societies the followers often number in tens of thousands or millions. In this case evocation of charisma relies entirely on perception transmitted through mass media, such as radio, cinema, photographs or television.

Most theorists who have commented upon or expanded Weber’s theory concur however that in a system of charismatic domination, the personality of the leader, for more than any ideology, is the potent force attracting adherents to the group. Because of the reverence accorded to an elected political leader by his constituents-perhaps because of the passion released during the election process that charismatic influence is often exaggerated than in other modern hierarchical relationships, such a leader become deified by close supporters.

Jacob contends that historically determined pre-colonial political formations and cultural practices have allowed Tamil Dravidian politics to become person centered and thereby provided ideal grounds for leaders of the Dravidian movement fall into the mould of charismatic leadership. This person centered cultural and political orientation of Tamil society was suitably exploited in cinematic narratives by deploying a range of strategies that required the audience or alternatively in the case of leaders their politically mobilized constituents to suspend critical faculties and accept their leaders’ policies and messages solely on the basis of their faith. (Jaco,2010b ibid. p.192-193)

Popular Hindi films in seeking fictional resolution via “heroism” of the hero give the star a magical aura near to charisma. Besides after the fall of the studio system, stars have been the central fulcrum around which the narrative of popular films have routinely cohered that renders stars into a parallel text or narrative authority with the power of “charisma” The attraction of
audience or more preciously fans who are crucial to the iconization of star, in the Indian context, as per Jacob, can be fitted into the indigenous Hindu paradigm of bhakti or devotion that seeks almost to sacralise or deify the star and re-articulates charisma” within a quasi religious framework (Jacob, ibid 193-195).

Dyer argues that Weber’s theories of charisma and its relevance to study star phenomenon need to be suitably modified in form as the notion of charisma does combine concepts of social function with an understanding of ideology. Weber was interested in accounting for how political order is legitimated (other than by sheer force) and suggested three alternatives: tradition (doing what we’ve always done), bureaucracy (doing things according to agreed, but alterable, supposedly rational rules) and charisma (doing things because the leader suggests it). Charisma is defined as: “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he [sic] is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least superficially exceptional qualities”. (cited in Dyer, 1979, p 35).

Dyer notes that there are certain difficulties in transferring the notion of charisma from political to film theory. As Alberoni had pointed that the status depends upon her/him not having any institutional political power. Yet there is clearly some correspondence between political and star charisma, in particular the question of how or why a given person comes to have “charisma” attributed to her or him.

Edward A. Shils in ‘Charisma, Order and Status’ suggests that: ‘The charismatic quality of an individual as perceived by other or himself (sic) lies in what is thought to be his connection with (including possession by or embedment in) some very central feature of man’s existence and the cosmos in which he lives. The centrality coupled with intensity makes it extraordinary ‘. In other words, the relationship of charismatic person’s relationship to the cultural and historical specificities is an eternal universal relationship. S.N. Eisenstaedt in his introduction to Weber’s Charisma and Institution Building developed the above argument of Shils by suggesting that on the basis of a survey of communication research, that charisma appeal is effective when the charismatic figure or group offers a value, order or stability to counterpoise this. ‘Linking a star with the whole of a society may not get us very far in these terms, unless one takes twentieth century Western society to have been in constant instability. Rather, one needs to think in terms of the relationship....... between stars and specific instabilities, ambiguities and contradictions in the culture (which are produced in the actual practice of making films, and film stars): (Dyer, ibid p 35).

This model underlines one of the earliest attempts to analyse a star image, that of Alistair Cooke’s ‘Douglas Fairbanks, the Making of a Screen Character’ (1940) in which Cooke accounted for Fairbanks’s stardom in terms of the appropriateness of his ‘American ness’ to contemporary situation in America.‘At a difficult time in American history, when the United States was keeping a precarious neutrality in the European war, Douglas Fairbanks appeared to
know all the answers and know them without pretending to be anything more than ‘an all-round chug just a regular American’ (The American). The attraction of this flattering transfer of identity to the audience did not have to be obvious to be enjoyed ......there already was the kernel of a public hero close enough, in manner and get up to contemporary America to leave his admirers with the feeling that they were manfully facing the times rather than escaping from them’ (as cited in Dyer ibid.p. 36).

Dyer argues that cases like Marilyn Monroe, Betty Friedan, Marlon Brando, Elvis Presely are instances of star charisma that needs to be situated in the specificities of the ideological configurations to which it belongs. (ibid).

2.12.10 The Semiotics of Kingship

The indigenous tradition of kingship offers a second theoretical perspective from which Jacob argues one can understand religiosity, ritual and imagery in contemporary political practice in Tamil Nadu. In pre-colonial South Indian Society, the sphere of religion and politics were identical. And the remnants of this system continue to resonate in contemporary attitudes to leadership in Tamil Nadu. The philosophies, ritual and functions of kingship have to a large extent shaped the development of civilization in South Asia. Ancient texts of Sanskrit were instrumental in establishing an enduring tradition of monarchy as the principal form of governance throughout the subcontinent. Despite variations in the concept of kingship at different historical periods and in different regions, key elements of the tradition were continually revived due to the authoritative status of these ancient literary sources. Indian Kings ruled by “divine right” claiming to be descendants of the chief gods of the pantheon: Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. However kings, themselves were subject to supreme law, or dharma. The practices associated with this system of kingship were prevalent since the establishment of the first republics and kingdom in the subcontinent, dating from 600 BCE Even these early records indicate the divine power of kingship-and the periodical revival of these powers through rituals conducted for important festival events. As king were believed to be descended from gods, likewise gods were represented as kings ruling over a domain of subjects or devotes.

From an analysis of the culturally dominant tradition of kingship, as it was practiced in South India from the 6th though the 18th centuries, historian and anthropologist Nicholas Dirks concludes that “worship as a firm of transaction and a mode of relationship provides the political process”. The period of British colonialism and the development of India as a nation state created a schism in the continuity of this tradition. Yet these pre-colonial nations about kingship have persisted into the present period, penetrating all levels of political culture in India and influencing contemporary expectations about leadership. Expressions of authority and ability to command the labour of others, even at the village level are based on traditional models of kingship. Film stars of Tamil Cinema, like MGR, Karunanidhi and Jaya Lalitha exemplify cases of political mobilizers whose populist appeal are deeply embedded in cultural
notions that deify leaders as kings. The legitimacy of their authority have their resonance in pre-colonial notions of monarchical system of governance where the relationship is a form of transaction between the benevolent “good-being” and the beneficence subject. While this is quite true of Southern politics where cinema is a site of ideological articulation and means of political mobilization directed at identity formation in the case of popular Hindi cinema, with a more generalized generic nation-vide appeal escaping consciously trappings of particularization of identity politics, there is a tendency to reify stars as king-like figures reigning fictional public imaginaries through publicity, propaganda advertisements and various other means. Film stars are often referred to as “Badshaah”, “Shahenshah”, meaning kings or emperors, that serve as popular euphemistic designation hinting at almost a king-like status of popular stars in the public imagination. (Jacob, 2010 ibid. p.197-198)

Drawing on the work of Thomas B. Hansen, Srinivas cites the suggestion that multiple sovereignties are operant because pre-republican loyalties continue to exist even currently. Madhav Prasad seek to ‘locate film stars within this field of fragmented sovereignties’. Prasad says that ‘The ideology of popular sovereignty has that in modern democracies, the monarch is divested of sovereignty vested in him, which is then fragmented and distributed equally among the people of the republic to constitute them as sovereign citizens’. Prasad contends that we are still to attain collective sovereignty of the people as the ‘interior’ has not been sufficiently subjected to a morphological overhaul and commensurate constitution of new subjectivities, new modes of association, new contractual relations, etc. in consonance with republican polity is still a process underway, and revolution is unattained fully. Under these circumstances cinema provide a popular site where ‘popular sovereignty is exercised, facilitating the production of stars who function as the ‘kings of democracy’, ‘binding political passions’ which were rendered objectless with the formation of the republic (Srinivas, 2009 ibid. p 130)

2.12.11 Scopophilia and Fetishism: Theories of Cinematic Spectatorship and Gaze in Western Tradition and Thought

Conventional theatre bound spectatorship and its access to images of cinema celebrities is an area of scholarship largely influenced by Western discourse of viewing or gaze, largely explained by cinema’s ineluctable kinship as a technology that articulated Western ideology, beliefs, values and its historically evolved sensibilities at the time when the technology came into existence. It is therefore an imperative to understand how spectatorship is defined within Western paradigm and cultural protocols. The subject of the human gaze in European culture was most notably examined by Sigmund Freud near the turn of the twentieth century. However, the most in-depth studies on psychology of gazing and financial gains that can be returned from it may arguably have been conducted by Western media-the artistry, craft and industry of visual, entertainment and advertising. Increasingly, sophisticated technologies of reproduction have nourished this desire to gaze by making available reproductions of an individual’s visage in a
multiplicity of ways. What makes us probe into is the popular and prolific nature of the images and also the conscious and unconscious desire that provokes this desire to look and return back the look.

Until Enlightenment in the seventeenth century, European believed in the “extra mission theory of vision”, i.e. eye as both receptor of light and transmitter – emitting light and other types of signals. This was complemented by belief in ability of inanimate objects to radiate influential qualities, emotions, powers or essences. The growth of secularism and development of scientific reasoning during Enlightenment quickly undermined intellectual support for extra mission and eroded its position in popular belief systems. Philosophically and culturally the eye was divested of its power of reaching out to objects and this also affirmed the basis for separating visual sense from auditory (hearing) and haptic (touch). As a result objects were divested of their ability to transmit essences of good and evil. Gradually, the eye and its vision achieved a new cultural position: as a passive instrument of observation associated with truth and verification.

Yet the influence of scientific thought failed to eliminate popular concepts that extended the gaze into the realm of touch. Scholars from the nineteenth century have struggled to theorise the complexity of perception and irrational hold that objects continue to exert on modern self. Freud’s theory of fetishism attempts to explain an individual’s unnatural fascination for a particular object and the animation of that object by the individual. The focus in this theory, however, is not on the interaction between seeing and the seen, but on the neurosis of the individual: his or her state of mind that is abnormal and in need of repair. The principal post-Enlightenment theories of gaze-Freudian scopophilia and its development by Lacan and Michel Foucault’s theory of societies of surveillance-focus on one side of visual negotiation: on the seer. As such gaze is hegemonic; its interactivity is present only in the unequal exchange between animate being.

Some theorists have made attempts to counter this trend. Pre-Enlightenment conceptualization of the object finds positives resonance in the creative works of the nineteenth and twentieth century artists. And visual theories of Walter Benjamin; Maurice Merlau Ponty and much of Lacan’s later writings build upon and extensively refer to these artistic projects; wherein objects seen can return the gaze of the viewer.(Jacob, ibid.p.242-244)

From this we see two paradigms of gaze, one that is audience gaze on the object, a one-sided hegemonic gaze controlled by the seer and the other is the interactive viewing where this viewing is returned by gaze of the seen.

