Since the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century cinema has played a major multidimensional role in the lives of people across countries. Cinema has enriched and impoverished millions of lives since its inception. Although cinema emerged as an influential medium of information, news and historical memory right from the days when Edison invented the movie camera historians, in general, have ignored it for a long time. However, these days research on cinema in various academic institutions is gaining momentum. The social importance of culture and identity in the modern world has opened new vistas for study of cinema. In this context, this thesis examines the relation between cinema and history to show that cinema is a part and parcel of general cultural pattern and the socio-economic, cultural and political forces shape and condition it.

The archival material cannot be the only source and basis of history-writing as it provides only the ‘official side’ of the details and doesn’t provide detailed and diverse information about the socio-cultural and economic life of the common people. Inspired by this situation, Indian historians too have tried to find and experiment with new sources to unearth vital details about the life of the people. Today comprehensive qualitative changes have come in the orthodox viewpoint of history and history-writing, new dimensions have been added to the study of history and history-writing. The study of popular culture has gained momentum. Cinema is also a popular art and the impact of such an audio-visual medium is immense on masses. The history of the holocaust and the German atrocities during the Nazi era seen through the film recordings of those times are an important source for documenting history of that period.\textsuperscript{1}

\textbf{Cinema and Nation}

The turning point in Indian cinema studies owes its force to the postcolonial times in literary and cultural studies, initiated according to the majority of scholars by Edward Said’s \textit{Orientalism}. In 1980s, the Indian commercial
cinema came to be recognized as a ‘valid’ cultural artefact. In late 1980s the categories and expressions related with post colonial and cultural studies have permeated vital discourses on popular Indian cinema. In these studies an intimate understanding between the attitudes in cinema and the objectives of national leadership can be located in the years before Second World War and immediately after independence. There is a thrust by filmmakers in their cinema to help the political leadership in their agenda of nation-making. The period after independence was seen as a broader ideological investment in ideas of social justice connected with the image of the new state. In a way, the cinema was always central for inventing a national. The Indian society’s penchant for patriarchal, upper-caste and class Hindu male is evident in its commercial cinema. The portrayals are closely tied to family and nation. In this way, nationalism is actually an ethical, ‘class - conditioned and gender defined value’. By and large, post - colonial Hindi cinema projects a bourgeois colonialism with its caste, provincial and religious prejudice. The cinema as an instrument of bourgeois nation building articulated bourgeois aspirations in numerous ways. Till the 1980s a privileged national bourgeois in association with the post - colonial state was attempting to forge a nation state. Its duty was to complete the task distorted and forsaken by colonialism. The male film stars such as Amitabh Bachchan, MGR, Shah Rukh Khan, Kamal Hassan, Rajnikant who are the objects of film star club worship, are considered as successful members of an upper class, visible and heroic, the worthy beneficiaries of a growing cinematic mobility.

The homogenizing tendencies of cinema and TV were very well detected by Panna Shah as early as 1950 when he argued that one of the important social effects of cinema is that it makes for similarity of outlook and attitude among people of different professions, earnings and classes and also different nations. Globalization is trying to make education purely utilitarian in terms reminiscent of colonial period. In 1990s and after education in India signifies substitution of knowledge by information. The homogenizing and hegemonizing continue under the impact of modernization and globalization.
In 20th Century, when all the streams of literature and art media have been accepted as part and source of history then cinema can also be an important raw-material for writing history. Cinema’s impact on society is well recognised in as it influences beliefs, fashions, food habits, cars and other merchandize. Another unique characteristic of cinema is to collectively fascinate, excite and influence a large number of people. The rationale behind this collective impression and impact is the presence of unconscious material and the hidden wishes of a vast number of people in the film. Consequently, the shaping of audience mentality in today’s capitalist world is being carried out by the advertising and marketing firms who want to create their hegemony by homogenizing the needs and desires of the consumers.

