CHAPTER VII. SUMMARY

Based on the foregoing analysis given in the Chapters IV, V and VI, we would like to draw the following summary as plausible outcomes of our study.

1. Under first theme of Golden Lotus Awards, we have developed the following categories of films to fit into the themes as: a. Films having Religious and Philosophical themes, b. Films having Humanistic themes, c. Films having Humanist and Biographical themes, d. Films having Feminist themes, e. Films having Marxist themes, f. Films having Romantic themes (See Table 8.b).

2. Films which have fallen under the category of religious and philosophical practices as sub-theme have offered strong messages through frames of cultural symbols such as rivers, boats, sea water, and prayers to God, the human bondages and their fragility and reality, social equality and the problems of existing inequalities both by caste and income, etc. The Gita has been offered as a connecting philosophical thread of all regions of India applicable to all irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

3. Though the film Adi Shankaracharya was produced in 1983, the songs/slokas of Adi Shankara have echoed much earlier in the South Indian homes down Andhra Pradesh largely due to the rendition of M.S. Subba Lakshmi (1916-2004), and another mellifluous singer on par Mangalampalli Bala Muralikrishna (1930- ). Adi Shankara’s philosophy offered many solutions and interpretations to the problems plaguing human life from time to time and are quite refreshing in terms of their potential to address complicating human issues even today. Thus, they are at par with the slokas of The Gita rendered by Lord Krishna millions of years ago. These hymns have no regional limitations too.

4. Another film Bhagini Nivedita, a western disciple of Swami Vivekananda came to Kolkata and stayed with Swamiji till his last. After receiving initiation from Swamiji, Nivedita undergoes cultural transformation. A shot very effectively portrays her taking bath in Ganges and wearing new attire of an Indian sanyasin. This is the second cultural sign in the film suggesting the cross-culturalism offered. Firstly, Vivekananda in Western attire to tune himself to the aptitude of the Western audience. Later, Nivedita’ transformed into Indian dress. However, the director has made unique combination in the new dress attire of Nivedita modelling it as both Western dress as well as dress of an Indian sanyasin. One can clearly see the difference between the attire of Mother Sarada and Nivedita. Further transformation of
Nivedita’s prayer symbols and mannerisms from Christianity to Hinduism had been carefully worked out by the director Bijay Bose by working out common cultural symbols such as lamp, flowers, etc. Throughout, she performed multi-tasks and continued working for the realization of ideals of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Guru Dev. Thus the film attained a cross-cultural contour. Firstly the Universality in Indian Upanishads has been a strong and poignant message to the larger family of the world in terms of recognizing one universally pervading formless God, called in Indian terms as *Advaita* form of God (non-dualism), and secondly by involving the orthodoxy Christian followers such as Nivedita to disseminate this message across the globe.

5. The story *Sagar Sangamey* though runs quite slowly to heighten the emotional part of the film, the film is shot for the entire first half on a small boat going over Ganges to Sagar. The travel represents upheavals of human life, separations of individuals and new relations, though unwanted, also emerge. The film’s philosophical connotations have far reaching meanings. The caste and the religion are interlinked in Indian tradition but if one looked broadly these are very petty matters when it came to decide the destiny and human relations.

The film is certainly cross-cultural by connotation at conceptual level as the social barriers such as caste and economic disparities are present across India. The river, the boat, the ship capsizing, upheavals of life, the sea, the confluence at sea and the cultural mix at the ghat where people of all faiths have holy dip and finally the girl getting closer to her before her death—all are identical cultural symbols, messengers of fate and destiny one that Supreme prescribes before. This is what we mean by conceptual cross-culturalism in this study.

6. As far as Ray’s films are concerned, they dealt with human realism. Whereas the problem in focus in *Pather Panchali* has been one that of economic backwardness, and Apu’s family’s decision to move out of their native place, the mental condition of Apu after losing his wife, being unable to come to terms with the reality of life, is focussed in *Apu Sansar*. These stories are recurrent in Indian society even today, i.e. fifty years on since these films were first produced by Satyajit Ray. In effectively portraying such natural problems of lower and middle class societies of India, Satyajit Ray won the acclaim of both national and international audiences/critics.

7. Under feminist sub-theme of category, we have examined the films such as *Anuradha*, *Charulata* (1964, Satyajit Ray) and *Unishe April* (1994, Rituparno Ghosh) which have
portrayed the multiple facets of women and the way they tend to express them in keeping with the fast creeping changes both in the social practices and norms.

