

**FRAMING THE NATION: CINEMA AND NATIONALISM
IN POSTCOLONIAL BOLLYWOOD**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy*

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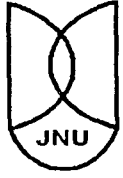


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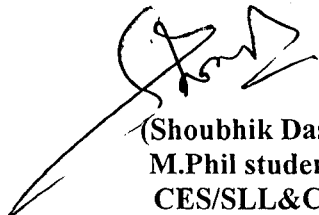
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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This dissertation titled "**Framing the Nation: Cinema and Nationalism in Postcolonial Bollywood**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.



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...for maa

&

baba

Acknowledgements

At first, I would take great pleasure in thanking my supervisor and mentor, Dr. Saugata Bhaduri, without whose guidance and timely suggestions this work of mine wouldn't have taken shape. My sincere thanks are also to all my Professors and especially to Prof. Kapil Kapoor who shared wonderful jokes with us and Prof. R.S. Gupta without whose help and kindness I wouldn't have encountered this time and space.

I am not complete without certain names with whom I have shared my days...my hugs and love goes to Rajan , Kuntal , Debu, and Robi da, who are all from Calcutta.

I cannot forget the moments that I have shared with Prasad, Harry, Gagan , and Shafique. Greetings and regards are also for those, whose imprints I cannot come up with.

Am thankful to Cherry for her company and will always be. The rest is for Bhai ...

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INTRODUCTION:

CINEMA AND THE FRAMING OF THE NATION

The title of my research work being *Framing the Nation: Cinema and Nationalism in post colonial Bollywood* might at the first stance seems dubious as the title of my M.Phil. Dissertation connotes different meanings and may not be a suitable departure in the mind of a lay reader. 'Framing the Nation' has been aptly chosen because if one looks in to the kinds of films that have been manufactured in the Hindi (Bollywood) film industry , majority of those films , in some sense or the other adheres to the propaganda of either dealing with the notion of India's achieving independence ,or the fight that have been fought by the freedom fighters in order to bring freedom to our country , or the dissection and the cataclysmic activities that have been made to gain partition at the cost of innocent lives or the organized crimes leading to terrorist insurgency , where one basic cause is corruption and self-centeredness. It is a point to be noted that till some years back, Indian Cinema was denied legitimacy as an object worth of study but the recent making of films relating to "patriarchy, family values, and nationalism in Hindi cinema are proliferating. The gendering of the popular Hindi film is almost as likely to be studied nowadays, if one may be permitted a touch of exaggeration, as communalism." ¹ 'Cinema and Nationalism' in its brief context means that how Cinema and nationalism are interrelated, and how can Cinema disperse socio-

¹ Vinay Lal and Ashis Nandy (ed) . 'Introduction'. *Fingerprinting Popular Culture*.OUP 2006.p-1

cultural and political issues at the best of its expertise. The entire notion of 'Post Colonial Bollywood' maneuvers to, and deals with the fact of the Hindi film industry after independence. Bollywood may seem to be a strange word, but today, not only the English language press but other forms of production have imbibed themselves to what we call Bollywood today.

In the last decade or so, one has seen a certain increase in the production of films dealing with a construction of Indian nationalism. So many films have been produced with this theme that they can even qualify to comprise an altogether separate "film genre." Either the context of the film is to rejuvenate in our minds the bitter taste or sensation of India being partitioned, or to move back a few decades to how the first revolution or 'resistance' took shape in order to combat the British Empire. Looking further into the spectrum of pre/post-independent India this 'genre' of films has to a certain extent, managed to posit a position of challenging the aura of history and historiography itself and also trying , bring in to a combated whole the poly-ethnic and multi-dimensional cultural structures of our country. One's mind might be preoccupied with questions and queries like is this 'genre' of films particularly of the last decade , or so is in a constant search of re-constructing Nationalism per se; or, is it trying to enmesh all substrata of social layers of our country irrespective of gender, class and caste in order to emphasize the notion of nationalism? Or, is it an endeavour of the film industry of Bollywood to project and highlight the struggle of our predecessors whose vision was to see India as a nation

where socialism and democracy are practiced at its justified definition; or, is it trying to relegate penury from the minds of ours succumbed to religious dichotomies where every minority community is questioned at par in order to prove its loyalty. “ In the clearest of these , popular film is treated as an entry point for understanding the legitimization of social and political power through narrative forms commanding the widest of social constituencies.”.² This research wishes to look into this ‘genre’ and trace the likely reasons behind its sudden emergence.

If one looks in to the different films produced in the last ten years which belong to this ‘genre’, one can see that there is not one singular model of nationalism that they construct but there are variations in its construction. The films that I have chosen to deal with and the perspectives that they present deal with the question of nationalism. For the sake of keeping my research focused I have decided to concentrate on four films: Ashutosh Gowariker’s *Lagaan* (2001) , which deals with construction of Indian nationalism in the colonial period; Deepa Mehta’s *1947 Earth* (1998) , which deals with the question of the nation at the point of India gaining independence and partitioned; S. Shankar’s *Hindustani* (1996) which deals with nationalism in the post-independent situation where the question of corruption and thus a betrayal of the dreams of free India get dealt with, and Khalid Mohammad’s *Fiza* (2000) ,which takes up the issue of terrorism which has forced one to recast the nationalism question.

² Ravi S. Vasudevan (ed). *Making Meaning in Popular Cinema*, Oxford India Paperbacks. 2000.p-1

The four films in question deal with their different constructions of nationalism using not only different periods but also different tropes. The overwhelming symbolicity of cricket as a colonizers' game which the colonized appropriate to form their one all-inclusive team of nationalist Indians is what marks Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (2001) . But it is not only the colonizers' game that the colonized adapted in order to combat and win against British imperialism, but also the game of cricket has marked as a 'cultural shift' from the mother country to the colonies and it is only via the medium of the colonizers that we came up with force and have embarked our resistance against the British. For matters are also to be dealt with in *Lagaan*, and that what as Partha Chatterjee calls "derivative discourse"—that we have borrowed or have made to borrow the medium or markers of the British in order to combat them. The cricket team of nationalist Indians in *Lagaan* is to be dealt carefully since the team comprised of nationalist Indians from all religions and sections of the Indian society which is important even though every body doesn't hold an equal status. There are Hindus, a Muslim and a Sikh in the team, not just upper and intermediate castes , but an "untouchable" too which reminds us that caste is still a major divisive issue in India. The background of *Lagaan* is set in the 1893 in a village called Champaner which has been represented as the all inclusive every village of India endorsing the microcosmic re-presentation of the country where all ethnicities that have existed in that era of the late 19th century India has been encompassed to deal with the historical details of the agencies of the colonialist's , the Raja of that region , Raja Puran Singh and how he was been

made to encounter the tentacles of British imperialism , and also how he confronted the British irrespective of his wish . “How does this tale of the village subalterns taking on the colonial masters in their own game assume the nationalist ‘aura’ or tend to inscribe the nationalist imaginary ? This occurs through the construction of the ‘other’ in the film .”³ In the film the post-structuralist binarism of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ have been put via a reversal role where the ‘other’ have been further reversed and it is the British who have been shown to have been the ‘other’. There is further paradox where the Raja though been shown to be antagonistic in relation to the British has a calm relation with the villagers but the point of double exploitation both at the hands of the British and the Raja is to be further looked in to . That *Lagaan* has epitomized only the exploitation of the villagers at the hands of the British cannot be fully accepted. If we look in to the exploitation that was prevalent by the taluqdars , the zamindars in the form of ‘nazrana’ collected from the peasants by the internal exploiters of 19th century India , where unofficial taxation was imposed as a pay to protect the peasants and the tenants , but nothing like this has happened in real life . The most oppressive situations in which the villagers and farmers had to face atrocity after a couple of decades of the mutiny when the story of *Lagaan* have been set can be resembled as true and just in it’s construction. *Lagaan* it is to be noted has been manufactured against the ‘self’ of the binary opposition and that this “binarising strategy reifies and essentialises the two categories and in the process eliminates all markers of difference like class, culture,

³ Nissim Mannathukkaren. ‘Subalterns, Cricket and the ‘Nation’. The Silences of ‘Lagaan’.’ *EPW* December 8 , 2001. p -4581

gender”⁴ which constructs in actuality the notion of nationalism and resistance against the Raj . Its not only the question of the subalterns speaking for themselves in *Lagaan* in the colonialist paradigm but the film has ensured confidence that the subalterns have attained force and energy in order to speak for themselves without the help of any ‘agency’. Its not only the tool of Cricket that the villagers have taken in order to bring rupture in the dominant order of discourse but have legitimized the fact that the debris of rupture in the continuity of discourse can be ineptly handled if we want to make it so . The team of nationalist Indians where all segments of society has been well re-presented further have questioned the theory of nation-building in contrast to the present situation that resides in praxis with in all its nakedness. The caste hierarchy which was prevalent in the 1893 and the dominant and divisive order that still prevails even after years of India gaining independence is highly contested at the societal and individual level . Though the Raja in the film has shown to be a mere spectator of the game and was unaware of the game , but history of Cricket in India shows that Rajas’ of many Provinces used to play the game of Cricket not as a form of ‘resistance’ as has been shown in *Lagaan* but the Rajas’ took pleasure in diluting themselves into Cricket as it gave them honour and hierarchy amongst its counterparts. *Lagaan* has well dealt with the notion of bringing in its lore a secular notion of acceptability at the political level of India but the acceptability of ‘secularism’ and ‘socialism’ reformulating an egalitarian out look is again contested both at the academic and societal level . The palimpsestic artistry with which *Lagaan* has been re-presented has left with fissures in the academic level too where

⁴ *Ibid.* 4582.

the legacies of colonial and counter discourses is questioned . There is a socio-political correctness in the construction of the film, for *Lagaan* have taken in to its mainstream structures the geniality of gender , class and caste and have positioned them so as to meet the peripheral and the central structures of historiography. It is suitable to call *Lagaan* a postcolonial film or a post(-)colonial film as Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra deals with the discourse of ‘ complicit’ post(-)colonialism in their essay “ What is post(-)colonialism?” is once again a contested phenomenon of ambiguity and it is precisely with the tremors of post-coloniality and its legacy that I have tried to looked in to the film *Lagaan*.

Deepa Mehta’s film *1947 Earth* (1998) , which has originally been written as Ice-Candy-Man , a novel, by Bapsi Sidhwa, on the other hand ,uses the very discordant and disharmonious backdrop of the partition to problematise the fissures and loopholes within such an idyllic unificatory Indian nationalism. The film opens in 1947 India , and revolves round with the outcomes that Partition of India in to Hindustan and Pakistan have foregrounded and how forced conversion either from Hinduism to Islam or from Hinduism to Christianity have taken place and why was it necessary for people to take forced conversion ? The film opens in 1947 Lahore where an eight year old , braced legged Parsee girl named , Lenny is shown as an epitome of nearing partition where Lenny and her nanny Shanta , a Hindu girl is admired for her nebulous features and her beauty by her admirers who were from all religions- Hindu , Sikh and Muslims. The film narrativise it’s technique of unfolding

it's plot via the voice of Lenny, who witness the Partition violence along with the psychic fear and change of moods of her Ice-Candy-Man when Shanta is taken as a prisoner at the hands of Dil Nawaz [Ice-Candy-Man] after Lenny is being betrayed by him . The film has departed its trajectory on various issues relating to Partition and India gaining independence at the cost of innocent lives; the proselytization process in order to curb from death; the abduction and its aftermath where thousands of women have been made to choose a profession against their wish; the shifting of people on the basis of religion and the death of relations. *1947 Earth*, has juxtaposedly taken in to consideration and have admixed the historical details of the time of partition and its aftermath .The film gets introduced when talks about partition was already in the air and discussions in Queen's Park amongst Shanta and her mates added momentum to the building of the structures. Furthermore, the film advances with the already onset of violence, pain and fear amongst the various religions and takes us to the aftermath of Partition. The narrative of Partition has been said by many female writers as a male narrative because until the assassination of the Indira Gandhi and the riot that broke in Delhi as it's retaliation , the female voices till then was not seen to be in the academic curriculum . The film is a living voice and holds truth as can be made from the dialogues between Bapsi Sidhwa and Alok Bhalla , taken from *Partition Dialogues : memories of a lost home* by Alok Bhalla:

Alok Bhalla : Most novels and short stories about the partition of the Indian subcontinent seem to be either autobiographical or based on actual incidents . Is the starting point of *Ice-Candy-Man* autobiographical too?

Bapsi Sidhwa : The starting point is . It then draws upon a whole range of other material which is either invented or heard from others. [page 223]⁵

Sidhwa has more over through the conversation has brought in to light the actual evidence that was available to her , and how the politicians especially Jinnha and Gandhi have been made to deal with in the film and also in her book has been justified. The film in all its vigour have encompassed the tropes of partition and the cataclysmic activities that made their presence felt by intimidating lives on the basis of religion . *Ice-Candy-Man* is only one such voice that have happened to raise itself but there are thousands of other voices too that have been silenced or have been uprooted. Though in the reign of Jawaharlal Nehru in the early 1950's the government of both the nations India and Pakistan, have placed a will to rescue women who have been abducted during the partition riots , but after women have been abducted and settled in their respective houses they themselves didn't want to re-settle themselves in their original land where the women didn't go as they would forego double repression at the hands of patriarchy. The film ends with a note by

⁵ Bhalla , Alok. 'Grief and survival in *Ice-Candy Man*, in conversation with Bapsi Sidhwa', in *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home*. p-223. OUP 2006.

Lenny , that Shanta has been seen in Lucknow ,or has been seen some where else but the novel adds on to the note of her departure to Amritsar and Ice-Candy-Man's departure to Wagah border where the partition of love, faith, religion and political bigotry of two-nation theory is further routinised and is put to question.

S.Shankar's *Hindustani*(1996), the story of an old freedom fighter Senapathy, who, disgusted at the current state of affairs ,take recourse to a classical Indian martial art *Kalari* to exterminate corrupt officials, is a treatise in how nationalism and patriotism can be resurrected by taking the laws in ones own hands is manifested. The film unfolds with Chandru, a would be RTO official who is seen to be taking bribe in order to make driving licence for all motor vehicles. Senapathy, the freedom fighter and Chandru's father a retired INA (Indian national Army) veteran is the main protagonist of the movie. The film takes us to the flashback back to the years of freedom struggle of the 1940's and introduce us with the role that have been played by Senapathy and her wife Namrata, and the recourse they took in order to combat the atrocity of the British . Namrata , a puppeteer who used to spread the message of national movement to the mass with her puppetry is significant as , she uses *Vande Mataram* in order to incite the mass against the British and the repercussions that she encounters at the hands of the British is promptly shown . Senapathy is shown to rebel against the existing Government and its corrupt officials in a violent way with the help of a rare martial art. This recourse is taken by Senapathy when a tragedy strikes the family when Kastoori, her daughter is

grievously caught in an accidental house fire. Senapathy and Namrata get her to the nearest hospital but the doctor wants them to file an FIR or to pay him money as bribe and so does the police inspector of the local Police Station and the Village Officer . The delay in getting the job done had to be paid with Kastoori's life and she dies. Senapathy with vengeance decides to teach the corrupt officials a lesson and in due course even kills his own son Chandrabose , a corrupt RTO official.

Khalid Mohammad's *Fiza* (2000), however, proves just the reverse where the possibility of the disgruntled minority youth to move towards taking the law in ones own hands as exemplified best by terrorism is being questioned and hence problematised. The film deals with forged manifestations of nationalism and the politics of 'fundamentalism' and the subtle inculcation of terrorism - a fatal instrument is being taken up as a retaliation to the injustice, hatred and helplessness both by the Government and its machinery. The film's projection of a Muslim family of the Ekramulla's of the 1992-1993 Bombay and its victimization by the Hindus and its allies at one level and the Police on the other is presented factually. Amaan , Fiza's brother who is caught amidst the riot of the 1992-1993 post Babri Masjid demolition sways away by the tentacles of terrorism and ultimately is being killed at the hands of his elder sister Fiza. The film narrates ingeniously of how a young Muslim youth is made to take up arms and fight for *Jehad* . Even the political syndrome of the movie with colours of Hindu fundamentalism and its camouflaging by the Muslim politician can be taken and studied from an angle of self-centredness

and the role that today's politicians play. The film takes a turn as Fiza being a female is shown to have taken up the task of searching her brother which she ultimately accomplishes to. The film is different in a way since "the role of a woman in a film almost always revolves around her physical attraction and the mating games she plays with the male characters. ... Women provide trouble or sexual interludes for the male characters, or are not present at all. Even when a woman is the central character she is generally shown as confused or helpless and in danger, or passive, or as a purely sexual being. It just seems odd that these few images, and others like them, are all we see of women in almost every film. [...] Since very few film makers have given much thought to their habits of sex-role stereotyping, even a film which has one strong female character will revert to cliché motivations and actions for the rest."

⁶ This movie particularly reverses the role of traditionality, where Fiza being a woman is seen to contest the contending forces of patriarchy and is projected as a shift from the mainstream roles that women in cinema are subjected to. *Fiza* has moreover dealt with the identity politics and its representation in the demography of the Indian political spectrum and yet has conferred the fact that till today Indian Muslims is always made to encounter their legitimacy of being an Indian, and have always to prove their loyalty which doesn't hold for other Indians. Such notions of fundamental politics has taken its roots in post-independent era of Indian independence from 1989 onwards with the *exodus* of the Kashmiri Pandits from Jammu and Kashmir, and the subsequent demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992

⁶ Sharon Smith. 'The Image of Women in Film : Some Suggestions for Future Research', in *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*. Ed Sue Thornhom. Edinburg University Press. Reprinted 2003. pp. 14-15.

have further more triggered the momentum of fundamentalism and politics on the basis of religion and in such a case it becomes extremely problematic of whether to claim India as a secular, socialist and democratic republic stands questioned.

The films in their tentative chapterisation have been looked in to in the respective chapters and I have tried to locate from all fissures to delve in to the questions of various trends of nationalisms that have followed right after some decades from the first war of independence of 1857. While the scope of this research is to analyse these films from the perspective of the different models of nationalism they present, the objective is to explore why this 'genre,' however diverse it may be , originates in the last decade or so ? It can be noticed that India enjoyed a relatively peaceful relation with her neighbours from 1971-89. However, after that her relations with Pakistan have once again soured substantially which is directly evident with the making of films like J.P.Dutta's *Border* (1997), J.P. Dutta's *Loc Kargil*(2003), Farhan Akhtar's *Lakshya* (2004) , Ketan Mehta's *Mangal Pandey:The Rising* (2005) , Raj Kumar Santoshi's *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002) and Rakesh Omprakash Mehra's *Rang De Basanti* (2006) and lots more. Could it be that this 'genre' is in response to this renewed need to incite patriotism in the average Indian and interrogate the question of nationalism anew? It can be noticed that this fifteen years has seen a renewed focus on nationalism in national politics. Could it be that this is the reason behind the rise of this 'genre,' either on the part of the proponents or the opponents of the nationalist ideology politics? While it may be

difficult to answer this question straightway this is what I intend to explore in my proposed research.

As I have already said above the question of nationalism has acquired a position of utmost importance in current cultural production. I think therefore that my proposed research is deeply rooted in the problems of contemporary Indian life and are thus of utter relevance.