Cinema has created a significant landmark in the developmental journey of the whole art media -i.e. it binds a large and diverse audience even while expressing minute details. This can be explained by the fact that classical works are not, generally, read by the common masses but the films based on them are, generally, seen by a large chunk of common audience. Tamas of Bhisham Sahni, based on the events during the partition of India may not have been read by many but the tele-film version has been seen by a vast majority on the screen. Similarly the famous novel ‘Devdas’ of Sharat Chandra Chatterji, made and remade as film several times by a number of directors has been seen by a majority of audience. It created a deep impact when it was first made as a film in 1936 and became the motive force of the films in one form or the other in the later decades. A thing which influences common masses becomes an acting-force of history and a historian can’t ignore it. But it is also a bitter truth that Indian historians have not recognised cinema as an implement and source of history. By this exercise, they are not only committing a grave injustice to cinema but also causing irreparable loss to history-writing.

Gaston Roberge, noted film scholar, on relation between history and cinema commented that like history, cinema also takes the past events as its subject and filmmakers, by making films on the facts and events of past, more
or less, does the work similar to a historian i.e. he also draws his own conclusions based on his own thinking and analysis of facts.\textsuperscript{14} The only difference is that for a filmmaker his film is a complete work for him while for a historian it is a factual raw material.

**History and Literature**

According to British philosopher R.G. Collingwood, the seeds of history can be first seen in the ‘Mesopotamian, literature namely the myth.’\textsuperscript{15} The writings of Homer consisted of legends. One can find the appearance of Gods, in the works of Homer as mediating in human matters ‘in a way in which they appear in the theocratic histories of the Near East.’\textsuperscript{16} The presence of these mythical elements can also be seen in the writings of hard headed and scientific Thucydides.\textsuperscript{17} Even in the writings of Herodotus, the ‘Father of History’, mythical and ‘legendary elements are notoriously frequent.’\textsuperscript{18}

*Rajtarangini* of Kalhana is considered to be the first history book of India. Even it has more literature than history. According to the noted historian and scholar A.L. Basham not all the eight parts of this work can totally be classified as history.\textsuperscript{19} Regarding the approach of Kalhana, Basham writes that Kalhana never regarded himself as a chronicler or a historian but as a poet and his work is, primarily, a poem. The history-writing, for Kalhana, was subject to the same inspiration as poetry.\textsuperscript{20} Basham further writes that from the ‘tenor of the whole work’ it appears that for Kalhana teaching’ moral lessons’ was more important than’ conceptualising historical truth.’\textsuperscript{21}

Collingwood argued:

St. Augustine looked at Roman history from the point of view of early Christian; Tillemont, from that of a seventeenth century Frenchman; Gibbon, from that of an eighteenth century Englishman, Mommsen from that of a nineteenth century German. There is no point in asking which the right point of view was. Each was the only one possible for the man who adopted it.\textsuperscript{22}

A historian is also a product of its times and a ‘conscious and unconscious’ representative of the society to which he belongs.\textsuperscript{23} He, in turn,
is also influenced by the prevailing conditions in the society which play an important role in shaping his viewpoint and approach. At the same time, it is the duty of the historian to not only present ‘accurate’ facts but also to exhibit all the ‘known or knowable facts’ which are relevant to the subject under study and to the ‘interpretation proposed.’ The statements of Bury (history is a science, nothing more nothing less) and Ranke (the task of a historian is simply to show how it really was) gave history the status of a completely objective discipline. But during this time historians also began to realise the fact that the subjectivity of the historian in history-writing, by which he selects facts and analyses them, cannot be denied.