8. Like wise we found the other sub-themes marking a beginning of radical change in Indian thinking on social and economic issues. There are only three films under this category: *Akaler Shandhaney* (1980), *Dakhal* (1981), and *Chokh* (1982) – all attempting to expose an angle of a social issue. Though there is not much Marxist ideological conflict involving serious theoretical intervention in any of the three films, *Dakhal* (1981) comes closely to the feudal vs peasant conflict in the real sense of Marxist-Leninist ideological war. However, this is an often repeated theme from the Bengali directors. Whereas *Chemmeen*’s love plot is associated with sentiment coupled with popular belief, the love angle in *Bhuvan Shome* (1969) veers round an aged amateur hunter who visits Gujarat occasionally for his hunting practices and incidentally falls in love with a young girl Gouri, half of his age. The theme of *Bhuvan Shome* (1969) has been recurrent in the post 2000s in Indian cinema as post-modern phenomenon (remember Amitabh’s starring with Zia Khan in *Nissabd*, 2007- directed by Ram Gopal Varma). For love the age is not an inhibitory factor—is the entire message that emerges from these early films.

9. Our analysis of the films discussed above reflected two realities concerning this question. Firstly, of all the 26 films, 11 films have reflected cross-culturalism in the form of indices we have formulated. The other films have conceptually and connotatively reflected the cross-culturalism. But we have also found an interesting feature of these films: they are truly Indian and cannot be mocked at as copies of Hollywood. In a way these films can be used to explain what indigenization of media theory or media studies could be too (Murthy, 2012).

10. Secondly though regional cinemas, some of which may be called as real cinemas, where as others cannot be, they have got more recognition in the form of national awards-- the very fact that India’s core integrity lies in its unifying concepts emerging from the regions than a ‘mythical’ centre. The more voluntarily it happens, the greater the appeal it will have to Indian audiences.

11. With regard to the second theme of Golden Lotus Awards for Best Popular Pictures for Wholesome Entertainment, we have examined a sample of 17 films of which nine films have been chosen from Hindi where as there are three films from Telugu, two from Bengali, and two from Malayalam and one from Tamil.
12. The films falling under different categories, as was done in respect of first theme of Golden Lotus Awards, are self-explanatory as to what the stories/plots of them. However, in terms of their packaging off entertainment for Indian masses they are self-sufficient. What might have added to the wholesome entertainment is a question to ponder over. While certainly all the departments of film making would have worked hard to get this finishing for each film to have a national appeal, certainly one thing distinctly operates independent of all is –music scoring that is cross-cultural per se.

13. Compared to the earlier films which have been examined for their cross-culturalism and national appeal for winning national awards, these films have outnumbering music scorings. We have given in brackets the number of songs each film has brought out. Most of the films falling under this award have such strong sense of appeal in their songs in terms of lyrical content, melody, pathos, romanticism, etc.

Starting with the film Kora Kagaz (1974) which has three songs, by the turn of Hum Aapke Hain Koun..! (1994), the number of songs, about fourteen, was outwitting all other films of the past, including that of silent era. No one needs a reminder how the title song of the film Kora Kagaz (1974) - Mera Jeevan Kora Kagaz-even today haunts us anywhere we go through the FM radio/Mobile radio or speakers at some functions both in urban or rural India. What does it mean? Is it the tune or the melody or the histrionics of Kishore Kumar?-Which makes the song live so long for over half a century since its first recording? At the same time, we are reminded of a fact that in India film music industry is the largest industry and amasses revenues more than the films get by the viewers watching them. Even those films which flopped at box offices have reaped rich harvest of revenues due to the melodies in the films. The cassette, Compact Disc (CD) and DVD industry of Indian film music is perhaps the largest and comparable with Hollywood.

14. With regard to other languages it was Telugu films which made a remarkable presence by virtue of two films bagging national awards for wholesome entertainment. Both the films have superhit songs rendered in classical music and native lyricism. The films are: Sankarabharanam (1979) and Geethanjali (1989). It is Sankarabharanam (1979) that created a wave in Indian classical music tradition-Carnatic.

15. In fact except Kony (1984), the other three films have fallen under one category due to their middle class representation, love entanglements complicating the joint family systems,
economic disparities and feudal conflicts. These are the common problems of Indian family system today. Thus the melodies in these films also veer round for sometime around romance and for sometime around pathos. This brings to the fore the philosophical underpinnings of Indian life that ‘life is a mix of both pleasure and pain performing a balancing act’. But, certain films end completely on tragic note.

16. The analysis of the songs sung by male singers and female singers, who were accorded national awards, has yielded a spectrum similar to our analysis in earlier chapters. Most of the songs sung by the male singers have fallen in romantic category (Chitchor, 1976; Ek Duje Ke Liye, 1981) though there are a few patriotic songs (Upkaar, 1967; Rudraveena, 1988) and devotional songs (Aradhana, 1969; Gayathri, 1973; Achanum Bappayum, 1972; Hamsageethe, 1975; Sankarabharanam, 1979). Both the singers and the lyrics besides moving images offered plenty of cross-cultural images. Singers like Yesudas and S P Balasubramanyam have offered wonderful melodies in different languages and have won maximum number of awards.

