



RENAISSANCE OF INDIAN CINEMA AND ITS IMPACT ON ASSAMESE CINEMA

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ABSTRACT

Cinema is a strong mass-media, blended by Science and Technology, Music, Literature and the realizations of life. As an art-media, it does not only reflect the thinking of its producer, but also it reflects the spiritual development, sense of beauty, level of imagination of the inherent society as well as the Nation. The outbreak and development of Indian Cinema is almost simultaneous to the history of the World Cinema. From its outbreak, the Indian cinema has been eclipsing different forms and so on the basis of these forms, the evolution of Indian cinema can be divided into several sorts. In real sense, the development of Indian cinema came to start from the mid of 20th century and this era can be declared as the Renaissance of Indian cinema. This era has played an important effort to make Indian cinema more closely to people by taking it as an art form. In the context of Assam also, the impacts of the Renaissance of Indian cinema can be seen. In Assam a healthy trend of Cinema making was started by being influenced from various causes, producers and their concepts. In the Post-Jyotiprasad period, the Renaissance of Indian cinema had significantly influenced to produce a trend of healthy cinemas in Assam. In this Research Paper, the Renaissance of Indian cinema and its impact on Assamese cinema has been discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

In a simultaneous sphere with the World Cinema, the chronicle of Indian cinema had also been commenced. The beginning of Indian Cinema was started by the era of Silent movies. Dada Saheb Falke had produced the first Indian full-length cinema, named 'Raja Harishandra' by taking a historical subject matter in the year of 1913. The cinema was made in Marathi language and all the female characters were acted by male actors. After 'Raja Harishandra', Falke had produced two another notable silent cinemas, namely- 'Mohini Bhasmashor' and 'Sabitri Satyaban'. It should be mentioned that both of the cinemas were based on historical background. Prior to the Falke, Harishandra Sakharam Vatwarekar, Dadasaheb Torne, Hiralal Sen etc. were some producers, who had strengthened the initiatives to create the proper environment of cinema making. But it should be remembered that their cinemas were mostly either short movies or camera-obstructed forms some popular dramas. To the field of the full-length Indian cinemas, which was formed by Dada Saheb Falke, many other producers of the then Silent era like Rustomji Dutiwai, Himangsu Ray, Raghupati Venkaya Naidu had also contributed in a significant way. The motive of arrival of Indian Cinema was commercial purpose by entertaining the masses instead of being exercised as an art form.

Mostly these cinemas had created on historical background. But some of Indian producers had tried to produce on the base of social reality or societal issues apart from the aforesaid historical or mythological base in the era of the Silent cinemas. In this context, the "Chaokari Pass" by Baburao Painter can be mentioned as a milestone. The inherent theme of the 'Chaokari pass', in which 'Location Shooting' and 'Cinematic acting' were applied, was exploitation and oppression of landlords to the common peasants. It is remarkable that the centers of the silent era of Indian cinema, which were practiced from 1913 to 1931 were Bombay (Mumbai) and Kolikata (Kolkata).

'Alam Ara', the first Indian word movie had published on 14th March of 1931. A numbers of word movie had brought out in the same year, which was a good sign for the Indian cinema industry. However, in the beginning stage of the word movie, as like the silent era, the motive of cinema making was commercial instead of being socially conscious or artistic. But in later period, a miniature changes in the setting of the motive of cinema making and its themes can be noticed. An idealistic and social-reality basic trend of cinema, though they were influenced by Romanticism had been initiated by 'Adhikar', 'Devadas' by Pramathesh Baruah, 'Udayer Pathe' by Bimal Ray, 'Asyut Kanya' by Himangsu Das and 'Admi', 'Duniyana mane' by V. Santaram etc.