Colonialism and Literature

During the colonial rule in India, at times, literature was also used to project imperial policies and aspirations in a different shade. It has been established beyond doubt that the real motive of the colonialists was to maintain imperial hegemony at any cost but it was provided a new garb in some of the literary writings. This has been aptly summed up by Suhash Chakravarty, “Rudyard Kipling gave the Raj a wide ideological umbrella which sheltered a whole range of self-righteous exaltations, romantic images and contorted visions wrapped up in a seductive phrase: white man’s burden.” Ashis Nandy has pointed out, the colonial denigration of indigenous culture consistently involved an assimilation of cultural hierarchies to sex hierarchies. Indigenous cultures were seen as feminine or effeminate and the metropolitan culture as masculine. Indigenous men were denied of their masculinity or manhood. They were not only seen as passive and subservient but harbouring hidden violence and lust. This racist and sexist view was applied cross-culturally by colonial ideologues – differing in degree - the more vicious the cultural denigration, the more sexually degraded was the image of colonized people. This denigration reached nadir with respect to sub-Saharan Africa.
Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* explores the manner in which colonial contact distorts Igbo culture in general and Igbo gender identity in particular. This expansion and strengthening of colonial contact precipitates a crisis in cultural identity as well as gender identity across Asia, Africa and Caribbean.\(^{30}\) In practical terms, during the colonial period the attitude of the colonial state could be seen in the devastating famine of Bengal in 1943. The famine was man made as human induced scarcities created such conditions. The apathy towards death was the usual attitude of the colonial government against the uncivilized native.

**Historians and Cinema**

D.W. Griffith’s, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) prepared a common ground for the assumption that film depicts the history of an era simply because it is a product of its times and ‘carries the cultural burden’ of presenting the ‘realistic’ image of that society.\(^ {31}\) The comment of Woodrow Wilson, then president of U.S.A., that Griffith had “written history with lightning” has almost become the watchword for those ‘practices that blend film with history in an inseparable combination of object and representation.’\(^{32}\)

Ferro treats film as both a ‘source’ as well as ‘agent’ of history. As a ‘source’ of history, film portrays the ‘relationships with the societies that produce and consume it’ and also ‘social processes involved in the making’. As an agent of history, film depicts and promotes particular values, principles and attitudes in given cultures.\(^ {33}\) It is the task of a historian to reach ‘beneath the discourses of films’ and treat them as documents reflecting social and political form of the ‘unconscious’ and explore the ‘true historical meaning’ of a film.\(^ {34}\) Pierre Sorlin aptly comments about the task of a historian in these words:

> If historians today neglect audio visual material, it will exist in spite of them as a history through pictures. Furthermore, the public will lose all interest in specialists, and the specialists will be in a curiously divided position, conducting their search shut away in libraries, but turning to television when they want information on the present. Historians must take an interest in the audio-visual work, if they are not to become schizophrenics, rejected by society as the representative of an outmoded erudition.\(^ {35}\)
One may contend that film tends to draw attention to individuals rather than movements or the impersonal processes that are the theme of a good deal of written history, yet we must realize that it is possible to make films that refrain from exaltation of the individuals and show the group as protagonist. Undoubtedly, this was one of the objectives and accomplishments of Soviet filmmakers in the 1920s in their quest for ‘non-bourgeois modes of representation.’ Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *Oktober* (1927) definitely provide meaningful models for ways to depict ‘collective historical moments.’

Marc Ferro also tries to view cinema as an image object whose meanings are not exclusively cinematographic. Film is precious not only because of what it unveils but also because of the socio – historical proposition it validates. Thus, the scrutiny will not essentially concern the totality of a work. They may be based on excerpts, they may look for ‘series or create ensembles.’ Nor will they be restricted to the film itself. They will blend the film in to the world that envelops it and with which it essentially interacts. Under this situation, it is insufficient to undertake the scrutiny of films or pieces of film, or shots, or themes while considering the knowledge and approach of the various human sciences. It is essential to exercise these techniques to each filmic element (images, sound images, images which resist sound) and to the interrelations among the constituents of these elements. It is necessary to scrutinize the film’s narrative as well its sets and language and the relations between a film and what is extra filmic (its author, production, reviews, public and the state). In this manner, we can hope to understand not only the work but also the reality it represents. It can be argued that film evidence is crucial and if it is properly handled will enlighten and improve the exploration of the 20th century.

