



#### **4. Indian Diasporic society depicted in Diasporic Cinema**

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##### **Abstract**

*Diaspora cinema refers to cinema filmed on diaspora people. Expressions based on indigenous culture and identity are included in these films. The specialty or beauty of this cinema is its form, aesthetics and its connection with the country of origin. Many currents of discussion are prevalent in the cinema of the twenty-first century. In these, like women's discourse and Dalit discourse, migrant discourse has also made its place here. The specialty of the diaspora discourse is that creative cinema has been more prominent within it. There has not been that much concentration on its critical aspect. Noted cinema expert Ajit Rai, commenting on expatriate cinema, said that 'the film sets its own standards; hence its standards are not made. The meaning is that diasporic cinema is capable of expressing the expressions of diasporic society.*

**Key words-** Diaspora, society, expression, cinema, film

##### **Introduction**

In today's context, the Indian diaspora world is playing an important role in transferring the socio-cultural heritage of its native country to the new generation. For years, the Indian diaspora communities settled abroad have been making continuous efforts to unite to stay connected to their roots. These are called diaspora.

These people of Indian origin, whose mother tongues are different, social and religious beliefs are also different, but all of them are conscious and faithful to Indian social and cultural values. Their dialects and languages also differ among themselves. They do different types of work, but the thread that connects them is their Indian origin, their love for Indian culture and their deep attachment to India. This is clearly visible in Hindi diasporic cinema.



### **Diasporic cinema: meaning and definition**

The literal meaning of Diaspora is to settle in a foreign country away from one's own country, i.e. 'migration'. Its core includes maintaining the socio-cultural traditions of one's home country even while living abroad. Diasporic cinema refers to cinema based on stories based on the lives of diaspora Indians. In these films, an attempt has been made to find the elements of love and dedication towards India in the context of the foreign culture and sociality adopted by the Indians living abroad. Diasporic cinema offers an analysis of the mindset of Indians in the diaspora. The efforts of diaspora Indians to find their cultural roots are meaningfully reflected in these films.

When the life and background of diaspora Indians are included in mainstream Hindi films on the basis of theme, songs, music and character acting, then such films can be called Hindi Diasporic Cinema. The basic objective of these films is also to connect the migrants with the roots of their native country.

The formation of new and hybrid ethnicities disrupts the cultural and social practices of diaspora societies. They also contest accepted ideas about Western modernity and nationalism, particularly racial constructs related to citizenship. Diaspora cinema is produced by colonial and migrant societies. According to Oxford Dictionary- 'Films made by colonized, exiled, or expatriate persons living in the West, and their descendants, are called diasporic films.

These producer-directors and actors, who have given special films to the Indian audience, have been greatly influenced by world cinema. Anurag Kashyap, director of films like 'Dev D', 'Gulaal', 'Black Friday' and 'No Smoking', got inspiration to make films from world cinema.

The nature of expatriate cinema is diverse. This can be analyzed on the basis of classification of categories of migrants. Migrant communities can be divided into three major categories-

1. The first category includes those people who were sent as indentured laborers to countries like Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, Guiana, South Africa etc.
2. The second category includes uneducated, semi-educated, skilled or semi-skilled laborers who went to European countries in the eighties.
3. The third category consists of well-educated middle class people who migrated around the year 80-90, who migrated for a good material life.



Out of these three categories, in the present times of cinema, only the last category seems to dominate. Most of the later generations of indentured laborers adopted international languages other than Hindi or Bhojpuri for employment and other reasons. Fiji's Vimal Reddy is one such director who is considered notable. His films *Adhura Sapna*, *Ghar Pardes*, *Highway to Suva* have received much praise. There has not been any writer or director from Fiji, Trinidad, Africa or Guyana who has gained more fame in expatriate writing and visualisation.

**There are two categories of Hindi diaspora cinema -**

- One that was made by expatriate directors and artists,
- Secondly, those which are made in the country by the producers and directors of the country.

The filming of these two categories has been termed as Hindi Overseas Cinema. In fact, the feeling of being a stranger in a foreign country and the efforts, successes and failures to adjust to that unfamiliar environment can be considered the basis of diaspora cinema. In all these three stages, social, cultural and economic conditions are depicted.' *Khan Drinks*, costumes, dialects, festivals are also mentioned, but customs, culture and lifestyle are considered to be the main genre of this discussion.

The spectrum of diasporic cinema is quite wide. It is a pictorial document of the story of sorrow, struggle, pain, dedication, hard work and triumph of each migrant community. Diaspora cinema attempts to depict the socio-cultural aspects of their country. While Mira Nair's '*Namesake*' shows the identity crisis of the Bengali community on a global scale, Manmohan Singh's film '*Asaan Nu Maan Watnan Da*' is a story based on the Punjabi diaspora. In this film, the story of what kind of problems a migrant person has to face when he wants to return to his country and settle down is shown. Apart from this, '*Bend It Like Beckham*', '*Monsoon Wedding*', '*Adhura Sapna*' highlight the problems of different types of migrants.