There is a lot of existing research in the topic of Cinema and Nationalism as Alan Williams in his book Film and Nationalism grapple with the question does national cinema still exist and, if so, what is it? He further more confronts the still larger quandary: what does it mean to be a nation in a period of global markets and instant communication.

However, these works focus on nationalism in cinema as such or deal very extensively with broader categories like “Asian Cinema,” or ‘Indian Cinema,” or Hollywood films but they do not deal with Bollywood films of the last decade in particular.

As has already been pointed above most of the existing research in this area does not deal with the particular topic that I intend to work on. My research is different and relevant in so far as it deals with the question of Nationalism in four specific films of

the specific 'genre' of a specific period of Bollywood Cinema, which, to my knowledge, has not been worked upon to any great extent.

A few words on the methodology may conclude this 'Introduction'. Since this research primarily involves analysis of films, the primary method will involve watching the four films under discussion and analyzing them in great detail. The research may also involve looking at other texts of the electronic media – films, televisions, internet etc. - for comparisons with other representations of nationalism in the same period. Needless to say the method will also involve textual readings from both print and electronic sources to look into the theoretical paradigms of Nationalism, representation and film theory.

Chapter 1

Nation-building in colonial India: Reading *Lagaan*

Lagaan

("The Tax," Hindi, 2001, 225 minutes)

Director: Ashutosh Gowariker

Producer: Aamir Khan

Story: Ashutosh Gowariker

Screenplay: Ashutosh Gowariker, Kumar Dave, Sanjay Dayma

Music: A.R. Rahman

Lyrics: Javed Akhter

“Sau saal Pehle ki ek kahani jo shayad itihās ki panno main kahi kho gaya.”

San atharaso teranabai Champaner, desh ke bicho bich basa ek chota sa gaon. Champaner ke log desh ke hazaron gaon ki tarah apne guzar basar kheti bari se karte the. Gaon ki seema se lagkar, Angrez hukumat ki chauni thi, aur chauni se do korz dur, dakshin ke aur is pranth ke raja ka tila tha. Angrez Raja ki pranth ki parosi ki Raja ke aakraman se hifazat karte the, aur un Raja o ko bhi woh is Raja o ke aakraman se bacha ne ka wada karta the. Is dogle khel ki badoulat Angrez un Rajao ke saath saath Champaner pranth ke raja se bhi Lagaan wasul karte the. Lagaan, kisan apne upaj jaise gehu, bajra, chawal ka ek hissa raja ko Lagaan ke tor par deta the aur yehi lagaan har raja apne pranth ke har gaon se wasul karta tha. Raja is main se ek hissa rakh kar, baaki angreez ke hawale kar deta tha. Is tarah Angrez ki mutthi buland hoti gayi desh ke hazaron gaon ke tarah. Champaner ki kisan bhi din

raat mehnat karke apne pet kat ke saalo saal Raja ko lagaan pahochate rahe hai .

*Pichle saal barish hui thi lekin kum....aur iss saal . abtak barsaat nahi hui haisukhi aankhen totor rahi hai [From the film *Lagaan*]*

(1893 Champaner , a small village in the middle of the country . The villagers of Champaner, like the villagers of other villages used to sustain themselves by farming. The British had their cantonment adjacent to the border of the village and towards the south was the fort of the Raja. The British used to promise to save the Raja from the attack of the nearby Rajas and used to say the same to the other rajas too. And following this two way game the British used to extract Lagaan [tax] from the Raja of the Champaner region. Lagaan [land tax] . The farmers used to pay a share of their income as Lagaan [land tax] in the form of food grains to the Raja and this tax was collected by the Raja from various villages under his jurisdiction. Keeping a share out of this the rest was sent to the British by the Raja. And in this way the roots of the British got itself strengthened and like thousands of other villages, the poor villagers of Champaner too compromised to pay the Lagaan [land tax] at the cost of their unwillingness. Last year it did rainbut was scantyand this year monsoon hasn't shown its face...dry eyes are expecting some relief from above.....)

[Translation mine]

“Modern European colonialism was distinctive and by far the most extensive of the different kinds of colonial contact that have been a recurrent feature of human history. By the 1930s, colonies and ex-colonies covered 84.6 percent of the land surface of the globe.”¹ But the matter of fact still is dubious in the minds of native intellectuals who have once been colonised, that how a single race was able to build up its command across the globe to which Edward Said promptly suggests in his work Orientalism, that colonialism was established either by ‘consent’ or by ‘force’. The Europeans (British) who landed in India at the reign of Jehangir started off their business of spice indigo etc. and later on enslaved India for two hundred years thus manipulating, misappropriating her wealth, culture, language and introducing Christianity through missionaries.

Ashutosh Gowariker’s *Lagaan* (2001) the Hindi blockbuster that laid a benchmark to interrogate postcoloniality and its aftermath is vividly portrayed with all its glamour and virility. Writers of postcolonial literature have well dealt with the thematic expressions of postcolonial exodus not only in India but also in other colonies, but *Lagaan* being nominated for the Oscars in the foreign film category is not to a small issue to be dealt with. Though the intensive setting of the film has been shot in Kutch (modern Uttar Pradesh) with the final outcome of a lengthy movie (an anecdote to hit back the Raj with their game of cricket) is what marks *Lagaan*. Irrespective of not receiving the Oscar the viewers of *Lagaan* didn’t loose spirit. It was fashionable to quote Rushdie or other Indian writers whether residing in India or

¹ Loomba, Ania. ‘Introduction’, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge , 1998.

diasporic to symbolise post colonial Bollywood. But, *Lagaan* had altogether set a different trend to deal with postcoloniality and its legacy. In text of postcolonial rootage we would find one predominant theme but *Lagaan* has proved itself above all text and being a moving medium it has in a way parodied the essence of triangular love between Gauri (Gracy Singh) , Bhuvan (Aamir Khan) and Elizabeth (Rachel Shelley). It has dealt extensively in historicizing history or has dealt with the historiography of the late nineteenth century India – a period movie set in 1893 (the period of the story was around 1885 but to facilitate the costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, who pointed out that at that time the cuts for women’s outfits were matronly, that too only in black and brown, it was decided that the period would be shifted to 1893. By that time the fashion has started to change in terms of cuts and colours and the outfits were more interesting), would rely on sets and costumes but limiting the movie to one village called Champaner and nearby British cantonment makes it easier on Nitin Desai and Bhanu Athaiya to successfully take one back by a century with none of the usual faux pas. The Prince of the then Princely states of India being epitomised by Raja Puran Singh as the sole authority of Champaner who himself was under the jurisdiction of the British captain, Captain Russell; the impact of Hindu majoritarian on the mass and minorities of Champaner, the segregation of Kachra from the entire village community as he was a sweeper an ‘untouchable’ in the Indian caste system. Conglomerating all the aspects of postcoloniality *Lagaan* has indeed tried to build up not a story but has invited ideas coincidentally matching itself to nation-building by picking up almost all threads of postcolonialism and its

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legacy combating to create an incidental episode of resistance against the Raj – an emergence of nationalistic spirit, inspiration and cinematic brilliance rather than a story by the medium of a game of cricket which of course the Indian intelligentsia has embarked upon the game to be Indian accidentally invented by the British.

Lagaan introduced itself with a prologue in the form of a dialogue by the Big B (Amitabh Bachchan). The introductory prologue in the first few reels of Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* resolves to the fact of how *Lagaan* (or crop tax) was imposed under the imperial hierarchy on poor peasants of the then nineteenth century India and how the division of the rulers and the ruled used to share their sustenance of life where one extracted 'tax' – a monopoly of the Britishers' over the ruled.

The rains have failed but still the villagers of Champaner are reluctant to have rain as they have full faith on God and they hope that they will be excused from paying the crippling crop-tax that their British rulers have imposed.....

Raja: *Yeh chahte hai ki hum is saal ka lagaan maaf kar de . hum ne bata diya hai ki yea na mumkin hai .* (the villagers want this year's tax to be exempted, but I have said that it is not possible).
Dekhiye.....[towards the villagers] ...

Capt. Russell: *Lekin yea mumkin hai.* (but this is possible)

Raja: *woh kaise ?* (how is this possible ?)

Russell: *hum bata ta hai ... [silence] thik hai, hum lagaan maff karega, lekin ek sharth par.*(I will tell...Ok, I will exempt you from paying tax , but on one condition)



Mukhiya: *Sharath , ka sharath lad saab?* (On what condition sir ?)

Russell: [pointing towards Bhuvan] *Tum , idhar aao . Kya kehe raha tha tum aapni khel ki bare main?* (You, come here. What were you saying about our game?) What did he say? *Sadilla....* [takes a pause] *Tum is khel ke bare main kya jante ho?* (Boring... What do you know about this game?)

Bhuvan : *bachpan se khelat aa rahe hai. Hum inka gilli danda kahat hai , aur, aap na jane ka ?* (We are playing this game from childhood. We call it *gilli danda* and you call it [sarcastically]

Russell: [promptly] *Cricket ... to tumhara yea kahna hai kit um yea cricket khel sakte ho.* (...so you mean to say that you can play this game)

Bhuvan : *Ha ! aasan hai .* (Yea ! it's simple.)

Russell: *Thik hai, to main lagaan maff kar deta hoon. Lekin tumhe humain iss khel main harana hoga* [pause] *sharth yea hai ki , tum humko is khel main harao , aur hum tumhara lagaan maff kar dega.* [Raja laughs] (Ok, I exempt you from paying tax, but for that you have to defeat us in this game).

Russell: I am serious . You beat us in this game and I will cancel your tax . *Lekin kahi tum har gaye to tum humko triple tax dega ,yani teen guna lagaan dega . thik hai bolo sharth manzoor hai ?* [takes time] ...*Thik hai hum sharth badata hai . Tum humko is khel main harao ge to tumhara is sall ka to kya , hum aagle sall ka bhi lagaan maff kar*

dega (but if you lose the match you have to pay triple tax . Do you agree to the condition ? [takes time] Ok let me revise the condition . If you can defeat us in the game , I will exempt you from paying tax not only for this year but for the next consecutive year too.).....*yea manzoor*(you agree to this ...) *thik hai hum sharth aur badata hai, sirf ek nahin aagli do saal – yani teen saal ka lagaan maff kar dega... aur sirf tumhari nahi , sare pranth ka ...aab manzoor hai...* (Ok, let me further revise... not only for one year but for consecutive three yearsand its not meant only for you but for the entire regionNow do you agree ?)

Bhuvan : [thinks for a while] *sharth manzoor hai* . (Yea I agree) .

Russell : *thik hai – yea tair raha ,khel thik teen mahine baad khela jayega* .(Ok then. The match would be played exactly after three months).

Elizabeth : This is not fair .

Russell : So is life.

The raja of this region, Puran Singh pleads before Captain Andrew Russell to reduce the levy as monsoons has not been adequate and as a result crops have suffered. But the captain does not agree. Instead the capricious British officer Captain Andrew Russell challenges Bhuvan the representative youth icon of Champaner to play a game of cricket taking advantage of their ignorance and tells the raja that he would make up his team and the raja should accept his challenge. If

they win they will be exempted from paying the tax for three consecutive years not only for Champaner but for the entire region and if they lose they have to pay triple tax – a challenge that could change the lives of the villagers for the years to come – a situation as precarious as a choice between life and death. But one man thinks that the challenge is worth staking their entire future on. Bhuvan , a young lad of Champaner invites Captain Russell’s challenge to play cricket against the British team and thus he starts making up his team. Bhuvan finds it a real challenge, as no one in the village has ever played cricket and neither do they even own a bat or a ball (the paraphernalia of the game has been made by the women of the village). With the introductory procedures of the selection of the team discrepancies arise with respect to religion and caste, with some villagers saying that they will never play in a team with a person belonging to an ‘outcaste’. Nevertheless Bhuvan pushes up and comes up with a team of eleven men. They begin to practise and Bhuvan finds an ally in Elizabeth Russell, Captain Russell’s sister ,who agrees to teach them the rules of the game of cricket justifying her brother’s unjust justice. The team uses a large stick in lieu of a bat and a round stone as a ball. Each player is assigned a definite task and tension reverberates as the day of the actual match draws closer. But, “ ... ‘Lagaan’ hardly echoes historical realities: the cricket match shown in the film is in many cases opposed to the rules of the game of cricket. A player who is not part of the playing XI is not allowed to run for an injured player.(Tipu runs for the injured Ismail in the film). Further , the match starts as being one similar to a three-day first class match. There is no mention of any over limit. The English continued

batting as long as they could and no stipulated quota of overs was decided upon before the start of the game in the film. Going by this yardstick, had Aamir Khan not hit the six off the last ball of the game, the match would have been drawn, not lost. It is for the sake of the film that the win / loss syndrome has been introduced.”² But it is not only the colonizer’s game that the colonized adopted in order to combat and win against British imperialism, but also marked a “cultural shift” from the mother country to the colonies and it is only via the medium of the colonizers that we have embarked our resistance against the British. “The metaphor of the game, then, was merely a mask of conquest, a euphemism for something that was brutal, coercive, and oppressive . *Lagaan* does not gloss over any of the latter aspects of imperialism. In fact ,the pretext for the game is nothing short of a life and death struggle for the inhabitants of Champaner , the fictitious “every-village” of India, against unjust taxation. In the process of their resistance , we are shown the violence and injustice in all its nakedness.”³ For matters are also to be dealt with in *Lagaan* and that which Partho Chatterjee calls “derivative discourse”- that we have borrowed or made to borrow the medium of the British in order to combat them.

The cricket team of nationalist Indians in *Lagaan* should be scrutinised properly for it has embedded within its structure of the team the *Desi XI* from all religions and sections of the Indian society where everybody doesn’t hold a similar status. Bhuvan puts together a team of eleven members which include a politically correct spectrum of caste and ethnic types ,all well portrayed : the Brahman

² Majumdar ,Boria. “Cricket in Colonial India” *EPW* 37.15 (2002): 1449-50.

³ Makarand Paranjape, ‘Postcolonial Bollywood’ , *Evam* 1, nos. 1-2(2002), pp.268-276.

physician Ishwar (Raj Zutshi) , the hot tempered Sikh Deva Singh(Pradeep Rawat) , the slightly mad soothsayer Guran(Rajesh Vivek), the mute drummer Bagha(Amin Hajee) and the sweeper Kachra (Aditya Lakhia), who is not only an ‘untouchable’ but also physically handicapped, with a limp hand that turns in to one of the teams secret weapon-spin bowling. “What comes across as being most obnoxious is that after all the drama over Kachra’s inclusion , we are told that he is a good spinner not because of his ability ,but because of his disability. The token Dalit is further Dalitilised. When Kachra wants to throw the ball with his ‘normal’ hand, know all Bhuvan insists he use the disabled hand. Kachra’s being an untouchable is hardly significant; his disability is. Kachra’s talent is not based on merit , the will to excel or the determination to defeat an enemy, like Bhuvan’s is. It is as if like untouchability ,comes with birth . And it is Bhuvan who discovers this ‘innate’ talent. Kachra knows nothing.”³ The scene of his acceptance in to the team championed by Bhuvan against the initial opposition of everyone else is both moving and anachronistic , prefiguring by decades Gandhi’s and Nehru’s efforts for Harijan upliftment but also hinting at the real life struggle and consciousness raising impact of cricket playing Dalits in Bombay in the early twentieth century. It is a point to be noted that “between 1919 and 1923 , for instance , he[Gandhi] was dragged , willy-nilly ,into a remarkable campaign to accord just recognition to a family of Dalit cricketers . These were the Palwankar brothers, the eldest of whom ,Palwankar Baloo, was without question India’s first great slow bowler. But because of his

³ Anand, Sirivayan. ‘Eating with Our Fingers , Watching Hindi cinema and Consuming Cricket.’ < <http://www.ambedkar.org?research/eatingwith.htm>.>

caste, Baloo was never made captain of the Hindu team in the Bombay Quadrangular, then India's premier cricket tournament, and in which the other competing teams were Muslims, the Parsis, and the ruling Europeans. The campaign to accord just recognition to the Palwalkars' got an enormous boost from Gandhi own struggle against the evils of caste. The family's nationalist supporters took heart from the Mahatma's claim that swaraj would come about only after we had done away with the pernicious social practise of untouchability. In 1923, Baloo's younger brother Vithal was made captain of the Hindus. Palwankar Vithal was a high-class batsman; according to some who watched both, he was just as good as Vijay Hazare."⁴ Hence the inclusion of Kachra as the eleventh member of the *Desi XI* "is a powerful reminder that caste is still such a divisive issue in India."⁵

Lagaan, in fact has succeeded in emphasizing the reversal role in portraying the 'Other' and poke fun of it by epitomizing our stance of passing from the colonial to the post colonial phase imbibing self-assurance and confidence in us in lieu of trauma and bereavements. This has been projected ingeniously in other variant thematic expressions of demeanouring the British where the plot of the film embarks itself with the construction of love plot of Elizabeth memsahib falling in love with our country yokel Bhuvan and not only that she derives pleasure in dispersing the rules of the colonizers' game to the ignorant villagers clandestinely. The presumption of course is if the third world or the developing nations are introduced to the mere glimpse of prosperity of globalization they too can position themselves

⁴ Guha, Ramachandra. 'Gandhi and Cricket'. *The Hindu*. Sunday, September 30, 2001.

⁵ Makarand Paranjape, 'Postcolonial Bollywood', *Evam* 1, nos. 1-2(2002), pp.268-276.

on the same pedestal as the first world nations are. This reflects a new belief in ones own abilities, for a nation not yet fully recovered from foreign exploitation and suppression – reinvigorating a message of amelioration of one’s own and nation-building. Though the game of cricket has been played only by the men folks of Champaner, the participation of women cannot be neglected where the women have helped in order to add up morale boost to the team of *Desi* players. Bhuvan’s inamorata Gauri (who feeds the team) and Elizabeth (the unofficial Coach) has been modelled in order to avoid a coercion relating to critically placed gender roles and its diversifying stand from the males. If we relate Elizabeth’s input and labour in clandestinely introducing the rules of the game to the *Desi* male folk’s of the tea, allegorically interpreting the fact that success of males to an extent has always been inspired by the females. To avoid disruption of the hierarchically placed system of caste in India Bhuvan’s caste has not been projected empirically but has been situated in an order where slogans regarding castiest interjections can be avoided politically and socially. Bhuvan in fact, has been placed in an ‘indeterminate’ hierarchical caste order where his departure point of centripetal amalgamation of all the various ethnicities in the village centralise.

One should not forget that apart from caste and other indigenous ethnicities of India the socio-political model of India is structured primordially on religion and *Lagaan* does not take aback from this troublesome issue at all. The main temple at the top of the hill which was built taking care that *Vaastu* was maintained and faced from east to west is clearly Hindu but the temple becomes the bedrock of faith and

energy for all religious sections of the then India or 'every-gaon' of India. Hindu being a non-Sanskrit term is still heralded in order to gain political mileage cobwebbing the cultural differences of ethnicities, caste and sub-castes across states and region of poly-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious India. It is a point to be noted that even Muslims and other minorities are seen offering themselves in front of the temple as the temple has been portrayed as a symbol of faith and cultural unity other than offering prayers to any particular shrine of any religious community. The song 'Chale Chalo' establishes the fact that India has been a God reliant country and will be at every time of crisis is thus emphasised.