The innate character of this document of history, which is a manifestation of a technology with which historians’ acquaintance is limited, precipitate the problem. In their efforts to study film, the historians do not have any difficulty with accuracy and adequacy of their methods or their deductions.
about the historical meaning of history. But the overzealous desire to maintain the identity of the discipline overshadows the effectiveness of focusing on the question of historical meaning alone. This is ironic that even the Marxist historians who have the most scientific perspective haven’t viewed cinema from a sufficient serious angle. But we can say that Marxism and film share a significant thing in common; they are both interested in masses.\textsuperscript{39} It is highly surprising that there is a talk of ‘oral history’ but not of audio-visual history. In reality, except some ordinary technical differences, films are like other historical documents and they can be understood and analysed in this form.

It is true that the events of past which become the subject matter for a historian are an objective reality but in determining the implements for selection of facts and their analysis, subjectivity of the historian is a deciding factor.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, the two aspects of the character of history i.e. objective and subjective are linked to each other. The objectivity history is not absolute but relative in nature. The commitment of a historian and the impact of society on him determine his viewpoint and approach towards the sources of history. In ordinary sense also, mentality, nature, thinking, interests, and habits etc. of a historian play an important role in his subject-selection, research-analysis and writing. Thus, it is very obvious that in spite of all precautions he can’t become a neutral observer. He will have a have historical eyesight and viewpoint whether he is conscious of it or not.

\textbf{Cinema as a Historical Source}

Cinema arrived in the whole world, more or less at the same time and it started to develop according to the prevailing conditions in various countries. The political rulers of various countries, realising the power and impact of cinema, started controlling it via the medium of ‘censor’ and also initiated its use in their own favour. Cinema, an international industry was more or less, strengthening its roots in the whole world in the same era. Films have bore the brunt of neglect of historians as a source of history-writing. The very fact that they have been little used in India as the source material for history is a
clear indicator of this attitude. This step-motherly treatment to such a developed audio-visual medium in an era where we consistently talk about ‘oral history’ is not a good sign for the development of Indian historiography.

The question of using cinema or any other form of art as a source of history is linked to the understanding and perception of the social role of art. Art provides a form to the human spirit by manifesting itself through dance, drama, painting, literature and poetry. By expressing oneself through the medium of art, an artist not only gives vent to his feelings and emotions but also provides a shape to them, which in turn, helps to achieve human objectives and aspirations. These proposals relating to mutual interaction between artistic creations and social reality are more appropriate to the stream of cinema for the sake of cinema being a developed art form. Cinema, in this way also, has encroached upon the limits of development of art as it projects minute details of its time and space. This is the main reason why cinema collectively influences an extensive group of people whose interests are completely diversified. Any creation or activity which affects a large majority of people becomes an acting force of history. It is very clear that cinema, in spite of being labelled as ‘live image’ of its time-space is, comparatively, of more self-understanding character than history. The images created in the minds of the filmmakers by the acting-reacting forces of society are projected by them on the screen. In such a situation the pictures presented by cinema can never encompass additional dimensions as history does. At this point, the character of cinema becomes qualitatively different from history. In spite of this, it is a bitter fact that cinema is a part, implement and source of history.

A historian, however imaginative he may be, cannot afford to ignore the facts nor can he be biased and cynical in the selection of his facts. He has to be objective in his selection of facts so that wrong selection of facts may not distort his vision of history. On the other hand, if literature/cinema neglects the realist world and divorces itself from social reality, it finishes its own social relevance by turning into a fairy-tale and fantasy. In this way, even literature/cinema does not
ignore the objective world but the creation and image of this world depends up on the imagination of the writer/filmmaker. He may create a fantasy which may indicate towards certain social reality. For instance, a number of stunt films like Hunterwali, Diamond Queen, Miss Frontier Mail etc., though under the realm of fantasy, had undercurrents of victory of good over evil, demand for justice, freedom of speech and expression, good governance and advocacy of democracy during the oppressive British rule. In this way, we find that literature/cinema is not different from history because of the limitation of objectivity but because their world of creation is different. The projection of reality of a particular period will be different in cinema and history. For instance, comprehensive study and detailed presentation of events of partition of India has been done in Mushirul Hasan’s book (India’s Partition: Process Strategy and Mobilisation, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994) as well as films like M.S. Sathyu’s Garam Hawa (1973) Govind Nihalani’s tele-film Tamas (1987) and Richard Attenborough’s Gandhi (1985). But the work of Mushirul Hasan and the films of these filmmakers could only be supplementary to each other, not synonymous.

