

Sam Bahadur – A lackluster effort which disappoints

A review by Sanjiva Sahai



Sam Bahadur, the biopic by Meghna Gulzar, attempts to bring Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw to life, but it's a lacklustre effort that falls flat. Watching his interviews or listening to audio recordings would have been a more engaging tribute.

Yes, the movie falls flatter than a pancake, lacking the cinematic excellence needed to do justice to this real-life hero's valour and contributions. The screenplay and execution, akin to a deflated balloon at a celebration, fail to capture the essence of his remarkable journey. It's almost as if the scriptwriters were aiming for a snooze fest rather than a compelling tribute to the national icon.

Furthermore, the core of the narrative hinges on the war sequences. Whether lifted from dusty archives in mere snippets or presented without leaving a discernible impact, these scenes fail to contribute meaningfully to the overall theme.

The movie adopts a docudrama-like tempo, punctuated by sporadic witty moments that aim to reflect the essence of Sam's character. Unfortunately, this approach falls short of creating a consistently engaging experience, leaving viewers yearning for a more dynamic and compelling storytelling rhythm.

Vicky Kaushal nails the postures but overdoses on drama in dialogue delivery, occasionally channeling Dev Anand – a peculiar choice. His characterization is more external that misses out on the depth. The actor who moved everyone of us with Sardar Udham, stays put on the periphery. Fatima Sana Sheikh's portrayal of Indira Gandhi lacks authenticity, bordering on the amateurish. Most of the actors in the movie come and go unnoticed. In the midst of the forgettable portrayals on reel, one can't help but salute the vibrant spirit of the real Manekshaw.

Talking about my generation- having grown up inspired by the valour and vibrancy of Manekshaw, listening to his words on the radio and later on TV, the movie proves to be a disheartening disappointment.

_____ Sanjiva Sahai

Animal – Blood and Gore!

by **Neelam Mansingh**

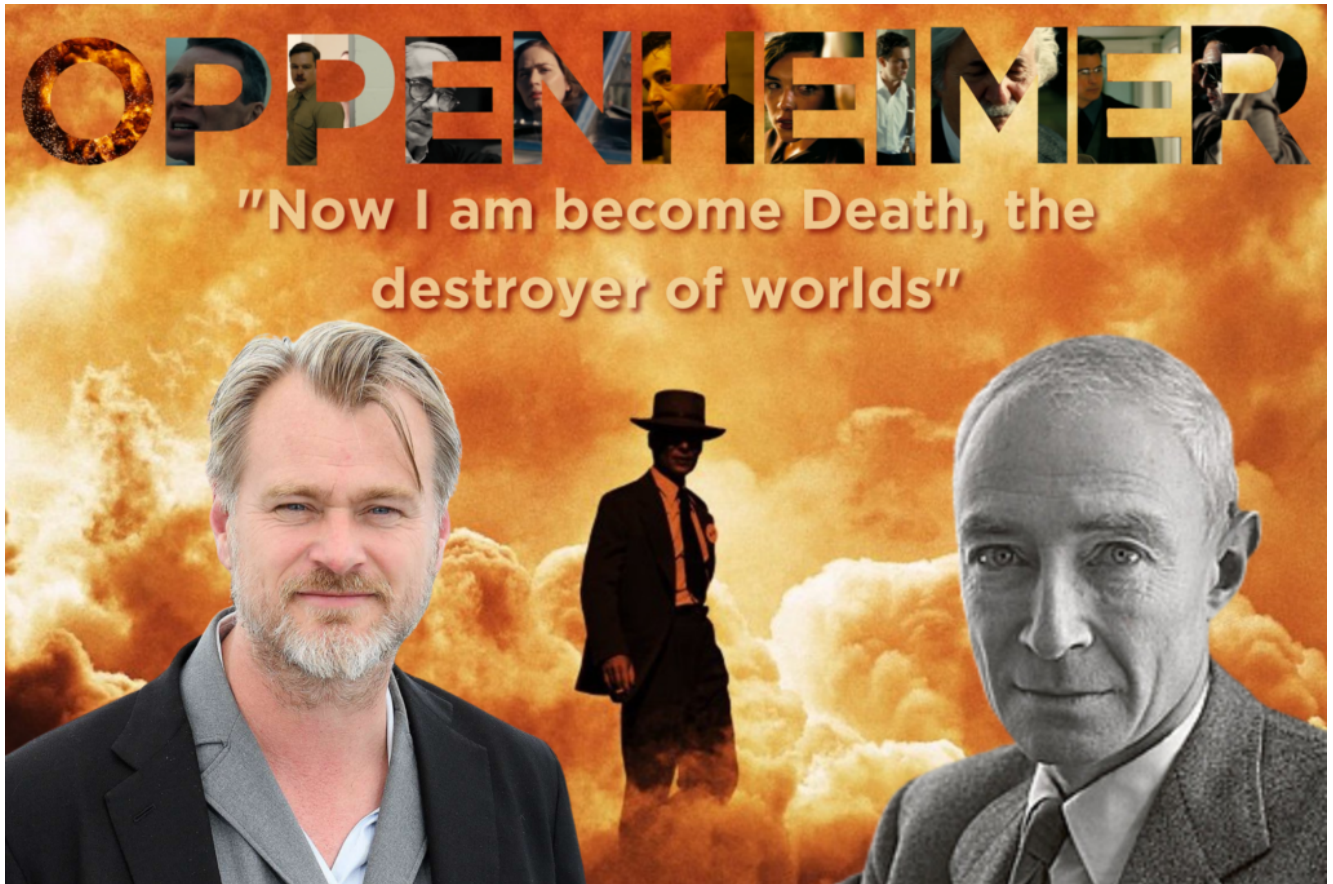


Saw Animal last night . The film stars Ranbir Kapoor, alongside Anil Kapoor, Bobby Deol, Rashmika Mandanna and Tripti Dimri. It's a Blood and Gore assault! Daddy is emotionally negligible so son goes berserk . A psychopath who desperately needs help but also seems beyond help . I was wondering when the law and order machinery will enter the

cinematic screen . An alternate world where violence and savagery without consequences exists and proliferates . The women are spirited but their agency gets demolished as the Protagonist calls the shots (pun intended) the father not loveing his son syndrome becomes demonic , and the father, Anil Kapur, wimps his way looking bewildered , a linear performance without nuance ! . Ranbir , Ranvijaya's misogyny despite its repulsion manages to make it watchable . The crowd clapping at cringe moments made me wonder at the new narratives in cinema . Did I like the film ? I am not sure if I can use terms liked or disliked . Am ambivalent about its intent and purpose ? Hell no ! The director is not Tarantino! Violence reached its precipice and the Neanderthal Alpha pitch is many decibels too high ! Ranbir triumphs in terms of acting chops and manages empathy, moments that make us feel his angst . Its box office bonanza augers a danger sign for society at large . Pulp fiction is a genre that can be considered exciting but this bloodied and bludgeon me .