The public’s principal source of access to images of cinema celebrities can be divided for the purposes of theorization into two very distinct contexts: conventional theatre-bound cinema spectatorship; and extra-cinematic encounters communicated by other media. Here it is relevant
to discuss the former type of spectatorship in view to understand spectatorial engagement with on screen presence of the star (hero).

In the darkened theatres the gaze of the audience is attentive, transfixed by the images of cinematic celebrities flickering on screen. Theatre viewed cinema is largely absent of the myriad attractions and interruptions common to televised film and the rapidly evolving home video technologies. The visual spectacle offered to theatre viewers is a paid privilege, and entails audience expectations. Theatre bound cinema viewing, is different largely from “static images” or still images on billboards, magazines and books, posters, studies and other conventional or even unimaginable forms. Often cursorily viewed, rarely they are spared attentive gaze by sheer novelty, size and quality out completing others present. The theatre bound cinema unlike the extra cinematic viewing demands universal viewing condition of theatre. The screen image is disassociated from its medium. Typically, the projection fall onto a wide screen. Its enlarged image saturates the individual viewer’s visual sense and submits him or her to a perspective that he or she shares, at that time only with other members of the audience. The film narrative that tend to unfold in pseudo-linear chronologies – with flashbacks, dream sequences, ships and jumps through events – allow spectators to share a common experience of “cinematic time” specific to that film. Situated within the physical and psychological dimensions of cinema-theatre environment, the audience is led by an illusion of fullness and an “absent presence”: of stars that wholly dissipates when film stops, enhancing the magical quality of the cinematic medium. Viewers become absorbed in the cinema experienced through activities of gazing and listening in a darkened, dream like space that is communal as well as personal, subjective and private.

These conditions have prompted film scholars to evoke Freudian theories of gaze, voyeurism, and fetishism to explain audiences experience and fascination. Freud applied these terms to understand neurotic behaviours concerning scopophilia-the obsessive desire to look. Freud’s research traced these neuroses to abnormalities in the development of the individual psyche. While Freud’s critics have argued often convincingly about the limited applicability of his analyses and for them being culturally and temporally specific-resonant-in the modern European patriarchal society of his time, for many scholars of visual media, Freudian theories of the gaze continue to have relevance to the study of cinema spectatorship. Scholars relate these theories both to spatial conditions in which cinema is experienced and to the structure of traditions of popular and particularly Hollywood film making. Their work asserts that both voyeuristic and fetishistic modes of looking are cultivated by the film’s unfolding narrative and frame by-frame structure, producing larger than life views of film celebrities. Any act of looking in the cinema, is constituted within the tension between fetishism and voyeurism and it is this tension between the two that constitutes cinema, and its pleasure and fascination.

The distance maintained between the audiences and the screen image, paralleling viewing through a peep hole, provides the basis for Freudian theorists’ equation of film spectatorship
and voyeurism. While the voyeur finds pleasure in the narrative’s forward movement, in story development, in activity and action—the fetishist, as constructed by theorists applying Freudian conceptualization of the gaze to cinematic spectatorship, desires to stop the action and become wholly fixated on the person image of the star. In the voyeuristic dimension of the film spectatorship the star is subject to the viewer’s controlling gaze; in the fetishistic dimension the cinematic celebrity possesses and subjugates his or her fan. Thus the twists and turns of modern cinema’s psychological dynamic are built upon the interplay of the actor’s and spectator’s development of this mutual relationship. (Jacob, 2010 ibid. p228-230).

Andrew Tudor has suggested a typology of audience star relationships drawing on Leo Handel’s work and reinforced by Handel’s conclusion that favourite stars of people tend to be of the same sex themselves, which both Handel and Tudor indicate that star audience relationships cannot be based on sexual attraction. In case of any argument that attraction to one’s own sex is also sexual, and that as homosexuality is a taboo in this society, the cinema has provided through the star phenomenon the vicarious and disguised experience of gay feeling for non-gay audiences. He proposed a model as follows ‘Image and Influence’ (Tudor cited in Dyer ibid p. 19)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE of AUDIENCE-STAR RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>RANGE of CONSEQUENCES</th>
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<td></td>
<td>CONTEXT SPECIFIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>SELF-IDENTIFICATION</td>
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<td>LOW</td>
<td>EMOTIONAL AFFINITY</td>
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The distinction between specific and diffuse consequences is not rigid, but is meant to capture the difference between a response that is limited to ‘watching the movie situation’ and one that has ‘consequences for a diffuse range of aspect of the fan’s life’. The four categories of star-audience relationship that emerge follows:

(a) Emotional Affinity: this is the weakest category and ‘probably’ the most common. The audience feels a loose attachment to a particular protagonist deriving jointly from star narrative and the individual personality of the audience member: a standard sense of involvement.’

(b) Self-Identification: This happens when ‘......involvement has reached the point at which audience member places himself (sic) in the same situation and persona of the star’.

(c) Imitation: This is the commonest practice among the young that takes the star-audience relationship beyond cinema going with ‘star acting as some sort of a model for the audience’

(d) Project: Imitation merges into projection ‘at the point at which the process becomes more than a simple mimicking of clothing, hairstyle, kissing and the like’ ( as cited in Dyer ibid. p 20).
**Bourgeois Identification:** The bourgeois conception of character as Dyer argues allow us to discern two kinds of ideological work that identification is allowed to do:

Reinforcement of norms – Rockwell identified this as a general aspect of identification within all ideological systems. ‘Fiction not only legitimates emotions and aspirations, it also…. particularly since the appearance of the novel with its devotion to the number of personal relationship gives models and patterns of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour……if the reader or watcher of drama can recognise enough of himself (sic) in a fictional character to make identification possible, identification with a literary character may be quite decisive in transmitting norms and influencing personal behaviour  (Fact from Fiction pp 80-1 as cited in Dyer ibid. p 109).

Identification with uniqueness-The specific emphasis of bourgeois characterisation on the individual serves to mask the ideological role of character. By feeling that we are identifying with an unique person, we ignore the fact that we are identifying with a normative figure ( ibid. p. 109).

Star images as constructed personages in media texts, carrying hall marks of novelistic character, as particularised and individuated instances allow for the process of identification. The understanding of this identification process in cinematic texts is largely informed by Lacanian Psychoanalysis and Atthnssser’s theory of ideology wherein identification with screen image takes place within the confines of ideological stranglehold.

As the process of identification is ideological in nature, Dyer suggests that ‘….identification demonstrates, it is in fact perfectly possible, and indeed fundamentally inherent in the form for a fictional character in novelistic mode to be both normative with respect to social types and individuated with respect to the specific realization of those types in a given character’.(ibid.p.109-110)

**2.12.12 Spectatorship in an Indian Context: Interactive Gaze of Darshan**

Understanding cinematic spectatorship as a firm of scopophihia is enlightening, yet anecdotal evidence about the behaviour of audience watching Indian cinema suggests that the activity of film gazing India is informed by other traditions of looking as well. In viewing of Indian cinema the communal participatory may supersede the individualized, private experience of viewers of Western cinema. Some of the differences separating spectatorship of Hollywood cinema from that of Indian commercial cinema can be explained, as well, by the divergence of their diegesis—the cinematic architectures and narratives structures of their respective filmic traditions. Of these, iconic stasis, a structural device frequently deployed by the Indian film makers in the song-and dance sequences, is conducive to producing a ‘darshanic’ mode of viewing. In iconic stasis the star turns to a frontal position to engage or address the audience. The intimate erotic gazes exchanged between the hero and heroine in song and dance sequences and dream sequences, are instead directed outward at the individual viewer who returns the privacy of the darkened theatre. This exchange of gazes between the star and fan disrupts the
scopophilia (both voyeurism and fetishism) that is normally associated with cinematic spectatorship. Unlike scopophilia, in icons stasis the object offers itself to be viewed. As this object is heroic, transcendent, inimitable in every way compared to the spectator, the viewership becomes a privilege. Thus the technology of cinema is put in the service of a darshanic gaze (Jacob, 2010 ibid. p. 230–p 232).

Devout Hindus believe that it is through darshan that the divinity’s power and grace is communicated to the devotee. Central element of temple visit and worship is tied to darshan, a mobile concept. Darsana is to briefly gaze at the duty’s iconic figure and under conducive and appropriate conditions become an intense spiritual experience. While clearly associated with Hindu religious tradition, in India the practice of darshan has blurred the boundaries between the religious and the secular. This ambiguity may have been fostered by early Hindu rulers who were themselves invested in blurring the spiritual and physical realms. These monarchs used the fictive kinship histories and royal families’ patronage of cults to remake themselves as earthly semi-gods with legendary connections to Hindu deities. Receiving darshan was an acknowledgement of those connections—of deification—and therefore of the spiritual and physical legitimacy of the state. It is little wonder that formal darshan, through originally associated with Hinduism, later became a standard defence to Muslim rulers in India. The court ceremonies of the Mughal Emperors included the practice of Jhadokha darshan that is a Mughal Emperor periodically presented himself at a jhadokha—a balcony or elevated window which is a key element in Mughal palace architecture before the gaze of public. (ibid. p. 246)

This originally religious tradition of formal darshan has descended seamlessly into contemporary India as a public ritual. Since darshan is a term used to describe an everyday form of worship, the visuality produced by this social and cultural context includes a religious dimension to what would otherwise be understood as secular activity, as Jacob argues in realm of Southern politics. The practice of darshan evolves from a deep-rooted indigenous belief system that articulates on power of the sight. This system applies equally to the rarefied abstractions of theology and philosophy as well as everyday ritual practices. Eye-emitted powers however were prerogative of deities, spiritually enlightened humans and icons in places of worship. From this view point, Hindu tradition dictates, the deity is considered to be within the image and can exchange darshan. As per darshanic protocols, the images or idol were invested with ‘shakti’ or power of faith that was able to “seat” the god in the image, in wider that they could see and be seen by the deity. (ibid. p. 248)

Gazing upon the iconic image of the deity the devotee is simultaneously exposed to and absorbs potency of the former’s gaze. The devotee is thus empowered thus empowered to return the deity’s piercing gaze with an enlightened and enhanced vision. As the exchange of gazes between devotee and deity continues, the inner vision of former expands to greater spiritual awareness, acquiring protection, knowledge and their power. According to Hindu religious texts and traditions, with enhanced awareness darshan provide a path to the senses of touch, opening up the possibility of physical contact with the saint or icon. This extension of vision to other senses, such as taste and to commune with deity’s psyche is clearly indicated in the
Vedas. Similar metaphysical interactions is reported with animate beings-spiritual guides or gurus, political leadership, celebrities-as well as inanimate objects such as painted and sculpted icons, photographs, and printed posters.