In the 20th century, Cinema played a definite role in shaping the momentum of development of the entire society. Thus, in the history-writing of the 20th Century, to overlook the films made during this period would be to ignore an essential acting-force of history. The sphere of art – literature - culture is as important as the sphere of political institutions. Only a mechanical research fellow could negate the interrelations of various streams of literature, media of art and cinema and history. Can an alert student of history analyse the past by negating the significance of various creations of art and literature? Then can cinema which is the most recent stream of writing poem/literature on celluloid be overlooked? Can history be studied and past be analysed without taking it in to consideration? These questions deserve attention of our research scholars and historians who should try to analyse the applicability of this emerging source in history-writing.
Cinema is not only a powerful means of communication but also a mirror of society, a cultural agent of change, subject-matter and source of history. In Europe, filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein, Jean Renoir, De Sica, Rossellini, Godard etc. have been regarded as founders and creators of an era and their films have become sources of contemporary historical reality. Should these filmmakers who portray contemporary history in their films be ignored by historians? In India if we see the films of V. Shantaram, K.A. Abbas, Bimal Roy, Raj Kapoor, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Guru Dutt, Shyam Benegal etc. they serve as important documents of those times. It is also true that during colonial times many of them were not able to express explicitly their political concerns and aspirations because of the obnoxious and politically inspired censorship policy of the British. But it should be kept in mind that the language of a motion picture is not dialogues alone; it is action, gestures, sentiments and symbolism.

The message of the film is not only contained in its dialogues but symbols also play their part in communication of an idea. Most often these symbols are part and parcel of a certain social and historical context that they generate emotions and excite a large number of masses at the same time. These symbols play an important role in creating 'appropriate emotional response or climate among the audience.' But the problem lies in the fact that how effectively a researcher is able to immerse himself in the period historically and culturally. This is very essential for the researcher as he is not trying to assess the film aesthetically but attempting to understand how it reflects its milieu and produces evidence towards the solution of its hypothesis. He will have to be very scientific in his approach so as to deduce logical conclusions from the creation of the filmmaker, by ignoring the subjectivity and viewpoint of the filmmaker. Therefore, a historian should apply his scientific analysis and logical deduction in the selection, interpretation and appraisal of his facts.

How can a researcher/historian arrive at a valid impression of the effect of a film upon its audience? A researcher is not a product of that period, making it difficult for him to situate himself in that era. Yet the film reviews in the local and
national press can serve his purpose of acquainting himself with the audience reaction. But it should also be kept in mind that a film critic is not an ordinary member of an audience but a professional viewer of films with his strong sense of likes and dislikes. One can also argue that a number of films were made by a particular section of society, keeping in mind a very limited target audience, consequently not reflecting the true social reality of that time. But it should be remembered that these films were also produced and consumed by the same society in the historical context identical to that of other films.

Modernization

An increasing group of critics argue that modernization is a euphemism for the usurpation of popular resources by elites in the name of development and nation. Recent critics of modernization challenge the myth of growth propagated by industrial capitalism since the 19th century. Modernization discourse says that growth and development are identical to technological change. Critics argue that modernization had become unsustainable in the 20th century. Moreover, ‘modern’ and ‘civilized’ nations have waged many dangerous wars and have produced an unparalleled ecological disaster.