17. An interesting analysis emerged out from the songs of female singers also. About 12 female singers have shared the awards for a total sample of 28 songs. P.Susheela from South topped the list with five awards, followed by S.Janaki with four awards. Lata Mangeshkar, Vani Jayaram, K.S.Chitra have bagged three awards each. Singers like P.Susheela, Janaki, Vani Jayaram, and Chitra have been very cross-cultural in singing both in their own mother tongue as well as other languages. This is an important index we have formulated in the beginning of the study under methodology.

18. Even distribution of songs in to various categories offered a very interesting insight in to the national juries’ priorities. South Indian films have made it more than the Hindi belt. Most of the songs selected for the female singers’ theme have been musical concerts, music and dance concerts. It showed the early female dominance in Indian classical music traditions in South. Further analysis proved that most of the songs that won the awards belonged to classical music base mostly Carnatic as far as South is concerned. For the Hindi films, it was mostly Hindustani and Western hybrid traditions. This confirms our observation that there is a distinct reason why these categories have been included for awards. Such type of awards in fact offered the national viewers greater opportunity to familiarize themselves with the singers and songs of different regions, besides most common and prevalent music traditions.
In the next sub-theme of music directors winning national awards for best music direction, our analysis clearly yielded how many film music directors have had a frequent record of composing music for film songs from other languages. Music directors like Ilaiyaraaja, K.V. Mahadevan and A.R.Rahman from South topped the list. Similarly from North India, S.D. Burman and Hridaynath Mangeshkar have shown more cross-cultural approach. Most of the North Indian music directors have confined themselves to Hindi belt and Bombay based film industry. But, almost all of them invariably demonstrated their talent both in native classical music as well as folk music, besides Western music tunes. Especially the romantic songs section, both in South Indian as well as North Indian languages, has shown hybrid music compositions.

Our study has done specific analysis of two South Indian films-Sankarabharanam (1980) and Sagara Sangamam (1983)---both directed by K.Viswanath with the music scoring from K.V. Mahadevan and Ilaiyaraaja respectively. Both the films offered an impetus to revival of Indian classical music and dance traditions.

The critical analysis of the songs by male singers, female singers, and music directors has enabled us to confirm that there exists a unique pattern, which may be called as a ‘genre’ in the composition of musicals. This manifest in several ways as one watches the visual images. Without accompanying visual images, it might be difficult to describe or call Bollywood musicals as a genre by its own stretch/definition. A variety of depiction of songs through an array of themes/concepts makes the ‘uniqueness’ to be called a ‘genre’. For instance the travel songs with a variety of philosophical, contextual and conceptual themes bearing relationship with the plot/theme are significant features of Bollywood musicals.

In our analysis of films that have been awarded Nargis Dutt Award for National Integration, we could clearly identify criteria underlying the selection of these films. There are three categories that emerged out of our keen watching of these films: a. Patriotic films Shaheed (Hindi, 1965), Saat Hindustani (Hindi, 1969), Garm Hava (Hindi, 1973), Tamas (Hindi, 1987), Roja (Tamil, 1992), b. Cross-cultural in terms of inter-religious/inter-caste systems of change Achanum Bappayum (Malayalam, 1972), Bhavni Bhavai (Gujarati, 1980), Saptapadi (Telugu, 1981), Rudraveena (Telugu, 1988), Santa Shishunala Sarifa (Kanada, 1990), Bombay (1995); and c. Biopic films on leading personalities who have impacted on India Sree Narayana Guru (Malayalam, 1985), Sardar (Hindi, 1993). Thus, our analysis yielded categories consistent with the earlier classifications in the foregoing.
22. Most of these films have been recurrent under various categories in the foregoing as well as in the succeeding also as some of these films’ songs have been given best male/female singer awards or best music direction awards or Golden Lotus Awards for Best Popular Picture for Wholesome Entertainment also.

23. The films chosen for this theme have been drawn from a spectrum of various languages. Mostly cross-cultural films have come from other languages. While majority of patriotic films have come by and large from Hindi, biopic films have come from both Hindi and other regional languages. Both the songs and the narrative of these films are new, distinct from masala genre, and are inspiring Indian audience to transcend social cultural and traditional barriers.