The process of empowering instance of inanimate objects to give darshana goes beyond religious images. Jacob observes the deification of film stars on film posters and advertisements. Ornamentation of images of a Southern star MGR, by his fans/devotees triggered exchange of gazes and transfer of aura from the iconic image to those who looked upon it with reverence. This instance is just among many that one could chance upon everyday in India wherein darshan bridges the gap between the individual practice of religious devotion and the public practice of spectatorship of visual culture.

In the Western cultural context-in theories of Lacan and Freud-the experience of gazing brings about a form of self-realization that is permeated with desires and anxieties. In the Indian context, the process of self-realization through darshan is ultimately empowering because it occurs through the body of another more powerful and protective being (ibid. p.249-250).

Although the Hindi film star is produced in different social and historical circumstances from those of the West, it does not seem clear if there are any specificities, although the practice of darshan (a) (a way of looking found in Hindu religious practice and also in some social and political practices) has clear implications for the merely viewing of the star. This is because the image authorises the look. (rather than merely being its object), thereby benefitting the beholder. Darshana is, therefore, a two way process, the beholder takes darshna and the object gives darshna in which the image rather than person looking has the power (Dwyer, ibid p 94).

This understanding of indigenous cultural protocols of viewing practices in Indian context is important to understand the iconization of film star and the cultural context that determine the process.

2.12.13 The Discourse on Iconization in the Realm of the Nation’s Popular Culture

From Nelson Mandela to Ronald Reagan, from Steve Jobs to Sam Whalton, from Oprah Winfrey to Martha Stewart, from Michael Jordan to Mohammed Ali, from John Wayne to Woody Allen, cultural icons dominate our world. These icons can be both fictional characters as well as real people. Li’l Abner, Superman, Archie Bunker, Rambo have all been popular icons of America. Cultural icons are not necessarily humans always, companies like Disney, Apple, NGOS like Greenspan or the Amnesty International and even universities like Oxford and Harvard have been cultural icons. Objects like the Zippo lighter, Coke etc and so does places like Paris, Statue of Liberty, the Silicon Valley become iconized. People forge strong emotional identification with cultural icons and often rely on their symbolism in their everyday lives. Icons serve as society’s foundational compass points—as anchors of meaning continually referred in various domains like entertainment, politics, sports, advertising etc. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a cultural iconos “person or thing regarded as a representative symbol, especially of a culture or a movement, a person or an institution considered worthy of admiration or respect”. More generally cultural icons are exemplary
symbol that accept as shorthand to represent important ideas. The crux of iconicity is that person or thing is widely regarded as the most compelling symbol of a set of ideas or values that a society deems important.

Cultural icons are as old as human civilization, but the nature of iconicity has changed with the advent of mass communication. We are increasingly inhabiting a world in which the circulation of cultural icons has become a cultural and economic activity. The market gravitates to produce what people value the most. Culture industries like film music, television, magazine, sports, advertisements are deeply inclined towards production, cultivation, circulation and monetization of these icons.

Outside the discourses of business school, academic disciplines like anthropology, sociology, history, mass communication, film studies have examined how and why cultural icons acquire meaning in a society in an intensive and persuasive manner. (Holt, 2004, p.1-2) Each society has its own cultural icons and looking at iconization of popular Bollywood star, as a popular icon of the nation entails considering the culture-industry supported iconization drawing upon the indigenous protocol of iconization and mobilization of religious symbolism through deification within the indigenous tradition of Bhakti and the rituals involved.

Visual reception by the viewer is often described in terms of the Indic terms bhakti, which refer to the devotional relationship between the viewer and the viewed object. Bhakti refers to a hierarchical or ranked relationship where the devotion from the lower is directed at the higher and has mostly occurred within religious contexts. In modern times, the nation has served as a fit recipient of ‘bhakti’ that has transcended the conventional limits of religion and Ramaswamy as cited observes: "Piety, adoration and reverence have routinely centred on sovereigns and parents; more recently, on politicians, movie stars and other figures of popular culture; and most distinctively in our times, on the nation" (Davis, 2007, ibid. p.28). Citing Kajri Jain, Davis observes argues that the schema of devotional viewing extends beyond the religious sphere of the icon, into representations that bear upon the nation. The medieval theologies and the theological logic prevalent in India that believed divinity to be incarnated within consecrated icon were applied to iconize public statues and other heroes of the nation. These figures like temple statues as icons of divine habitations are seen as investment of national embodiment.

The sanctification of symbols of nationhood is not a vestige of medieval Hindu religion surviving into the modern cosmopolitan world. The secular politics too have its magical and sacral qualities, and the sacral qualities of the state is embodied in physical objects like flags, civic statues of national leaders, national memorials etc serving as icons. Among the countless streams of images that flood the modern Indian landscape there are several pertaining to various conceptions of nationhood (ibid, p.29-31). In the popular realm, one can therefore locate the iconographic embodiment of this popular spirit of the peopled nation.

Nations require a moral consensus to function. Citizens must identify with the nation and the set of values that defines it. These moral imperatives propel people to pursue national goals as they strive to meet the definition of success and respect. This is national ideology, a system of ideas that forges links between everyday life-the aspirations of individual families and
communities-and those of the nation. The ideology of the nation, is a deeply felt ‘natural truth’ conveyed via myths. These myths are critical in binding the citizens and linking them to the nation building project. These national ideologies create models for living and identification. Myths rely on populist world, serving as cultural sites and providing raw ingredients. The popular realm often accord credibility to these myths. Popular culture provides the primary locale for myths and these myths located within the popular culture are primary medium to participate in the nation’s culture. (Holt, 2004, p.57-60)

Iconic brands or popular figures, as the present study demands in the case of exploring the iconization of Shah Rukh, belonging to the realm of the popular embodies the myth of the nation, a revised myth of the globalizing moment. The culture industry’s mainstream films have recurrently re-adjusted and re-invented the ‘iconic’ myth through its heroes, who have mostly acted as icons of the nation. As per Holt’s argument of popular icons it may be argued that SRK comes to represent a particular kind of story or an identity myth addressing collective desires and anxieties. Invested with an ‘extraordinary value’, the star lends a ‘charismatic performance’ to the myths of materialist success, achievement, upward mobility, wish fulfilment, pleasure of gratification, etc., avowed as ideals of new upwardly mobile Indian middle class. (see, Holt, ibid., p.2, Varma, 2004 ibid.)

Cultural texts are re-adapted, re-packaged, to suit the times and popular terrain provides a perfect site where the cultural codes revise itself. Such recasting and malleability was seen in the Hollywood heroes to suit historical demands. Heroes were meant to renew the myths and recharge the lapsing values in times of crises. Heroes as brands, as myths are subject to transformation over time. (see, Holt ibid.)

The hegemonic discourse of the nation is often embodied via the heroic ideals, and tracing the construction of ideal malehood, one can see how it is appropriate to the nation’s discourse(s). The definers of idea malehood are re-worked in tandem with the ideological discourse and shifts in hegemonic equilibrium. (Virdi, 2003 ibid)

Iconization is also a cumulative process where the star image grows and draws from his earlier ones. Repeat viewing of films and incredibly detailed knowledge of the life of the start by the audience is related to iconization. This is further buttressed by traditional viewing protocol of ‘darsana’ that to a certain length ‘deifies’ the star as an object of spectation. Wider social practices concerning the creation of the star manifest in the star’s presence in wider media ecology. ‘The star needs other media not only to maintain visibility beyond the brief moment of performance but also to allow the creation of a star persona’. Indian television, films, and lifestyle magazines telling ‘of their off-screen exploits’ and their ‘off-screen personae’, gossip magazines etc. keep the stars in circulation in public domain (see, Dwyer et al., 2002, p.33)

2.13 THE DISCOURSE OF BODY AND MASCULINITY

2.13.1 How and why heroes and heroic types change or are diverse

Gender is not static, but dynamic, shifting and even contradictory. It cannot be falsely universalized (Barrett 2001, p 95). Manhood is neither eternal as a timeless essence which is
innate to the physiological and psychological composition of human male. Manhood instead is cultural and historical and is relationally conceived against the ‘other’(which is mostly the feminine). Definition of manhood are constantly changing, played out upon political and social terrain that constitute relationship between man and woman.

The historically and socially constructed masculinity as opposed to a transcendental essentialism opens up the possibility of agency or capacity to act, both collectively and individually in active recreation of masculine identities (Kimmel 2001, p 267).

This begins with the assumption that there are many ‘masculinities’, they are historically contingent, continually changing, continually being redefined and renegotiated, and their meanings are closely tied in with those of other kinds of power relations, such as those concerning class and nationality. This has been recognized by gender theorists and sociologists, and also by writers, dramatists and performers (Mangan 2003 ,p 6).

Masculinity is not a homogenous category capable of encompassing behaviour of all types. Citing David Morgan’s understanding of plural masculinity as a ‘theoretical and political strategy designed to deconstruct conventional stereotypes which may get in the way of understanding the workings of patriarchy’; Horrocks stresses on masculinity as ‘heterogenous, contextually sensitive, interrelational, not fixed but fluid’ (Horrocks 1994, p5). Masculinity is therefore,not monolithic unitary phenomenon. ‘The use of the plural term deconstructs the notion of masculinity, and subjects it to a political critique (ibid p 33).

Critical men’s studies provide evergrowing recognition that masculinity cannot be studied as singular, homogenous and static. It acknowledges the plurality and diversity of men’s experiences, attitudes, beliefs, situations, practices and institutions, along lines of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, region, physical appearance, able bodiedness, mental ability and various other categories with which we describe our lives and experiences. (Brod et al 1994 p 4-5)

Different masculinities existing in terms of men’s differential location in relation to structured relations seek to reproduce a gendered class view of men. Plural masculinities are thus ‘indicative or representative of men’s relative stable locations with respect to structural relations’ (Hearn et al 1994 p107).

Differential location of men in terms of structural relations are posited along different axes. Thus unities between men is problematised and rendered diverse and this cannot be seen to be part of an unified patterned discourse with respect to plural expression of masculinities through various heroic bodies and persona. One can show a broader set of cinematic methods and practices that repeatedly inscribe heroic types within a larger hegemonic formation that sustains the political and cultural economy of cinematic production.

The understanding of heroes as representation of social history is underlined by the premise that ‘differences within the category of men, including different types of men and /or differential relational positionings of different men at different times and places, and in different social sites’( ibid,p.108).
While historical and cultural specificities are crucial to the construction of heroic masculinities, it remains, that heroes of a certain time are largely reproduced by the hegemonic model of masculinity or hegemonic ideals. The various axes of differentiation producing variations among heroic types are pronounced when compared across temporal frames than when seen within a particular period.