Moreover, critics of modernity see modernization as a euphemism for the extension of bourgeois hegemony in general. Anirudh Deshpande finds some merit in this view and argues that:

Modernization does involve the subjugation of subaltern groups and expropriation of their resources, including labour, by those who wield power in the name of ideological singularities like civilization, religion, nation, development, market or even democracy. The critique of modernity rejects the idea of historical inevitability, supports human volition in history, and tries to undermine master narratives, according to which human progress and development are necessarily implied in historical change and technological growth. But criticizing modernity does not mean uncritically accepting tradition or whatever is understood by the term. A balanced critique of historical knowledge which translates into cinematic representation in India questions the apotheosis of modernization and glorification of tradition projected simultaneously in the ideological universe of Hindi Cinema.
The Indian middle class and its historical self consciousness resulted from British colonialism. Since the early 19th century the colonial rulers of India attempted to create a class of Indians imbued with paraphernalia of a modernity which was submissive to colonial interests. Fascinated by the function of the bourgeois in European history, the Indian middle class started to regard itself the forerunner of modernity in India. The majority of the Indian bourgeoisie was created by the distinctive interface of British colonial rule and modern education with the traditional elite of Indian society. In the 19th century, liberal capitalist interpretations of the early modern enlightenment, as a vehicle of progress and development became central to the awareness of this class. The national mission of this middle class was made problematic by the colonial conditions confronting it. The history of Indian cinema conveys to us how the bourgeois nation has been historicized, narrativized and defined differently in varying contexts. The Indian bourgeoisie has experienced a voyage from anti colonialism, followed by nation building and planned development, to the contemporary period of a collaborationist globalization. The bulk of Indian media is capitalist owned and bourgeois controlled. With few exceptions it represents and rationalizes these transitions in the name of liberalism, progress and development. Though, the political emphasis of the ideal bourgeois nation - state altered in India from the early 20th century to the late 1990s the social engineering chosen by the Indian bourgeoisie has shown a significant consistency. This unusual consistency, essential to the continuance of patriarchal and caste continuity in the face of historical change, is exposed and attacked by the critics. The filmmakers collaborated with the state in this sacred project of nation building. Films like Naya Daur, Paigham etc. became proponents of Nehruvian model of development emphasizing on industrialization and economic self sufficiency.

Communal Overtones

The growth of the post - colonial state in India shows that pseudo-socialist or capitalist economic development and religious slanting are not mutually exclusive. In numerous ways, the creation of the national ideal through the fixing of gender,
social and religious identities accomplished in developmental soap smoothened the way for the subsequent ascendancy of national Identity by *Hindutva*. The repeated transmission of Hindu epics on various television channels attempts to project a new sense of the ‘Hinduness’ of the past. The projection of a muscular Ram in print media is a reiteration of a revitalized Hinduism. The telecast of Ramayana and Mahabharata showed how the post-independence state reserved the Sunday morning slot for hegemonic purposes.

Uma Chakravarty discusses the way in which a serial named Chanakya made by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi and telecast in 1991-91 on T.V. became famous for its Hindu tinge. The recurrent motifs in Chanakya are the twin concerns proclaimed by the proponents of today’s Hindu rashtravadis: need for an *akhand Bharat* (undivided India) to contest the fragmentation which exposes us to the external foes; and the necessity to produce a new Hindu male to tackle the hydra-headed corruption spearheaded by the dishonest wielders of state power, the nation’s internal foe. As a secular patriotic serial might generate any kind of dissent, turning to religion via T.V. was thus a conscious political act. All the above serials emphasize the notion of family which is seen as substitution for nation.

Popular cinema is also a vehicle of consumer culture. The fashions, cars, merchandise, beauty products etc are guided by films. Films promoted by huge corporations, sell the products associated with the film. Ostensibly they serve as some sort of souvenir for the spectators but actually they are meant to maximise the profits from the promotion of the film. Madhav Prasad argues that:

> As an effective medium of propagation of consumer culture, popular cinema has managed to combine a reassuring moral conservatism[with] the utopian ideal that consists not only the pleasures of commodity culture but also the micro-social forms such as the nuclear family which is at once an ideal consuming unit that the industrial economy's logic calls for as well as a desirable alternative to the existing patriarchal enclaves within which subjects are situated...Popular cinema's... one of its constant preoccupations is with the propagation of commodity culture within the context of traditionally regulated social relations.
The consumerist forces are active in redefining the regional traditions to such an extent that regressive rituals like *Karva Chauth* are promoted and advertised in such a manner that they have been transformed into national festivals. Many women are embracing these traditions which were never been part of their culture. A custom of sacrifice is transformed into a festival of consumption. The role of husband has changed from being a passive and somewhat superior receiver of attention to being a somewhat guilty and unsure sympathizer, sometimes observing a fast to demonstrate solidarity and purchasing gifts to tone down his guilt. The reason for such a custom to acquire such proportions is that it is used purposefully to drive consumption. The role of cinema and television in this context is enormous. Films like *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (1995) have been bandwagons of such rituals. Television through its soap opera is engaged in creation and recreation of festivals on screen on daily basis as if all households in the country are engaged in preparation of one festival after another. Such portrayals are encouraging commercialization and the general audience cannot help but feel inadequate if they do any less.

**Hegemony**

Cinema emerged as a cultural instrument of bourgeois hegemony in India. It draws ideological associations between the Indian middle class and Indian cinema in the historical milieu. The realization of the ideological mission of commercial cinema is to be found in the understanding of historical nature of the Indian middle class. Akin to education and administration, the cinema, broadly, was dominated by the intellectuals of the Indian bourgeoisie. It derived its essence from the culture of the leading elites of Indian society. The popular cinema eventually caters to the benefit of the extremely patriarchal Indian ruling classes.53

The success of commercial cinema is also a component of bourgeois hegemony in India. The bourgeois setting of cinema appeals to the subaltern classes in the similar manner as Hollywood appears tempting to the Indian
middle class. Cinema’s hallucinations articulate ‘popular aspirations.’ The lower classes imitate the bourgeois to identify with the prevailing culture of the time. The limitation of subaltern struggle to sanskritisation conditions popular reactions to films which reject glamour and focus on poverty. Cinematic realism emphasizes the misery of scarcity which underprivileged might not be interested in viewing. The deprived crave to flee from their circumstances and move to a more comfortable existence. Therefore, they don’t like to fritter their meagre money to witness their own lives replayed on celluloid. This may not be relevant to thrilling films of Amitabh Bachchan in 1970s in which the underprivileged found sensational empowerment. In this kind of cinema class contradictions were resolved through the aggressive, restless and cathartic personality of the protagonist and not by ‘radical working class politics’.54

Anirudh Deshpande argues that from the early 20th Century, Indian bourgeoisie has experienced three identifiable phases in its growth. The first stage was noticeable by its resistance to colonial rule but this resistance was weakened right from the initiation because of a variety of contradictions in Indian society. Eventually, the task of modernity pursued by the Indian middle class did not lead to a modern nation state as it was not a success in attending to the caste and communal issues in India. The wounds of partition, still unhealed, resulted from a compromised modernity achieved by the founders of Modern South Asia. The second phase saw the nation-building zeal of the Nehruvian era. But even this era witnessed elitism of the Indian bourgeois and the colonial baggage in the form of an administration and mentality which was thought to provide the benefits of a mixed economy. Certainly, the limitations of the Nehrurian project discredited the left and produced the economic and ideological space for neoliberalism. Lastly, the contemporary phase is marked by a blending of globalization, caste politics and Hindu nationalism. At every stage various problematic ideals of modernity have preoccupied the Indian bourgeoisie. These ideals were not realized. Bourgeois hegemony, unsustainable development, unemployment, inequality, chimera of globalization and huge environmental degradation is seen in
contemporary India despite the illusions created by its cosmopolitan elites and an ideologically rooted media.\textsuperscript{55}

Many films constantly enabled the clash between classes to be imagined in cultural and nostalgic terms through the loss narratives of the pre-colonial pastoral idyll, parents, acquaintances and other emotional ties that surpass punitive structures and bureaucratic balance sheets rather than a material clash in the opportunities and resources accessible to the poor whether they be Muslims, Dalits or girls.\textsuperscript{56} At the same time, the desire to integrate each other is so strong that in the film \textit{Jagriti}, the \textit{Sabarmati Ke Sant} song pays homage to the whole pantheon - Gandhi, Nehru, Subhash etc. - almost indiscriminately. The image of integration is so persuasive that it must include in the nation the philosophies of Gandhi, Nehru, Bhagat Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose, the countryside and the metropolitan, along with innumerable other contradictions.\textsuperscript{57}