Lagaan acknowledges the fact that any kind of national pitfall can be recovered or taken track of if fought secularly. This is what *Lagaan* brings out with the match of the imperial- '*khel*'(game) where every-gaon of India representing Champaner's villagers fought for in order to save the future of the village and its generations to come. In a way the film with its characterization of different players from different echelons of the village embodies the message of secularism and its fight against the British – a secular activity, projected vehemently by the director of the film concomitantly processing the ethos of nation-building and nationness which is not to be seen detached from the living faith of the players. It's a noted point in Indian popular cinema that the religious dichotomy of Hindu majority and Muslim minority has always been projected as a combated whole where one attains its significance only in terms of the other. In fact, Ismail the Muslim batsman is shown to be the match saver of the game who comes back to resume his energy and aptitude

on the second day. Ismail's position and his contributions should never be questioned with ideas of Indian Muslim's loyalty, they are as loyal and patriotic as other Indians are. Nevertheless, though the geo-political and social mappings of India differs with respect to cultural and religious practices nothing has been formulated or can ever be made to formulate in order to erode the plethora of sameness which gets itself marked embodying a singular identity of Indianness.

The Delhi based cultural critic Ashis Nandy in his partly whimsical book (1989) The Tao of Cricket suggested that "cricket", is "an Indian game accidentally discovered by the British."⁶ He further argues that the three great obsessions of contemporary India are Cricket, Politics and Bombay Cinema. Arguing further that all three adhere , in significant ways to the basic grammar of performance. Sreeram Chaulia in reviewing a book of Boria Majumdar puts in that "It [cricket] met urges for social mobility by uplifting the underprivileged in a caste ridden society. To others it is a non violent way of challenging the British –a desire to meet the Englishman on equal terms on the ground and vanquish him ."⁷ If one looks in to the history of Cricket played in India s/he will be ably detect the fact that cricket in India has truly been a casteist game- a game best suited to Hinduism. But to understand the vitiating approach that *Lagaan* has portrayed via the game of cricket as a casteist one where the 'outcast' or the 'dalit' representation in the movie is politically set, and have been fully projected in colour cinema for the first time. When Elizabeth supervise the game to the villagers we spot Kachra (in Hindustani it

⁶ Nandy,Ashis . *The Tao of Cricket : On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of games*. New Delhi: Viking, 1989.

⁷ Boria Majumdar ,Rev. of *Twenty –Two Yards to Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket* by

also means waste or garbage), the untouchable standing on the margins –literally as the ball rolls before him. Bhuvan asks Kachra to throw the ball back which Kachra does with his disabled left hand . The ball spins wildly .Bhuvan is terribly impressed and wants to include Kachra as the eleventh member they have been looking for. Predictably, the entire village from *mukhiya* (village chief) to *vaid* (doctor) and *jyotishi* (astrologer) opposes the move to include an ‘*achchut.*’ (outcaste). “Till the introduction of this Dalit character, Dalit’s and caste never figures in the cinematic village...It fact, no character seems to be caste-marked in the pristine village-the Gandhian ideal. It is only Kachra who bears the burden of caste identity. From the Raja to Bhuvan we are not made aware of anybody’s caste. Now , do the untouchables of Champaner live in separate quarters? Who are the other untouchables in the village? (There can’t be just one!) Do they approve of Kachra being part of the team? The rest of the villagers-Bhuvan, Lakhaand others –are constantly referred to as ‘farmers/peasants’ who won land (though they are never shown participating in any formerly activity) . Hence the lagaan (double ,triple levy, whatever) affects them .But what about the landless and rightless untouchables? How does the lagaan , or the cricket match that will liberate Champaner and Awadh from this burden, affect the Dalits? What is the problem that Dalits have with the white coloniser-state? Are not their problems more linked to the caste-colonialism sustained by the raja and caste Hindus of the village?”⁸

⁸ Anand, Siriyavan. ‘Eating with Our Fingers , Watching Hindi cinema and Consuming Cricket.’ <
[http:// www.ambedkar.org/research/eatingwith.htm](http://www.ambedkar.org/research/eatingwith.htm).>

The director of the movie Ashutosh Gowariker had the genius to combine all three in to an allegorical package and sold it to Aamir Khan . The rest is cinematic history , and also one of the most successful Indian efforts at historical cinema ,of epic length where the indigenisation of cricket becomes a metaphor for the entire Indian independence. One is not sure whether Ashutosh Gowariker has read or dealt with Nandy's works or writings of other scholars of merit but that he has internalised their insight in depicting the history of the imperial '*khel*' played in India cannot be doubted. The game of cricket is turned into a classic instance of what postcolonials like to say as the Empire is writing back. The colonised have seized the language and other tools in order to rein scribe themselves with it. In doing so the colonised have taken charge of their own self and are in a position to tackle any further dominance over them from foreign power building the bedrock of assurance and lost dignity. If one magnifies the structure of the language of *Lagaan* one would easily be able to make out that it is not 'Hindustani' but is a hybrid of three dialects (*bolis*) Braj, Awadhi and Bhojpuri. “ But the language of Bollywood Cinema is identified as 'Hindi'- which is one label for the *lingua-franca* of much of North and Central South Asia. It is to be understood that this spoken language at times called 'Hindustani' is commonly written in two scripts: Devnageri and Nastaliq. But the interesting fact is when Hindi is written in Nastaliq its called Urdu. Its important to note that Hindi and Urdu are grammatically and practically a single language and it seems foolish to categorise Mumbai –made 'Hindi' films as being in 'Urdu' wherever they happen to be about Muslims. Infact, the language of mumbai films in

general (like much of everyday speech of North and Central India) contains a large number of Arabic and Persian words and is thus Urduised in flavour. Rather than contribute to the further division of this unitary language along religious lines, we elect to simply call it “Hindi”, and regret if this does not please all readers.”⁹ Not only the language but the location of the setting is deliberately vague- though shot in Kutch region of Gujrat the film projects an admixture of North and Central Indian architecture, dress dialect with the obvious intent of establishing a microcosmic representation of every-village or ‘*gaon*’ of India. Similarly the game of cricket has been roughly translated into an Indian idiom: a pastime that Bhuvan has earlier mocked as a variant on the humble stick-game of *gilli-danda* played by village boys. Its not just the technique of *gilli-danda* that they remodelled but accidentally they invent spin-bowling which help the team gain momentum and sheer confidence.

Lagaan has the structure where the ‘Other’ has made fun of the ‘Self’ restoring merit and confidence which has almost been deracinated in due rule by the British. The movie has successfully dealt with the subaltern project where the subalterns i.e the entire team of *Lagaan* may not be subalterns economically but are subalterns in the colonial circuit. But the fallacy arises as Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak makes it a point that because the subalterns cannot speak others should speak for them. But, this positioning if subalternism is dissected from its original form of her ‘*Can the subaltern speak*’- for the project of *Lagaan* is completely a subaltern project where the director/producer comes under the aegis of subaltern voices and structure which is seldom heard. But there lies another socially in-correct structure of

⁹ <http://www.uiowa.edu/~incinema/Hindinote.html>

the caste hierarchy of Bhuvan, where the spin bowling of Kachra has actually been foregrounded by Bhuvan, for on Kachra's part the question still lingers with utter disclamation of not being able to speak. Hence "Can the Subaltern Speak?"- is utterly politicised. The way in which Lagaan manipulates Kachra's representation utterly discloses the fact of how mainstream society, histories and nationalisms have dealt with Dalits. It is also reflective of how cricket has dealt with Dalits (Vinod Kambli and Doddanarasiah Ganesh, both short-lived careers, are being talked about as the only post 1947 Dalit cricketers, though the former is supposed to be a Gowda and the latter from the Fisherman caste not considered to be scheduled Caste).

The British colonial authority has been constructed on the 'self/other' dichotomy in the film thereby effacing all internal 'others' in the nation. For instance Raja Puran Singh who would otherwise be seen as an internal exploiter is shown to be antagonistic to the British.

The popularity of *Lagaan* makes it amply clear that such a pluralistic, self-reflexive discourse of moving medium can affix itself to the 'ego' of one billion different entities that inhabit India and reinforce in them the 'superego' to be like Bhuvan representing the force of Indian youth which again can be debated on casteist grounds.

Apart from projecting the game of cricket as a tool of resistance to British imperialism in the filmic and imaginative mode, Lagaan henceforth has successfully sown the seeds to interrogate history from its varying degrees and to justly project the fact of whether it was the fictive year of 1893 when the villagers of Champaner

depicting the northern and central part of India was the only point in the imperial globe of the British where the game has been taken as a challenge to shed off the burden of inferiority. Moreover, the film with its inbuilt methodology has in a way merged with the idea to re-establish and recover, in fiction, the minute details of the lost history of the game adhering responsibility on the shoulders of cricket historians. Boria Majumdar says “ Fiction does not rely on history, history relies on fiction to bring into focus those aspects of history that remain unmentioned. Fiction does not seek to rewrite history, historians use fiction to bring to light historical experiences... So, by using ‘*Lagaan*’ as an entry point, is to show there is a lost history of the game in India, which calls in to question the received wisdom of existing historiography.”¹⁰ But is it just to claim looking at the game of cricket of the game being played in one region of the country, something that historiography of cricket in India should look at ? If we look back at the emergence of cricket being played in colonial India we get facts of how communal was the game when it was organised in Bombay with communal colours attached to it, and it was the trend till the late 1930’s. A point should be noted henceforth that the game was communal and was segmented in to Hindu, Muslim, and teams of affluent Parsis, who were in fact the first to start playing the game and later on it was taken by the other sections and hence the point becomes dubious over the fact of the *Desi XI* in *Lagaan* promoting secularism or is the film in a way has challenged the entire gamut of the historiography of cricket being played in India camouflaging communalism? Though the narrative technique and contemporary theory has been well implemented in order

¹⁰ Majumdar, Boria. ‘Cricket in colonial India’. *EPW*. April 13,2002.pg-1449

to justify the exactitude of the film in all its orchestrated structure there lies loopholes which the film historians have exacerbated and thus have trafficked in not getting an Oscar. “ While cricket in Bombay was organised along communal lines, Bengal cricket was never organised on such lines, a fact ignored in existing historiography. Existing studies ignore cricketing traditions in Indian provinces other than Bombay, a fact that leads them to argue that in the mid 19th century, membership in religious communities became the salient principle around which Indians banded together to play cricket.”¹¹ *Lagaan* then cannot be justly said to have constructed the episodes of just history in all its true shape and contours. Though the role of a secular and just labyrinth has been projected, queries still predominate the fact that though secular in theory, things take averse shape in order to bring in to practice which can be aptly justified taking in to account the role of the Congress, the League and the support of the Raj in order to divide India into two halves on the grounds of religion.

In the text of *Lagaan* there are other precincts of colonialism that have been merged in order to shape the prevalent structures that have already taken hold of the situation of the cherished era of the late 19th century. It is noted that the interpreter who actually takes Elizabeth to Bhuvan and his villagers uses the medium of English in order to communicate in between them. Had it not been the case that the villagers of Champaner had been helped by Captain Russell’s sister it would have taken a role reversal in not only playing the game but also to know the tricks of the game. When after accepting the challenge, Bhuvan and his friends are found watching the game to learn the game they fortunately encounter Elizabeth and she asks.

¹¹ *Ibid* 1450

Elizabeth: You were trying to learn the game?

[Unable to understand the language of Elizabeth , Bhuvan says in reply]

Bhuvan: *Nahi memsaab hum to khel samajh main lagi the..*(No memsaab we are just trying to learn the game).

[Elizabeth unable to understand Bhuvan says]

Elizabeth: Oh I thought you were just about to learn the game. [She calls up Ram Singh]Ram Singh I want you to tell them that I would like to help them learn the game.

Ram Singh: *Mem saab kehe rahi hai ki is khel ko samjhane main tumra madad karma chahi.* (Madam is saying that she would like to help you understand the game).

Hence the entire movie takes a reversal role after Elizabeth makes them equipped with the rules of the game. Moreover “ the villagers of Champaner beat the British at their own game; they author their own representations.”¹² At the end of the game when the British was defeated the British had to leave Champaner :

Angrez sarkar is zillat bardash nahi kar saki, usne Champaner se aapni Chauni hatani ki fasle par mohar lage di...Aur is tarah Champaner hi nahi, us pranth ke sare gaon ko teen saal tak koi lagaan nahi dena para . Captain Russell ko aapni sang ki bartao ki kimat chukani pari, usse teen guna lagaan bharna para aur saath hi uska tabadla ragistan main kar diya gaya. Elizabeth aapni maan main Bhuvan ki muraat le kar wapas England chali

gayi aur sara jivan abhivahit rehe kar Bhuvan ki Radha bani. Is aitihasik jeet ki baad bhi Bhuvan ki naam itihass ki koi panno main kho gaya...

(The British Government could not take this insult and planned to transfer their cantonment from Champaner , and like this not only Champaner but the surrounding villages too didn't have to pay land tax for three successive years. Captain Russell and his team had to pay for their deed and they had to reimbursed the tax for the three years and were transferred to Rajasthan. Elizabeth too went back to England with memories of Bhuvan and remained as a spinster by successfully playing the role of Radha. Even after such a histrionic victory Bhuvan's name got lost in the pages of History.)

[Translation mine]

Chapter -2

Independence/Partition and National Identity: Reading *1947 Earth*

1947 Earth (1998)

Director: Deepa Mehta

Producer: Delip Mehta, Anne Manon,
And Deepa Mehta

Music: A. R. Rahman

Love is stronger than hatred, love is far stronger than hatred, love is far stronger than hatred, and love is far stronger than hatred at any time and anywhere. It was a thousand times better to love and die, than to live and hate.¹

The Partition of India into two separate nations India and Pakistan is an event which is said to have happened in August 1947 yet its beginnings go much farther back to 1935 and whose repercussions and ramifications are still to be felt and read in today's history. Though the archival records of Partition provide anecdotes and history as has been recorded by historians where the incidents tally from one to the other whose ideological stand on partition can be easily deciphered by going through the pages of history. That partition was signed in the auspicious presence of Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammed Ali Jinnah is a moment which was in one moment a joyous episode in the history of both the Nations which received their freedom from the clutches of British rule in the legal

¹ Hasan (ed.), *India Partitioned*, Vol.2, p.112.

sense but the other side of this freedom had paid a high price through sacrifice of millions of people who were made to exchange their 'homeland' albeit on the basis of religious dichotomy and majority population either of the two religions of Hindus and Muslims residing in the areas specially of the Punjab province where politically the Sikhs were also made to join Hindustan. Historians have promptly added the fact that it was not because that Partition was made available to the people in order to provide freedom to its citizens where democracy (where many Indians took pride in the first fully democratic provincial governments elected as a result of the constitutional reforms introduced in the 1935 Govt. of India Act), secularism, and socialism can be brought to force and the under-developed can develop themselves which is the case for only India, but, for Pakistan it varies giving it country a rule on the basis of religion and region. The aftermath of Partition has moreover enrolled itself in contestation amongst the then nationalists who were in a position to grab political power of the newly formed states and to rule them, which is still predominant in the present day where as Mark Tully comments "the long reign of the Nehru-Gandhi family after independence indicates that Penderel Moon was right when in the 'Conclusion' to *Strangers in India* he wrote of 'the deep seated Indian respect for authority and for hereditary rights'"² indicates that Moon was right in understanding the criteria that in developing countries autocracy is a better system than democracy.

Though records show the number of deaths, exchange of people, rape, forced conversion, abduction of women and children by the males of other communities,

² Moon, Penderel. 'Introduction to *Divide and Quit*', from *The Partition Omnibus* p-viii

murder of girls in a household in order to retain the purity and more, but it would fail to comprehend with the psychic terror and traumatic feeling that is adhered to the stigma of the bereaved families of all communities of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs where there was no assimilation of relationships "...the bonds of relationship were in tatters, and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan"³ and such emotional attachments can be recovered from pages of living dialogues and partition literature. Literature has "stepped in at least partly, to record the full horror of partitionIn one sense, it can be considered a kind of social history not only because it so approximates reality (what Alok Rai calls "a hypnotic, fascinated but also slavish invitation of reality") but because it is the only non – official contemporary record we have of the time, apart from reportage."⁴ In literature of partition we will feel the ambivalence, the traumas and the series of bereavements that have been encountered by communities and their families and lastly by the gender where the targeted once are the females. At times critics and writers have claimed Partition narratives as male narratives where the 'self' has always dominated sadistically in order to fulfil their desire of de - neutralising the 'other'. The experience of Partition from living voices as recorder in articles by scholars dealing with partition narratives like Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Menon, Urvashi Batulia and others re-instigates the actuality of partition and the horror that people of all communities have delved through during the years of partition. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin puts it that the human experience of Partition "went

³ Chugtai, Ismat. *My Friend, My Enemy: Essays, Reminiscences, Portraits*. p-3

⁴ Sarvar, V Sherry Chand. 'Manto's "Open It", Engendering Partition Narratives'. *EPW*, Jan 28, 2006, pp-6-7

unrecorded, unverballed ; historical truth precisely in its power to represent”, and this is precisely what Deepa Mehta’s *1947 Earth* has tried to show and made to be felt through synchronised structure of transgressing the novel of Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy- Man* in to a major film *1947 Earth* revolving around the years of India getting partitioned. The film is extremely powerful and works as much through what it deliberately leave unsaid and through what it actually says. The film *1947 Earth* has encapsulated a refined portrayal and amalgamation of the various religious communities who until partitioned had stayed jointly but the certain spark of dividing India into two had led to the misappropriation of lives souls and wealth “...the event lives on our minds, not so much through historical records as through the tales that are told and retold, particularly in north Indian families, of the horror and brutality of the time, the friends and relatives who continue to live across the border, the visits to old ancestral homes , much of this creating a yearning for a mostly mythical – harmonious past where Hindus , Sikhs and Muslims lived happily together , something that we continued to hold on to in the face of an increasingly communal present.”⁵

If we look in to the socio-political history of Punjab in the second half of the 1920’s we witness a kind of wave in Punjab receding from the ideal of an inclusionary nationalism towards an apparently unbending kind of exclusionary communitarianism. This can be judged from the proposed solution to the problem of contested sovereignty in Punjab in the year 1924 by none other than Lala Lajpat Rai,

⁵ Butalia, Urvashi. ‘Community, State and Gender: On Women’s Agency during Partition’. *EPW*, Apr 24, 1993, WS – 13.

the pre-eminent Hindu nationalist of that region who sought to partition that province in order to make the principle of majority rule effective which was relentlessly brought in to motion by the leaders of the League especially the Ali brothers and Mohammed Iqbal. But with the emergence of this majoritarianism in the Province of Punjab the seeds of communitarian politics has spread its wings and talks on partition of “Hindustan –Pakistan plan was announced on June 3,1947 whereby a new political entity, Pakistan, was created of which west Pakistan was to comprise the Muslim-majority provinces of Sind, the North –West Frontier Provinces (NWPF) and 16 districts of undivided Punjab were to be part of India. Although the exact boundary line between the two countries had still to be determined by the Boundary Commission, the exchange of populations had started taking place even before August 15.”⁶

March unissoo saitalis main mei umar aath baras ki hogi , main Lahore main thi. British Raj ki buniyaadi hil rahi thi, lekin saath hi hamari zameen batrawe ke badte kadam ki dhamak bhi suun rahi thi; Hindustan aur Pakistan ka batwara. Hindu, Musulman , Sikh, jo sadiyon se mile jhule samaj main jee rahe the , achanak Hindustan ki zameen se apne apne hisse mangne lage, aur phir August unisso saitalis , angreezi samraj ne apne kalam iss mulk ki khoon main dubokain , hamari zameen par hamesha hamesha ke liyeek lakeer khich di...