Vimal Reddy is known for making films focusi

ng on the problems of the Indian diaspora living in Fiji. '*Adhura Sapna*', '*Ghar-Pardesh*' and '*Highway to Suva*' produced by him are the expression of the NRIs living in Fiji. Ish Amitoj's '*Kandabi Kalai*' is a popular film based on the diasporic community. The problems of the Sikh diaspora have been highlighted in this film.



Rekha Sharma has tried to see South Asian representation through films by analyzing the film 'American Desi'. Srija Sanyal in 'Namesake' examined what kind of problems a woman faces when she migrates. Subrata Das looked at the problems of Bengali diaspora on the basis of the film 'Namesake'. Similarly, Karim H Karim presents discussion on ethnic media.

Among the non-resident films made in India, 'Namaste London', 'Purab Aur Paschim', 'Tamas', 'Train to Pakistan' are prominent. Directed by Shoaib Mansoor, 'Khuda Ke Liye' expresses the identity crisis of expatriate Pakistanis living in America and Britain. This film especially shows America's attitude towards Pakistan and Afghanistan and its effects on ordinary citizens.

The beginning of the diaspora cinema genre is not very old. The films of Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta, Gurinder Chaddha have been in the news for the last few years. There are hundreds of writers, producers, directors, who have some thing, some idea which attracts them to convey the thing through visuals, advises them to enter the market without any knowledge. Such cinema in which the story of the country of origin is presented in its dialect and the emphasis is on truthful portrayal, is called expatriate cinema. Migration appears on the cinema screen at three major points – production, presentation and assimilation.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, many such films were made in which the diasporic cinema producers and directors tried to show the cultural interactions and conflicts of the internal sensibilities of the Indian society and were successful in it to a great extent. All these films were successful in telling and creating the Bharatethar Jeevan series. In these films, not only the flavor of diasporic cinema but also their society was depicted, which included 'Kaho Na Pyaar Hai' (2000), 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham' (2001), 'Yaadein' (2001) and 'Mujhse Dosti Karoge' (2002). ), 'Chalte Chalte' (2003), 'Hum Tum' (2004), 'Salaam Namaste' (2005), 'Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna' (2006), 'Namaste London', 'Hey Baby' (2007), Films like 'Singh is King', 'Dostana' (2008), 'Love Aaj Kal' (2009) have been prominent.

Through these films, an attempt is made to convey the customs of Indian culture and the socio-cultural pictures of the Indian Diasporic society in the minds of the diaspora Indians. 'Diasporic cinema provides a new perspective on popular culture, media and entertainment industry issues'. It discusses a series of contemporary films such as 'Veer Zaara', 'Jhoom Barabar Jhoom' and



'Dostana'. Through these films, important points of discussion of the indigenous culture among the diaspora have been analyzed. 'With approximately eight hundred films being produced every year, modern India is called the temple of cinema. It examines aesthetic principles, the global film industry, film theory, national identity, popular culture and broader issues of cinema history in films like 'Mother India' (1957), 'Devdas' (1935), 'Ramalakhan' (1989) and 'Khalnayak'. (1993) can be seen to have diasporic implications.

### **Diaspora societies in important diasporic films**

Manoj Kumar, producer of the film *Purab Aur Paschim* (1970), has portrayed the Indian urban-rural scenario and the social nature of the people who migrated from India to foreign countries. Various relationships and living environments of life have been shown very well in the film. The aim of the film focusing on diasporic society is to mention the lifestyle of one's native country and the lifestyle, food and dialect of the western i.e. migration country. In the film, the director-producer has portrayed the mentality of young Indian immigrants trapped in the greed for power, luxury and money by presenting the story of Indian expatriates who have forgotten their own country and got influenced by foreign civilization and culture and look upon their own country with contempt. Have done. The disregard for their native country among the youth who have gone abroad from India was shown very well in this film. Within the culture and society of the western country, the way of life, food habits, culture of luxury and freedom of mind show the non-cultural environment among the Indian immigrants. Western culture is such a culture where daughters do not respect their parents but sit together and smoke cigarettes and alcohol. Due to excess of wealth in the West, youth get trapped in luxury. Omkar has also portrayed the youth in wrong company very well. The film, titled *Purab Aur Paschim*, aptly portrays the cultural-social context. The film is very capable of keeping its core message among the people.

The film '*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*' directed by Yash Chopra is a Hindi language film made in the year 1995. The film stars Chaudhary Baldev Singh, a British immigrant. He lives in London with his wife Lajwanti and two daughters, Simran and Chutki. Despite living in London for so many years, he believes in Indian culture and traditions and gives the same education to his



children. He believes that he is in London only to earn money and one day he will return back to his country India (Punjab).