In the Post-war period, due to an economic circumstances, a group of highly commercial producers were emerged. As a consequence, in this era, Indian cinema had lost its taste and

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the realization of its art form. However, from the mid of 50th decade, instead of this atrophy, a great initiative to make socially concerned cinemas were being grown in some regions of the nation. Poverty in a war-effected society, Struggle, famine were some roots of the newly emerged socially concerned cinemas, which were basically being carried a solicitation of humanity. Simultaneously Italy was faced with its neo-realism and India was also influenced. By being influenced from the now-realism, Chetan Anand had produced 'Nisa Nagar', Mehboob Kha had produced 'Ek hi rasta', 'Rooti', Abbas had produced 'Dhartikelal' etc. 'Nisa Nagar' as the first Indian cinema in 1946 had won a major prize in the Kna Cinema festival in French and instantly the field of Indian Cinema had been confronted with a Renaissance. Mainly the Renaissance of Indian cinema was started by the efforts of 'Chinnamul' by Nimai Ghosh, 'Do bighajamin' by Bimal Roy, 'Nagarik' by Rittik Ghatak etc. some artistic as well as realistic cinemas. In a simultaneous sphere,

Satyajit Rai had emerged in the context of Indian cinema. 'Pather Panchali' was the first single of the Apu trilogy and this Apu trilogy had able to won several international reputations in the then era.

A query can be arise that why other producers like Santaram, Debaki Kumar Basu etc had failed to own the reputation that 'Pather Panchali' had achieved? The answer is transparent that those cinemas were a blend of Literature, Drama and opera. Literary dialogues, stage like acting techniques and use of opera music had pushed away those cinemas from being cinematic, though they had a few cinematic scenarios. But the trend that has initiated by the 'Pather Panchali' was limited in the Bangla movies of West Bengal for the foremost decade. Rittik kumar Ghatak was one of the prominent concurrent producers to Satyajit Rai. Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, Rajen Tarafdar, Kabin Saha, Utpal Dutta, Purnendo Patri etc some of the prominent producers of that time.

It is indubitably true that Satyajit Ray is the inaugural one, who had initiated the Renaissance of Indian cinema. The actualization of life of Satyajit Ray was a set of Humanity, Social consciousness, the depth of human relationship, poetic and lyrical. The rural poverty and loneliness of the town life of the then era was being contemplated in his 'Apu Trilogy'. Subsequently the 'Pather Panchali', in 'Aparjit' and 'Apar Sansar' had also been reflected the scenario of humanitarian ambitions. A sense of death is the primary motif of the trilogy of Satyajit Ray, who immersed the audiences by a sound sadness, though at least a spirit towards life had come out. The cinematic language of Satyajit Ray was prosperous by metaphoric language and had held a distinct philosophy towards life. A clear impact of French and Russian cinemas can be cited on the Neo-Realist cinema producers of Italy, who had come out after the Second World War. A clear impact of the concurrent world-movie theatre can be cited in the cinemas of Satyajit Ray. Prior to the Satyajit Ray, no single Indian cinema-maker held a depth study of World cinema. (Baruah, 1992, p. 60) It should be noted that those impacts were used as an aesthetic influence instead of being followed. In his cinemas, he essayed to express his subject matter under the Symphony rhythm of Western music. However he was not the introducer of the lyrical expression of cinema. Several examples of this can be cited in many cinemas of many talented filmmakers of Silent and word eras including Griffith, the introducer of the artistic style of cinema. (Baruah, 1992,

p. 62) A clear impact of the Renaissance of Bengal can be summoned in the psychological development of Satyajit Ray. To attain excellence by harmony between the western thinking with the Indian civilization and history was the main purpose of the Societal Renaissance movement. 'Apu', the hero of the 'Apu Trilogy' is a symbol or representative of this Renaissance movement. The root of Apu can be ground in the history of India, but he is ambitious to the new creations of the Western science. At all, instead of the societal problems that arose in the post-independence era, the cinemas of Satyajit Ray had expressed the expansion of idealism in between the cultural Renessa of the middle class Bengali Society from the mid of 19th century.