⁶ Bhasin, Kamla and Ritu Menon. ‘Recovery, Rupture, Resistance’. *EPW* Apr 24 1993. WS-3.

(In March 1947, I was eight years old and was in Lahore. The British Raj was planning to leave, but simultaneously the division of our land was also at stake; the division of India in to Hindustan and Pakistan. Hindu, Muslims, Sikhs - who have stayed together for centuries, suddenly started claiming about their share of land. And then, in August 1947 the British sanctioned Partition at the cost of our blood and a permanent line was hence stretched...).

The movie 1947Earth directed by the Canadian based director Deepa Mehta opens in Lahore of 1947 before India and Pakistan got partitioned. The setting of the movie is revolved around the character of Lenny (Maia Sethna) an old Parsee girl who is young; brace legged and is looked after by her beautiful ayah Shanta (Nandita Das). She was admired by all men of the *moholla* (locale) belonging to different communities because of her friendly nature and attractive contours of her body, which she clandestinely revealed. Shanta falls in love with Hasan (Rahul Khanna) who by profession is a masseur, but likes Dil Nawaz(Aamir Khan) too but doesn't love him, who is known as 'Ice-Candy-Man' or 'Ice-Candy-walla' in the film. Shanta's life is pleasant and calm as is shown in the film for she lives in a wealthy parsee household run by Lenny's mother Bunty (Kitu Gidwani) and her officious father. The whole onset of fragmentation of 1947 Earth is symbolically is represented in the first scene of the film where the braced-legged eight year old

Parsee girl takes a plate and smash it on the floor and hence the characters gets themselves introduced ...

Lenny: Mummy can one break a country? What happens if the English make India warehouses? How will I get to the park then?

Bunty: No one is going to break India. Where did you hear this? [There's some silence]

Shanta: *Baijee! Baijee maine suna hai , angreez azadi dene se pehle ek bahot bara canal khodenge, ek side pe Hindustan aur dusri side Pakistan . Abb agar unko do mulk banana hai to yehi karna paraga, hai na baijee?* (Madam! Madam, I heard that before giving independence the British are going to make a huge canal, where on one side there will be Hindustan and on the other side Pakistan. Now if they want to make two nations they have to do this. Isn't it Madam?)

The psyche of Lenny and her understanding of the aftermath of partition via the breaking of the clay plate is deliberate for it impinges the setting of the plot construction of the film which certainly is not the kind featured in the novel, with Shanta saying: "*madam ji angreez ek canal khodne wali hai.....*" and here the formal talk regarding the division of India is encountered. But for Lenny, the trouble first appears in her Lahore home when an argument between Mr. Singh (Gulshan Grover) a Sikh neighbour and Mr. Rogers, a British Inspector General of

Police who comes to dine at Lenny's residence and a discussion regarding partition leads to antagonism amongst them

Mr. Singh: Finally we will have self-rule.

Mr. Rogers: You think you are way up to your own work?

Mr. Singh: Why not? *mian to tumhe aur tumhare desh ko bech doon.*[in anger] (if possible I will sell you and your county along). Why do you think *hum* (we) self-rule *nahi karsaktain hai?* (Why do you think that we can't rule ourselves?)

Mr. Rogers: if we quit India today you bloody will fall on each other's throats. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs will champ for power.

The plot of the film proceeds with Shanta taking Lenny for a a walk in the nearby Queens park where admirers of Shanta from all communities used to gather in order to praise Shantas beauty and come up with episodes to woo her. Dil Nawaz the ice-candy- wala dedicates *shairi* ,prose pieces ,in praise of Shanta bai and indeed the depiction of their gathering itself acted as a self -regulating lubricant of discussion relating the division of India and its outcomes. They discussed about the role of the League, the Congress and the Raj in view of partition. Even "South Asians readers everywhere from colleges and universities to the platform of Indian History

Congress – still earnestly desire to understand a lot more about the triangular narrative, with the British, Congress and the League occupying centre Stage.”⁷

David Page in discussing the dynamics of Partition and the role of the Raj and the Congress party and the Raj’s support to the League comments “in the consolidation of political interests around communal issues, the Imperial power played an important role. By locating the Muslims as a separate group, it divided them from other Indians by granting them separate electorates, it institutionalised that division. This was one of the most crucial factors in the development of communal politics. Muslim politicians did not have to appeal to Muslims .This made it very difficult for a genuine nationalism to emerge.”⁸

As the discussion gets heated up amongst them in the Queen’s Park, Shanta who has leaves in the middle of the discussion regarding the politics and its affiliates on partition as she plays a genial role where she is against such kind of dichotomy between the various communities of India. It is a point to be noted that though Shanta is a Hindu and is in love with Hasan who is a Muslim, the reversal role of conversion comes from the side of Hasan who after asks Shanta whether she wants to marry her or not and was keen enough to convert himself to Hinduism such that they can stay together as husband and wife, but their dreams gets shattered for Hasan is shown to have been murdered where the colour of murder has been given a communal paradigm for it was only Lenny and Dil Nawaz who has actually seen Hasan and Shanta making union .The unpredictability of revenge is shown

⁷ Hasan, Mushirul. ‘Introduction’, *The Partition Omnibus*. New Delhi: Oxford, 2002.

⁸ Page,David. *Prelude to Partition* . *The Partition Omnibus*. New Delhi: OUP, 2002. p-260

clandestinely anis understood from the progression of the movie. The movie 1947 Earth in its due unfolding its cinematography has shown clearly the cataclysmic activities that have taken shape in the name of religion and of course in due process to form a new state of Pakistan. The slogans which were there in the procession hoisted by the supporters of the League in the film actually projects the history and its records which have been recorded .In the film the slogans “Pakistan Zindabad” and “ Hindustan Murdabad” actually goes in opposition with the slogans as Anita Inder Singh comments “between Nov 1946 and February 1947, the League’s attitude to the Interim Government, its attempt to overthrow by force the Unionist Ministry in Punjab, its refusal to enter the Constituent Assembly and to accept the Cabinet Mission plan of 16 may 1946- all signified its intent to achieve Pakistan.”⁹

Infact , “the fixing of a terminal date for the Raj in the 20th February statement , far from leading to an agreement between the League and the Congress ,proved the signal for an attempt to carve out Pakistan by direct action by the League.”¹⁰ the demonstrations that has been shown by the Muslims in the film suggests that the League wanted a separate state for themselves on the basis of community belonging but that a communal feeling also took shape in the mind of the Hindu and Sikhs cannot be given off. “On 4th march Hindu and Sikhs students took out a procession through the main part of Lahore shouting ‘Pakistan Murdabad , ‘Jinnah Murdabad’ and according to Dawn, ‘Allah-o-Akbar Murdabad.’”¹¹

⁹ Singh, Anita Inder. *Prelude to Partition* .ch-7, p-203

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pg -216

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chapter 8. ‘The Origins of the Partition of India 1936-1947’

As the film progress with its plot certain episodes becomes clear. Like the Partition of India is inevitable ,that Lahore will be in Pakistan and the division will be made on the basis of majority population in the province of Punjab and hence the entire question of nationalism came to be questioned. If at all the country is being divided on religious grounds where lays the essence of democracy, of secularism? As Ayesha Jalal comments that “The pre-eminent view of Indian nationalism has been that of an inclusionary, accomodative, consensual and popular anti-colonial struggle. This has entailed denigrating the exclusive affinities of religion as ‘communal’ in an imagined hierarchy of collectivities crowned by the ideal of a ‘nation’ unsullied by narrow minded bigotry.”¹²

Hasan and Shanta getting closer actually brought rage and angst in Dil Nawaz’s character and though he was in love with Shanta who is a Hindu he passed comments showing his affinity favouring Partition and his subtle biasness towards the Mislum League and its deeds created hatred in Shanta’s heart and she started hating Dil Nawaz for his comments

Dil Nawaz: *Woh dekh Shalmii jal rahi hai . Woh gaya . Woh barood jo who humare liye jama kiya tha. [fire brigade arrives] inhone to wahan par petrol chirak diyahai. Saala musullman hoga [he looks at Shanta and she gets astonished] (Look, Shalmi is burning. See the explosion ,it must have been those that they have kept for us.[the fire brigade arrives] they have sprinkled petrol...must be Musullman ...*

¹² Jalal, Ayesha. ‘Nation, Reason and Religion: Punjab’s Role in the Partition of India’. *EPW* p-2183

validating communal flavour . When a train filled up with dead bodies of Muslims arrive from Lahore the various sects who have stayed together for years turn against each other and the city is soon in flame .Further more communal riot and the exodus of people interchange their land as the film calls it ‘the largest and most terrible exchange of population in history’. Nobody knows how many were killed in partition violence or how many were displaced and dispossessed. It is estimated that during the years 1946 and 1951 over nine million Hindus and Sikhs came to India , five million out of which came from what became West Pakistan and four million from East Pakistan and six million Muslims went to Pakistan. But during the communal riot relating to partition the upheaval of lives and property was mostly affected and “...the bonds of relationship were in tatters , and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan.”¹³

After partition it seems that the entire notion of nationalism gets questioned at the cost of the lives of the dead and the living who have witnessed partition through their naked eyes and it is via the medium of oral discourse that partition narratives gets to embolden its heroes who emerge in the riot torn cities and its their exemplary courage , counterpoised to the inhumanity of the killers that gets celebrated. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin argues in providing justice to actual partition discourse and comments that “the literature that has appeared during the last decade or so points to the possibilities of charting new territories , and breaking force from the boundaries defined by partition historiography. Using fiction to portray the other face of freedom, and introducing poignant and powerful gender

¹³ Chughtai, Ismat. *My Friend, My Enemy: Essays, Reminiscences, Portraits*. p-3

narratives has, likewise, triggered lively discussions that go far beyond the limited terrain explored during the last few decades.”¹⁴

The division of India into two separate independent nations has thrown signals of bringing into eminence the oppositions and conflicts between nationalism and regionalism, dictatorship and democracy, secularism and Islam. With the Muslim League and its aftermath there was a subtlety of political insurgency leading to an entirely separatist agenda of division on the basis of religion where the entire nationalist agenda relegating provincialism and regionalism is contested at the primal level.

Until the emergence of subaltern history there was this biasness to look into the ongoing traditionality attacking nationalist historiography where the nurturing of institutions and leaders of a particular ideological parameter were taken into account who were at per se aligned to the hierarchy of power where the rest of the citizens were subjected to accustom the already prevailing power structures of the ruling nationalists who were in a position to provide freedom to its citizens. That was the phase where autocracy was prevailing over the subdued notion of democracy, but, with the emergence of the subaltern challenge the porous structures surrounding the marginalised and their voices has been taken into account in order to keep in pace the ongoing legacy of nationalism with its motley and variegated colours. The subaltern history has moreover challenged the entire notions of secularism, nationalism and its belonging structures keeping them aloof from the

¹⁴ Menon, Ritu and Kamla Bhasin. *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. New Delhi, 1998.

general accepted notions already radicalised by the European and American notion of defining terminologies which doesn't fit in the cultural matrix of India . “ The Indian meanings of ‘secularism’ did not emerge in ignorance of the European or American meanings of the word....in its current usage in India , with apparently well-defined ‘Indian’ referents , the loud and often acrimonious Indian debate on ‘secularism’ is never entirely innocent of its western genealogies. To pretend that the ‘Indian’ meaning of secularism has marked out a conceptual world all of its own , untroubled by its differences with ‘western’ secularism is to take an ideological position which refuses either to recognise or to justify its own grounds.”¹⁵ One has to believe that whether its secularism, nationalism or socialism – these western concepts that have been accepted in the constitutional parameters of India cannot actually be practised in practicality in the multifaceted socio-politico and cultural spectrum of India, for these definitions are culture specific and vary. Recollecting ideas of Plato on democracy he explains that *demos* (gk) means ‘majority’ and so the minority entities cannot be taken in due charge for it is always the majority whose voice or stand is taken in to force and hence ‘democracy’ in all its embolden structures becomes fake and regenerate other adversaries challenging ‘majority’ and hence democracy can be charged of intimidation as it goes against the voice of the minority. Partha Chatterjee claims that “Nationalism has arrived ; it has now constituted itself into a state ideology ; it has appropriated the life of the nation into

¹⁵ Chatterjee, Partha .*Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World, A Derivative Discourse.* New Delhi 1986, p-166-161

the life of the state.”¹⁶ So according to Chatterjee’s analysis the nation is hence unable to resolve the issues which still persists and are reclaimed as products of an incomplete revolution re-instigating peasant populism or ethnic separatism and “bear the marks of the people- nation struggling in an inchoate , undirected and unequal battle against forces which have sought to dominate it.”¹⁷

That the leaders of the Indian national movement were secular cannot wholly be taken in to account for we have discussed Lala Lajpat Rai’s role of majoritative politics in Punjab , Nehru representing the Indian bourgeoisie whose vision for India was particularly different from Gandhi whose book *Swaraj* or *Home Rule* may be read as an antithesis to Nehru’s vision. It could be noticed that right from late 19th century the concepts of nation and community had overlapped and India had been seen as a political entity encapsulating divergences straight-jacketed in acclaiming itself as a nation through porosity of it’s enabling togetherness cudgelling ethno-cultural and religious bifurcations. It would not be just to comment that the nationalists of India who fought against the Raj were secular for Gyanendra Pandey comments on Gandhi’s secretarian and separatist attitude on the Ali brothers “ the brave brothers are staunch lovers of their country, but they are Mussulmans first and everything else afterwards. It must be so with every religious minded man.”¹⁸ Such sayings indicted by Nationalists can always be questioned relating the atmosphere that prevails in India and the ongoing thirst for identity and its repercussions, which

¹⁶ Chatterjee, Partha. ‘Secularism and Toleration’. *EPW* July 9 1994 .p-1769

¹⁷ Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*. New Delhi 1997, pp-238-9

¹⁸ Pandey, Gyanendra. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, New Delhi 1990. p-238

keeps multiplying with change of seasons. It was only after 1920's that Hindu and Muslim communal organizations came in to force and established its importance and that the Congress leaders begin to characterise communalism as an antithesis of nationalism – the result of colonial manipulation which will disappear only with independence but which still predominates in the country and will whatsoever and howsoever situations tend to shape for the psyche of people cannot change.

In 1947 Earth where the onset and the aftermath of Partition has been projected through the eyes and the upbringing of Lenny and her experiences with her life witnessing the massacres and the burning of the locales of both Hindu and Muslims and the tragic way of dissecting people reinforces the cult of bestiality in human beings. The film has enrolled in its settings the fate of the characters like Shanta, Pappo (the untouchable girl), Hassan, Hari and others. Pappoo's character is interesting for both Lenny and Pappoo being of the same age were not introduced to the same kind of treatment from their parents. Pappoo, is shown to have been getting married to a man far above her age and hence it shows the still dominating culture where women are still forced to submit themselves. The film focus and order in its discourse the aftermath and the result of partition on Shanta - who represents the affected whole of women being abducted during Partition. Shanta is shown to have been taken as captive by the Muslims whose conquering of a Hindu woman represents a miniature representation of the unfortunate women who have been abducted by people from the 'other' community and Lenny becomes the living voice and dialogue-a living artefact of history representing the fate of emerging history.

Lenny's character has to be studied carefully for she is the resultant of Partition and that she is the biography written by Bapsi Sidhwa and that "the starting point is. It then draws upon a whole range of other material which is either invented or heard from others."¹⁹ The abduction of Shanta is a strong contender of unpredictability and deceptiveness and the estrangement of the character of Dil Nawaz for whom community belonging and community consciousness was more relevant than personal relationship

Dil Nawaz : *haton yahan se , haton . yea sab kya ho rah hai ? kya ho raha hai yea ha. Kya tamasha laga rakha hai? Chalo dafa ho yahan se. Chalo niklo.* [Lenny moves towards Dil Nawaz] *thik hai Baijee.* [Says to Bunty with some assurance] *Ro mat Lenny baby, main aa gaya* [looks at Lenny] *mujhe maloom hai kiss cheez se Lenny baby par muskurahat aayagi. Kesri?* [Lenny nods her head, Dil Nawaz lifts her up on his lap and asks] *Lenny Baby mujhe baton ayah kahan hai ? Main uske liye aya hoon . Woh yehi hai na ? Tum jaante ho main uske liye kuch bhi kar sakta hun . Kahan hai woh ?* (Move, go away. What is all this? What is happening? What do you think you are doing? Go away . I said move. It's Ok Madam. Don't cry Lenny Baby , I am here. I know what is it you like the most? Kesar right? Lenny Baby you tell me where is Ayah? I have come for her. She is here isn't? You know I can do anything for her. Where is she?)

¹⁹ Bhalla, Alok. *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home*. OUP 2006. p-223

Lenny: *Aandar, mummy ki bedroom main.* (She is in mummy's bedroom).

Dil Nawaz: *Aandar hai woh* [informs the mob] (she is inside).

Lenny: *Ice-candy wala, ice-candy wala, main jhooth bol rahi hun. Who Amritsar chali gayi , main jhooth bol raha hoon . Woh Amritsar chali gayi, main jhooth bol rahi hoon...*[and Lenny's voice fades as the mob carries away Shanta with Dil Nawaz taking charge of the carriage]. (Ice-candy-Wala, ice-candy-wala I am lying. She has gone back to Amritsar,I was lying . She has left for Amritsar ...)

It is seen that Partition with all its violence and dislocation has been and still is a spectre at the feast . The lost lives in the cataclysmic massacres of partition and the traumas of the survivors have reinforced the ideologies of nationalism justifying centralisation of power and the suppression of challenges to it helped to create a division between the two states and their people. Women authors have commented upon partition as a 'male narrative' and such research on women have come in to force after the massacres of Sikh in Delhi after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Partition " retains its pre-eminence even today , despite a couple of wars on our borders and the wave after wave of communal violence. It marks a watershed as much in people's consciousness as in the lives of those who were uprooted and had to find themselves again , elsewhere."²⁰

²⁰ Menon, Ritu and Kamla Bhasin , 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and the Abductions of Women during Partition'. *EPW*, Apr 28, 1993. WS-2.