Openheimer – Said and Unsaid



First Published in THE AIDEM (theaidem.com)

Oppenheimer is a biographical film on the most controversial physicist of the 20th century by the celebrated Hollywood director Christopher Nolan, maker of *Dunkirk* (2017), *Interstellar* (2014), *Batman Vs Superman* Ultimate Edition (2016), *Inception* (2016) and a host of other films on eclectic subjects. He is a megastar amongst Hollywood's film directors.

Robert Oppenheimer, was an American Jew, whose intellect, perhaps matched that of Albert Einstein, the German-Jew who, fleeing Hitler's anti-semitic Nazi Germany in 1932, found a home in the United States of America and was celebrated there. Einstein's genius for physics was matched by his ethical conscience. The same cannot be said of J. Robert Oppenheimer, who came to be known as the 'Father of the Atom' bomb and the man who headed the Manhattan Project, comprising a team of scientists working on the Atom Bomb in utmost secrecy and with great speed to have it ready before Hitler's Germany did during World War II (1939-1945).

The ultimate tragedy was that Oppenheimer (the subject of the film) was unable to fully comprehend the destructive potential of the bomb until it was too late. Promotional poster for Oppenheimer (2023)

Nolan's film goes easy on these ethical considerations though there is a sentimental approach adopted by the director in the last shot of the film, when, in response to Einstein's fear that the Atom Bomb may destroy the world, Oppenheimer, in gigantic close up (the film is shot in IMAX, a huge screen format designed expressly to overwhelm the viewer), he says "we already have," meaning have destroyed the world. This lone statement does not compensate for the rest of the film which evades the ethical implications of creating a monster that can destroy the world in a trice.

The film's structure is staccato. It begins with Oppenheimer's trial instigated by the notorious anti-Communist Senator Joseph McCarthy, who was convinced that Oppenheimer was a traitor, because of his communist sympathies, at a time when very many intellectuals, became either members of the Communist Party of America or fellow travelers, having witnessed the failure of American capitalism when the share market collapsing in 1929 and leaving the economy of the nation tottering for a decade and millions struggling for their daily bread. The principal villain in the trial in the film, is Lewis Strauss, a mediocre scientist who thinks he has been wronged by Oppenheimer. Strauss (played powerfully by Robert Downey Jr.) is the driving force of the story and scenes from Oppenheimer's life are intercut with Strauss's 'testament' at the trial.

Cillian Murphy's portrayal of Oppenheimer is involved, in an old fashioned style of Method acting. He lives the part, in accordance with his conception of what the man he is playing may have been like. It is through his portrayal that Nolan's film acquires both its thrust, and aesthetic ambivalence.

It is important to place the real Oppenheimer alongside his onscreen version. The film's Oppenheimer, for all his brilliance, comes across as a vulnerable, and, on occasion, an indecisive man. In other words the victim of his circumstances. It is an interpretation that suits the American audience, still floundering between Christ and Freud, and also, unable to give up its appetite for the overweening comforts of the material world and its attendant perversions.

Nolan, who is also the scriptwriter of the film, sees Oppenheimer as a man obsessed with his work and yet politically aware, who is grateful in an understated way to the American State for providing him the opportunity as it turns out, in retrospect, of playing both Faust and Mephistopheles at the same time. The script is based on J. Robert Oppenheimer's biography, *American Prometheus* by Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin, a book that won a Pulitzer Prize. *American Prometheus* by Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin

It is difficult, even today, for the U.S. and its citizens (a vast majority of them) to accept the fact that the Atom Bomb created by Oppenheimer and his team in the Manhattan project had paved the way for the destruction of the world; an observation proven by the proliferation of nuclear weapons all over the world today, with the U.S.A leading the way, followed by Russia (the erstwhile Soviet Union) and China, in that order. All it needs is a lunatic, driven by extreme insecurity to push the Button, to provoke an instantaneous reaction from others to do the same, for the entire world to go up in flames in seconds.

In the film what is stated clearly is the need for America to make the bomb before Nazi Germany does and uses it on the Allies. The outcome of the Second World War is seen to be hanging in the balance. Nazi Germany loses the War and surrenders, but its ally Japan, on its last legs, with hardly any resources—military and financial left, fights on gamely, and possibly may hold out for another month.

The Atom Bomb is dropped over the islands of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nevertheless. Three hundred thousand people die in moments and very many others are maimed and crippled for life and are afflicted by radiation poisoning in varying degrees. Both Hiroshima and Nagasaki are completely destroyed. The real reason for dropping the two bombs was to judge how destructive they could be. As later facts were to prove that the United States of America, immediately after the end of the war in 1945, fearing the rise of communism and Soviet Union's ever increasing political power, had actually planned to use the A-Bomb over 66 cities of the Soviet Union if the situation got 'out of hand'. Surely Nolan, Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin were aware of these facts. The film is silent about this crucial detail and the U.S. Government's deliberate, completely inhuman dropping of the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and to use the Japanese as Guinea Pigs, giving an absolute racist angle to the exercise. In addition, there are no images of the aftermath of the bombing and the complete destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the film.



The mounting of the production, in layman's language, is gorgeous. Nolan, is perhaps, the greatest showman of our time. He has an exceptionally talented team working to help realise his vision. Hoyte Van Hoytema (Cinematography), Jennifer Lame (Editing), Jake Cavallo (Art Direction), Ruth De Jong (Production Design), Clair Kaufman (Set Decoration), Oliva Peebles (Set Decorator – New Mexico Unit), Scott R. Fisher, Laurie Pellard, Mario Vanillo, Vincent Vanillo (Special Effects Team), Ellen Mirojnick (Costume Design) and a host of others who worked together to give the film its completely authentic look. The Los Alamos township and testing sight is a most impressive combination of engineering construction and art direction.