Rittik Ghatak had emerged as the second one after Satyajit Rai. He had self-expressed by the 'Nagarik' in 1952 and had produced a numbers of masterpieces like- 'Ajantrik', 'Meghe Dhaka tara', 'Komal Gandhar' and 'Subarnarekha' etc. But due to some commercial purposes, the 'Ngarik' film had not been released. Leave out the 'Meghe Dhaka Tara', no other cinemas had commercially succeeded. Yea, he had not produced any film after the 'Subarnarekha' for long ten years. In an interview he had mentioned that- "My poor livelihood is one of the reason that's why I do not make any fiction movies. The second reason is that I have noticed that from the 'Ajantrik' to 'Subarnarekha', the entire five movies had not able to commercially survive." (Baruah, 1992, p. 63) The 'Ajantrik' can be mentioned as the greatest creation of his life. According to the critics, for the experimental use of patient elements in 'Ajantrik', RittikGhat can be cited as equal to Satyajit Ray. Different international film critics like Merry Citon, Gorge Shardul, Jargy Toeplitz from Poland etc. had commented on the 'Ajantrik'. Jargy Toeplitz had commented that- "Rittik Ghatak, an young produver had produced 'Ajantrik', in which from over all viewpoint, about a taxi driver of an old cab is being discussed. But in depth a burning problem, that has arose as a result of the industrialization of today's India, has been presented. The problem is about the clashes between the machinery production and the craftsmen's production, which resulting in several dissimilarities." (Baruah, 1992, p. 67) After the 'Ajantrik', 'Meghe Dhaka tara', 'Komal Gandhar' and 'Subarnarekha' were produced by reflecting the lives of proletariats of West-Bangal, who were effected in the share-out of the nation. After Ghatak, the name of Mrinal Sen can be cited. His notable creations were 'Neel Akasher niche', 'Baise Shrawon', 'Abaseshe', 'Pratinidhi' and 'Akash Kushum'. The context, style of presentation and the technical methods had able to attract the foreign critics.

Sen had received the opportunity to watch the 'Four hundred blows' and 'July at gym' by Francisco Trupho, who was one of the prominent producer of French's new wave and Mrinal Sen, by being influenced from the technical methods of those films, had produced the 'Akash Kushum', by giving importance on 'Jump Cut' and 'Freeze shot'. But the critics did not appreciate those techniques by relating the theme of the movie. At all, Satyajit Ray, Rittik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen had initiated to make healthy and artistic films instead of the then narrow entertainment and commercial show up of Hindi cinemas. These efforts had played a notable role to expand the parallel Indian cinema in the 70th decade.

Role of film Societies in the Renaissance of Indian Cinema

Movie makers thought about to save the real nature of cinemas at 1950s. In 1947 many intellectual from Bengal formed the 'Calcutta Film Society'. In the renaissance of Indian cinema this institute played a major role. This type of institutes helps many film directors like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Bimol Roy, Mrinal Sen and Purnendu Pattre in their self establishment. In 1952, International Film Festival was held in India and it totally changed prevailing concepts of Indian cinema. The young movie makers of that time got their chance to witness world's best movies and got introduced with the popular Neo-Realism trend of Italy. It later reflected on the works of Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen. By looking at the evolution and quality development of the Indian cinema Central Education Ministry invited British movie director Marry Siton in 1956 to discuss about the cinema art. In the speech "Film Society Movement" Siton said that "In the era of movie distribution this type of associations helps a lot. In England, France and Italy by producing good movies, this type of associations strengthen the cinema movement and created a new era of cinema; like foreign countries Indian film associations could also discuss about cinema, only by this type of gestures real cinema can come into existence." (Baruah, 1992, p.59). Siton's lecture influenced many other to form film associations around the country. In 1959 for better inter relation and distribution system Central Film Association or Federation of Film Society (F.F.S.I) was formed. This type of institutes conducted many international film festivals, lecture sessions and discussions for creating a international movie market in a certain period of time which helps to create quality movie viewer and critics in the country.