The film gives the message of balance between foreign influence and Indian culture. While on one hand Raj and Simran have grown up in a foreign country, on the other hand Raj refuses to let Simran run away and wants to marry Simran only with the blessings and approval of the elders. While 'Ghar Aaja Pardesi...' calls back to the NRI, 'Mere Khwabon Mein Aaye...' describes the prince of Simran's dreams. 'Ho gaya hai tujhko toh pyar sajna...' shows the feelings of Simran and Raj's unknown love.

The story of the film 'Pardes (1997)' directed by Subhash Ghai stars Arjun and Ganga. The themes in the film are overwhelmed by the aesthetic and often perceived desirability of Western culture and values over the entitlement of Indian culture and values. Kishori Lal is a successful industrialist who has settled in America but is still connected to India at heart. He wanted to marry his son Rajiv, who himself is completely from western culture, with an educated, virtuous and cultured Indian girl so that his son could know the Indian culture. He wants to marry Ganga, the daughter of his old childhood friend Suraj Dev, to his son because he wants to keep the Indian culture alive.

The film 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham' directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali is a Hindi diaspora film made in the year 2001. Yashvardhan Raichand is a rich, famous man of the city who has two sons - Rahul and Rohan. Rahul is adopted by Yash and his wife Nandini in his childhood and Yash sends Rahul abroad to study. When Rahul returns home after completing his studies, his father wants to marry him to his friend's daughter Naina. Rahul marries Anjali against his father's wishes. In anger, Yash throws Rahul out of his life. Thereafter, Yashvardhan accepts Rahul and Anjali again due to his attachment to Indian values. The film gives a sense of Indianness.

The film 'Kaho Na Pyaar Hai' directed by Rakesh Roshan of the year 2000 is the story of Sonia and Rohit. Sonia Saxena is the daughter of a very rich businessman who meets a poor boy Rohit and falls in love with his voice. In this, Indian lifestyle and Indian environment has been shown.

The film 'Pardes' directed by Subhash Ghai in the year 1997 portrayed America. There is a comparative presentation of whether Indianness, culture, lifestyle, customs and religious identity



is a symbol of Indianness among the Indian immigrants living outside their country of origin. The Indian cultural values have been well highlighted in the film. The film discusses America as a foreign country, that is, shows the socio-cultural environment of Western countries and analyzes the cultural values there in a very abstract manner. In India, one is proud of the worship, respect among the people and various elements of one's native country like customs and food. People give more importance to hard work. The elders respect the younger ones and the younger ones respect the elders a lot. The significance of the word Pardes in the film is reflected in the theme of the filming. The film very well portrays the cultural-social aspect of its name, Pardes. The film is very capable of keeping its core message among the people.

The film 'Swades' (2004) directed by Ashutosh Gowariker underlines the socio-cultural richness and relationships of indigenous i.e. India. In the diaspora film 'Swades', two types of societies have been shown together in which one is the expatriate Indian society which does not want to leave the foreign country and come back home but somewhere the native sentiments attract it towards itself and the other is its conservative society which is still It is the same age old ideas in which the desire to discriminate between high and low, caste, color and boys and girls has been depicted. Through Swadesh, we have tried to show different aspects of our country, due to which on one hand people also keep India in the category of greatness. The film succeeds in citing the socio-cultural problems of both the places. It tries to convey diasporic contexts and the objectives of indigenous elements very well.

In the film 'Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna' (2006) directed by Karan Johar, not following seven rounds of marital relations and rituals, the Indian immigrants to America, not knowing the religious identities of their country of origin, explains their cultural tendency. Alcohol and cigarettes have been shown under the food habits of the diasporic community. The characters, characters and setting of the film present the American country in a very interesting way. In terms of life values, European life values are more moralistic and traditionalist than American life values whereas morality and traditions have little to no importance in the American life style. The film reveals the problems of people of Indian origin settled abroad.

## **Conclusion**



In Hindi diasporic cinema, through a realistic approach, human relationships and interactions of NRIs are being recognized and loneliness, fear, broken environment, reality of relationships and their complexity as well as strengths like morality, equality, trust are being depicted. In terms of socio-cultural influence, the youth of the Indian diaspora has been most affected, a reflection of which can be clearly seen in Hindi cinema. On one hand, the youth have received Indian values from their parents or guardians, while on the other hand, they are also getting extensive socio-cultural experience of their current foreign environment. Therefore this youth class is a victim of deep conflict, which can be reflected in Hindi cinema.

The global expansion of the medium of cinema gradually influenced both filmmakers and audiences alike in its social and cultural relevance. When the social concern of cinema started becoming clear on the world stage, the life of the diaspora community also started being made the main subject of cinema. The international nature of cinema is what fundamentally defines diasporic cinema. Narratives focused on issues related to the life of migrant communities were created on both real and imaginary levels and diasporic cinema began to be produced. In this cinema, topics related to internationalization of capital and labor market, economic policies, ethnic conflict, civil war, environmental problems, human rights questions, political upheaval, class struggle etc. were mainly presented.

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