The scene of the testing of the Atom Bomb is certainly awe-inspiring but what follows later in the story in the Los Alamos township auditorium when Oppenheimer informs his co-workers, not all of whom are scientists, but have been a part of the project, about the devastation caused by the two bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is both scary and nauseating. Every member of the audience in the auditorium is cheering manically like a football hooligan! The film does not clearly say anything about the complete devastation of the two cities but is jubilant about the total military defeat of Japan.

There is an attempt throughout the film to deflect attention from the real issue, that of the destruction of human civilisation till 1945, and, not just the poisoning of the human consciousness but a fatalistic acceptance of the new status quo, that is, nuclear weapons shall remain in permanent existence, and the world, henceforth, shall live in fear all the time.

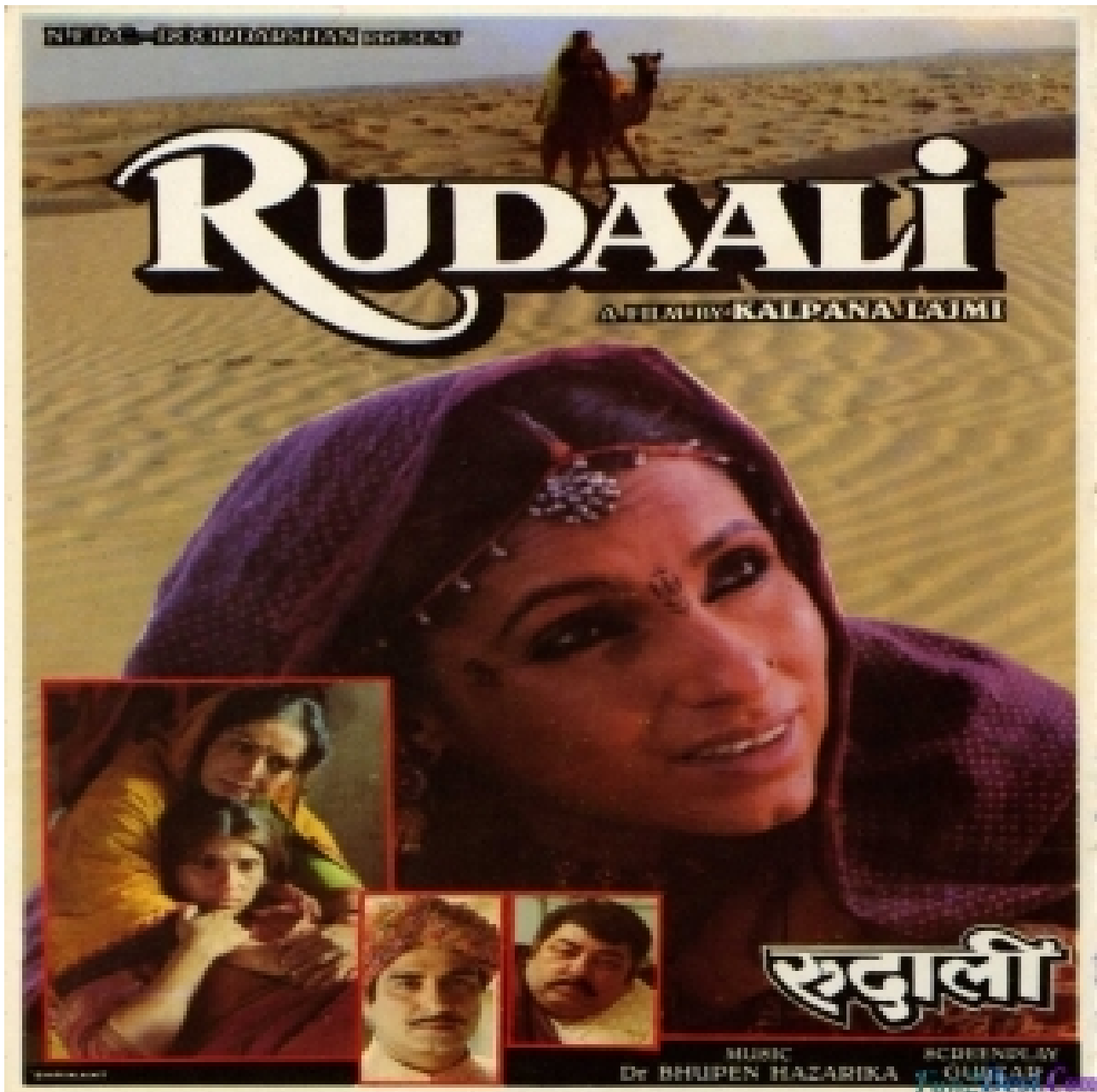
Nolan treats his story differently. He treats President Truman as a callous buffoon in the scene of his meeting with Oppenheimer, who tries feebly to tell him of the enormous destruction caused by the two A-bombs. Truman responds with,

“But we brought our boys home (meaning the Army) safely.” When Oppenheimer, with tears in his eyes, mumbles something about the destruction caused, Truman, draws out his handkerchief and offers it to him and tells his friend, “Take this cry baby away.” Oppenheimer meeting President Truman (Still from movie)

American cinema, certainly in the last fifty years has been gravitating towards a language of misleading heroism and hence machismo. The trial of Oppenheimer, which is the pivot of the film, is cut up in many bits. In a portion, the physicist is called before a Committee of Jurists, mostly from the Armed Forces, who question him about his attitude towards the Atom Bomb (he doesn't want any more to be made, though he is aware that it is going to be a futile exercise) and, of course, his integrity and character. Strangely enough, Leslie Groves (finely played by Matt Damon), a senior Army Officer, Supervising the Los Alamos operations during World War II, comes to his defence.

Oppenheimer, the former Communist sympathiser, makes his compromises with the System steadily and is given official recognition, not unsurprisingly. Nolan makes a film, with no nuances, saying all the right things, which is visually and aurally breath-taking, but far away from what we consider to be a universal truth.

Folklore and Hindi Films



Folklore and Hindi Films

India is the largest film producing country in the world; it produces about 900 films annually. Indian films are not only seen in South Asia but also almost all parts of the world love to watch “the song and dance routine” of Bollywood. Indian films are popular in Russia, Canada, Australia, Middle East, United States and Mauritius just to name a few countries. Incidentally, Raj Kapoor a popular actor of the 1950s and 1960s attained the status of a folk hero in some parts of Soviet Union. His film Awaara in 1951 was highly acclaimed and popular not only in Russia but also in Africa and countries like Turkey.