In 1962 for the first time in Assam "Shillong Film Society" was established in the state's capital Shillong. People like Padum Boruah, Mohd. Sadullah and many people tried their best to form this association. By inspired of this in 1965 Guwahati Cine Club and later Duliajan Film Society was formed. Having contact with the both Shillong Film Society and Guwahati Cine Club and got introduced with world's best cinemas quality movies were started to made in Assam. After Jyoti Prashad the first try of quality and art crafted movie making process in Assam can be seen at Padum Boruah's "Ganga Silonir Pakhi". In the preface of Ganga Silonir Pakhi's script he mentioned that "From 1949 to later 25 years of living in Shillong as a government employee I got a real chance to get touch with world cinema by regularly shown movies mainly American and British cinemas and also by the study of movie making related books. After that (in 1962) with help of some college students and friends after establishment of North East's first cinema institute Shillong Film Society where we saw some rare movies made around the globe at different period of time we get the eye experience of the journey and development of cinema by the touch of great directors" (Preface, Screenplay- Ganga silonir pakhi). The renaissance of Assamese Cinema which was started from Ganga Silonir Pakhi (1976) was later carried forward by the directors like Bhabendranath Saikia, Atul Bordoloi, Jahnu Boruah, Manju Borah, Gautam Borah etc.

Impact of Indian Renessa in Assamese Cinema

The first Indian word movie 'Alam ara' had released in 1931. After four years from 'Alam Ara', Jyotiprasad Agarwala had produced 'Joymoti' in Assam. It is an outcome of the studies

of world's finest creations and their respective philosophies. It should be observed that 'Joymoti' is a realistic creation. Unfortunately, in the subsequent four decades after 'Joymoti' the trend was not being kept. The filmmakers were failed to continue the artistic values due to the lackness of artistic-taste and the hike of commercialization. Afterwards a long 41 years from 'Joymoti',

Padum Boruah by his 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi', had proved that the trend was not totally dimmed. By being influenced from 'Joymoti' of Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Padum Boruah had deeply connected to the film industry. "I fall in 'love' with cinema by watching 'Joymoti' in 1935. I was only 11 years old at that time. I was surprised by its roles of 'Shadow and light' techniques which was much realer than being 'real', instead of the reality that has created in the film. Ace of the impressive matters of 'Joymoti' was its extensive use of the indigenous characters. By watching 'Joymoti' in that of age, I have realized the truth that the manners of a nation can be expressed fully in only cinema, not in the stage acting, in which artificial environment and dramatic dialogues are mostly valued. Actually the root of 'Ganga silonir Pakhi', which had published after a long struggle of 8 years, was sprouted by the experience of watching 'Joymoti'." (Preface, Screenplay-Ganga silonir pakhi) Besides 'Joymoti', he had felt the depth of the film after watching the silent movies of Douglas Fare and the 'General Suvvov' by Pudvikon. To create a healthy environment of Assamese cinema, he had deeply concentrated to study and make cinema and as a result after a long wandering of eight years, the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' had completed. In a real sense, after the long 40 years from the masterpiece of Jyotiprasad, i.e. 'Joymoti', the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' can be mentioned as the first successful effort to produce artistic films in Assam. (Sarmah, 2014, p. 101)

Some special cases had worked behind the conception of 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' can be cited, who had sprouted a new wave towards the Assamese cinema. Padum Boruah had established a film society in Shillong in 1943 and from the banner of the film society had demonstrated the 'Pather Panchali' in 1963. The 'Pather Panchali' had influenced the then Assamese filmmakers and they recommended a custom of producing healthy cinema as a part of creating a conducive environment of Assamese cinema. Padum Boruah had produced the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' by based on the same titled fiction of Laksminandan Borah and aesthetically presented the simplicity of Assamese rural lifestyles, hopes and despairs and the obtainments and non-recipients. From the vision of the film of Padum Boruah, it is vividly clear that Rittik Ghatak and Satyajit Ray, who were two prominent introduced of the Renaissance of Indian cinemas in the post-independence periods, had acted upon him in a very special way. Satyajit Ray had influenced him by his realization of life, intensity of humanitarian relations and the quest for subtle in between the vast of life. Likewise Rittik Ghatak had influenced to study cinema as a serious art form by his societal mentality and social responsibilities. Though Padum Baruah in the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' had presented the hopes and desires, anguishes and the division of society in a highly artistic form, but has failed to make more deep and meaningful the social life in a broader sense. The producer of the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' has failed to place appropriately the injuries of the post-independent Indian society, which is a characteristic of the cinemas of Rittik Ghatak, for which the most of descriptions of