The shortening of space between Shanta and Hasan and the deliberate shifting of Dil Nawaz from the triangular love and hate triangle subsumes ultimately to the murder of Hasan who gave word to marry Shanta and that they will fled to Amritsar and that Hasan for his love will convert himself to Hinduism .The relation and the time for both Shanta and Hasan were going smooth and they had plans to settle and spend the rest of their lives together but fate wasn't in their favour and they arrested themselves to the hands of fate succumbing to partition and its aftermath. Though in Parsee household there were Muslim attendants like Imandin (Khulbhusan Kharbanda) and Hari who forced himself to convert to Islam in order to save his life from the clutches of the riot and the conversion of Papoo's father in to Christianity does reveal the same kind of psychological terror of losing life. Even the unpredictable betrayal of Dil Nawaz to Lenny and the resultant abduction of Shanta attest to the vociferous attitude of the ice-candy-man who became lethal in retaliating to his family's death and thus show his true colour in all its nakedness. The closing scene of the movie *1947 Earth* , is powerful to the fact that the 'other' as a joyous victory of a community abducts Shanta. Abduction of women "was simultaneously an assertion of identity and a humiliation of the rival community through the appropriation of its women. Women accompanied by forcible conversion and marriage , it could be counted upon the outrage both , family and community honour and religious sentiments . The fear of abduction , or of falling in to the hands of the enemy compelled hundreds of women to take their own lives , equal numbers to the killed by their own families and literally thousands of others to carry packets of

poison on their persons in the eventuality that they might be captured . and many committed suicide after they were released by their captors for having been thus ‘used ‘ and polluted.’”²¹

The film *1947 Earth* ends with a note that Shanta was seen somewhere in Lucknow as a *bai* (courtesan). The movie sheds colour of pain, angst horror - a discourse of the actuality consummating the upheavals of dispossession, of communal violence, of realignment of family, community and national identities as people were forced to accommodate and accept the dramatically altered reality that now prevailed. It would be unjust of not to claim the unrest episodes that have surpassed women during the year of partition and “ that in times of communal strife they are at the receiving end of violence as its victims, it is their homes that have been destroyed, their bodies violated, their men killed and they are left with the task of rebuilding the community.”²² The aftermath of Partition has recommended evidence of what exactly happened on women each through the state were in a position to ‘recover’ and ‘rehabilitate’ women. “ The violence women experienced took particular forms; there are accounts of innumerable rapes, of women being stripped naked and paraded down streets, of their being cut off, of their bodies being carved with religious symbols the other community”. “Not only these abducted women were often sold from hand to hand and were ill used by their captors...These girls of tender years of not being able to settle down anywhere, nor will they be able to settle down for many years. Their youth is being sold for a few thousand, and

²¹ *Ibid.* , WS-3.

²² Butalia, Urvashi. ‘Community, State and Gender: On Women’s Agency during Partition’. *EPW* WS-13

lustful men, having satisfied their lust for a while begin to think of the momentary benefit that could come from their sale.”²³ But here arrives the issue of gender roles and its subversive effort that persisted at the time of Partition and is still a question of patriarchal supremacy which was incapable to usher its role in bringing back the female of their household and hence they had to seek the help of the state from both halves of the partitioned country in order to seek justice aligned to their collapse in rescuing women. The silence surrounding such issues is directly related in questioning identity of agency, of religion and of sexuality.

Lenny’s soliloquy...

Angreezi samraj ke dhaiso baras baad hamari aankhon ke samne kya tha? Ek mulk jiski tukde ho gaya ? ...katleam , lootmar , kidnapping, zulm aur uski badle aur zulm . Pachaas baras guzri jab main apni ayaah ko anjaane main dhoka diya tha . Baad main kabhi uske bare main suna ki uski shaadi ice-candy wala ki saath ho gayi thi aur kabhi suna ki usko Lahore ki kisi kothe pe dekha gaya tha . Ek baar koi kehe raha tha ki who Amritsar main hai, lekin maine apni ayaah ko uss din ke baad kabhi nahi dekha.....unisso saitalis ki uss din ke baad jab maine apni ayaah ko apne wajood , apne dil ka ek hissa hamesha ke liye kho diya tha.....” (What is left after two hundred and fifty years of British rule? A Nation in parts? ...Murder, loot, kidnapping, injustice retaliated with further injustice. Fifty years have passed

²³ *Ibid.*, WS-14.

since I unintentionally breached my Ayah. Later on I heard that she was married to ice-candy-man, and at times I heard that she was seen in a brothel at Lahore. Once somebody was saying that she is in Amritsar , but after that day I didn't see my Ayah for once...after that day of 1947 when forever I lost a part of my soul...).

The novel Ice-Candy-Man ends its plot by remembering the lost days of Lenny's childhood and so is the film but the novel Lenny is told that “ Ayah, at last has gone to her family in Amritsar ...And Ice-candy-man , too , disappears across the Wagah border in to India.”²⁴

²⁴ Sidhwa, Bapsi. *The Ice-Candy Man*. Penguin, New Delhi. 1988 p-277

Chapter 3

The Dream of the Nation Gone Sour: Reading *Hindustani*

Hindustani (1996)

Tagline: 'The biggest Indian film ever made'

Director: S.Shankar

Writer: S. Shankar (story)

Sujatha (dialogue)

Producer: A.M. Rathnam

Music: A.R.Rahman

Cinematography: Jeeva

Also known as: *Bharateeyudu* (Telugu)

Indian (Tamil)

Hindustani (1996) with a tagline of 'The biggest Indian film ever made', directed by S. Shankar has been released on the Indian screen in three languages in India – Tamil, Telugu and Hindi and my concern is the third in the series of languages. The departure of this chapter and specially this film revolves round the variation of the present state of bribery and the helpless struggle of the contending middle-class to make themselves subject to the inept attitudinal hierarchy that exists in the Indian society and the helplessness that this particular class is suffering. The film brought primacy to my concern as it ushers openings to look in to the systematic arrangement and the editing of the late 1940's era of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and the palimpsestical methodology that have been used in order to relate the past with the present and intermingling the two. The film, like other films of India looks in to the crux and the polity and the ongoing role of Government officials to enhance the already pre existing structure of mis-appropriating wealth. The common man is

under tremendous pressure to review his conceptions about politics, politicians and national priorities. Maniratnam's *Roja* (1992) and *Bombay* (1995), which were too made in Tamil and later on, dubbed in to Hindi smashed all-India records and have made good profits out of it. All these three films have an all India theme and an issue and reveal pulp patriotism in all its vanity and full measure. Look to the cryptologist hero of *Roja*, dousing a burning flag rolling over it to the ground and the plot revolves around the emerging terrorism of Kashmir and how the hero escapes under a deal amongst the terrorist and the army. The film comprehends with the aftermath of 1989 Indian political scenario; the releasing of terrorists as a ransom to the release of the hero. Similarly, Maniratnam's *Bombay* revolves around the pulp-secularism trying to bring unity amongst the two communities of the Hindus and the Muslims by unleashing middle class sentimentality. S. Shankar's *Hindustani* aligns itself on the commitment of a freedom fighter with enabling self-righteous patriotic neurosis. Shankar, the director has meticulously built a parallel contemporary in the film. To save the system from overall collapse we see only one wing of the state judiciary displaying 'activism'. The message intended is clear and that there still is hope. One arm of the state can take charge of cleansing the whole unwanted weeds. We are shown that the top to bottom officials whether its Police, Govt., RTO are fuelled with corruption. But the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), is full of impeccable officers further strengthening the fact and the will power of the citizens that we still have hope. The film epitomises the fact that the Indian Government has up to date information of all radicals and terrorists either of the past or the present. The film

Hindustani, to my knowledge has at its best schematised the role of the Indian and through the character of Senapathy has added zeal and have assured on us Indians that there is and always will be people who can take charge of our country.

The film have brought in to our vicinity the adjunct role of what the freedom fighters have done for our future and the patriotic fervour of India is hence challenged, challenging the aftermath of independence. The struggle against social evils, the awakening of the oppressed castes, the rise of peasants and workers against social oppression and inequalities, the demand for industrialization of India and the introduction of modern science and technology- all became an integral part of our freedom struggle and seeking these dreams to be true is what our freedom fighters have fought - in a way of building a nation where all sections of society can be under one roof, but the present situation is dubious and is challenging Nationalism. Talking of nationalism, of whose definition is being widely debated now days, today we have become self-centered and we think only of ourselves. Every one thinks he should be alive and should be happy for oneself, but true happiness lies in the happiness of others 'for the goal of life is happiness'.

The film opens with a sewage cleansing machine where the roads are been shown to have been cleaned and thereafter the map of India, probably a news paper cutting hung on an iron door, and the film unfolds its plot by a discussion where a person is asked to go to the respective department in order to get a 'certificate of death' and when he asks as to why he has to pay hundred rupees to the department,

in order to get his job done. He is being given an example of bringing out milk from a cow and that its not possible without applying oil which metaphorically applies for both the civilised and the domestic and that human beings now a days are no less than animals and that if one has to get ones job one has to feed the corrupt officials which have engulfed the whole Nation and there by the entire question of independence, freedom and the dream that our freedom fighters have dreamt of has been miscalculated and that the orders of the day are bribery and corruption and misappropriation of wealth . S. Shankar, the director of *Hindustani* (1996) deals with the present situation of India and how a freedom fighter named Senapathy (Kamal Hasan) takes a bold step to deracinate corruption and to fill in the minds of Indians to fight against the present order of discord. The plot of *Hindustani* revolves around the story of an old man representing the earlier generation of the late 1950's and their values with which they live, and have drawn parallel with the present generation who are unaware of what and how much have the freedom fighters struggled in order to free India from the clutches of the British. The world around him has literally changed and has overtaken him and his shared values. The present generation has engulfed in to the already existing notion of the West and that without which there exists a nullifying space precariously situated on the brims of Gandhian traditionality and Nehruvian modernity. Senapathy (literally means the commander of a wing) , the hero of the film ,who accomplished his footage and his continuing war first to free India from the British and now has resumed and resurrected his self to fight corruption . He is shown in the film as an INA (*Indian National Army*)

veteran who receives an invitation from the INA. Subhas Chandra Bose the Chief of the INA attempted to lead a radical revival of the Congress and tried to steer it in a more radical and socialist direction. In 1939, he defeated M. K. Gandhi's nominee Pattabhi Sitaramayya to be re-elected as the Congress president. But he was ill prepared to deal with a campaign of non-cooperation launched against him by Gandhi, and resigned a few months later to launch an alternative and more radical platform that eventually became the Forward Block in independent India.

The outbreak of the Second World War opened up a new and more determined phase of the struggle against British rule. In 1939 and 1940, strikes and peasant uprisings reached a fever pitch. The year 1941 recollects the historical time and space of the *Indian National Army* (INA) when it was launched by General Mohan Singh in Malaya with the help of the Japanese. He belonged to Sialkot (Punjab, now in Pakistan) and had been greatly influenced by the killings of Jallianwala Bagh massacre and hangings of the Ghadar Party members during his younger years. In 1943, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose (who had always been close to the armed revolutionaries of Bengal) took over the *Indian National Army* and it was renamed as the *Azad Hind Fauj*. More than two million Indian civilians living in South-East Asia responded to his call for “total-mobilization.” In his army of liberation Punjabi, Muslim, Sikh and Pathan professional soldiers fought side by side with Tamil and Malayali rubber plantation workers. In his Azad Hind Movement Netaji was able to demonstrate by example how to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity and amity and enable women to get their rightful role in public affairs. The recent film

on Netaji by Shyam Benegal has tried to focus on the labour and the stern decision of Netaji to fight against the British with arms and appealed to the citizens of his country ' *tum mujhe khoon do , main tumhe azadi dunga,* ' you give me blood , I will give you freedom, and his remarkable 'Dilli Chalho' at every cost turn the nerves on and makes us feel nostalgic about the forgotten past of a Nation's cry for freedom .

Senapathy: [directing towards Namrata]. *INA main jaane ka bichaar hai mera . Mera neta Subhash Chandra Bose Singapore main hai. Singapore se hamari Azaad Hind Fauz rawana hoke , Burma border se hoke , Imphal se India main ghusegi..... aur Dilli pahuch ke Goron pe humla karegi . Iske liye mujhe bhi nimantran aaya hai . (I have thought of joining the INA. My leader Subhash Chandra Bose is in Singapore. From Singapore our Azad Hind Fauz will enter India by crossing the borders of Burma and then through Imphal...and after reaching Delhi will attack the British, and I have received an invitation for this).*

Senapathy, his wife Namrata , and their heirs Chandru (Kamal Hasan) and Kastoori were living happily . Chandru asks for twenty thousand from his dad in order to get a job by second hand means but Chandru is refused and he leaves leave the house and goes to the city where he finds a temporary job. Chandru , joins as a smalltime broker outside the RTO (Road Transport office) who gets people licences etc. for hefty sums. He is supported in this work by his crony Goundamani . Chandru is in

love with Aishwarya (Manisha Koirala) who is a member of an organisation named *Blue Star* which is an organisation against cruelty to animals. Sapna (Urmila Matondkar) is the daughter of a high level officer in the RTO. Her Dad promises to get Chandru a good job if he runs errands for them. He agrees to work for them. The news that Chandru has got a job is received by Senapathy and Kastoori , Chandru's sister was very happy but amidst this happiness a catastrophe happens and Kastoori accidentally gets burned and Senapathy and Namrata takes her to the hospital and there by Senapathy faces the pain and was sorry to witness the state of corruption . At the Government hospital the doctor demands, money if not given , he wouldn't treat without an FIR. At the police station the inspector demands money for an FIR . If not paid , he insists on a report from village secretary. The Village Secretary wants money and Senapathy says....

Senapathy: *Mere pass paise hai de sakta hoon , garib ka kya hoga.* (I have money and can pay ,but what about the poor).

Village officer : *Garib jiye to kya mare to kya ?* (Who cares about the poor).

Senapathy gets aghast of the situation and goes back to the hospital and finds her daughter dead as treatment was not given to her . His life gets shattered , he collapses. His thought is directed at the root cause of his predicament . He decides to fight against this corruption and plans to deracinate the cause of corruption –bribe . Being a farmer, he he wants to deweed his farm the Nation ...

Senapathy : *Aaj desh ko hara bhara rakhne wale adhikari log khar patwar banke ugg rahe hai . Is desh ko sudharna hai to who kharpatwar hatani hogi. dharm nayay , saare jahan se aacha swatantrata divas samahroh , inki samarahoh inki zaroorat nahi haiDusre hatihar aapnana honge. Darr, saza ka darr, iski zaroorat hai(The ones to whom the machinery of the state has been deployed to look after it are vitiating the atmosphere , and one has to stop it . there is no need of showing off that we are independentOne has to take other machanisms . Fear , the fear of punishment , is what should be imposed now).*

Senapathy becomes adamant to take and to abide by the thought that he has been thinking off and comes to the battlefield to defeat the forces that have been promulgating corruption and vices in all fields of the society . Senapathy is skilled in the ancient martial art *Kalaripayttu* that cause fatal effect . One after another he targets his victims and kills them for a noble cause . He starts his mission by killing the Commissioner of Corporation in an attempt to root out corruption . Ministers , Government officials and the Police are appalled. Senapati gets hold of the doctor who refused to attend to his daughter and records the killing of the doctor and is accidently forecasted in TV. Nedumudi Venu is an intelligence officer out to nab Senapati and is in sole charge of it . He manages to somehow trace his way to

Senapati's house and finds Senapathy posing as an ex freedom fighter. Archived newspaper reports say that Senapati was an INA soldier who was an extremist. Senapati's wife (Namrata) is asked what Senapati did to deserve a freedom fighter tag, and at this point, we are taken to the 1940s.

Vaidyaswami : [the intelligence officer in mask who comes to arrest Senapati] *Gunda tyagi ban raha hai* [directing to Namrata] (Now an extremist is trying to be a gentleman) .

Namrata: *Kisko Gunda bola tune ? Who kyon hai maloom hai tujhe ? Swatantrata wala yuddh kya tha malum hai tujhe ?* (Whom did you refer to as a gunda ? Do you know who is he ? Do you have any idea of what the National Movement was all about ?)

We are thereby taken to the 1940's and are shown the kind of struggle that our predecessors have encountered in order to gain independence . Namrata is shown in the film as a nationalist who used to disperse the message of freedom movement via her puppet show. The entire construction of the puppet show is very significant for the cause where the statement ' action speaks louder than words' is validated . If we look in to the history of Indian freedom struggle we can decipher the agencies that have been brought in to force by the native intellectuals , who were successful in sending the message combat against imperialism and its agenda via novels , poetry and other such means where Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Anandamath* stands

un- paralleled from wher the *bani* (phrase) *Vande Mataram* have been taken and still lingers in the Saffron brigade of Indian politics .*Vande Mataram* is the national song of this country . The song first appeared in Bankim's book *Anandamath*, published in 1882 amidst fear of a ban by the British , though the song itself was actually written six years prior in 1876. "*Vande Mataram*" was the national cry for freedom from British oppression during the freedom movement. Large rallies, fermenting initially in West Bengal and which later on got dispersed in the other major metropolis of India , worked themselves up into a patriotic fever by shouting the slogan "*Vande Mataram*," or "Hail to the Mother(land)!". The British, fearful of the potential danger and its upcoming effects of an incited Indian populace, at one point banned the utterance of this *bani* (phrase) in public forums and jailed many freedom fighters for disobeying the proscription. Till date, "*Vande Mataram*" is seen as a national *mantra*, chant, describing and enhancing the love and passion of patriots for the country of India. There came a lineage of the *bani*'s use by many personalities of the then India. For example, Rabindranath Tagore sang '*Vande Mataram*' in 1896 at the Calcutta (Kolkata) Congress Session. Poet Sarala Devi Chaudurani sang '*Vande Mataram*' in the Benaras Congress Session in 1905. Lala Lajpat Rai named a journal called *Vande Mataram* from Lahore.

Though a major aspirant for being the national anthem of India, *Vande Mataram* was eventually overtaken by *Jana Gana Mana*, which was ultimately chosen as the National Anthem of India . The choice was slightly controversial, since the *Vande Mataram* was the one song that truly depicted the pre-independence

national fervour. The song was rejected basing on the grounds that Muslims felt offended by its depiction of the nation as “Maa Durga”-a Hindu goddess- thus equating the nation with the Hindu conception of shakti, divine feminine dynamic force; and by its origin as part of *Anandamath*, a novel they felt had an anti-Muslim message . There still exists some controversy with *Jana Gana Mana* too as it mentions some areas as part of India which are now no longer within the political mappings of India. However, in recent times, the *mantra* of *Jana gana mana* has been remodelled by an Indian music director A.R.Rahman and have encompassed the song *Vande Mataram* in all its glow,energy,virility and strength. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India who while presiding the Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950, made the following statement which was also adopted as the final decision on the issue relating to as which one should be the National Anthem of independent India :

The composition consisting of words and music known as Jana Gana Mana is the National Anthem of India, subject to such alterations as the Government may authorise as occasion arises, and the song Vande Mataram, which has played a historic part in the struggle for Indian freedom, shall be honored equally with Jana Gana Mana and shall have equal status with it. (Applause)
I hope this will satisfy members. (Constituent Assembly of India, Vol. XII, 24-1-1950)

Going back to the flash back of *Hindustani* , the fervour of *Vande Mataram* is witnessed in all its charm , vigour and resistance . When Namrata is being asked by a British Officer to salute the flag of England , she rejects and there by we are taken aback of how Senapati and Namrata came to know each other .

Officer: Salute the flag .

Namrata: *Hindustan ki jhande ke siwa , dusre jhande ko sammaan nahi dungii main* . (Other than the flag of India I won't bow before any).