Cinema opens a new window into culture by studying it we get a deeper understanding of the customs, behaviour patterns, values and arts and crafts of the Indian people. Deeper insights into the complex process of modernization, colonialism, nationalism and freedom and status of women can be acquired through Indian films. Cinema not only mirrors culture but also shapes it. By studying Indian cinema we can see how they have in turn shaped and promoted modernization, westernization, urbanization, secularism and emancipation of women.

Folk ideas and folk motifs have also found its way in Indian cinema and have regularly been used in particularly in Indian film songs and dances. Several folk tunes for example songs sung by Latha Mangeshkar in the film directed by Gulzar Lekin, Yara sili sili and Kesariya Balama are based on popular folk tunes. S.D. Burman, highly inspired by the Baul singers of Bengal, also used several folk tunes of these Bhatiyali while composing music; this can be seen in a very popular song Sun mere bhandu re in the film Sujatha. One of the best and popular music composer, who has won the Oscar, A.R. Rehman is greatly influenced by folk tunes, (said to be composed by Ghazi Khan) that can be seen in his composition Limbuda in the film Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. He also uses sufi music to large extent that is heavily popular not only in India but also the west.

Many dance numbers also borrow folk concepts and Saroj Khan the famous dance choreographer is heavily influenced by folk dance of India. This can be seen in the dance of the famous actor Sri Devi in Morni Baaga main boli aadhi raat ma in the film Lamhe. Hybridized folk dancing can also be seen in many other films like used in Jhanak Jhanak Payal Bhaje. Another form of dancing was also popularized by actor Vyjayanthimala who in the film New Delhi combined Bharat Natyam dance steps with Kathak dance and Bhangra, a Punjabi folk dance.

By studying Indian cinema we can enter productively into the

thought worlds and the performance worlds of other traditional arts such as the folk ones. Many Indian film directors from pioneers such as Dadasaheb Phalke to directors like Satyajit Raj, Ritwik Ghatak and Shyam Benegal have sought to employ creatively the visualizations and the colour symbolisms that can be seen in folk dance, music, mime and theatre. In the use of song, dance, humor, structure of narrative, the melodrama, the folk plays of Lavani, Tamasha of Maharashtra, Jatra of Bengal, Bhavai of Gujarat, Nautanki of northern India and Terukuttu of Tamilnadu have had great influence on popular Indian filmmakers.

Perhaps the greatest influence of folk in films can be seen in the genre of mythology. The first Indian feature film Raja Harishchandra directed by Phalke was based on the mythology from the Ramayana. Phalke was highly influenced by the film the Life of Christ and he decided to make a mythological film. His 50 minute film Raja Harishchandra became immensely successful that saw its influence on many other films based on the same genre. The myth has a strong cultural- religious tradition and the Indian mind is deeply attached to it. This can be seen in later films like Jai Santoshi Maa which helped in resurrecting a little known provincial goddess to a grand overpowering level where new temples for her have sprung up in all over the country. Among the most popular myths have been from the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and the countless tales connected with Lord Krishna. These have been repeated frequently and we can give a number of instances such as Shataram's Surekha Haran, Vijay Bhatt's Bharat Milap and the actor Dara Singh playing lord Hanuman in Bajrangbali. Many animation films like Hanuman and Return of Hanuman are also being created now to find the audience amongst children and keen adults.

Mythological themes like good fighting and destroying evil (Sholay by Ramesh Sippy,) brothers uniting (Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gam by Karan Johar), reincarnation (Om Shanti Om by Farah

Khan), sacrifice (Mother India by Bimal Roy) and tolerance (Bombay, and Roja by Mani Ratnam) can also be seen in films. Historical anecdotes and instances can be seen in films such as Mohenjadaro and Jodha Akbar.

Folklore legends about holy men and women (example Sant Tukaram and Savitri Satyavan), kings and queens (Mughal –e- Azam, Ruzia Sultana and Jodha Akbar) and even outlaws and dacoits (Reshma aur Shera by Sunil Dutt) can be seen in films. There are also stories about legendary love pairs who have lived and died for love which have been made into films such as Heer Ranjha, Sohni Mahiwal, Mirza Sahiban and Dhola Maru. Fantasy based and magic films were made by Kikubhai Desai as early as the 1930s. Today we see that Subhash Ghai and late Manmohan Desai have raised this genre to the opulent levels of grand, multistar films, good examples being Dharam Veer, Amar Akbar, Anthony and Parvarish. Pure fantasy films have also been made such as Alladin, Alibaba, Sindbad the Sailor and Thief of Baghdad. By and large, all the non myth genres in films have functioned as mythological by products, existing in a supernatural miracle world and promoting old world beliefs and superstitions.

Charlie Chopra & The Mystery Of Solang Valley



A Review by **Sanjiva Sahai**

Charlie Chopra

& The Mystery Of Solang Valley

(The latest Hindi web series in 6 episodes on Sony Liv)

□□Directed by Vishal Bharadwaj the show opens with an innovative musical score and hilariously clever lyrics that reveal the protagonist's (Wamiqa) home address. These elements stand out as commendable highlights in the series. However, while the music and the stunning snow-capped setting deserve praise, the adaptation of Agatha Christie's classic Sittaford Mystery falls short of delivering a believable, relatable, and engaging narrative.

□□Charlie's sporadic fourth-wall-breaking moments, where she addresses the camera and talks to the viewers, leave much to be desired. This is a well-known technique in theatre, film, TV, and literature but here it's executed with a lack of finesse, often descending into gimmickry and absurdity. Wamiqa Gabbi's reactions serve as mere punctuation to these instances, highlighting their shallowness. It raises the question of whether delving into a detective's psyche is

justified when the true pleasure lies in external observation and deciphering their actions.

□ While Agatha's novel sparkled like a well-polished diamond, the adaptation and cast's performances were more like deflated party balloons. It's as if they were handed a *Rogan Josh* recipe but decided to cook instant noodles instead. The characters needed emotional depth, but the actors served up emotional flatlines. Wamiqa Gabbi, a radiant presence, struggles to carry the show solo, hampered by a lack of versatility, rendering her lengthy role predictably dull. Naseeruddin Shah, oddly out of place, delivers a superficial performance. Neena Gupta, however, shines as the sole beacon of spontaneity and precision. Gulshan Grover repeats himself. The ensemble cast- including the entire Shah family (Ratna Pathak – Heeba – Vivaan – Imaad), Lara Dutta, Chandan Roy Sanyal, Paoli Dam, and Ashique Hussain, adds their bit to the mix.