the scenarios were busy to present the hopes and anguishes of the personal life of Basanti by both concrete and abstract forms. The background music is one of the important components to make more strengthened and suggestive the expression of a statement. Podium bore in his cinema 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' had extensively used the Assamese folk music on the basis of the Western Sonata music. He had also used the 'Theme Music' and 'Source Music'. In the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' of Padum Boruah can be noticed the reflection of the smooth lyrical making-style of Satyajit Ray. Padum Boruah had commented on the expertise of using music of Satyajit Ray, who himself was influenced by Griffith, the introducer of artistic form of cinema along with other western filmmakers- "One of the important characteristics of the construction-style of Satyajit Ray is his lyrical expression. He had succeeded to make his famous movies like 'Apu Trilogy' as classic as like the western classical music by using the flow of dramatic clash and peculiar reactions of the Western Symphony music in the cinema as a template to give a special form of the rhythm of the cinema by moving pictures and sounds." (Baruah, 1992, p.61).

As an inheritor of Padum Boruah, Bhabendranath Saikia had attended to establish a parallel trend of Assamese cinema by being influenced from the parallel trend of Indian cinema. According to the critics, Bhabendranath Saikia has set foot by producing 'Sandhyarag' by afflating Satyajit Ray. Though both of the producers cannot be compared, but many similarities regarding thinking, working style and day to day life can be cited. Likewise Satyajit Ray, Bhabendranath Saikia was also interested in Children psyche, thriller biography and thrilling detectives. (Srosta aru Drosta, Page: 28) In subsequent times, instead of going to the depth of societal phenomenon, Bhabendranath Saikia wanted to present fluently the problems of individual lives in the context of Assam. Besides the 'Abartan', his entire works like 'Itihas', 'Agnisnan', 'Anirban', 'Sarathi' and 'Kolahal' were based on his own literary works. After Padum Boruah and Bhabendranath Saikia, the subsequent producers like Atul Bordoloi, Jahnu Baruah, Manju Borah and Gautam Borah had initiated to extend and develop the trend of Renaissance of Assamese cinema. In the second decade of the 21st century, the Assamese cinema have able to maintain an own distinct position in the field of world cinema. 'Village Rockstars' by Reema das, 'Bokul' by Reema Borah, 'Bilbul can sing' by Reema Das, 'Xoixobote Dhemalite' by Bidyut Katakhi etc. some latest examples of the discussed trend.

Findings

By studying the topic 'Renaissance of Indian Cinema and its impact on Assamese Cinema' we come to conclusion by sort out certain findings. They are on follow –

1. The Renaissance movement, that emerged in the mid of 20th century had helped the cinema in the context of India to establish themselves as an art form in real sense.
2. The Renaissance had debuted a distinct development in the context of subject matter and production of film.
3. It has contributed to eclipse an own position in the atmosphere of world cinema.
4. Jyotiprasad Agarwala, by being influenced from this Renaissance, had produced 'Joymoti' and debuted the Renaissance in the field of Assamese cinema.
5. A distinct impact of the introducers of the Renaissance of Indian cinema, like Satyajit Rai, Rittik Ghatak can be cited in the 'Ganga Silonir Pakhi' of Padum Boruah for the first time. This impact can be although regarded as the aesthetic inspiration instead of follow. Bhabendranath Saikia and Jahnu Baruah had made the journey of the Renaissance as good path.

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