On the margins is the problem of caste, class, community and religion which is usually overlooked. \textit{Dalits}, religious and regional and proletarians in general make momentary appearances. Also, the caricaturing and stereotyping of ‘other’ and their cultures is quite evident in Indian cinema. Moreover, in cinema the escapist themes are a reflection of Fascist tendencies which emphasize such cinema so as to take the masses away from real problems of unemployment, inequality, poverty, class conflict and the failure of the state to solve their predicaments in an independent state. The involvement of moneyed section in cinema as financiers is also an important aspect. The emphasis is on recovery of the invested money by catering to audience in a manner which is based on advertising, good packaging and treating them as consumers and not as film goers/citizens.

Thus, we can say that before attempting to use films as a raw material of history, a researcher must be ready to accept the hypothesis that films have the ability to reflect historical realities in a useful way. They must be seen as a part and parcel of the society to which they belong. This could be
understood in this way that the British reaction, in the form of censorship, towards the films of political and nationalist undercurrents generated tensions between the colonial government and Indian masses. Moreover, the themes disliked by post-colonial state were censored and banned by the censor authorities. The use of film material for history writing has been comparatively recent and the development of its methodology is only in its initial stages. So a number of theoretical and practical difficulties are bound to affect such a study but the concerted, organised and persistent efforts would not only remove apprehensions and suspicions but also definitely yield positive results for the cause of history.
REFERENCES

1. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power and Consciousness in Indian Cinema and Television*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2009, P. 104


3. Hiranmay Karlekar, ed. *Independent India: The First Fifty Years*, OUP, Delhi, 1998, P. 430

4. Sumita Chakravarty *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema*, OUP, Delhi, 1996, P. 74

5. Ravi Vasudevan, *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2010, P.104


7. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power…*, Pp. 35 -110


9. Panna Shah, *The Indian Film*, Motion Picture Society of India, Bombay, 1950, P.4

10. This viewpoint is highlighted in Anil Sadgopal’s, *Political economy of Education in the Age of Globalisation: Demystifying the Knowledge Agenda*, Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha, New Delhi, 2003

11. Advertising within the films called Brand Placement is quite popular in cinema. Celebrity endorsement of products is also popular which has increased the sales of these consumer goods. Shahrukh Khan’s association with Santro car increased its sales.


13. *Tamas* a novel written by Bhisham Sahni was made into a tele-film by Govind Nihlani in 1987


24. E.H. Carr, What is History…, Ch-1 and Ch-2
28 Ashis Nandy, The Intimate Enemy: The Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism, OUP, New Delhi, 1983 Pp.4-11
30 Patrick Colm Hogan, Colonialism and Cultural Identity…, P. xiii
32. Dissertation of Shekhar A. Deshpande, ‘Historical Representations…, P. 8
34. Marc Ferro, ‘Film as An Agent, Product and Source of History’ in Journal of Contemporary History, 18, 1983, P. 358
38  J.A.S. Grenville, Film as History: The Nature of Film Evidence, Birmingham, 1971, P.22
42. K.R.M. Short, ed., *Feature Film as…*, P. 29
43. K.R.M. Short, ed., *Feature Film as…*, P. 30
44. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power…*, P. 104
45. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power…*, P. x-xiii
46. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power …*, P. x-xiii
47. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power …*, P. 20
49. Iqbal Masud, Images of Dominance, *Indian Express*, 16.8.92
51. Iqbal Masud, Images of Dominance, *Indian Express*, 16.8.92
53. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power…*, P.xv
54. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power …*, p.106
55. Anirudh Deshpande, *Class, Power …*, pp 119-120
57. Nandini Chandra, Merit and Opportunity …, P.135