□ It leaves viewers hoping that future adaptations by Vishal will capture the essence of Christie's work more effectively.

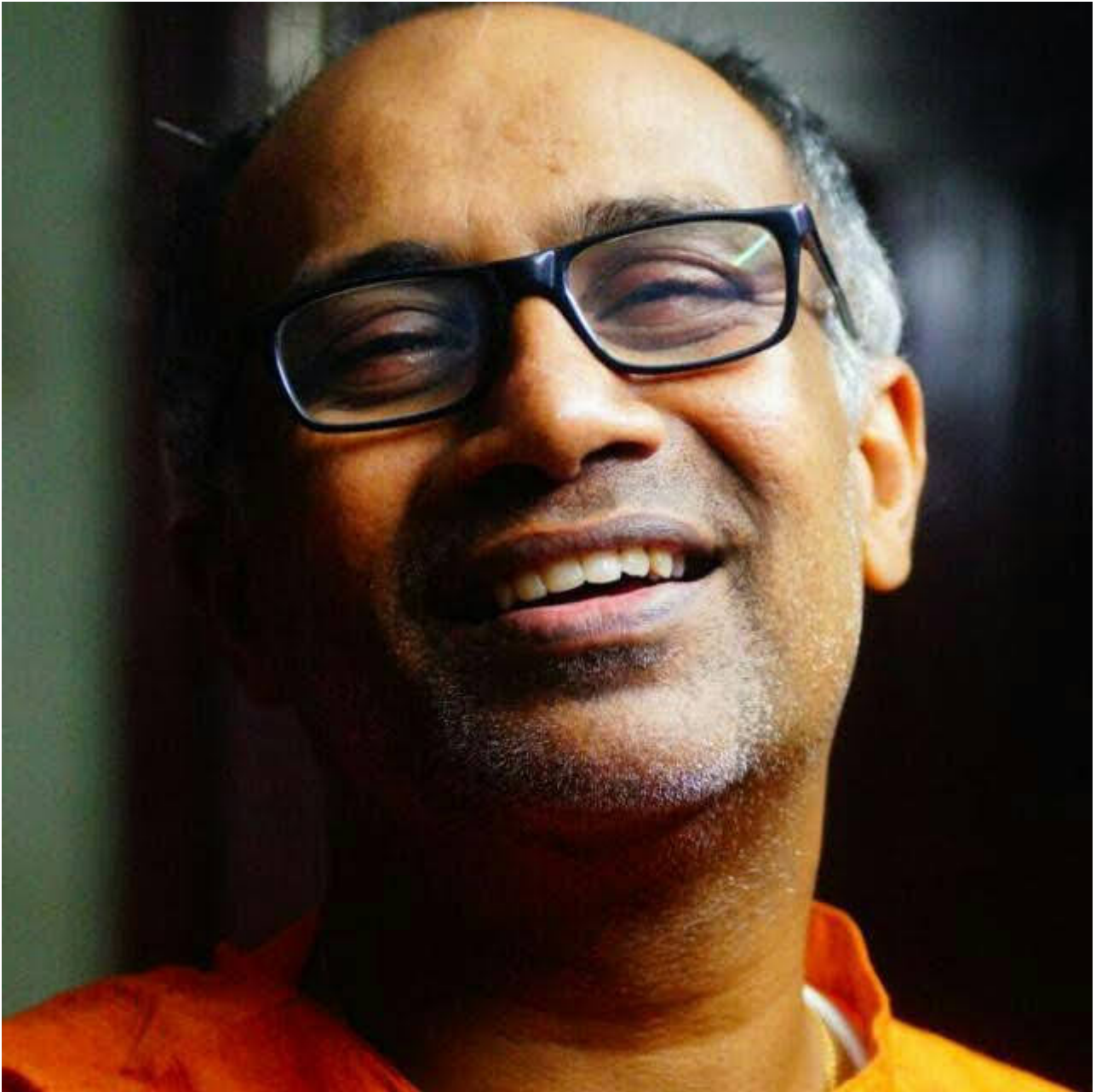
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_ Sanjiva Sahai

Janardan Ghosh's Kayantar – Towards the need for

Transformation



KAYANTAR- A film co-directed by Rajdeep Paul & Sarmistha Maity

The lead actor in the film, Dr Janardan Ghosh, is really versatile and multi talented. He is a performing artist, academic, theatre director, film actor, playwright, performance coach and storyteller (Katha 'Koli, a new art of storytelling) whose practice includes the use of traditional theories, contemporary performance vocabulary, and interactive media. His research-based work engages the indigenous practice methods in urban spaces exploring the perspectives of

historicity, spiritual consciousness, intertextual dialogue, and body-space dynamics of myths, tales and gossips.

Kayantar- is a poignant tale of religious discrimination that leads to repenting circumstances for those that are forced to quietly endure and hence implicitly exploited to endorse conformity to the extent of losing their identities and eventually their lives. Moreover, it is a tale that has a sub-plot dealing with the pathos of the Bahurupi artists who beg in front of the people for their survival; their art not being recognized as a respectable profession but being condemned as a demeaning activity, pursued by those that are financially underprivileged and become nomadic thus imploring in front of the people for alms in order to make both ends meet.

The film is heart-wrenching as we see how the Bahurupi Muslim artist (played by Dr. Janardan Ghosh) dressed as the Hindu Goddess Kali appears in front of his two children; only to consecutively become crippled and hence forcefully passing on his legacy to his son who dislikes pursuing his father's profession. The son has a point. He being a Muslim roaming around in the apparel of a Hindu Goddess is disparaged by the religious stalwarts of his community, is mocked at by the children of the village and is boycotted by many conservatives as 'Bhikhari' – a pauper. These facts reiterated in an overtly painful and innately stark undertone are enough evidences to make the pangs of the young man believable and evocative of the viewers' empathy for him.

That the innocent youth who has not acquired this profession by his own choice and it has been rather forced on him comes as a harsh and undeniable truth that grills our thinking capacities to the extent of questioning all our modern theories of global indivisibilities of culture and religion. When the young lad takes an anomalous decision to choose a girl of the rival community and loses his life because of being engulfed in the holocaust of communal riots that take place in his village, our conscience gets stirred and we as

viewers of the film are compelled to revise our notions of living in an industrialized, progressive world. We are made to rethink whether the circumferences of culture, creed, race and religion only exist on national borders or are they still prevalent somewhere within our psyches and we are only ignoring these under the pretext of being the civilized community.