Cinematic space allow for performance, and as gender by its non essentialist understanding (see Butler) is performatively expressed, one can draw analogous relation between social performativity and theatrical/cinematic performance. Mangan argues: ‘Social performativity and theatrical performance may be congruent, they may be related, and they may resemble each other – but they are not identical. Evidence from past plays and performances has a complex and problematic status. It exists…as the trace of a performed moment which was itself part of the complex dialectic between the real and the imaginary, articulated within a historically specific mode of cultural production that relies on particular kinds of conventions for negotiating relations between the fictional and the real world…The stage thus operates both as separate space subject to its own laws and also an extension of the everyday reality’ (Mangan, 2003 p13). Mangan contends that despite its own logic, dramatic performance parallels social performances as it negotiates with reality and is embedded within a temporally situated cultural discourse.

From Mangan’s understanding one can discern a social interface of cinematic or theatrical performances notwithstanding its fictional character. They are to be seen to articulate, endorse, undermine, critique or resist ideologies of masculinities as they are produced by ideological gender configurations prevalent at a time.

The metaphor of performance provides an explanatory framework for understanding contingency of identity. Identity is performative and involves an engagement in practices, events, contingencies, desires, semiotic and regulatory material operation. Members of particular groups, community or culture are given vast array if scripts that together constitute them as social subjects. Some scripts are more emphatic, insistent than other. Contingency of identity allow for social performance and also leave open ‘the potential for rewriting the scripts of individual (and group) identity. The notion of rewriting lead to the critical question of agency’ (Gutterman 1994 p 223).

Like social actors exercising critical agency of rewriting script, actors performing subjectivities constituted by discourse negotiate with the discursively defined script by rewriting them through their individual style, gestures and other body generated movements and expressions. Culture itself has a performative aspect that turns our attention to the simultaneous production of the discursive body and its set of practices. The metaphor of performances engages with the following:
Like all metaphors, performances are suited for purposes like public and interactional situations than contemplative zones of culture. Performance therefore works well for specific purposes or objects than other. Performance, however, connotes intention to convey, enact and constitute that which they propose to describe. The metaphor of performance suits well when prefixed it with a descriptor thus conversational performance, filmic performance, gender performance, ethnic performance and so forth (Barker 2002, p 42).

The body is a vehicle to the performative body of the actor and a site to manifest the character, the expression produced and the discourse within which the universe of the narrative is situated. The actor has several forms of corporeal presence. The essence of theatricality is closely bound in assertions of bodily presence. The actor can inhabit variety of discursive realms and the corporeal presence may compete with each other in theatrical space. It reveals ‘ontological permutations of corporeal display’, where the body variously manifests itself. The body mediates the discourse within which it is situated.

As per theories of theaters, it is commonly claimed actors have a dual existence: as characters in a drama and performers on stage. This traditional dichotomy in actor’s ontology rests upon a nebulous distinction either between reality and artifice or between presentation and representation. The arguments propose that an actor pretends to be a particular character enacted while remaining his/her real self or that the actor represents a particular character while at the same time presenting his/her performance. It can be said that both the character and the actor are present but in their own distinct ways. However, it is the character’s presence that appear more conspicuous than the actor as a performer since the character of the actor is more pronounedly defined. These characters render themselves visible with acknowledged protocols of representation. The types of clothes worn, their subjectivities, their actions - all compound to constitute their characters with well-defined ‘purpose and place within the world of a play’ (Graver 2003, p157). The presence of the actor or performer is more vague than the characters played. A discourse dating from Aristotle subordinates the actor to the character suggesting that the actor’s body provides the vehicle around which the drama is woven.

The character constitutive of the appearance is meaningful when interpreted, but this interpretation does not occur in a vacuum. ‘Interpretation is enabled and shaped by the universe of discourse in which it is made. We perceive because we interpret, and we interpret with terms given to us by a particular discursive domain. Thus we perceive things only as they are representable within a particular structure of meaningful entities. To see something is to find some meaning in it, to note how it is situated within a particular universe of discourse…” (ibid).
The actor as character appear to be meaningful only when seen to be situated within the drama’s ‘universe of discourse’. Apart from being an actor performing a character, the other meaningful and representative entity that renders actor meaningful is the body of the actor. The actor establishes a corporeal existence in a world where the actor holds meanings, where he is meaningful in his bodily presence. In addition to an object or image, a body has an interiority, exteriority and autonomy (ibid, p158). The actor’s body as a character ‘ inhabits a world of signs’. The body exists in so far as it establishes a significance for itself within the semiotic sphere of mimesis. The gestures and expressions of the actor, mediated through the body signify the life and experience of a fictional character within a fictional world where the actor has a ‘semiotic body’. Signs signifying the character and the character signified are part of the same body. These signs signify both exterior and interior of the body. While signs signifying interior constitute thoughts, emotion, memories and motivations, the exterior manifests built, behaviour and positioning within communities (of family acquaintances state etc). The character’s body is unusual in the fact that both its interior and exterior are open to view. The interior is made explicit through variety of means like soliloquies, asides, revelations etc. Character is explicated through body- the body makes the character known to audiences. The ready display of both interior and exterior is found upon body. ‘This body can appear in painting, novel and film as readily on stage (ibid, p159).

In performance, the actor displays an expressive body, a body involved in communicative activity. The performing body of the actor is a medium for dramatic action. As an actor’s performing body, there are two distinct aspects: a) its authority and b) its engagement. Authority of the body springs from its ability to command attention as focus of expressivity and as a legitimate object of attention while engagement is constituted through involvement in performing activity. Authority and engagement constitute the exterior and interior of the performing body (ibid, p 160). The bodily movements are couched in a cultural vocabulary of representation.

Apart from being an actor’s body as character or performative vehicle, bodies also act as personages when it is that of a star or celebrity. The physical body then forms or appear as personages. The essence of a celebrity’s visibility is not, however, a physical body but an aura generated through public circulation of stories. The audience recognises the physical presence of celebrity as an accepted fictional illusion. The audience projects upon the figure of the actor what they know or assumes to know about life and career of the actor. There are certain bodily gestures repeated from role to role or the ghost of a particularly famous and successful earlier part. Effects of age and other changes are noticeable upon body and one can also see the difference or similarity between character portrayed and real life. Personage body is not the real person but a representation of the actor within a discursive domain. Personage is a construction derived from variety of material accessible to the audience. Contingent upon material from which the personage is constituted, the interiority of personage ‘can be composed of personal history, public gossip, or a performing career. The exterior of personage is composed of distinctive physical features, typical gestures or vocal tones, the marks of personal history or
ghosts of part performances. This exterior body of personage is fetishized by audience to vicariously identify with the actor-star within (ibid, p 166).

In addition to bodies being constituted within discourse and as medium for activities, actors display their bodies of flesh’. The exterior of fleshy body is simply hair and skin. The interior is physical inside distinct from mind and body. This fleshy body has a radiant capacity to glow with warmth and separates the body’s physicality from the rest of the world – it articulates and animates life of the actor’s body (ibid, p 168). The flesh clothes itself in ‘shifting tableaux’ in varied gestures of defiance, desire, seduction and vulnerability. These variety of gestures demonstrates how body is to be read in terms of its movement and ‘what universe of discourse it occupies’. Flesh is not all of corporeality through in case of celebrity personages it adds ‘to raise their own ontological bulk’.

The most secretive of an actor’s body and arguably, most ontologically primary is the body of private sensation that constitutes itself just beneath the skin. The interiority is distinct from the mind and more intimately attached to the flesh. ‘The exterior of the body of sensation is composed of signals of excitement or distress that surge through the skin’, i.e., wounds, secretions etc. Sensation on visible surface of skin indicates body’s internal activity, much muted than what generates it. It is predominantly internal to body, clothed by flesh but capable of asserting an interiority. The body of sensation participates in performance but not overtly displayed (ibid 69). However visible appearance of sensation is part of naturalized representation of the actor’s body.

The body of sensation of pain, pleasure, numbness, sensitivity etc. always participates in performance in some way. The internal sensations relayed are seen as real as preferred visible appearances and as natural expressions of the acting body. The body of sensation and its spectacularised representation is part of actor’s own experience distinct from the audience. Although the suffering and other sensation expressed is ultimately only in the possession of the participants, that is actors, its presence gives the performative event (of acting) ‘a distinctive charge’. The spectacle emoting sensation has a weight and its attachment to the performing body precludes it from any chance of being consumed as inconsequential image by the audience. An atmosphere of concern or empathy and reverence is built between the performers and spectators, as there is much that escapes eye in the event, so much that remains locked in the body of the performer. The performer stands between two worlds: the one in spectator’s eye and the one inside their own bodies (ibid, p 170). This liminal balancing act becomes more important for both performer and audience than its undeniably discernible manifestation (ibid, p 171).

2.13.3 The Male Body becoming Visible Within Academic Scholarship

The male body for long remained ‘invisible’in contrast to the obsessive attention paid to female body. In specific reference to this invisibility in films, Rosalind Coward notes: ‘Under this sheer weight of attention to women’s bodies we seem to have become blind to something. Nobody seems to have noticed that men’s bodies have quietly absented themselves. Somewhere
along the line, men have managed to keep out of the glare, escaping from the relentless activity of sexual definitions. Peter Lehman as cited, too reflects on films: ‘Traditional patriarchial constructions of masculinity benefit enormously by keeping the male body in the dark, out of the critical spotlight. Indeed, the mystique of the phallus is in part dependent on it.’ The male body in other words eluded definition (Duroche 1990, p 172.). The human body was for all practical purposes, till the 18th century, was assumed to be an ungendered generic body. The male body was indisputably the standard or norm. The female body it was believed had all parts of the male; they were seen to be simply re-arranged, outside-in, deformed and also seen as an inferior to man. It was around 18th century that a revolutionary shift took place whereby the model of hierarchised difference, based on homologies between male and female reproductive system began to be discredited. Anatomy and physiology of incommensurability replaced a metaphysics of hierarchy. Differences became politically important and differences came to be noted. The influence of Enlightenment is undeniable (ibid,p173). New biology supplanted the old social order. The female body recognized as different was politically expedient to be recognized (ibid, p 174).

The focus on masculine specificity appear as an interesting reversal of the usual practice, i.e. to treat female difference in relation to an unstated male norm. While the body had only a marginal presence in mainstream sociological scholarship, the exploration and problematization of received understandings of the female body has been for more central to feminist thinking (Sheldon 2002, p14).