Officer : Oh woh ! who is she [the officer asks the sepoy]

Sepoy : *Namrata naam hai iska. Katputli ki khel ki aar main swatantrata ka prachar karte hai* . (Her name is Namrata. She delivers the message of Independence by putting up puppet shows).

Officer : *Oh tab to tumhe iss jhande ko salute karna hoga* . (Oh then you have to salute the flag) . Come on do it .

Namrata: *Bilkul nahi* ... (no, not at all) . [She gives her hand to the officer .
The officer beats her on her hand]

Officer : Salute the flag ...

Namrata: *Vande Mataram* [she shouts]

Officer : Salute the flag ...

Namrata: *Vande Mataram* [she shouts again]

Officer : I said salute the flag .[Senapathy is shown at the terrace of the Cook Town Police Station .Unable to withstand the inhumanity of the

Officer , Senapathy picks up the flagpost of England and throws on the Officer's chest]

The entire incident fills up a kind of interest in Namrata as Senapathy saves Namrata from the clutches of the British officer . Namrata along with other Indian's takes part in a rally against use of British goods where the *Swadeshi Movement* has been projected- the *Swadeshi Movement* is an early form of economic Nationalism that was first seen to be observed in Shikarpur (Sindh), when the Pritam Dharma Sabha, set up in 1888, which initiated various social reforms , among which the setting up of the use of *swadeshi* sugar, soap, and cloth mills were the ones to be located first. Even the partition of Bengal along communal lines in 1905 by the British ("*Banga Bhanga*") also triggered a nation-wide *Swadeshi* movement, giving a great hype to the freedom movement throughout the country. A boycott of foreign goods was proclaimed on August 7th 1905. At this time, the Indian National Congress gave only conditional support to the plan of boycotting of foreign manufactured goods, but a year later, under the influence of more radical leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Maharashtra, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh from Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai from Punjab, the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906 proclaimed for the first time, the concept of '*swaraj*', i.e self-rule and called for support to the boycott movement against all manufactured goods by the British. The *Swadeshi* movement, was a successful economic strategy to remove the British Empire from power and improve economic conditions in India through following principles of *swadeshi* (self-sufficiency) or self-rule.. *Swadeshi*, as a strategy, was a

key focus of Mahatma Gandhi who described it as the soul of *Swaraj* (self rule or Home-Rule).

But the pitfalls of the rage against the foreign manufactured goods had to be paid with the self-esteem and dignith of Namrata and other women who joined the protest . When Collector Right King enquires about the leader of the rally against foreign goods , he comes to gather information that it is a woman , and asks his soldiers to arrest all the women in to their jeeps and disperse the men from the crowd. We are shown that Namrata and all other women are taken to a secluded place and are ordered by the Collector to take off all clothes from their bodies and burnt them , and out of sheer shame all women commits suicide, but Namrata somehow manage to keep herself alive and coincidentally she meets Senapathy who comes at the tragic site and is narrated about the atrocity that has happened with them ...

[Senapati hears some voice behind a tree and intends to see who is it]

Senapati: *Kyon hai ?* (who is there?)

Namrata: *idhar matt aaiye.* (please don't come here).

Senapati: *kyun ?* (why ?)

Namrata: *humne videshi kapde jalaye, isiliye Collector Right Kings ne hum sare aurat o ki saare kapde jala diye. Sharm ke mare saare aurato ne*

khud khushi kar li. Is attaychar ki khabar kisi ko den eke liye main yahaan jaan hatheli pe liye baithinn hoon . Aapko saab batadiya hai aap jaiye . (As we burnt the foreign clothes so the Collector ordered to take away our clothes and asked to burn them. Out of shame all women have committed suicide. Just to narrate this incident I kept myself alive. Now that I have told you everything you please go).

Rebellions against the British, atrocities etc are shown, culminating in Senapathy promising Namrata to marry her and leaving for Singapore to join Subash Chandra Bose as part of the Indian National Army. He returns after independence and finally marries Namrata.

On the one side of the film Chandru is a corrupt RTO officer who takes bribes from people in order to issue driving licences . Chandru parts ways with his father because of his excessive insistence on honesty etc. and considers these values to be dead and worthless and stays at his senior official's house whose daughter is Sapna (Urmila Matondkar) . He does everything that Sapna tells him to do as he wants to get a job out of Sapna's fathers source. Chandru gets a job in the RTO and had earlier taken a bribe and given a licence to a bus driver whose bus was in an abysmal condition. The bus meets with an accident and thus Chandru is held responsible. Chandru applies money to camouflage the case and is caught in the process by his father Senapathy while he is seen to have been injecting alcohol in to the corpse of the bus driver in order to save his life . But Senapati is bent on giving

Chandru the same punishment as he gives to others, ie death. Chandru tries hard to save his life from his father but he is unable to do so Senapathy kills Chandru and flee from the hands of the police too.

Senapathy: *jahan bhi anyay hoga main wohan zaroor aayunga....Hindustani ki maut nahi hogi.* (I will be with my presence always, at the site of corruption and ...and Indian will never die.)

It is said that Cinema in India reflects the popular perception of current affairs whether it's political, sociological or religious. But there is also the other side that the Indian Popular Cinema reflects and that is the machinizations of the ruling classes to deflete and modifies the thinking process of the mass. *Hindustani* the film reveals all possible corruption and shows the despair of the middleclass at the hands of the bureaucracy and other officials. Government corridors, ministries police health departments all have been entrenched with the tentacles of corrurption. Bribes are offered and accepted without a wink. The film hits the bull's eye – the middle classes who are silent spectators-cum-participants and sufferers of the consequences of corruption in public offices. The choice of RTO is significant for owning a two-wheeler is one of the criteria for being part of the middle-class in India and a member of this must have had encountered some kind of experiences with the RTO.

If we look into the history of corruption in post-Independence India it starts with the Jeep scandal in 1948, when a transaction concerning purchase of jeeps for the Indian army needed for Kashmir operation was entered into by V.K. Krishna

Menon, the then High Commissioner for India in London with a foreign firm without observing normal procedure. Over fifty years of democratic rule have made India so immune to corruption that we have learnt how to live and adjust within the system even though the cancerous growth of this malady may finally kill us. The repercussions of this growth are well portrayed in S. Shankar's film *Hindustani*. According to World Bank report 1997 'Corruption' is an abuse of public power for private gains. But this appears to be too simplistic an explanation of corruption. In fact it is a multi-faceted evil, which gradually kills a system's backbone and hinders economic growth. A basic conflict between the ethos and system has weakened the Indian polity. Corruption at all levels and especially in the politics is unquestionable. Leaders like Laloo Prasad Yadav, Jayalalitha, Sukhram and others, who are facing corruption charges, continue to have wide range of people's support and are re-elected and are given primacy irrespective of knowing the corrupt background of the politicians. Transparency, responsiveness, accountability, probity in public life and good governance are now only slogans. The legislature has failed to make the judiciary, executive and even media sensitive to the cause of the common people. The failure of the political leadership to take a principled stand against corruption has clouded the system to the extent that it is now difficult to understand whether the system is alive or dead. Not only this the entire notion of bringing change in the Indian polity now is left only as a dream which hinders the souls of the martyrs and the freedom fighters who have taken pains in order to see smile on our face.

The freedom struggle was not merely a struggle for political freedom from the foreign rule but also for laying the foundations for building a new India. The struggle for freedom brought the people of India together on the basis of a new unity based on the concept of nationhood. It battled against forces that divided the people, the forces that were fostered by and allied with imperialism. The concept of unity that the struggle for freedom aimed at and which formed the basis of Indian nationhood, was not a unity based on language, religion or monolithic culture, but based on the acceptance of diversity, multiplicity of religions, languages, customs and beliefs- a composite culture. The struggle for independence also represented the awakening of the people of India into the modern World. It came to represent all the best and forward-looking features of the modern era in World history.¹

The struggle against social evils, the awakening of the oppressed castes, the rise of peasants and workers against social oppression and inequalities, the demand for industrialisation of India and the introduction of modern science and technology- all became an integral part of our freedom struggle.

Talking of nationalism, of whose definition is being widely debated now days, he said that today we have become self-centered. We think only of ourselves. Every one thinks he should be alive.

¹ Nibandh Vinodh. 'A dream yet to be realized' . <http://www.Nagpurcity.net/netzine/990901a3.html>.

Chapter 4

Terrorism, Identity politics and Re-defining Nationalism: Reading *FIZA*

Fiza (2000)

Hindi, 168 minutes

Story, Screenplay, and Direction: Khalid Mohamed

Cinematography: Santosh Sivan

Music: Anu Malik, A R Rahman (*Piya Haji Ali*), Ranjit Barot (background score)

Lyrics: Gulzar, Sameer, Shaukat Ali, Tejpal Kaur

Dialogues: Javed Siddiqi

Art: Sharmista Roy

Action: Shyam Kaushal

Choreography: Saroj Khan, Farah Khan, Ganesh Hegde

Editing: Sreekar Prasad

Producer: Pradeep Guha

With the independence of India on the basis of religion and the mass of the majority living in the province of Punjab, the division, the two-nation theory, the bigotry of class, caste, gender and its still existing grey colour persists to imbibe in a conglomerated whole the social, political and the cultural euphoria- a *fiza* or ambience which still is co-existing and living as a fertile state where intimidation on the grounds of caste, religion, gender and class cannot be just left aside. The early years of the 1940's and its aftermath leading to the barbaric cataclysmic cleansing of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims across boundaries and borders and the silencing of especially women who, could have not rejected the phenomenon of patriarchy had to coalesce themselves in the hands of the brutal men where during rape or forceful molestation against ones wish religion and caste of the victim was not taken in to task but further victimization of the 'other' in the very anti-male gendered perspective. That Hindustan was for the Hindus is an amalgamated version for it

really doesn't prevail the now political syndrome of India since days and auras of the freedom movement and India's dark independence has been misappropriated rapidly within the aegis of a handful of politicians who in order to succumb to their desire enhance the position of their 'super-ego' have bought the cataclysmic error in the proper functioning of the state of India. That Hindustan is for the Hindus and Pakistan for the Muslims and all other ethnicities and minorities in Pakistan is metaphorised in the scanty area of the Pakistani national flag depicting white which resembles to the minority existing in Pakistan with a crescent and a star whereas the national flag of India encompasses both the saffron and the green thus manifesting the equal status –quo and prestige and the honour for both the majority and the minority existing within the parameters of this country which is again debatable on the grounds of secularism, socialism and democracy. The upsurge of the Akali Dal under the leadership of Tara Singh and its call for independency from India on the grounds of Sikhism and hence its demand for Khalistan can be further augmented and one can judge the flaws of the Indian political system with the assassination of our former Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi at the hands of her Sikh bodyguards in 1984. Not only that, the assassination of one had to be paid by the lives of a thousands of Sikhs who has been killed as its aftermath in Delhi where a particular fictional anecdote of a small Sikh girl has been encrusted in the movie *Amu* by Shonali Bose with of course a politically injected message of the Left wing of Indian political structure that have been restaged where the Left too share the dynamics of the Government.

That the political spectrum of independent India is highly debatable and that is not a matter to be forbidden can easily be located in the history of independent India from 1947 till date. There were shifting of government and parties and hardly there was one party rule which prognosticates the fact that the emerging population of India is getting itself imbibed to the utter deep rooted reality of the politically fabricated spectrum of this country and the emergence of more and more regional parties strongly adjudicate the criterion that the Indians are becoming more politically conscious. “ India has not been able to free itself of the curse of communalism even more than 50 years after independence .If anything the situation has been getting worse year after year. There has not been a single year in the post-independence period which has been free of communal violence, though the number of incidents may have varied.”¹ The leader of the cabinet in the year 1989 who was also the then Prime Minister of India from Janata Dal had formed its government with the coalition of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and other allies, a cousin brother of the RSS (Rashtriya Samaj Sevak Sangh) and the Bajrang Dal planned to take out a *rath yatra*, across India having its destination in Ayodhya which is believed to be the birth place of Shri Ram the all Hindu God of integrity. The BJP right from the beginnings of 1992 orchestrated its campaign for the construction of a temple at Ayodhya by holding *Ram Paduka* processions and meetings, using these occasions for delivering inflammatory speeches exhorting the Hindus to become united on the issue. The *rathyatra* by the BJP in support of its campaign for building

¹ Engineer, Ali Asghar. ‘Communal Riots in 2002: A Survey’. *EPW* January 25, 2003 p-280.

of the Ram temple at Ayodhya further added communal tension all over the country and Bombay city was no exception and was flared with the repercussions of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. It is believed that Ayodhya is the birthplace of Shri ram and that there was a temple of Ram, which has been made to be a mosque under the reign of Babur in the 16th century. That the Hindus wanted to make a Mandir at the place of the Masjid is quite dubious and retaliation were also set against the Hindus too by the Muslims. “ The Muslim organizations like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Bombay Muslim Action Committee, also carried on propaganda and demonstrations opposing the construction of a temple at Ayodhya and calling for Babri Masjid being left alone. Some of the speeches made during this period by both sides were likely to incite communal passion. These activities on the part of the rival communities were building up an undercurrent of communal tension, the dangerous implications of which were not fully realized by the police and the state machinery.”² The mosque was destroyed by a crowd of about seventy five thousand people (*karsevaks*) of the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and other associated groups. The destruction occurred at the end of L K Advani’s *rathayatra* and evidence shows that the entire programme of demolition was pre-destined. L K Advani was present at the rostrum opposite to the mosque on the day of the destruction and was the guest of honour. Uma Bharati of the BJP along with her associates, Sadhvi Ritambhara and Acharya Dharmendra articulated slogans like “*Ram nam satya hai , Babri Masjid dhvasthai hai ,*”(true is the name of Ram , the

² Document. *Mumbai Riots (1992-93) in Perspective: Damning Verdict of Srikrishna Commission.* p-7

Babri Masjid has been demolished) and “*Ek dhakka aur do, Babri Masjid tod do*” (give one more push and break the Babri Masjid).Not only that slogans like “*Mandir Vahi banayenge*” and “*Is Desh me rahana hoga to Vande Mataram kehna hoga*” rent the air. Though ostensibly religious, the *Ram Paduka* had less of religion and more of politics. “News of demolition of Babri Masjid spread by 2.30 p.m. on December 6,1992. The cry of *danger to Islam* reverberated in the air. The Muslim fundamentalists seized this opportunity to aggressively propagate that Islam was in imminent danger since proponents of the Hindu nation had been allowed a free hand to destroy, in broad daylight, under the very nose of the armed forces, the Babri Masjid , a standing symbol of Islam , despite assurances and undertakings by the Uttar Pradesh State Government and the Government of India that no harm would be permitted to be caused to the Babri Masjid during *kar seva* at Ayodhya on 6th December , 1992.”³ Following the destruction of the mosque, communal riots broke out between Hindus and Muslims across India, including in Bombay, which is a commercial and cosmopolitan hub of India. It would not be just to say that it was only the Hindus who were the first to take the banner of Hindutva politics, but Muslim organizations too retaliated to the demolition of the Mosque.

The various agitations launched by the Sangh Parivar had communalized society as never before and had triggered many riots. Moreover, Rajiv Gandhi’s overtures to the Hindu right – opening the lock of the Mandir and allowing the ‘*shilanyas*’- only helped make the communal forces more and more strident. The response to these overtures demonstrated that the right wing forces cannot be

³ *Ibid p-7*

appeased through concessions. But the question arise when thousands of *karsevaks* were converging on Ayodhya from all over the country why did'nt the Central Government take adequate steps to prevent possible damage to the mosque? Why was not the Uttar Pradesh government not dismissed ,and why didn't the Mulayam Singh Government took any bold steps? In December 1992 and January 1993 there was widespread riot in Bombay following the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu groups led by the RSS. Between the first week of January the city witnessed a series of riots in which near about two thousand people, mostly Muslims lost their lives. Since the AIBMAC (All India Babri Masjid Action Committee) and other Muslim groups have been campaigning to have the mosque rebuilt at the same site, while the VHP announced that it would construct the temple in a year and a half (ie. by the mid 2004). Primeminister Atal Vihari Vajpayee said in February 2003 during election campaigning in Himachal Pradesh that he firmly believed that the Babri Mosque existed on the site of a temple. The congress took a cautious stance fearing it might alienate the Hindu vote by taking a position different from the Hindu communal forces. Kapil Sibal , the Congress party spokesperson said that the court order was part of the judicial process for the final adjudication of the dispute. The riots of Bombay have witnessed a series of bereavements and trauma both in the psyche of the Hindu and the Muslims; some families got bereaved of their family members, the conjugal relationship of husband and wife was at stake, children were orphaned, mother lost her son, sister lost her brother, the entire structure of

human relationships was in turmoil and the it is the story of a particular Muslim family of the Ekramulla's that Khalid Mohammad's movie *Fiza* interrogates.

The word, *Fiza*, which roughly means creating ambience has a story line of a Muslim family of Bombay who were victims of the Bombay riot that broke in 1992-1993 as a result of the Babri Masjid demolition, where both psychologically and physically the young jubilant Muslim boy Amaan (Hrithik Roshan) caught in to the clutches of the riot had to pay with his life at the end of the day. *Fiza*, Aman's sister (Karishma Kapoor), depicts the triumph and trauma and the series of bereavements of a middle class Muslim family who till the emergence of the communal riot used to run their family and household with little pension that the family received on behalf of *Fiza's* father, and her mother's income that she earned by teaching Urdu were the only sources of their sustenance . Their life was going smoothly before the riot broke out and the revelation of their smooth functioning of their family sets the on set of the movie. The first half of the movie revolves around *Fiza*, who for the sake of her mothers mental peace decides to set out and find her brother Amaan, who has been missing for six years after a terrorizing night during the 1993 Bombay riots. The film opens with the depiction of the small but happy Ekramulla family showing Amaan , her elder sister *Fiza* and their mother Nishatbi (Jaya Bachchan) sitting together and bantering affectionately with watching Raj Kapoor's film *Bobby* on TV. But their peace of mind and family certainly gets shattered during a nocturnal happening when Aman heeds a friend's call to the

streets of his locale and finally accoust himself in the foregoing encounters. He disappears and is considered to be dead but his body is never found clinging the faith of their mother and sister to the belief that Amaan survived and is alive and that he will return one day. After six years Fiza is shown to have attained a college degree and she catches a glimpse of Amaan on a busy street and resolves to go in search of him but her mother disagrees

Fiza: *mujhe paisa chahiye,main iss suspense ko khatam kar dena chahta hoon ,jo na hume jine deti hai na marene deti hai ,main Amaan ko talash karma chahti hoon.aur isi liye mujhe paisa chahiye.*(I need money , I wan't to break this suspense which neither is letting us to live or to die.i want to search Amaan and that's why I need money.)

Nitishbai: *main nahi dungii.* (I won't give)

Fiza: *isiliye nahi doge na ki tummain himmat hi nahj hai sachchai jaanne ki. Tum jaannehi nahi chahte ho uss raat kya hua tha? Tumhare beta par kya guzrui?*(You don't want to give because you don't want to face the truth. You don't want to know of what has happened that night and how have your son felt?)