Within the framework of a story that so effectively becomes pertinent with the theme of universal relevance as we still find the world divided into castes and communities and people identifying themselves through their religions, there is a very intriguing story of Asia, the young girl who wishes to adorn herself as Kali and pursue her Bahurupi father's profession with confidence and dignity. The tale comes as an pleasant surprise when Asia is founded engaging herself in painting her body coal black and rejoicing to see herself in the gruesome look. It seems a woman's reclusive identification of the other dimension of the divine feminine that exists within her apparent demure image of a meek girl.

That Kali chooses Asia's body to be her abode is also a fact that demands our prudent understanding of the fact that religious differences prevail only on the superficial level as the Bahurupi keeps singing "Apanar Apni fana hole shei bhed jana jai"- Means that realization comes only when the distinction between mine and yours gets erased. Such an indubitable truth of the oneness of divinity is fondly repeated as a backdrop of the entire film makes the theme of the movie apparent- It is not by dividing but it is by uniting that humanity can realize in the oneness of this universe wherein every entity is the fragment of that supreme energy that we call God. The philosophical context in the film does not let the film lose its ties with an integral theme of gender discrimination.

Asia takes the permission of her father to dress up as Kali and pursue her profession as a Bahurupi. Nonetheless, the

Bahurupi, her father, gets annoyed with her and says that he cannot allow his daughter to wander on the roads as a prostitute. Why the man who has earned a living with the same profession disallows his daughter to follow his footsteps? The film gives us a jolt when we hear these words of the Bahurupi. If it were such a demeaning profession, why on earth did he adopt it? Was he also forced by his family to adopt it and with great reluctance he went on from door to door dressed up as Kali and asked for money from the people? The film does not answer these questions but raising these queries in our minds the film acts as a thunderbolt when we see a Muslim girl adopting her father's profession ultimately when her brother dies in the communal riots and she has to earn a living for her home ultimately as her father is crippled and is unable to do anything to make a living. Though she finally opts to become Kali, the intimidating figure of the bloodthirsty goddess who is so venomous becomes the most pensive image of pathos; she has to become Kali only to support her family and this time her father is helpless and cannot stop her even if he wants to. She walks on the railway track fearlessly continuing her journey on the route that has her brother's remnants that remind us of the gruesome ending that the young boy faced due to his unfortunate choice.

Diluting the conformist image of Kali as a fearsome goddess, Kayantar presents another facet of hers as a sad feminine figure who wanders helplessly for recognition. When she walks on the road men do not fear her ghastly appearance. They in fact dare to tease her which undermines her ferocity only to expose the truth that a woman's frightening exterior cannot dismantle the atrocities meted out to her in a man's world. She may be regarded as an epitome of Kali and the goddess may have chosen her to manifest her form but the fact remains that she is an ordinary woman confined within domestic sphere that does not allow her to operate according to her will and discretion. Her life is what a man wants it to be. She may dress up as Kali but she will never be regarded equal to the

formidable goddess of the temples and the cemeteries. She will remain as an ordinary woman. When the Bahurupi tries to disclose the truth in front of her thus refusing her to wander on the roads as Kali, it is this harsh reality that he tries to explain to her which remains unadulterated truth pertinent to all times.

That a woman is exploited under the pretext of granting her equal rights and overt sexual violence and tacit manipulation are indeed a part of this so called man's world even today are not hidden realities but are undeniable truths. Kayantar shows that if Kali wanders as an ordinary powerless woman Asia, she will be shamed. The film aptly demystifies the wrathful image of Kali and extracts the ordinary femininity in her that seeks recognition till date.

When the goddess Kali accidentally stepped on Kala- Lord Shiva as per the mythical account, she was unhappy and wailed for the fact that she had made a grave mistake of putting her feet on her husband's chest; a sinful conduct for a woman as per the conventional theories of Hinduism. It is not Kali's pathos that is underpinned in the temples when we worship her as the mother goddess. It is her ire that is being continually recognized and the red tongue that lolled accidentally out of her mouth due to her unconscious act of putting her feet on Shiva's chest is ironically regarded as a mark of her fearful image. Kayantar shows the other aspect of this horrific Kali and that is – Kali as the one that resides in the domicile of an artist who earns his morsel of food by emoting her from door to door. When the Kayantar takes place and the Bahurupi allows her to possess him, the possession is just on the level of the exterior. There is no internal possession because the artist cannot afford it. He is supposed to be submissive and not exert his redoubtable image in front of others. He is a beggar.

The film talks about the pathos of the village artists that pursue their profession only as a means of earning the basic

necessities in life. With the advent of complex technologies in the realm of entertainment, these artists are deprived of their due recognition. Kayantar – the transformation is of the body and not the soul but this is what the film seems to have intended. The ardour of transforming one's soul is explained through the restraint that the Bahurupi imposes on himself and his son who both dress up as Kali only because they have to earn money to win their bread and butter. There is no philosophical enlightenment in the process of transforming themselves. It stays at the superficial level even after the Bahurupi keeps singing the song 'Apnar Apni fana hole shei bhed jana jai- which talks about the need to escalate beyond the boundaries of time and space to realize divinity.

The song remains merely a song and the spiritual message ingrained in it is only a matter of speculation. In the end, the Muslim girl Asia adopting Kali's image does undermine religious discrimination but it does not become prominent because; the extremely painful state of a girl who takes up a vocation on account of a drastic change that occurs in her life of losing her own brother is a telling tale that completely dilutes the fury in the image she adopts and brings out the agony of an ordinary woman incarcerated in the prison of conformity that she is unable to challenge or disown.

All in all, Kayantar is a film that stimulates us to understand religion beyond the confines of the right and the wrong and urges us to revise our cliché associations of Gods and Goddesses as intimidating figures of the temples who possess their disciples that invoke them in the temple rituals. It certainly is an eye-opener to the fact that the transformation of our soul is needed but is often occluded by our senses governed by selfish motives that thwart the spiritual awakening which engenders the realization of truth.