2.13.4 Sociology of Masculinity

Sociological explorations on what constitutes men and what is meant by masculinity, have utilized its privileged position in incorporating new frameworks and social vocabulary that challenges common sense assumptions about gender and includes sexual politics, patriarchy, gay and lesbian writings, homophobia, compulsory heterosexuality, queer theory, transgendered identities, heterosexual matrix etc. These new conceptual frameworks emerging in response to gender and identity politics have provided useful insights into the social importance of masculinity. Sociology of masculinity since 1990s have provided us with relevant theoretical frameworks that have enabled us to systematically analyse and coherently document the social, material and discursive production of masculinities within a larger context of gender relations. Within sociological studies of masculinity there is noticeably an irreconcilable gap between a materialist and post structuralist reading of gender identity formation.

Notwithstanding diversity in approaches, sociology of masculinity examines theories of sex role, gender and power, discourse analysis, gender identities and relation. Sociological perspectives emphasize on cultural production on of masculinities within institutional sites including state, family, organization, media etc. This enables to associate masculinity with traditional sociological concerns like power and stratification and more recent issues like body,
desire and subjectivity. In addition, in response to the suggested crisis of masculinity in relation to wider social and cultural transformations in late modernity, sociology critically examines the altered notions that define masculinity. It also takes note of historical trajectory that links it to structural changes influencing gender relations and masculinity.

Sociology of masculinity also seek to trace the shift from earlier monocausal models of power to more inclusive models recognizing the imbrication of power with other categories of social division like class, age, ethnicity. It investigates emerging forms of masculinity cross-culturally emphasizing how multiple, collective and multi layered social practices define the masculine at both local and global levels.

The wide ranging sociological studies on masculinity is highly diverse and includes a polemics of essentialism/social constructionism,structured action/subjectivity, categoricalism/deconstructionism (Haywood et all 2003, p 4-6).

Conventional understandings of masculinity have been premised on binary divisions of two sexes and a naturalized behavioral /attitudinal distinction between sexes and an easy unproblematic correspondence between sexual division and sex roles. Theory of gender socialization reinforces the close alliance between sex role and appropriate gender role and behaviour. For long, such essentialist ideas dominated sociology and gave rise to an absence of a critical study of men in mainstream sociology. Initial studies of gender relations compensated for this sociological partiality by contributing much needed knowledge on the social worlds of women and girls. Such work opened up masculinity to critical scrutiny, employing an unitary notion of masculinity, with patriarchy attaining an universal status as single cause of women’s oppression. A central concern was to understand masculinity that is situated within a structure of gendered hierarchies, in which particular social practices are used to reproduce social divisions and inequality. Feminisms’ exploratory power uncovered the logic of social inequalities produced by patriarchy.

Pro feminist analyses privileges a connection between masculinity and wider social and economic forces and links class to patriarchy. It throws light on social structure of oppression that acts to the advantage of men. Holding on to invariability of power structure within gender relation and patriarchy’s alliance with capitalism, it compromises on question of changing dynamics of structure agency and question of subjectivity and discourse.

Despite providing a highly productive set of frameworks to analyse masculinities, profeminist perspectives are not free of problems. The notion of oppression has its limitations and gender relations as Middleton agues surpasses it. Gender relations is more dynamic as regulation and forms of control. Problematising the pro-feminist framework that was in consonance with feminist /gender sociology also reveals the limitations of the latter in addressing question of masculinity.

Recently psychoanalysts’ inflections have informed poststructural texts, by social psychologists addressing the limitations of sociology around issues of self, body, subjectivity, gender/sexual identity formations etc. Post structuralism involves displacing hierarchies, destabilizing dominant meanings and deconstructing binary and oppositional thinking. At the same time,
psychoanalysis has developed highly productive accounts of the complex psychic investments that individuals have in dominant sexual and gendered discourses. Masculinity is central to the modernity project with its emphasis on rationality, reason and scientific progress. Most studies have tended to express masculinity to be a part of rationalist project. It is works in disciplines like psychoanalysis that has the potential to open up the soft underbelly of these masculinity studies. This illustrates the limits of overrationalist sociological explanation of sexual politics that fail to acknowledge that what we feel is as important as what we know in respect to maintenance of dominant gendered and heterosexual discourses and social practices. Lives of men are intricately linked to social and cultural transformations, and emerging forms of sexuality in late modernity have major significance for men, masculinity and gender relations. These social and cultural shifts (such as separation of sexual pleasure from reproduction and marriage, development of reproductive technologies, growing spatial visibility of homosexuality, mass production of sexual products and pornography) all have impacted upon meanings of manhood as observed by Giddens and Hawkes. It has fractured sexual meaning leading to ‘frayed understandings of what it means to be a man’.

Writings on men and masculinity in last two decades have been intimately linked to wider social and cultural transformations and has been inspired by concepts like homosexuality, sex role, gender identity, gender and power relations, psychoanalyses and so on. Sociological writings on men and masculinity engages with reference to theoretical and disciplinary developments in criminology, social psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, history and cultural studies. Besides the relationship between sociology and psychology is historically important, as psychological accounts have constituted major premise for sociology of gender. Masculinity is intimately linked to wider social and cultural transformations and that the assumed crisis of masculinity can be read as crisis of and effect of wider late modernity. The question of identity has emerged as one of key dynamic concepts in the context of reassessing socio-cultural transformations. It is believed that these transformations are marked by the disintegration of older social collectivities – such as social class – and by the enhanced fluidity of social relationships, with an accompanying interest in identity and subjectivity. Mercer as cited importantly argues with reference to social change... ‘Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty’. This doubt and uncertainty is experienced by individual, social and psychic levels, circumscribed by the local-global nexus of cultural transformations. In this context, masculine identity is subject to social dislocation in the post-colonial de-industrialising scene. In particular, a greater attention to pluralization of identities involving process of fragmentation and dislocation have been noted by Hall and Giddens. The resonance of the identity concept is used in a wide variety of ways in different contexts. Its usefulness as observed by Brittan, examines three emphases, pertinent to theorization on masculinity, viz. the socialization case, masculine crisis theory and the reality construction model. Sociologically, the high conceptual
value of identity emerges from its contributions to new frameworks, which open up renewed means of exploring the relationship between individuals and society.

Social transformation and its influence producing fractured, fluid, unstable identities has produced the need ‘to develop a sociology that explores the changing collective self representations of dominant forms of identity. There is a general trend whereby binaries are being interrogated and masculinity is central to an understanding of new political changes, marked by politics of nation, identity, new cultural conditions of diaspora (movement of people through cultural dispersal), hybridity (mixing cultures), syncretism (pluralistic forms of cultural belongings) and transnationalism.

Placing earlier materialist representations of patriarchy, class domination and social change within their sociohistorical context enables us to see how they resonated with wider social concerns and anxieties of their times. Today, it is easy to be dismissive of these accounts by citing their limitations on account of their essentialism, functionalism and over-determinism. The earlier issues on sociological agenda comprised social reproduction of sexist ideology, state regulation of patriarchy and institutionalized sexual discrimination. The theoretical and political contributions of this work raised questions on discrimination and violence perpetrated against women. However, post-modern tendency have influenced sociological concerns as post modern work tend to undermine or erase issues that concern stable categories and essentialist understandings ‘like patriarchal state power, social class divisions, institutional structures and hegemonic cultural capital’. Discourses and practices of representations as part of post modern turn have dislodged the conceptual necessity of such terms as ideology and social reproduction.

Recent conceptual framework that has emerged serve to throw light upon the ‘uncoupling of masculinity from male bodies’. Butler’s contemporary theorizing on gender as performatives has ruptured stable categories of gender. The emphasis on gender as performative has problematized the ‘cultural formation of sex and the interconnections between sex and gender’. This disassociated masculinity from male bodies. Gender identity ceased to be equated with biological sex. Disconnecting gender from bodies, while continuing to sociologically retain the notion of maleness pointed that masculinity is problematised. It rendered masculinity diverse and open to power relations between men and women. Body turned body to a site of power discourses. Recent studies tended to concentrate on the contingent and localized production of masculinity and experiences. It helped to suggest that masculinities need to be seen as embedded within larger social and cultural framework that includes globalization and transnationalism. Masculinity has been recognized as mutable and contingent. Competing representations and performances of masculinity are being articulated through multiple discourses traversing spaces (Haywood et al, 2003, p9-10; 14-16).

Cross cultural investigations provide sociologists with much information on the socially constructed nature of masculinities. These analyses help to problematize gender categories by investigating how meanings are assembled in local context. Methodologically, cross cultural analyses allow sociologists to respond reflexively to the conceptual frameworks that are
employed. This facet of cross cultural analyses of masculinity enables sociology ‘to destabilize the concept of masculinity itself.’ It reveals its culturally contested nature, and that it is neither fixed nor universal.

The structural functionalist assumption, as one of the persvasive and popularized explanations of gender, is that ‘all men are the same; there exists an ubiquitous male’, and this is premised on the view that ‘all masculinities share similar fundamental structures’ (ibid, p 85). There is no such valid idea of an unitary/global maleness.

Feminism, as in the works of Judith Butler and Susan Bordo, challenges the understandings of the body as biologically given and fixed, and argues that the human body is both historically and culturally specific. Body is not fixed and less certainly defined. These understandings question the assumption that the ‘body is natural and transhistorical’ with an increasing awareness of the negotiable and changeable possibilities of the body, one is led to the recognition that the body cannot be taken as fixed naturalized category (Evans 2002 p1).

2.13.5 Gendering of The Body

The reliance of social sciences including sociology for long on biological arguments and understandings on models if sex believed to contain a certain theological immanance, an inherent and inevitable quality was responsible for reproduction of gender relations that kept masculinity invisible and rendered feminity problematic. Biological arguments enjoyed a privileged status in academic research about gender and sexuality and helped us understand cross cultural regularities in behaviour and attitudes, but they failed to lead us far in knowing cross-cultural variations also.

Much of social science research was long entrapped in fixed, ahistorical formulations of sex roles and behaviours that are said to refer to masculinity and feminity. Gender socialization into adopting appropriate behaviours and attitudes are ascertained by dichotomous categorization, viz. biological males and females. Despite an emphasis, unlike biological models, on acquisition of gender characteristics rather than drawing an emergence from biological imperative, the sex role model along with biological models assume a functionalist teleology that sees the gender difference to be based on biological and cultural evolution. The heterosexual male dominance over women and homosexuals is naturalized or legitimized and rendered irrefutable. What is held to be normative is constructed and enforced through social sanctions and gender socialization is normalized and seen as naturalized, designed by nature and culturally enacted. This arrangement serves to obscure the power play that upholds the normative in the interest of minimizing historical variability of masculinity and feminity and also reduce capacity of either models to change.

Men seek to benefit from the inherited biological or sex-role definitions of masculinity, which implies superior traits like mastery, rationality, competence etc. Gender relations deemed as genetically encoded and culturally prescribed obscure power asymmetry between men and women. Feminism has been able to expose the centrality of gendering as an organizing principle and the power play involved.
For long, masculinity was generalized from a dominant position wherein it came to be cast as normative and individual experience came to be measured against this construction. Much later, male social scientists acknowledged that men had a gender and hence could be constructed as problematic from within a feminist framework. However, as said, early works problematised masculinities which were non-traditional or non-conforming to the hegemonic conception. Masculinity for long obscured the political dynamic of power involved in its construction, whereby non-normative masculinities are marginalized from hegemonic construction (Kimmel 1990, p. 94-97).