Nitishbai: *haan main nahi jaanna chahti.budhape main ek jawan bete se badhkar sahara aur koi nai hoti. Aaj beta nahi hai ,lekin umiid to hai.tu yea bhi mujhse chin lena chahti hai Fiza is ke siwa mere paas aur kuch bhi to nahi hai.*(Yes I don't want to know.In old age there is nothing in

comparisomn to young son. Today I don't have my son but still have prospect if his return and you want to snatch it from me too , Fiza. What else do I have?)

The hope that Amaan is alive and will be back re -instigates Fiza's mind and she becomes desperate to find out her brother at any cost. Despite being a girl Fiza is desperate to fight against all odds, which she does in order to trace her brother. She meets the inspector Prakash Shinde in a bar where he was to disclose about what actually happened that night

Fiza: aap batane wale the uss raat kya hua tha.(you were about to say of what happened that night)

Shinde: yea (giving a piece of paper), court main jo bayan diya than a uska copy hai . uss din jo hua, dekha sab likha hai ismain.(Yea. This is the copy of the testimonial that I gave to the court. It contains every detail of what I saw and have witnessed.)

Fiza: aap ka byan sun chuki hun us din court main(I have heard you on that day in the court).

Shinde; to tujhe aur kua sunna hai? (So what else is it you want to hear then ?)

Fiza: *jo iss kagaz main nahi hai such* (Whatever is not inscribed in the paper.)..*bataiye uss ratt kya hua tha?*(tell me what happened that night?)

Shinde: *woh bhaag raha tha...*(he was running).

In her endeavour she is helped by her friend Aniruddh (Bikram Saluja), her college friend who too holds a soft corner for her. The poignant depiction of the women's trauma and their callous treatment by the Government officials, the Police inspector to whom she inquires about her brother and what exactly has happened on that night discloses the clandestine politics, and the calculating politicians and journalists echoes the reality experienced by numerous female survivors who of communal bloodbaths who are still in search of their family members and their loved ones awaiting justice. " More important than the statistics of loss, is the nature of terror, for violence now consists of public acts of sadism that have been missing from earliest histories of carnage in our country. Looked at dispassionately, we have exceeded the achievements of Nazi terror, Bosnian atrocities, our own partition violence-if not in scale or numbers, then in the intensity of torture, the sheer opulence and exuberance in forms of cruelty."⁴

The second half of the film takes a turn and focuses on Amaan's difficulty in coping with re-integrating his old vanquished world. The tremors and brutality against humanity as witnessed against people against people, fragments,

⁴ Sarkar, Tanika. 'Semiotics of Terror: Muslim Children and Women in Hindu Rashtra'. *EPW* July 13, 2002 p-2872.

Amaan's mind as he loses his decidability .This Muslim youth as is interrogated and is psychologically dressed up by a jehad preaching Islamic militant led by one called Murad Khan(Manoj Bajpai), who locates and prepares Amaan to take up arms in order to fight against the anarchical rule of the government and by so doing will be able to provide justice to their people but their was a role reversal and anti-climax toward the end of the film when Murad Khan's mission of training Amaan and his order to kill Amaan after killing the Hindu politician Ram Singh and his counterpart Syed Bhai, the ministers revealing the in-depth politics of self satisfying thirst for power and position. In Amaan's character after he is being taken charge by Murad Khan no longer remains the same Amaan , but years of hardship has whittled his innocence. He has become a hardened man who does not mind using the wrong means to achieve his ends. His only respite being Shehnaz (Neha Srivastav),Amaan's inamorata who is not able to wait for his return shows a great deal of controlled resistant in herself and is particularly noteworthy in scene where Amaan apologize to

Shehnaz :

Amaan : *kaise ho Shehnaz?* (how are you Shehnaz?)

Shehnaz: *aacha hun* .(pause) *tum kuch kehe kar bhi nahi gaye, ishare kiye hote to intejar kar sakti thi.* (I am fine. You went away without saying anything...if u would have passed on a sign to wait I could have waited.)

Amaan : *mujhe maff karna Shehnaaz . jo khwab dikhaye the , puri nahi kar saka.*(forgive me Shehnaaz, I could'nt fulfil your dreams that you came up with.)

Shehnaz: *maaf kiya.*(I forgive you.)

Fiza follows a trip to Rajasthan in order to search for her brother Amaan where the Jihad preaching Islamic militants engage in a fight against the Indian security forces on the outskirts of Udaipur, a location apparently dictated by its proximity to the desert that ultimately leads to Pakistani border. There are questions that arise with Fiza who is not only a sister in search of her missing brother Amaan but also speaks about such many sisters and others who have either lost, have seen their kinsmen being murdered in front of their naked eyes and are still awaited to receive justice from the government. The question arises whether Fiza and others of her kind will be able to get back their lost ones? Will the fate of ones who are still in search of their sons and brothers be reunited?

The film *Fiza* has rightfully depicted about the chores of violence both physical and mental and the prejudices that a family a family had to undergo under such circumstances provide us with the filthy politics and “ the ensuing riots brought to surface the inherent tension and turbulence of the system, which never tires of ravaging about the great culture of centuries and boasting of democratic secular value of the constitution. Devastated communities, lost lives and ravaged homes raises some fundamental questions about ethnic conflicts in India – about

their reasons and roots, about the main players and the processes, and above all about the credibility of the state and the fragility of the civil society.”⁵ Interrogating the film *Fiza*, it can be well situated that the film narrates its plot circumlocating a Muslim family and slowly it unfolds the economic conditions of Ekramulla family and its aftermath after the riot. “A quick look at the riot –affected areas in the metropolitan shows that inhabitants in most of these areas suffer from economic deprivation. Civic amenities are not to be found and even opportunities to earn a decent living are not on the horizon. Addition to communal animosity added fuel to the fire.”⁶ Report says that previous to 1993 riots in Mumbai the two communities were not so much distant apart and even the police credibility towards the minority was unexpected and segregated. The Muslims were not even willing to take a complaint to the police for they knew they would be relegated from justice and which prevailed in Khalid Mohammad’s *Fiza* where both Natishbi (Jaya Bachchan), Amaan’s mother and her sister were desperate to know whether Amaan is dead or alive? Natishbi goes to the police station to enquire about her son but each time she comes back with a sense of loss and peregrinations. An interesting point to be noted down that under the Bilasrao Deshmukh Govt. already more than forty-four riots have taken place and the target has always been the Muslims of Maharashtra who have always been kept under pressure by the Shiv Sena and the BJP and its allies under the aegis of Hindutva. “Savarkar had proclaimed in 1923 that Indians were essentially Hindus in their cultural ethos, and all those who have any affiliation with

⁵ Takkar, Usha. ‘Mohalla Committees of Mumbai: Candle in Omnipotent darkness’. *EPW* Feb 7, 2004. p-580.

⁶ *Ibid* 581

religious and cultural movements outside the land were not Indians. The formula excluded Muslims and Christians from the body politic. Later, the VHP constitution added communists to the list. At one stroke, therefore, citizenship was reserved for Hindus alone and nation and Hindus were made synonymous. In his multi-volume histories of India, Savarkar painted a bleak picture of Muslim tyranny in India, emphasizing especially the alleged abductions of Hindu women. The RSS drew a single corollary from this. All Muslims are a threat to faith and nation, and especially to women at all times, and, therefore revenge must be taken on present day Muslims both for historical wrongs and for the future danger that they embody.”⁷ with the emergence of the saffron brigade and after the forceful demolition of the Babri Masjid the Sangh Parivar have been successful in dividing the country psychologically in to two halves- Hindus and Muslims. But the controversy here too arises as for who are the Hindus in the pretext of the Hindutva politics? Is it only the upper castes of India who were against the policy of socialism of the Congress or are these post-modern Hindus have nullified their attachment to the cultural history of India and are in a position to accept any contender from dalits, adivasis and other backward castes/class in their well-fabricated matrix? The “ well entrenched nature of the Hindutva movement and its predecessors in this part of the country, strongly opposed to communal harmony and to the design of society as a melting pot of diverse and open-ended social segments . The mobilization of low and intermediate castes to participate in the activities of the Sangh Parivar organisations in the last

⁷ Sarkar, Tanika. ‘Semiotics of Terror: Muslim Children and Women in Hindu Rashtra’. *EPW* July 13, 2002. p-2874.

two decades has broadened the base of Hindu fundamentalism as a social-political force. The price these previously denigrated segments have to pay for their acceptance within the Hindutva fold is their willingness to express antagonism to Muslims as members of the religious minority and, in brutal acts of confrontation, to do the dirty works of cleansing on behalf of their high-caste brothers and sisters. The dynamics of exclusion are intricately interwoven.”⁸

The certain dismantling of the Ekramulla family revolve round the factors of Hindu attack over the Muslims of Bombay ignited by the Shiv Sena supremo Balasaheb Thackrey and its allies the BJP and the RSS and the police who deliberately misled the Muslims and the in competency of the police to control such fragile and sensitive situation cannot be given off and be reprimanded. The mishandling of the Muslims and in active competence to catch hold of such obnoxious situations of societal conflagration epitomizing the penury and biased histrionic cults that have been fore grounded within the period of the riots of the 1992-93 Mumbai . Amaan tries hard to save himself and ultimately falls before the mob of his counterpart with unsheathed daggers and arms –the Hindu fundamentalists especially the Shiv Sainiks’ in actuality of what has happened in Mumbai, and other of its kind and run to seek help from the local police

⁸ Breman, Jan. ‘Communal Upheaval as Resurgence of Social Darwinism’. *EPW* Apr 20, 2002.p-1485.

Amaan: (in flashback) *saab mujhe bacha ligiye saab, who log mujhe mar dalenge saab... woh log mere dost ko bhi maar rahe hai saab. Saab humne kuch nahi kiya saab.* (Sir please save my life Sir , they will kill me and my friends, Sir).

Shinde: *yea ! bachne ka hai tujhe ? to bhaag ja Pakistan , bhaag chaal* (If you want to live then run and go to Pakistan)

But the inspector's words bring sheer helplessness in Amaan's eyes and he becomes a victim at the hands of the armed Hindus. " The response of police to appeals from desperate victims, particularly Muslims, was cynical and utterly indifferent. On occasions, the response was that they were unable to leave the appointed post; on others, the attitude was that one Muslim killed was one Muslim less... Several arson incidents, stabbing and violence occurred within the eyesight and earshot of the police pickets without any action by them... Police officers and men, particularly at the junior level, appeared to have an in-built bias against the Muslims which was evident in their treatment of the suspected Muslims and Muslim victims of the riots. The treatment given was harsh and brutal and, on occasions, bordering on inhuman, hardly doing credit to the police. The bias of policemen was seen in the active connivance of police constables with the rioting Hindu mobs on occasions, with their adopting the role of passive onlookers on occasions, and finally, in their lack of enthusiasm in registering

offences against Hindus even when the accused were clearly identified and the post haste classifying the cases in 'A' summary.”⁹

So one can rationally make out the fact that had Amaan been saved and would have taken care of by the police as part of their duty Amaan would'nt have taken arms in his hands for survival and to retaliate against the system and never would he have joined the terrorist group which finally he was being made to be paid with his life and the suicide of Nitishbi, his mother, seeing Amaan's change from a jubilant to a terrorist could have been saved. But the crux of the narrative structure of *Fiza* takes altogether a different turn and a happy family as depicted of engulfing all cumbersome menace could have been stopped; a metamorphosis where the congeniality of three lives is set ablaze deconstructing the existing stricture and is thus fragmented and left in vain .

Fiza unable to comprehend with the present state of her mother who bemoans her son's sudden vanishing and she herself in order to demystify the actuality of whether her brother Amaan is alive or dead star her journey 'in search of her brother'. She writes about the incident of the night and takes it to the editor of a newspaper, but her story at first is rejected but lately is taken for publication creating havoc in society, politics and in the media. After the publication in the news and getting media coverage Fiza is being called up by the politicians of both the Hindu and Muslim side and the climax is embarked upon vote bank politics and that the

⁹ Document. *Mumbai Riots (1992-93) in Perspective: Damning Verdict of Srikrishna Commission*. p. 10.

true colour of the political mileage on the grounds of religion is set at disposal. But Fiza receives negative response from the politicians of both the communities and once again the political dynamics of religion and identity comes in to question. she is invited to meet V K Singh the Hindu politician

Singh: *aapke paas uska koi photo hai*(do you have a photo of his ?)

Fiza : *ji* (yes)

Singh: *huum ! sundar ladka hai. Kya karta tha, padta tha?* (yea , he is handsome .Did he use to study?) ?

Fiza: *kitabain uske liye nahin thi ,padhai main uska dil hi nahi lagta tha, magar who bahut mahir tha , drawing main , painting main ,haath ki karigari main.* (Books were not for him, he couldn't reconcile himself to books but he painted well , and was good at handicrafts)

Singh: *aap ka matlab yea hai ki ashikshit hote hue bhi who aapna jivan ko safal kar sakta tha* (you mean to say that irrespective of being literate he could have sustained his own life)

Fiza: *ji haan mere kahane ka yehi matlab tha* (yes that was what I precisely meant)...

Fiza: *please kaam ki baat ki jiyee* (please let us come to point)

Singh: *kyun nahin ,kyun nahi .Aap bhi aabhi jane mane hasti hai. Aap aagar logon se kahenge ki hum kisi dharm, kisi sampradaya ki biruddh nahi hai , to log aapki baat sunenge. Aab dekhiyen na mughol lo nain hum par aakramaan kiya ,humpar kabja kar liya ,humne unhe schama kar diya*

(smiles).aap logon nain wahan ja kar ke aapna desh bana liya uss main bhi humain koi aapathi nahi hai.(why not why not? You are now a well-noticed person .If you say to people that you don't believe in religion, or creed, people will listen to you. Now you see the Mughals occupied our land but we pardoned them.You went off to make a new country of yours but then also we didn't mind..)

Fiza:aaplog maat kahiye Singh saab,jinhonain Pakistan banaya tha woh wahan jaa chuke hain . Is desh main Pakistan banane wale koi nai hai.hum utnahi Hindustani hai jitna aap hain. (Don't say We ,Mr. Singh .Those who made Pakistan they have already already moved. Now those who have made Pakistan are no more here , we are as much Indians as you are.)

Hence the political mileage that V K Singh wanted to make out from his statement is clear and that till date, howsoever loyal and faithful Muslims are in this country they are always looked as foreigners in their own country. The in depth politics and the dream of V D Savarkar which is almost eighty years old, where the entire Sangh Parivar is still in a position to claim India as a Hindu Rashtra and that this land is only for those who are Hindus is utterly challenging the ethos of secularism ad is malignly combating democracy where the majority is always taken in to account and the lost voice of the minority is kept aside. The message is clear from Singh's speech that echoes the rambling biased attitude of the Sangh Parivar and its allies that Indian

Muslims have no place in this country and that they are foreigners who cannot accommodate the culture of this country and thus should go to Pakistan or else abide by the decorum set by the so called cultural nationalists. But it would be wrong to only blame the Parivar, for the thirst of political mileage and vote bank politics because the same game is also played by Muslim politicians too in order to share Ministry in the state level politics and to nurture power at the price of innocent lives. When Syed bhai the Muslim politician meets Fiza the stealthily politics gets unfolded....

Syed: bete tumhari kaushish ko kuch log dusre nazar se bhi dekh rahe hain. woh kehe raha hai ki tum uss qayamat ko dubara dahorana chahati ho jo unisso baranabbai- terranabbai main barpa hui thi. tumhari bhai ki tumhare liye faidamand ho sakta hai lekin issse sari kaum ka bahut bara nuksan hio sakti hai. zara soch kar dekho. (Dear , your work is not taken up in the right sense ,they are saying you want to resume the angst that have been long buried in the years of 192-1993. The search of your brother may prove fruitful to you but it may affect the entire community. Think twice before you take any further step.)

Fiza: aap logon ko bhi sochna chahiye. ek bahen ko aapna bhai dhoondne ka hauq hai ya nahin? ek maa ko aapni bachche ka aarzo karne ka haq hai ya nahi? agar aap logon ki galat faimi se daar rahi hai to dur kar dijiye unki galat fami. kehe dijiye ki main aapke saath nahin hoon. (you people too

should think whether a sister have the right to search for her brother or not ?

A mother has the right to get back her child or not ?

Syaed : *hum aaman kayam karne chahate hai ladki* [Angrily] *aur tu fasabd karna chahati hai ladki.* (We want peace and you want to further go with violence.)

Fiza: *amaan to tab kayaam hoga Syed saab , jab hare ek aapni haq ke aandar rahe . such to yaeah hain ki hara rang aur bhagwa rang , green and saffron, Hindustan ke jhande ka ek hi hissa hai aur usse ek hissa hi rehna chahiye, pura jhanda karne ki kaushish karni nahi chahiye, samjhe aap?*

Salaam! (Peace can be achieved when everyone keep themselves within parameters. But the truth is Green and Saffron is the two parts of the Indian flag and let it be so. Let not anyone take control of the whole of it. Goodbye.)

With the speech of Syed bhai the intension of his is brought to prominence and it further attest to the dynamics of politics . The probability is with the inception of Fiza's strength to fight against the odd truths and her grounded self-confidence to reveal the truth that actually happened that night after which Amaan is no more seen in the vicinity of the city. There are questions that actually can be questioned in order to know as to why the intended speech and Syed bhai's hard on try to convince Fiza such that she gives her opinion of searching her brother and not re read palimpsestically the history of the bygone past. The notion of Syed in order not to let

Fiza once again let her search the truth can actually bring in to prominence the actuality that has actually happened in the nights of 1992-93 December and January.

Fiza's friend Anniruddh asks Fiza about Amaan..

Aniruddh: *Amaan ka kuch pata chala?* (is there any news about Amaan?)

Fiza: *Nahi.* (no)

Aniruddh: *newspaper ki report ki badd media aur politicians ke elawa kisine contact nahi kiya.* (After the newspapers report it's only the politicians and the media who have contact us.)

Fiza: *kya maloom unke elava kisi nain yea report padi bhi ya nahin? aajkal log headlines padkahi chod detui hai.* (Who knows whether other than the politicians and the media anyone else have gone through the report or not? now a days people read only the headlines.)

Aniruddh: *aacha agar yea mann liya jaye ki who zinda hai to....* (see, if he is alive ...)

Fiza: *woh zinda hai...meri aankhen itna bada ddhoka nahi kha sakti, aur mera dil bhi yea kehta hai.* (He is alive. My eyes cannot commit such a big mistake; my heart too says the same.)

Aniruddh: *par who kahan ho sakta hai ? Chupa kyun hai ? aata kyun nahin. kahi aisa to nahi ki who kisi group main shamil ho gayi ho.* (if he is

alive , where is he? Why doesn't he come to us? And why is he hiding? I hope he hasn't joined any group.)

Fiza: *kaisa group?* (what group?)

Aniruddh: *dekho bura matt maan na. mere kehne ka matlab hai , koi terrorist group, aatankwadi, extremist.*(pause) *zara Amaan ka photo to nikalna?* (See, don't mind, I wanted to mean if he has joined some terrorist or extremists group. Just take out Amaan's photo once.)

Fiza: (gives the photo) *Yea tum kya kar rehe ho?* (What are you doing?)

Aniruddh: *yea dekho yea maine internet se doenload kiya hai, dono ki aankhen dekho.*(see these pictures I have down loaded them from the internet, [Aniruddh match the photos] look at their eyes they are the same).