For comments on the article please write in the box given below:

AFWAAH – a landmark film by Sudhir Mishra



'Afwaah' is an announcement, if one were needed, of Sudhir's arrival as perhaps the most perceptive political film makers of our time . A brilliant take on the abuse of social media in India Today, it's weaponisation to serve vested political interests, fake news and its humongous and horrific impact on society, a telling comment on the grotesque systemic and personal injustices and subversion of law of the land, the inconsequence of human lives, be it a community, be it gender, abject and impotent silence of the intelligentsia.

The film is a thrilling edge-of-the-seat ride along the journey of protagonists caught in the web of a tragicomic narrative of their own creation. Each character is a real persona you can spot in your own environment. An amazing story of how conflicting narratives recoil on their own creators in a way, nobody could have predicted or anticipated.

It is a must see film . Sudhir Mishra has arrived .

Synopsis:

Rahab Ahmed, a top notch advertising professional takes an ill fated detour through his hometown and unwittingly rescues Nivi, a political heiress running away from her father's legacy. This fateful night becomes a journey through hell as rumors run rife and social media becomes a lethal weapon.

Afwaah is a quirky thriller that explores the power of rumours in our society. Directed by Sudhir Mishra and produced by Anubhav Sinha, the film features Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Bhumi Pednekar in lead roles. The film is set to release on May 5, 2023.

Cast:

Nawazuddin Siddiqui

Bhumi Pednekar

Sharib Hashmi

Sumit Kaul

Sumeet Vyas

Rockey Raina

TJ Bhanu

Crew:

Directed by Sudhir Mishra

Produced by Anubhav Sinha

Story by – Sudhir Mishra

Screenplay – Sudhir Mishra, Shiva Shankar Bajpai & Nisarg Mehta

Dialogues – Sudhir Mishra, Apurva Dhar Badgaiyann & Nisarg Mehta

Cinematography by Mauricio Vidal

Background music by Karel Antonín

'Aaj ye Basant' Song composed by Shamir Tandon

'Aaj ye Basant' Song Lyrics by Dr. Sagar

Edited by Atanu Mukherjee

Production Company: Benaras Mediaworks

Trailer Link:

<https://stagebuzz.in/2023/05/04/afwaah-the-sudhir-mishra-thriller-opening-5th-may/>

‘AFWAAH’ the Sudhir Mishra thriller opening 5th May

Rahab Ahmed, a top notch advertising professional takes an ill fated detour through his hometown and unwittingly rescues Nivi, a political heiress running away from her father's legacy. This fateful night becomes a journey through hell as rumors run rife and social media becomes a lethal weapon.

Afwaah is a quirky thriller that explores the power of rumours in our society. Directed by **Sudhir Mishra** and produced by **Anubhav Sinha**, the film features **Nawazuddin Siddiqui** and **Bhumi Pednekar** in lead roles. The film is set to release on May 5, 2023.

Look out for this space tomorrow for a detailed analysis and review of the film by Poet, Thinker, Author: Dr. **Madhup Mohta**



Garbage Free Society

Today's Indian and Hindi cinema in particular seems the kind of garbage in and out- Irrelevant data producing irrelevant output. This general perception justifiably springs from the conspicuously lavish supply of extravagant violence and sex that's become an inseparable part of the films we see today. Nonetheless, if the makers of films are supposed to be held responsible for displaying such content, I feel, the audiences are equally responsible for paying undue attention to such frivolous foolery that is not worthy of even an iota of today's extremely busy minds that have much serious and deservedly important tasks to dwell upon. My question is "why do we even talk about such content?" The moment we see a sleazy or excessively violent film trailer, why do we not discard it from our vicinity instead of just investing our time writing critical articles, dislodging them or engaging in mass protests against them.

If banning a film could have saved our highly vulnerable youth extremely anxious to watch age restricted videos, we could have successfully been able to divert their concentration towards participating in intellectual activities rather than getting hooked to violate all rules of censorship under the pretext of modernity. Indeed it is the gusto of radicalism that provokes the younger generation of today to watch violence and sex that spoils their mind and deviates them towards unwarranted actions.

If juvenile delinquency is a major concern today, it is not because of only films, it is because of our inability as responsible adults to rationally explain the youth the adequate reason beneath our denial to watch such explicit content on Television. Yes, somewhere down the line we have failed as parents and guardians to make our children understand the detrimental factors of becoming susceptible to the addiction of such films and hence we see the generation today watches all the provocative material.

Imposing the rule of not watching Netflix or OTT platform will not help. The rules are supposed to be broken is the anthem of many such youths that are unregulated on account of the fact that they are misguided. Many a times, the working parents and guardians are too engrossed in their own problems to fathom the necessity of counselling curious minds.

It is not by stringent principles but by a forthright and sensitized counselling that the youth of today can be made to understand the need to focus on the ethically correct and age appropriate matter. Three four days back, I found a very young 8th standard student reading a novel that wasn't compatible with his age. On asking, he told me that the book was given to him by a girl of his class and on further inquiry it was discerned that the girl had got it from one of her friends who happens to be outside of the academic organization. This means that the child is being persuaded to pursue something that

isn't good for her. She's influenced and does not even realize that someone has tried to intoxicate her with the wrong thoughts through a very indirect mode of approach.

Apparently, in today's times, it has become very easy to spoil young minds by implicit method of exposing them to inapt literary and entertainment media. The reason these hypnotise young minds is that these vouch as tempting modes providing access to all that is apparently denied to them. The prohibited content is like a forbidden fruit that appears more irresistible and therefore getting carried away by it is evidently easy. Argument, altercation and stipulating precepts against watching the sensitive content does not make any sense and does not work. It is only a healthy and candid discussion with them that enables them to cultivate the understanding that they are not mature enough to get exposed to mature content.

When we advocate sex education to the youths of today for their safety, it must be ensured that they learn the subject with decency by appropriately highlighting the health hazards involved in the same. Similarly, the jeopardy of inculcating violent traits in nature by watching exorbitant violence needs to be adequately explained. Most importantly, these notions enter into the minds of those that have been honourably initiated into culture and tradition which endorses decency and sobriety.

It is my personal observation as a teacher that unless young people have very strong ethical values taught to them by their parents and guardians, they do not comprehend the benefits of living a sober life. This is true in case of every child because it is a blatant reality that children that do not have a proper guidance in their youth are directed towards delinquent behaviour very frequently. Teaching the worthiness of abstaining from matter that does not complement the age is the indispensable responsibility of the parents and guardians. The centres of education like the schools and colleges may

hold on value education classes but the primary teaching of ethics and principles certainly comes from the family; this fact cannot be dispensed with.