Gendering of the sexual body has been enabled through a masculine politics that sought a gendering of sex premised on biological criteria. Biological arguments complicit with gendering assumption of role and behavior sought normativity and naturalization through a power dynamic whereby a certain hegemonic variant of masculinity came to be seen as genetically encoded and culturally sanctioned. Gendering came to inform sexuality of male and female and simultaneously subordinated women and non-normative men from hegemonic construction and undermined therefore the variability in the construction of masculinities and their constitution into hierarchy. Sexuality that assumed a behavioral correspondence between biological and social categories and an innateness of the biological body was exposed. Gender scholarship brought to fore the social construction of sexuality. It ‘is a fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors that we construct from images, values and prescriptions…’ and is both culturally and historically variable and shaped by contingent situations (ibid, p. 97). Given that sexuality is socially constructed renders it dynamic and expands the repertoire of sexual behaviors available to men and women. The most significant contribution of social constructionist position is its ability to open up possibilities of transformation and the responsibility to account for our own sexuality (ibid, ibid, p. 99).

The social construction of sex and gender and the gendering of sex inevitably lead us to significant corrective from quarters of feminist scholarship that sought to question the disjunction between sex and gender and attempted to overcome the dualism. The conceptual split between the two was derived from the classical tradition that believes in the divide between nature and culture (Edwards, 1990, p. 110-11).

Gender is not innate as misconceived as an essential dichotomous difference between men and women. Biological sex differences are not understandable in terms of gender as sexual differences cannot account for social inequalities. The tendency to essentialize gender differences is quite common and attempts to conflate sex and gender by positing universal sex differences need to be amended. (Scott, C. 1994). The relation between sex and gender via simplified sociobiological interpretation of historical, anthropological, mythical and biological information need to be re-examined. These accounts seek to naturalise gender differences as biologically premised and is complicit with patriarchy. Gender ideology favours and seeks to gain from a naturalized and inevitable differences between man and woman (ibid 46).

Scott observes a distinct bias in methods to study gender that tend to produce ideological interpretation favouring naturalized differences across cultures. The methods of conventional
sociological practices used are often implicated in power (colonialist) and subjectivity (masculinist) that render them as ideologically biased, non-objective and often conventional methods serve to favour essentialist gender differences and tend to ignore specificities and diversities of data. As meanings of gender are culturally unique, the conventional methods to study gender are not full proof (ibid p 50-51).

Scott reflects on the debate between sociology’s attempt to theorize as opposed to postmodernist’s insistence on particularism. Set to oppose and deconstruct false dualisms of mind/body, man/woman, culture/nature, modern/primitive, reason/emotion, subject/object it creates images of “fractured, decentered and reflective selves that appear in postmodernist writings that critically evaluate overtly simple categories. However, notwithstanding the relevance of discourse and cognition and linguistic construction of reality, it is contended that postmodernism fail to emphasize concrete bases of social inequality. Capturing social world as ‘floating fields of symbols manipulated by reflexive agents probably captures a phenomenological reality’ but one cannot preclude the relevance of material conditions. Heavy reliance on deconstruction, as argued lead to an over emphasis in favour of historical, symbolic and subjective particularity.

Postmodern tendency to undermine systemic structural understanding of sociology producing gender inequality, as opposed to theoretical abstraction and casuality; postmodern emphasize on particularity, uniqueness of experiences. This does not take away the heuristic value of social structure or fails generalization across situation, despite diversity and uniqueness of lives. The utility of casuality remains. Despite limitations, theories need to be casual. In view of limitations of both scienticism and particularism the utility of both methods remain. This renders multiple methods as plausible (ibid 52-53).

The earlier paradigm based on gender polarity is informed by essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity where gender is conceived as individual’s fixed identity. Earlier definitions of masculinity were closely associated with psychological paradigms that perceived masculinity as both behavioral and attitudinal. Approaches relying on such fixed notions of sex roles as a concept to understand masculinity tend to be closely aligned to sociological theories of gender socialization (as in Parsons and Bales). It is through socialization model that sex role theory argues that males and females display conditioned sex roles of behavior. Polarised and dichotomous norms and binary gendered expectations are crucial to definition of masculinity. As per this perspective, masculinity is subject to objective and unproblematic measurement through an index of gender norms. There is therefore, a tendentious inclination within sex role theory to assume that these ahistorical gender essences are quantifiable and measurable. Such ideas lead to a more normative understanding of masculinity wherein certain categories are seen to be aberrations or deviant. Sex role theory strategically seeks to naturalise gender and sexual division through scientific discourse couched in psychological terms/conceptions (Haywood et al. 2003, p7-8). In all cases, the social world demands that the body, whether male or female, fulfils its expectations about the physical forms of human beings. ‘Becoming male or female is the first complex negotiations for all human beings; the nature of that resolution is
then located within a particular set of expectations about race and physical appearance’ (Evans 2002, p-6).

Body as sexed and as a biological entity while gender as a culturally regulated construction is refutable on the grounds that there is in principle no access to the biological ‘truths’ that is extraneous to cultural discourses and therefore no ‘sex’ which is not already cultural. Thus, sexed bodies are always already represented as the production of regulatory discourses. Judith Butler furnishes a cutting edge to this whole debate in suggesting that, as cited, ‘the category of sex, is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called “regulatory ideal”. In this sense then, sex functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs’. Therefore, discourses of sex are ones that through repetition of acts they guide, bring sex into view as a necessary norm. Therefore, while sex is held to be ‘a social construction, it is an indispensable one that forms subjects and governs materialisation of bodies. This does not imply that everything is discourse as Butler cited argues that materiality and discourses of bodies are indissoluble (ibid p111).

2.13.6 Gendering of the Hero via Gendering of the Body

Gender seeks manifestations in cultural patterns, institutionalised structures & recursive practices. Its validity being recursively contingent remains open to modifications and challenges. From the perspective of social constructionism, there exists a difference between categories of sex and gender. Sex refers to the constructed biological categories of male and female which are assumed to correspond to gendered behaviour. Whereas gender is a social organizing principle, in congruence with sexual categories, an institution, a human invention like language that organises and structures social relationship in culturally patterned ways and upholds and reproduces rules and patterns of social expectations. It is so institutionalized and evident in recursive practices that they appear to be naturalized and hence rules are experienced common sensically. Human beings, however, as agents actively accomplish or practice gender in their daily practices and actions within a larger social pattern. However, the structures and patterns supporting gender have no validity other than people’s engagement in individual practices and actions, wherein gender norms can also be challenged (Barrett 2001, p 78).

What is important for the argument is that in a dominant heteronormative discourse the heroic self or body is so constructed and imagined so as to ensure that the hero socially reproduces gender that further reproduces the gendered societal structure, as heroes enact gender norms in compliance with audience(societal) expectations and thereby maintain a gendered system of dominance and power within which the hero is implicated. Gender invests in body as a site of discursive strategies/practices in identity construction. Masculinity and femininity are historically produced and are neither biologically determined or exist as presocial categories. ‘It is precisely the property of human sociality that it transcends biological determination. To transcend is not to ignore. The bodily dimension remains a presence within the social practice. Not as a “base”, but as an object of practice. Masculinity invests the body. Reproduction is a question of strategies. Social relations continuously take account of the body and biological process and
interact with them….‘. (Carrigan et al. 1987, p 95) Body, as both biological and social category provide a site for discursive practice, negotiating biological limits with social interaction.

In one of the most seminal contribution on discursivity of gender, Judith Butler as cited by Thomas, contends that the male/phallic subjectivity linguistically constructed within the symbolic is rendered dynamic ‘the heteropathos that pervades the legacy of Lacanian psychoanalysis and some of its feminist reformulations can be countered only by rendering the symbolic increasingly dynamic, that is, by considering the conditions and limits of representation and representability as open to significant rearticulations and transformations under the pressure of social practice of various kinds (Thwaites et al 2002, p 70) . Alternative inscriptions through discursivity lead to a productive dissolution of straight male subjectivity (ibid p83). The body is the surface on which are inscribed culturally coded and socially sanctioned contexts of perfect body (Thapan 2001, p 132).

One of the great achievements of early feminist scholarship was to distill sex and gender into two distinct analytical categories, with sex conceived as anatomical distinction and gender as social construction of masculinity and feminity on the basis of biological differences. In an early and seminal text, Kate Millet, US feminist, cites the work of Robert J Stoller to elaborate upon this distinction:

‘the word sex…. (refers) to the male or female sex and the component biological parts that determine whether one is a male or a female; the word sexual (has) connotations of anatomy and physiology. This obviously leaves tremendous areas of behaviour, feelings, thoughts and fantasies that are related to the sexes and yet do not have primarily biological connotations. It is for some of these psychological phenomena that the term gender will be used: one can speak of the male sex or the female sex, but one can also talk about masculinity and feminity(sic) and not necessarily be implying anything about anatomy or physiology. Thus , while sex and gender seem to common sense inextricably bound together …the two realms...are not inevitably bound in anything like a one-to-one relationship, but each may go into (sic) quite independent ways’ (as cited in Sheldon 2002, p18-19). A distinction between sex and gender was central to Millet’s argument and she argued that generally held distinctions between sexes in the more significant areas of role attitude is essentially derived from cultural, rather than biological bases (Sheldon ibid, p 19).

In view of Butler’s argument that there is no pure body, no possibility of unmediated access to a pre-social constructed ‘reality of the body’ render all materializations or understanding of bodies as culturally ordered. Sheldon cites Butler: ‘the regulatory norms of ‘sex’ work in a performtive fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body’s sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative…Once ‘sex’ itself is understood in its normativity, the materiality of the body will not be thinkable apart from the materialization of that regulatory norm’. Butler’s argument produces a reversal of the sex/gender binary : to think of sex not as a natural category or biological difference, but as a normative concept, as a ‘regulatory ideal’ imposing certain value towards reinforcing the heterosexual imperative. Butler’s understanding is
profoundly influenced by gender and allow us to perceive that bodies are in reality gendered. What we otherwise perceive as ‘material, sexed body’ (ibid, p21).