Fiza: (after looking at the photos) *Amaan....*

The dialogue between Aniruddh and Fiza reveals Fiza's confidence that her brother Amaan is alive and that she makes her mind to go to the border areas of Rajasthan and enquire about Amaan. She comes to know from the pictures that Amaan has joined a terrorist group and that it would never be possible for the society to accept Amaan back. Aniruddh tells Fiza that going to the border area alone is unsafe for a woman and that he too should come along with her. But Fiza says no and which reveals the still patriarchal notion of orthodoxy that a woman is not fit enough to do her job alone and that at one point of time or the other she might need the help of a man in order to accomplish her purpose but Fiza does her job alone and fights

patriarchy. The role of Fiza and her inept attitude with which she fights shows the movement of a biological –*female*, a culturally established construction of *feminine* and a politically correct *feminist* – a movement that is self made and gain its results without the sheer help of the patriarchal mindset and its establishments. The search of a sister begins when Fiza goes to find Amaan and encounters Amaan coincidentally and exasperates...

Fiza : *Amaan tu kahan chala gaya tha?(she embrace him) hame chod kar kyun chala gaya tha ? hum se kya kasoor ho gaya tha ? tujhe dhoondne ke liye maine kya kya nahi kiya aur tu iss hal main mila. Aise mera bhia.*

(Where did you go Amaan? why did you go leaving us alone? What was our mistake? What have I not done to search you and I find my brother in such a state.)

Fiza finds her brother Amaan and feels the pain that was there both in her brother's eyes and in her too. She asks Amaan as why did he joined this group and what is he fighting for...

Amaan : *Janna chahte ho na (pause) janna chahte ho. To aao mere saath! Jihad ! Jihad kar raha hoon.(you want to know. You want to know, why am I doing this? Jihad ! Its Jihad that I am doing.)*

Fiza: kis se? (With whom?)

Amaan : *zulm se , nainsafi se , nafrat se .* (With anarchy, with injustice, with hate)

Amaan's words reveal the depth, hatred and injustice that he has received the night he was changed in to an altogether different man who was made to become a terrorist and was moulded to fight against the tyranny and anarchy that have made him to take up arms in order to fight against the Government and bring justice for the innocent lives and to further stop the birth of his stereotypes. The role reversal of Amaan from a mothers lad to a terrorist is very much unfortunate as every day many youths of our country are taking the path of arms and violence for justice as retaliation to their in justice and hate that the govt. have given the Muslim youths. it is not only the system that is the cause but also the society that deals with Muslims in this country . Sheer hatred and injustice as par the Srikrishna report of the Mumbai Riots of the 1992-93 December and January shows that the greater part of injustice was made to have happened by the Police and the Shiv Sena of Mumbai where both fought in order to deracinate the entire community of the Muslims from India.

Amaan's(soliloquy) ...

Kyon hun main ? kya kar raha hun ?kuch bhi to nahi hai mere pass.....ghar pe Ammi aur Appa ke sar pe bojh hun , jo who pyar se sahe rahi hai , main uss pyar ke kabil nahin hun ...Ammi ko such ka pata chal gaya to unpe kya guzregi ... mujhe zaath path aur mazahbi se koi matlab nahin ...matlab hai to sirf Murad Khan ki ek nasihat se...hamla

zaari bardash nahi karenge ...jo zulm hamare saath hua hai , kisi aur pe hone nahin denge...wohi gumnami thik tha wohi laut jao.....(who am I ? what am I doing ? what do I have ? ... I am a burden on both my mother and sister, which they are taking up patiently and I am not worth of their love what if mother comes to know the reality, and how will she feel? I have no interest in caste, creed or religion...now what I have interest on is only with Murad Khan's consent.... I wont accept any more of it...the injustice that have happened with us we won't let it happen on anyone else...that life of wandering?)

The above lines shoes the psyche of Amaan and he thinks about his past life and tries to co relate with the present situation. That there is no job and his frustration makes him feel low and he is frustrated. He was in a precarious position to think about talks about the situation that his mother would feel and how she would react again takes him back to Murad Khan and he decides to join back the group. The psychological terror and haphazardness is further augmented. What happens to a youth in such a situation and how the society accepts is what *Fiza* deals in to. The gist of the movie shows the transformation of a young, valiant, intrepid lad of young age to actually confront the existing system and the dynamics of politics and ultimately had to be paid with his life. The betrayal of Amaan by Murad Khan and his associates resolves the further more organized, self-oriented dynamics of the terrorists and their mission where after accomplishing their mission they take

themselves aback from their inmates and may order to kill the agency once their job is done. No body in this world is a born 'terrorist' and *Fiza* rightly have accumulated the storyline of how, why and under what circumstances does give birth to a 'terrorist' as been projected in Khalid Mohammed's *Fiza*. It is not just a film surrounding the love, the repercussions, the trauma and the terror of a particular family but the film is also a historical document that have re-historicized history itself and have open up vistas to further deal with the filthy politics where religion has been ineptly admixed within the regulatory syndrome of Indian politics. The fundamentalist approach especially that of Hindu fundamentalism and the dichotomy between the "us" versus "them" has been dialectically synchronized in the movie and the intimidation of youths at the hands of the corrupt politicians and commanders of organized crimes can be seen at bay.

After assassinating the politicians, Amaan is shown to be targeted by his fellow inmates who too were in to the plan of killing V K Singh and Syed saab , but Amaan makes a narrow escape and Fiza catch sight of Amaan escaping and she follows him. Fiza finds Amaan in a state where he is tired of the world and they converse nostalgically about what they have shared till date...and Fiza out of a crux asks Amaan to give her the gun.

Fiza: gun mujhe de ! Gun mujhe de Amaan, Gun de mujhe Amaan.(give me the gun ! Give me the gun Amaan , come on give me the gun).

Amaan : *Thik hai . Lekin ek sharth par.* (Ok, but on a condition).

Fiza: *Kaisi sharth ?* (What kind of condition?).

Amaan : *Mujhe dekho appa....Apni Amaan ko dekho. Kuchi der main ya to police mujhe uda degi , ya phir kanoon phasi ke takte pad chada degi ; aur log muft main ek mazedar maut ka tamasha dekhega. Who kya jaane ki uss raat isi shahar ki galiyon main meri maut ho chuki thi...tum mujhe uskie hawale nahi karoge Apaa. Wada karo.* (Look at me Apaa.... Look at your Amaan. Within some time police will kill me or else I will be hanged and people will watch the show. How will they understand that on that heinous night I got killed from inside.. Don't give me to their hands Apaa. Promise me).

Fiza: Amaan (in a melancholic voice).

Amaan : *mujhe apni zindagi par koi faqr nahi hai Apaa, par kam se kam meri maut to izzat se hone do* [Amaan gives the gun to Fiza].(I am not at all proud of my life, but at least let me die with some honour).

Fiza: Amaan *Nahi.* (No Amaan)

Amaan : *gun lo Apaa.* (Take the gun Apaa.)

Fiza: *Nahi...nahi.* (No...no).

Amaan: *Gun lo...* [Fiza unable to decide takes the gun]. *Ammi bahut thaki hui hai Apaa, mujhe Ammi ki pass jana hai, unki goud main sar rakhna hai Apaa, main bahoot thak chukka hoon , mujhe bida karo.* (Take the gun ...

Ammi is very tired Apaa, I want to go to Ammi, I want to rest my head on her lap Apaa, and I'm very tired! Let me go).

Fiza: Amaan. ...[Looking at Amaan]

Amaan : *mujhe bida karo* ... (Let me go ...)

[The Police are approaching... Fiza keeps the gun on Amaan's chest... and pulls the trigger of the gun. Fiza stares at Amaan].

Fiza: *Allah hafiz* Amaan (May God bless you Amaan and may you rest in peace).

The fall of a brother at the hands of her sister brings a turn in the move of the movie . the situation of the scenes and the uncontrollable circumstances and its flaw all revolves round the killing of ones brother in ones own . The tragedy, the anticlimax and the role that have been stigmatized has been enormously structured to epitomize the consequential death of Amaan at the hands of his elder sister and the psychological output that have been encrusted on the plethorial image of Fiza can only be highly praised. If one recalls the killing of ones own family members during partition of India the cause being not to desecrate the body of themselves at the hands of others can be correlated in this movie too. Fiza's character is undoubtedly suitable for any sister who is 'in search of her brother' and is aptly possible for the macrocosmic realm of family members to do so in order to seek justice in this pseudo-democratic and secular Nation where all walks of life is always questioned on the grounds of caste, creed and religion. Where lies the solace then to be in '

One's Own Country?' The vacuum persists and will so be wherever and whenever the question of "identity" comes in to play.

Conclusion

Different Kinds of Nationalism in Contemporary Bollywood

“In Hindi films the image of the Nation as a mythical community –a family – collapses under the weight of its own contradictions. Gender, heterosexuality, class and religious communities crosshatch the nation, and each of these disrupts the nationalist narration in Hindi cinema to reveal a different history.”¹

To say that Hindi Cinema is national there are many questions that comes to be interrogated like: What does nation mean? How can we suggest a cinema to be national? What are the parameters, which suggest a popular Hindi cinema to be national? Nation and nationalism are particularly troubled concepts for historians as well as for the political and cultural theorists alike. It is a constantly shifting paradigm that first emerged in the eighteenth century; it offers a primary form of identification, a status of belonging and encompass indefinite whole and is yet difficult to establish the criteria on which it is based. Benedict Anderson has argued “ the dawn of nationalism at the end of the eighteenth century coincided with the dusk of religious modes of thought.”² He furthermore justifies that “ the nation is the most resilient form of community imagined, and the devotion it elicits from

¹ Virdi, Jyotika. *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004. p-1

² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* . London :Verso , 1990.p-15.

followers is next only to the intensity religion evokes.”³ It is a point to be noted that Nationalism in India took root among a small, westernized elite at the beginning of the 19th century after getting influenced by the French Revolution, the American war of Independence and the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, liberty, and the right to self determination, where the premise were wholly political and economic but in India Nationalism marshaled with the revival of Culture, a task taken up by the native intellectuals. The point of argument is though the trend of nationalism was taken up by the Elite Indians the other of the elite i.e. the mass were in no way introduced to Nation and its contents but were secluded from it. The aforesaid point of departure that Anderson reflects about the intensity and virulence of the nation in question is adjusted to the present Indian notion of nationalism, which is more of a jingoistic activity than that of what Anderson puts, “ are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fiction in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role.”⁴ In the late 19th century in India , as nationalist movement gained momentum cultural revivalism too in various forms got itself deployed to bring anew art forms through new interpretations. Cinema, which was introduced in India by the Lumiere brothers’, deployed a unique apparatus as part of the other cultural forms imbricating the nation-making process. This process of building the apparatus of the late 19th century has been articulated imbibing the all contending forces necessary to give a break through in the nation –making process in *Lagaan*. The movie *Lagaan* has aptly dealt with the colonial resistance in the 19th

³ *ibid.*, 19

⁴ *ibid.*, 15

century with the help of a tool of the British –Cricket. As discussed in my chapters that though the Subalterns have shaken off the roots of the British by defeating the British in their game, is not only a game about cricket but of other contending issues like the “tridentine oppression” perpetuated by the “sarkar”, “zamindar”, “sahukar” in coalition with other classes on the peasants’ ”⁵, is a point that has been looked through the Marxist interpretation of class negotiation. Furthermore, the movie has given a cast of secularism in the pre-independent India; an upcoming construction of brotherhood and not secularism in its deployed task and definition is henceforth contested at the primary level. Jakobe De Roover argues, “the semantic confusion surrounding ‘secularism’ masks a number of deeper problems in the Indian debate. Instead of being embedded in a well-structured theory, the idea of secularism consists of a number of isolated normative positions regarding the relation of politics and religion, which are proclaimed as though they are self-evidently true.”⁶

The film *Lagaan* have for the first time have placed the role of the peasants of India and their role in order to combat the British from paying Land Tax and not only that the voice of the subalterns have been made to be heard from the subaltern themselves. *Lagaan*, from the Marxist point of view have not really talked about the role of the intermediate class who also took a particular share of the Land Tax in order to maintain a balance between the Rajas and the Prajas. *Lagaan* incessantly points out the ‘resistance’ against the white colonizers in all its gay. *Lagaan*, hence reads itself

⁵ Nissim Mannathukkaren, “Subalterns, Cricket and the ‘Nation’: The Silences of ‘Lagaan’”, *EPW* 8 December, 2001

⁶ Jakob De Roover, ‘The Vacuity of Secularism : On the Indian Debate and Its Western Origins’, *EPW* 28 Sep, 2002.

as a construction of 'nation' and 'nation-building' by devaluing the intersecting conflicts of class, caste, gender, race, region and so on heralding altogether a 'national oppression'.

The best of the literature that has emerged during the era of Partition bears an imprint of sadism, fear, betrayal and pain. As I have discussed in the chapter dealing with Partition that the pre 1947 years of India and, South Asia was actually literature that came out of the dominant discourse and these insights broke the long repressed silence in the collective and individual sphere. Whereas this movie that have been adapted from Sidhwa's novel is a silenced voice that have voiced against the existing parameters of patriarchy and moreover the Partition literature was regarded to be a 'male' narrative where women have been made to have been silenced or sacrifice. "Whether the main characters in partition fiction choose to migrate or stay, the division of the subcontinent leaves their moral, political, and social imagination utterly paralyzed. Instead of making life more secure for them amongst people of their own religious faith, the partition makes them feel more humiliated and anxious,"⁷ which can be justified from the characters of bapsi Sidhwa's novel. *1947 Earth*, deals mainly with the conflagration of violence and betrayal at the hands of ones friends and narrates the historical details in all its vigour through the naked eyes of the eight year old Parsee girl Lenny which is a living dialogue, as bapsi Sidhwa herself has experienced life as presented in the film as well as in the movie –as if reality has been presented to us. The novel reflects the dismantled love affair of

⁷ Bhalla, Alok. *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home*. Ch-1, New Delhi: OUP, 2006, p-32.

Shanta with Hasan and DilNawaz becomes the victim . Hasan's murder though clandestinely done in the narrative discourse haven't revealed the murderer as Sidhwa says, " That is left deliberately vague."⁸ Ice-Candy-Man betrayal and his abduction by his fellow Muslim brothers reveal the character to be " a threatening figure,"⁹ as interrogated by Alok Bhalla .The film has projected through its unfurling technique and histrionic representation the flaws and the fragmentation that the partition of India has given to both the countries of Hindustan and Pakistan. The question of nationalism that actually imbibed itself from the first freedom struggle of 1857 questions the hardened death of our predecessors who wanted a free India but witnessed blood and trauma as the its aftermath. The sequence of the movie questions the political incorrectness, the lack of potential in ruling a country on the notion of secular-*ism*. "...the increasingly congealed discourse on secularism – congealed, because there are too many things being said in too short a space and time-there is a need to free the secular from the burden of 'ism'....The politicization of the term results not merely in an exclusivist discourse (one that is ultimately comprehensible to the theorists alone), it seems to distance itself from the worldliness of secularism in the social and cultural domains of life. If our understanding of the secular has to evolve in to a larger , more textured strategy of living with difference , then a dialogue has to be initiated beyond the academic confines of seminars , conferences , and journals on a wider spectrum , where the

⁸ *ibid.*,239.

⁹ *ibid.*, 239

languages of secularism can be grounded in the struggles of everyday life.”¹⁰

The movie renews interest in further looking through the cruel and painful lens of partition as to what has partition done to us. Hence in this movie, a different kind of nationalism different from the theoretical definition of Anderson’s is challenged and is defined to be jingoistic nationalism, as previewed through the dissected view of religion and power politics.

Hindustani, to an extent doesn’t follow the other forms of nationalism as has been adapted while reading the other two movies but is apparently different where a nation that has been politically established deals with internal corruption leading to the slow fossilization of the nation. With the present scenario of corruption and bribery in the realm of globalization we are made to see and make ourselves subject to the dominant hierarchy. The movie taking us back through the flashback make us feel the low and dingy about ourselves and prognosticates the emerging fate that we are going to face. To my knowledge the film and its director S.Shankar has ingeniously adapted the theory of neo-colonialism that might be awaited if situations as being shown in the film continues. The flash back rejuvenates in us once again the angst and the heroism with which our freedom fighters have fought to bring independence. The film with the double role played by Kamal Hasan both as the son and the father Chandru and Senapathy, requires attention as it shows the generation gap and the present situation in all Government and other machinery where without

¹⁰ Bharucha, Rustam. In the Name of the Secular: Contemporary Cultural activism in India. New Delhi: OUP, 1998, p-13.

underhand payment nothing gets sorted out. Hence Nationalism in all its bitter taste is all that the film has dealt with where the dream of a freedom fighter is betrayed and he resolves to fight as long as he lives for his motherland.

Fiza, takes a stage in resurrecting the tremor of terrorism and questions of why and under what circumstances does terrorism actually flourish. The contextual skill that the director has taken in order to deal with this film is highly substantial and polemical. Fiza, the elder sister of Amaan sets out to find her brother after a gap of six years and finally finds Amaan, as a terrorist on the outskirts of Rajasthan. The film circumrotates around the 1992 Bombay riots following the demolition of Babri Masjid and shows of how a young Muslim youth takes arms in his hands as the state machinery neglects him at the time of justice. Ashis Nandy points out that the Ayodhya issue though was reinforced clandestinely by the Rajiv Gandhi Govt. with the *Shilanas* and its *pujan*, the politics at its wholesome integrity is thus revealed in front of the mass and that the secular manifesto that our Constitution amended to is falsified. “ We tried to find out the reactions of a small, randomly chosen group of educated young men who had participated in some of the events at Ayodhya. They said that, at long last, the first step had been taken to avenge the partition of the country and the sell-out to the Muslims by M.K. Gandhi; ‘he was no Mahatma, he was a traitor’.”¹¹ The vitiating and provoking language hence hinders the growth of nationalism is thus manifested from young, educated youths of India is further contested. The film furthermore, takes the role of the Police during the communal

¹¹ Nandy, Ashis. *Exiled at Home. ‘Creating a Nationality’*. New Delhi: OUP, 1998. p-31

riots that broke in 1992-93 December-January in Bombay and directly challenges the then State Government of Maharashtra in showing biasness towards a particular community. The Sri Krishna Commission Report on corrupt police officials and the majoritarian religious fundamentalism is set against pulp-secularism and is shown to be a contested phenomenon. Here, the notion of nationalism is shown to be perplex and precarious and questions the implementation of the Govt. in order to provide the rights of the Muslims of India.

All the films that I have taken for my research deal in some way or the other in either defining 'nationalism' or 'nation-building' in Bollywood. But the crux of the point is, so much have been said and defined in the constructions that the time has come where if the segmentations and fragmentations are not stopped and been let to be continued , no one is sure of what would happen to this nation, which we call India. This could be the real recipe for a true 'nationalism' in 'postcolonial Bollywood'. This dissertation, however inadequately tried to look for this. In conclusion, after having studied four representative films of contemporary Bollywood, dealing with nationalism, that entire one can say in conclusion, is that there are different kinds of nationalism, and no single formula can encompass it all. The need still stays for formulating this diverse 'recipe', as I have called it, and that has been the purpose of this dissertation.

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