We cannot expect a clean society without attempting to clean it. Merely sitting comfortably on our chairs and critiquing a certain realm of enterprise will not help. It is our moral duty to ensure we guide our youth in the right direction rationally without dictating the dos and don'ts to them in an old school fashion. Today's times I find the dearth of such matured adults that construe the need to focus all their energy and attention towards constructive ways of living life and becoming true mentors for the present day youth. What I find is a bunch of critics that raise a barrage of complaints against violent and sexually explicit content, burn effigies of celebrities or rant continually against them. The moment we mind our own business and not indulge in such foppery to avail media attention, we would make this world indubitably a better and safer place to live in. It is not by ruthlessly protesting and banning films but by educating our youth rightfully that we would ultimately gain immunity against such inappropriate content. It will not affect us anymore and therefore whether it is displayed or not displayed in front of us will make not a tinge of difference. We would not get susceptible to it in any way. **This is how we make a garbage free society, not by pouring out our anger against these content creators in a rancorous way.**

For comments (if any) please post in the box given below.

The meteoric rise of a Superstar



By **Sunil Sarpal**

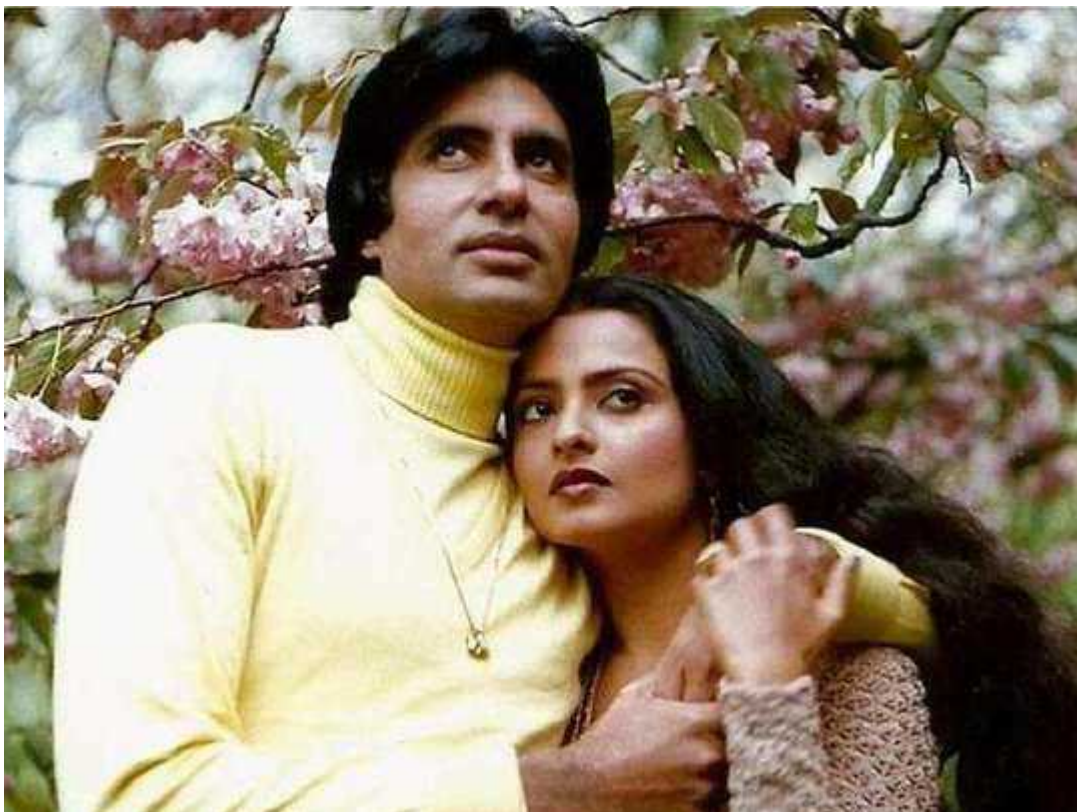
His Bollywood journey started from a bench in a Mumbai park. He left his marketing job in Calcutta to migrate to Mumbai so as to try his luck in acting. In Mumbai, he had to share accommodation with other aspirants.

Once sitting on the bench, he was deeply engrossed in thought

process as to how his acting career will take off. He concluded if he keeps on living with these people, he shall not be able to focus on his career and all his endeavour of coming to Mumbai will go waste. He needed a separate accommodation so that he can concentrate seriously on his career.

The movie which took him to stardom was Janjeer. By now you must have guessed that we are talking about Amitabh Bachchan. Thereafter he did so many movies which took him to dizzy heights in Bollywood. Some of them were Deewar, Namak Haram, Sholay, Don, Amar Akbar Anthony so on and so forth. The list is endless.

In movies, Amitabh was paired with so many heroins but his equation with Rekha was unique. Even both of them were rumoured to have been in love with each other.



His image of an angry young man in Janjeer became so popular that he was tagged with that image. All renowned writers and producers started writing script keeping in mind his image of a young angry man. In order to come out of that image, Amitabh

did so many different roles. Even he tried his luck in comedy by doing Amar Akbar Anthony and his sense of humour was appreciated by the audience. During those day, whatever Amitabh would put his hands on would invariably turn into Gold.

He became so charismatic that this confidence prompted him to open a company called ABCL. The purpose of opening this company was to make movies. But the company flopped miserably and Amitabh became bankrupt.

At that agonising hour in his life, Dhirubhai Ambani came to his rescue and extended financial help so that he could stand up again in his life.

Amitabh's fortune changed once again and from being a bankrupt, he emerged as a winner. Acting roles started pouring in thick and fast in his life.

He even earned lot of money thru the television show – Kaun Banega Crorepati – and that show is still going strong with him as the anchor.

In an interview, Salim Khan, the main writer of Deewar and Sholay movies, has opinionated that it is time for Amitabh to wind- up his career in acting. Because, for his age the roles are far and few.



Some of Amitabh's dialogue which became viral are:

- 1) ***Rishte Mein to hum tumare baap lagte hain Naam hai Shahanshah***
- 2) ***Line wahin se shuru hoti hai jahan hum khade hote hai***
- 3) ***Khush to bahut hoge tum, jo aaj tak tumari sidian nahi chadha, dekho dekho who aaj tumare aage haath felai khada hai***