Foucauldian understanding of power reduces individual’s resistance more as a kind of reactionary strategy rather than a transformative practice. Control is exercised in everyday life through what Mc Nay, as cited, terms as ‘more invisible strategies of normalization’. This is in consonance with Foucault’s argument that individuals regulate themselves through an inner search for their hidden truth which lies in their innermost identity. This identity is evidentlyone’s sexual identity which is the linchpin of normalizing strategies argues Mc Nay;; to the extent that individuals fail to recognize the constructed nature of their sexuality and are therefore unable to see the possibility of change. Culture attempts to inculcate a normatively defined gendered identity. The legitimate or truth of such gendered identity is not questioned as successful gender socialization ensures socialization into appropriate modes of becoming or being gendered and accepting corresponding gendered codes of conduct. Apart from socialization process as means to allow normalizing strategies to function effectively,subjects are continuously exposed to wide array of social and cultural practice that influence gender identities (Thapan , 2001 p.138-139).Despite dominant perceptions of gendered bodies, it does not exhaust the possibility of resistance. Resistance to social practices take the form of subversion to make space for individual being, knowing and perceiving . Such resistance is mostly individual response which fail to radically transform dominant perceptions of their gendered bodies. It is limited form of resistance and remain non-confrontational and essentially individual responses. Such resistance, argues Faith, as cited, ‘ cannot simply defeat, overturn or suddenly transform disciplinary power’. It, however, can ‘resituate the problem of power abuse’ that is, it ‘weakens process of victimization and generates personal and political empowerment….’ Affirming the positive nature of such individual acts of resistance, Faith, as cited, argues in favour of such individual resistance endowed with transformative potential: ‘The willing victim may be operating from the vantage of strategic resistance, watching for openings and coalescing the fragmentary forms of resistance which, in combination, articulate a potential challenge to the status quo.’

To understand everydaylife, the social reproduction of dominant constructions of gendered embodiment and the individual or collective acts of resistance are of equal importance. Resistance and complicity is not just agency, but as per Moore, related to forms or aspects of subjectivity. Individual differences on the basis of gender, education class etc characterize the subjectivity of individuals. The resistance to dominant discourse is dependent on variously marked and changing subjectivity (ibid., p 139-141).

As our subjectivities are multiple and inscribed by multiple social axes, gender intersects with them to proffer varied subject positions. The response includes both by acceptance as well by resisting from an alternative gendered position (ibid., p 141).Reproduction of gender is problematised as subjective gendered position are as important as dominant ideologies of gendered representation. To understand the social construction of gender we need to examine as Moore cited, argues ‘how the social representations of gender affect subjective constructions
and how the subjective representation or self-representation of gender affects its social construction’ (ibid p 142)

The sex-gender distinction often lead us to the theoretical debates about essentialism and anti-essentialism. But this is becoming irrelevant since in practice what matters is a tactical balance of the two approaches. While essentialism tries to combat the idea that gender is a universally fixed substance. On the other hand, we do not need the excesses of anti-essentialism either whereby it is claimed that sex and gender are wholly malleable. ‘Much of our gendered capacities and behavior is plastic and changeable but there is also a significant aspect of sexed being that is not open to transformation…(Barker 2002, p 112-113).

2.13.7 Sociology of Body

Academic advances have brought to five comprehensive understandings of body as embodied preconditions of agency and the physical effects of social structures. In sociology discussions of embodiments and disconcerning of classical sociological writing converging around a hitherto neglected view of the body as a multidimension medium for the constitution of society now has become central. Five strands of social thought/analytical concern have done much to promote and sustain and even proliferate interest in the study of body since the 1980s. Analysts of consumer culture held body as a surface phenomenon which had become a malleable marker of commercial value subject to the vagaries of fashion and people’s sense of self-identity. For feminists the body as a sexed object legitimized women’s subordination. Foucauldian analysts of governmentality analysed the subjection of the body to changing modes of institutional control. Various technological advances encouraged analysts to focus on the uncertain body and instituted a weakening of the boundaries between bodies and machines that prompted a post modern concern with cyborgs or disappearing bodies and also allow for a destabilized ontologically unsecured, malleable body with dissolution of the body’s facility. Finally body became a positive conceptual category or resource for advancing and addressing theoretical problems of various disciplines.

These disparate interests generated wide variety of studies on the subject since the 1980s. Scholarship on body and its sheer volume testifies its relevance as a new field of study and also challenged the assumption that influence of society is intellectual alone. Several sub-disciplinary areas of study have contributed to the study of body and the general contributions to social and cultural theory. Body remains one of the embattled concepts in social sciences whose analysis has produced a contest intellectual terrain tied to competing agenda, diversity of body structures and varying aspects of embodiment over which respective disciplinary claims have been made. It includes claims of sociology sociobiology post structuralism, post modernism phenomenology, cultural structures etc..

While ancient western thought rooted in Greek philosophy marginalized the relevance of body 18th century. Enlightenment did little to amend the prevalent negative views of the body. The emphasis on rationality of mind devalued the body. The early exceptions to this was found in writings of figures like De Maistre, Feurbach Nietche and Husseral as well as those associated
within sociology such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber who have been identified as important contributors to a hidden history of body relevant writings. While Parsonian sociology obfuscated the significance of the body to classical sociology by taking as its negative referent Hobbies analysis of what motivated social action, and developing an alternative normative solution, it was later writers like Mauss, Marica Merleau Ponty and Erving Goffman who resurrected its relevance and later by Giddens and Boundaries also (Shilling 2005, ibid p.1-8).

A review of sociological writings from classical traditions reveal that despite huge differences that separate Marx Durkheim and Simmel there is discernibly a convergence around a view of the body and embodied experience as a multidimensional medium for the constitution of society. Body as a source and recipient of a collective symbolism capable of incorporating individuals into moral life of group constituted Durkhenmain understanding of the body. In Simmel body as source of dispositions was conducive to embryonic constitution of social forms. Finally for Marx body as a source of economic relations bore the effects of capitalism and market and constituted the basis for labour and class struggle (ibid 9-10).

In addition to the centrifugal tendencies seen in Shilling’s analysis of a corporeal realism within classical traditions in recent times there diverse theoretical approaches have emerged as dominant firms of explanation within the field of body studies. While none of them claims a view of the body as holistic as body as a multi dimensional medium for the constitution of society, they provide us with an unprecedented focus on body. (In these approaches include the social constinctionist analyses of the ordered body, action or phenomenologically oriented approaches towards the lived body, and conceptions of the body in structuration theory).

Social constructionist analyses of the ordered body view human physicality as an object produced and regulated by political normative and discursive regimes. They focus on the body as a location for society, implying that it is only through such an approach that allows us to appreciate the overwhelming structuring powers of the social system. It established the governmental management of the body as key to the external environment in which social action occurs. The influence of Michael Foucault is readily apparent in such studies. Foucault conceived body as the inscribed surface of events and as totally imprinted by history. This position is presumed on the assumption that there are no irreducible essence of body that define identity or actions immanently. Inscriptions of identity changes with time. (ibid p 16-17).

While social constructionist are informed by a political concern viz the subjugation of bodily diversity and how the body was ordered and inscribed by power relations, it remained frequently muted about how the body could be agentic/generations in being a source of social and about the lived experience of embodied action. They tend to undermine ontological existence of the body apart from society and rendered it impossible to evaluate institutional impact upon the body. In response to this lacuna 1990 witnessed a rise of studies about body’s own lived experiences of its embodiment. Such accounts derived from phenomenology, existentialist and interactionist resources to portray the body as source of society. It is the phenomenology of Merleau Ponty that has been most influential in the emergence of ‘carnal sociology’ (ibid p 17) Here being self, society and symbolic order are
constituted through the work of the body. This approach upheld an emphasis on the determining (instead of a determined) nature of embodiment and an ostensible focus on body and universal bodily basis of meaning and knowledge.

Unlike constructionist and phenomenological approach whose analyses of the ordered and lived bodies provided a schism between theories of structure and agency, structuration theories developed means of bridging this opposition. Based on assumptions about the mutually constituting nature of social structures and actions, the body was central to structuration theory’s view of society. Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens are the most influential proponents. Despite differences both claimed that the body was a recipient of social practices and an active creation of the milieu. In Bourdieu’s theory of social reproduction body is shaped by and also reproduces class inequalities, while Giddens invested the body with changeability and cognitive reflexivity (p 18-19).

The constructionist view fails to take account for embodiment and does not tell us what people do with their bodies in daily life – alternatively scholarship in phenomenology and sociology, suggests a paradigm of embodiment which examines what the body does to supplement the paradigm of the body.

Bourdieu’s understanding demonstrated how embodied social agents orient themselves to situations. Boundaries methodological framework whole lending itself to an account of embodiment in everyday life is too structuralist and pays less attention to agency. Bourdieu’s idea of habitus predisposes individuals bodies to live in our bodies in certain way and the body comes to be structured by our social situation primarily our social class. According to bourdieu our social and class structures our tastes which are themselves bodily experiences, but these structure are only brought into being through embodied actions of individuals. On acquiring appropriate habits we have the capacity to generate practice and these practices or embodied actions of individuals. On acquiring appropriate habits, we have the capacity to generate practice and these practices or embodied activities are constantly adaptable to the conditions it fulfils. Class taste is reproducible through our intimate relationship to the body (Entwistle 2002 p 146-149). Through the concept of habitus, Bourdieu further explicates own inability to alter our being. Power operates from within us and has taken root in many webbed modes of thinking, knowing and seeing – so that we perceive the way we are – the structure produced govern our practice. For Merleau Ponty embodied subjects develop direction and purpose on the basis of the practical engagements they have with their surroundings and through the internationality they develop as a result of the situatedness of embodied existence. This emphasis on the determining rather than determined nature of our embodiment and on the universal bodily basis of measuring and knowledge, constitutes a major challenge to structuralist and post structuralist theories (Shilling ,2005,ibid.p 18).

The psychical component of embodiment and individual’s own sense of gender is also an important area of studies in embodiment theories. And that the body must be psychically constituted in order for the subject to acquire a sense of its place in the world and in connection with others argues Grosz as cited. The embodied self is cultural as well psychological. Grosz
suggested embodied subjectivity or psychical corporeality which eschews dualism of mind and body. The psychological creation of gender identity is evident within an embodied self in terms of the modes and strategies adopted to negotiate, one’s social and cultural construction and the extent to which one colludes with this construction. This negotiation is informed by individual’s senses, emotions and fantasies as well her relations with significant others (Thapar 2001 p 133-134).