24. Under regional themes for Silver Lotus Awards, our study has covered three important major film industries in India: Hindi, Telugu and Tamil. Under Telugu about 26 films have been available as a sample. As we viewed all the films, we could get an inkling of the criteria behind choosing these films for awards. Compared to the national Golden Lotus and Silver Lotus awards, the regional film awards (Silver Lotus) appeared to be having different criteria. Primarily, as our topic of research is cross-cultural influences, we looked at the films from this background. Most of the films chosen for the awards have the themes involving domestic problems, human relations in middle class families, love and romantic themes. Almost all the films have a number of songs which are super hit at box office in terms of selling the audio cassettes and video albums of songs. Among all the categories, a few films have a unique place by virtue of their being historical Tenali Ramakrishna (1956), Mahakavi Kalidasu (1960) and Mahamantri Timmarusu (1962) have been historical and religious (Lava Kusa 1963).

25. In respect of award winning regional films (Silver Lotus), the cross-cultural indices we laid down in our Chapter III- Methodology could be clearly seen both in original films produced in Telugu and the remakes from other languages in Telugu. Most of the regional awards winning films often get remade in other languages to encash the popoularity and the craze the films generated at box office. As remakes are not entitled to be considered for national awards, the remakes in other languages will not get the same acknowledgment at national level. Nevertheless, the cross-cultural flows through the remakes have immense contribution to bring a sense of shared conscience/belongingness among its audiences. Films
like *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981) and *Thevar Magan* (1992) have offered such cross-cultural flows aplenty.

26. The award winning Telugu films have been classified as follows: a. Domestic themes, b. Feudalistic, naxalism based themes, c. Social evils and pervert ways of youth living themes, d. Romance or love based themes which included cross-religious themes as well, e. Devotional themes, f. Historical themes, g. Corruption related themes. This classification of categories goes more or less similar to Best Popular Films for Wholesome Entertainment (Golden Lotus) and Nargis Dutt films for National Integration (Silver Lotus).

27. With regard to Tamil films, we could get only 22 films as our sample. Most of these films have domestic themes predominantly though there are different dimensions to it. Next highest category of films is related to humanistic approach though again we found various angles to establish it. On a critical analysis the total 22 films can be categorized as follows: i. Humanistic=6, ii. Domestic=10, iii. Romantic=2, iv. Corruption=1, v. Patriotic=1, vi. Historical = 1, vii. Adventurous =1. Almost all these films have a number of super hit songs which brought heavy grosses for these films.


29. This analysis shows that in regional films the humanist angle had taken a larger base in Indian cinema awards. This is most desirable development for humanism transcends all caste, colour, creed and religious barriers. So much so the Bollywood musicals.

30. Further most of the regional films have offered conceptual cross culturalism in terms of themes/plots. At the same time, as we pointed out earlier, the regional cinema of Telugu and Hindi happened to be more cross-cultural than Tamil films in terms of indices that we laid down in our methodology (Murthy, 2013).

31. An over view of analysis of each Chapter dealing with specific themes has been supported by the data drawn from questionnaires both closed ending and open ending (See page no. 165-169). The questions in the questionnaire, which are based on our hypotheses, have drawn good support from the respondents who were administered both closed ending questionnaire and open ended questionnaire. These responses have been discussed with the
focus groups as well as specialists drawn from the film institutes across India. Eminent authors like Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Centre for Studies of Culture and Society, Bangalore and many other academics from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata and Film and Television Institute of India, Pune have given answers which have supported most of our hypotheses (See page no. 33) and analyses in the foregoing.

32. In effect cross-culturalism in Indian cinema is a very important facet of national integration and acts as a binding substance. This happens through many forms. The analysis has shown that the accomplishment of this larger phenomenon happens by virtue of story plots/themes that are applicable to entire India primarily. Secondly, the applicability of these plots/themes happens at various levels. One is extension of concepts cross culturally at abstract level, where film viewers watch the films and draw the spirit of the film. The other is both by way of concept as well as enlisting actors, singers, musicians and other technical experts from various parts of country. As such the audiences would get to know the eminence of people hailing from different schools of arts from different regions of India. Had it not been so, Yesudas, SP Balasubramanyam, P.Susheela, S.Janaki, Vani Jayaram, Chitra, etc would not have become popular entire country. Same is the case of music directors like K.V.Mahadevan, Ilaiyaraaja, A.R. Rahman, etc.

33. Finally the visuals chosen for different themes/plots in films that have been selected for different awards under Golden Lotus as well as Silver Lotus awards have something uniquely common. They appear to be invoking similar feelings, be it religious or romantic or humanistic or patriotic, feudalistic or domestic, and feministic. There is no difficulty for the common man to understand the embedded meanings these signs and symbols convey. The flute, the moon, the hills, the clouds, the morning Sun rise and evening Sun set, the ruddy colour of waters, the boats, the carts, the lotuses in ponds, the lamps, all are part of this symbolism and larger connecting frame work of Indian human schema of understanding a film (See Photos 34-45). This is what we tended to term as ‘binding substance’ that works as an ‘under current’ for national integration. Thus this study drawing evidences based on the foregoing supports all its hypotheses.

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