Structuration theories on the other hand provide us with a middle way between social constructionist accounts of governmentality and phenomenological accounts of lived experience. Social constructionist theories of the governed body, action and phenomenological accounts of the lived body, and structuration theories have provided us with systematic theoretical alternatives, demonstrated the ubiquity of the body as a subject and imparted to the field an identity’. These theories variously argued that the body is a social construct what is otherwise presented normatively as natural identities that the body is the seat of all experiences, and that social structures are absorbed and actively reproduced by embodied subjects. While focusing variously on the body as a location for or as a source of and as a means for positioning of individuals within their environment none of these theories allows scope for the embodied subjects. multi-dimensional implication in all these of these processes. The structuration theory acknowledge the significance of body as a location which social structures inscribe themselves, phenomenology sees body as a vehicle through which society is constructed, or as circuit which connects individuals with society as per structuration theories. But none comprehensively take into account all of these there processes. These three approaches, warns Shilling, individually focusing on body’s status are analytically separable and are not mutually exclusive options or constitutive of totally separate functions of the body. They constitute, instead co-existing moments in or dimensions of an ongoing process that manifest over time. Eschewing reductionism body’s significance as multi-dimensional medium for social constitution is to be recognized. The balance between ongoing aspects of body’s existence as a source, location and means shifts with time depending on a number of variables. Sociological studies taking these into account recognize bodies as variously generative of and receptive to social structures (Shilling,2005p ibid 20).

The three approaches born out of diverse centripetal tendencies informed the diverse field of body studies. While these approaches drew on classical writings they were committed to integrate precious themes with recent insight in order to delineate a new range of perspective on the body-society relationship. The range of issues covered by the contemporary approaches grows ever wider, but from a theoretical perspective can be seen to converge around three defining positions (1) Social constructionist analyses of the ordered body (2) action and phenomenologically oriented approaches towards the lived body and (3) conceptions of the body in structuration theory.

Based on methodological objectivism constructionism ignores human agency and experience. Examining how the body is regulated, controlled and how it is subjected to power it tends to fall into the trap of social reductionism in a bid to avoid biological essentiatlism. The tendency
to perceive body as recipient of social practices a location for social system exhausts its chances for experienced subjectivity.

The reason for upholding body as socially constrained and receptive can be traced to the ideological influence of Parsons and Althusser on Turner and Butler. Although Parson is hardly seen as a productive influence within sociology of body his theories of action and the social system have informed social constructionist assumptions. These include the idea that suggest body’s significance to rest on its capacity to be socialized and be activated system. The culturally produced social system therefore provide us the key to understand the relationship between social order and embodied identity. As per Parson’s normative sociology, the body was important to the social system mostly as a constraining sub-system of action that needed to be socialized in order to maximize the functional capacity of society.

Social constructionist theory have highlighted the significance of body as a location of society and thus obliterates chances of the body being a source of society. Denying the body and ontological materiality, these perspectives leave themselves bereft of any physical grounds on which to examine the interaction between the body and society over time or to make judgements about the impact of social formations on bodily potential of people. The ordered body under the weight and constraint of social structure and norms restrict the creative ability of body to the meaningfully construct society (ibid 53).

It is the phenomenology of Merlean Ponty that has been most influential in sociology of body, wherein body is a source of society. Merlean – Ponty had rejected the objectification of body and insisted upon bodies being seen as sites of subjectivity and consciousness the body constitutes our active vehicle of being in the world and provide us with a point of view on and situated experience of our lived in condition i.e. environment. This thrust upon bodily basis of meaning and knowledge poses a major challenge to the structuralist and post structuralist theories. It claims the social structure derives and achieves its meaning through the medium of corporeal experience ( ibid.p 54). Embodied subjects develop direction and purpose not because of constraining influence of governmental power or discursive regimes that are otherwise structurally inaccessible to individuals, instead on the strength of practical engagements they have with their environment and through the intentionality they develop as a result of situatedness of embodied existence. Phenomenology enables body and bodily capacities to be a source of self and society and rectify the lopsidedness of constructionist accounts of ordered body. However, it has its limitations.

Theorises of the ordered body and the phenomenological approaches of the lived body offer two different routes to the study of body. It is in structuration theory that one discerns an attempt to overcome the stark distinction between external social structures and agentic living subject. It seeks to resolve this invalid and apparently unbridgeable schism between the two positions viz body as source of society and body a location for the society. This dualism precludes an acknowledgement of the fact the action of the body and structure are instantiated in each other. It is the writings of the two main proponents or sociologists that is held to be most significant in structuration theory viz Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdien ( ibid.p. 60).
Bourdieu’s statement as cited that ‘The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body’ reveals his assumption that the embodied actor is both indelibly shaped by, and an active reproducer of society. Bourdieu develops this position, which underpins his work, through critical engagement with both objectivism, associated with structural analysis of the ordered body, and the subjectivism associated with phenomenological writings on the body subject. Bourdieu observes that while objectivism is unable to appreciate that bodily experiences are a precondition of and are inscribed within social institutions the subjectivism associated with phenomenology on the other hand is incapable of addressing the existence and development of the contexts in which experience occurs. Bourdieu seeks to relate experiences, appearances and accounts of individuals to the social conditions which gave rise to them. Bourdieu approach are developed through the key conceptual distinction between social field and habitus. Social field refer to a set of dynamic organizing principles, ultimately maintained by social groups, which identity and organise certain categories of practices occurring within a given social space(e.g. education, art, sport, economics). These social fields develop out of prolonged automatization and represent specialized social sector structured by their own specific logics and principles, and departs from earlier pattern of relatively undifferentiated community. Each social field enjoys relative autonomy from other fields and bestows values on its social practices as per its principles of interval organization and recognition.

Bourdieu characterizes society in terms of multiple social fields and this reflects that in his view contemporary social life is not governed by a single overacting culture, system or logic of capital, instead is constituted by structured space wherein each possess their own regulative principles. The influence of social field is not like completely determining structure. Social fields locate themselves upon the bodies of these entering their fields by a measure of contingency instead of constraining, and there by allow room for individual variation. The rules which organize a given field can always be negotiated and reflected upon. This scheme allows for manoeuvring space within a social life that Bourdieu’s views as patterned, regular and stable (ibid p 61).

The conceptual relationship between social field and the habitus is crucial to understanding of boundaries position. Habitus for Bourdien is a socially constituted sytem of durable, transposable, dispositions which provide individuals with a class-dependent, predisposed ways of categorizing and relating to both familiar and novel situations. Constituted in the context of people’s social locations, habitus inculcates within people a set of tastes and world view based on and reconciled to these positions. Specifically, it installs within humans as Bourdien cited: schemes of perception, thought and action derived from the social fields individuals inhabit. This process of installation is not experienced as oppressive or constraining and are frequently embraced by individuals. This concepts of both social field and habitus are crucial to Bourdien’s attempt to overcome the dualisms between subject/object. Social fields are not discrete, independent social facts and depend for their continuation on the dominant social practices of groups and individuals.
Gidden’s structuration theory has proved to be influential both in sociology in general and within body theory in particular in its significant contributions towards the body as a project and assignments about the growing close association between the self identity and the exterior of people’s bodily selves. Like Bourdien, Giddens views the body as both determining by social structures and as an active reproducer of social structure. In his early writings on body the thrust was more upon the natural organism as a constraint on social action, while his later studies there is shift in focus on body’s transformation within modernity into a vehicle and an expression of reflexivity.

Giddens in ‘The Constitution of Society (1984)’ Giddens stresses upon how the body restricts the individual. Individuals prior to asserting their bodily capacity need to acquire a basic trust in their own motility and environment as the physical structure and sensory qualities of the human organism’s body impose serious restriction or strict limitation upon social agency of the individual. These constraints however do not undermine the importance of the body with respect to agency, the ability and capacity of intervention in regular life is contingent upon bodily conditions surrounding spacing timing and significance of interpersonal encounters. According to Giddens structures, conceived of as rules and resources are instantiated in practice and reproduced by, embodied subjects. The significance Giddens attributes to the human body, is demonstrated clearly in his assessment of Erving Goffman as a systematic social theorist. As per Giddens. Goffman’s presentation of self display the human skills involved in becoming a competent agent whereby structural rules and resources through bodily skills are manifest in social action. It is therefore the body which provides crucial means through which individuals are related or associated with society.

In ‘The Constitution of Society’ one discerns a distinct suggestion of Giddens that the body imposes a natural constraint on individuals and remains significant from the perspective on the structuration of social life. However, a relatively more voluntaristic tenor permeates his subsequent analysis of the body in modernity. In ‘Modernity and Self identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age’, Giddens (1991) argues that in contrast to traditional societies where the body used to be governed by processes only marginally subject to human intervention modernity has liberated individuals from nature. The body ceases to be an extrinsically given that functions outside the internally referential systems of modernity but has become drawn into the reflexive organization of social life to the extent that we are responsible for the design of our own bodies argued Giddens as cited (Shillings, 2005 ibid p 64). The notion of humans as lived, intentional body practically oriented towards the world, assumes that individuals gradually become integrated, coordinate and aware of its potential and limitations. This somatic unity is contingent upon fulfillment of certain pre-requisites that involves the development our body schema. Our ability for motility and the sensory media that enables body to engage itself with the world.
2.14 CONCLUSION

The star phenomenon quintessentially social replete with social and cultural meanings, inscribed by past and present discourse is illustrative of a larger context within which it emerges and is discursively constructed. This chapter before proceeding towards the specific understanding of the theme seeks to provide a basic contouring of the conceptual and theoretical framework to justify the followings: (a) nation as a discursive entity, an imaginable construct exceeds the statist discourse; (b) the nation has its popular manifestations; (c) Hindi cinema represents the popular culture of the Indian nation and is a cultural unifier of diverse nation; (d) Hindi cinema and its relationship with the state—a trajectory of antipathy, ambivalence, reconciliation and recognition casting its influence upon industry, its mode of production, its narrative form and heroic type; (e) Hindi cinema as a chronicle of the nation from pre-independence to post-globalization regime and a retrospective delineation testifying the same; (f) influence of globalization upon the political and cultural economy of film production and how this provides the basis to star formation and iconization at a global juncture; (g) the coalescing of the discourse of nation, global, post-colonial within the popular filmic texts and the subject formation as represented through the hero; (h) the social history of contemporary India; (i) the central themes of post-liberalization films and its relation to the discourse of nation at its global moment, viz. nostalgia, neo-traditionalism, re-ethnicization, fundamentalism and crisis of modernist secular discourse of the nation, burgeoning middle class and changing value systems, consumerist culture purveyed by global capitalist market-culture; (j) the meaning of stardom and the social, political and psychological bases of identification and indigenous (Indian) cultural protocols of popular identification.

The subsequent reading of films of Shah Rukh where the film texts embedded within the contemporary discourse of the nation articulates itself through the heroic subjectivity of the star is not an unique social phenomenon, and is to be seen illustratively as an exemplar of a particular cultural formation, an embodiment of a certain discourse(s), a specific heroic type who emerged at a particular time as a mediation of nation’s popular myths, history, collective conscience etc. Stars are neither agentic, nor sheer commercial construction of culture-industry, identification with the star have deeper roots in the socio-cultural, psychological, political roots of every society. Understanding of SRK therefore need to be proceeded from the generalized contextualization of star formation offered by Hindi cinema and its relation to the polity, economy and cultural complex of the nation.