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REPRESENTING A CHANGED CULTURE IN DELHI BELLY (MOVIE), BAISHE SRABON (MOVIE) AND ALTAF GOMES (THEATRE): A CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT IN DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Cinema is the mirror of the society. In this paper I have chosen two movies and one theatre to justify how the usage of language in media can make changes in the stereotype communication form. Delhi Belly (rated A certification) is a 2011 Bollywood Hindi Movie, Baishe Srabon (rated A certification) is a 2011 Bengali Movie and Altaf Gomes is 2013 Bengali Play (strictly for adults). These three forms of communication and media have one single thing in common i.e. their language. They didn't miss a single opportunity in any shot or sequence to use slang languages in its optimum. This paper will try and analyze how these mediums of communication have become effective or not to the common mass, whether people have liked these languages and their usage or not, whether Indian society still like the traditional form of communication in media or do we have the courage to accept the new trend in languages, many Hollywood movies use the four letter word at a very casual and common mood and none of us seem to bother but if we use them in our movies then some of us might talk about the language in a negative sense, why? These are some of the questions that I would like to emphasize through my paper taking the examples of the above mentioned 2 movies and 1 drama.

Keywords: Cinema, Drama, Language, Acting, Mass Appeal.

Introduction

Language is a very important aspect of human verbal communication. The usage of language in Delhi Belly (Bollywood movie), Baishe Srabon (Bengali movie) and Altaf Gomes (Bengali theatre) and their implications on society has been my keen area of interest in this paper. Delhi Belly is a 2011 Indian black comedy film written by Akshat Verma and directed by Abhinay Deo (Joshi, 2010). It stars Imran Khan, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Vir Das, Poorna Jagannathan and Shenaz Treasurywala. While the original version was in Hinglish, a Hindi dubbed version was also released (Rao, 2011). The film is produced by Aamir Khan Productions and IBC Motion Pictures. The theatrical trailer of the film premiered with Aamir Khan's *Dhobi Ghat* on 21 January 2011 while the film was released on 1 July 2011. The film was given an 'A' certificate for its obscene language and adult content. The film was remade in Tamil as *Settai*. Producer-actor Aamir Khan is seen dancing in a song and dance performance as the credits start rolling. (DNA India, 2011)

Baishe Srabon (*22 Srabon*) is a 2011 Bengali psychological thriller directed by Srijit Mukherji. The cast consists of Prosenjit Chatterjee, Parambrata Chatterjee, Raima Sen, Abir Chatterjee and director Gautam Ghosh, making a comeback after a 29-year absence. The film centers on two journalists and two police officers (one suspended) chasing a vengeful Kolkata psychopath, who leaves behind couplets from Bengali poems. *Baishe*

Srabon received positive reviews from critics, and was one of the highest-grossing Bengali films of 2011. The film received an A certificate from the Central Board of Film Certification for adult language. The *Baishe Srabon* soundtrack is composed and the lyrics penned by Anupam Roy. Soundtrack got released on 27 August 2011. *Baishe Srabon* is the first mainstream film incorporating the Bengali "hungry generation" movement of the 1960s into its plot. (Wikipedia, 2014)

Altaf Gomes is a 2013 Bengali Drama meant strictly for adults. This play has been written by Sri Bratya Basu, Honorable Minister – in – Charge, Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal, India. The theme of this play is mainly media oriented. It projects that media can do anything; it can make or break a person standing at any height of the society. Media enjoys the ultimate power. But suddenly one fine morning a common man (Altaf, a bold police inspector) revolted against the media tycoon Gomes and raped him. The background score said “who says women can only be raped, men can be raped also” and ultimately the fight between man and media power continues. This play has used enormous slang languages throughout its script with a bold thought.

Delhi Belly (Movie)

On 3 July 2011, the Government of Nepal banned screening of the movie citing the reluctance by the cinema halls to remove offensive scenes from the film (Parashar, 2011). However, Nepal's censors later agreed to clear the film for viewing by theatre goers above 16 years (IANS, 2011). An offending scene showing one of the protagonists, played by Kunaal Roy Kapur, visiting a brothel was cut and some expletives in two scenes were muted. The film was selected for being screened in the Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School as a part of the Harvard India Conference 2012. Director Abhinay Deowas invited as a guest.

The film opened very well at the box office. It grossed ₹360 million (US\$5.8 million) in the first week of screening all around India and US\$1.6 million overseas (Delhi Belly Week One Territorial Breakdown, 2011). The film grossed ₹550 million (US\$8.8 million) in India by the end of its third week, being declared a super hit (Delhi Belly 55 Crore in Three Weeks, 2011). *Delhi Belly* grossed ₹920 million (US\$15 million) worldwide (Delhi Belly Does Well Overseas, 2011). The movie was inspired by 2000 Hollywood movie *Snatch* (film). *Delhi Belly* further inspired the plot of Telugu movie *Swamy Ra Ra*, which was also a hit movie (Top Ten Worldwide Grosser 2011).

The music of the film was composed by Ram Sampath while the lyrics were penned by Amitabh Bhattacharya, Munna Dhiman, Ram Sampath, Akshat Verma and Chetan Shashital. The song "Bhaag D.K. Bose" created controversy upon its release. 'D K Bose, D K Bose,' juxtaposed and sung at a quick pace forms a popular

expletive in North India (Hit song 'DK Bose' twists name into expletive, 2011). Akshat Verma came up with the idea of using the phrase 'D K Bose'. Abhinay Deo and Aamir Khan gave their nod to the song as they felt the catch phrase went with the young and irreverent theme of the film (D K Bose Secret Behind the song, 2011).

Critical Reception

Nikhata Kazmi of the *Times of India* rated the film with four out of five stars, and said – "All in all, Delhi Belly is a fine example of how the brightest and the boldest, when they pool in their talent, can create a film that is guaranteed to give you your money's worth, even as it re-writes all the moth-balled rules of an ageing industry (Kazmi, 2011). Enjoy the experience." Pratim D. Gupta of *The Telegraph* called *Delhi Belly* "an insanely funny ensemble comedy" and praised writer Akshat Verma's "original screenplay, which knows the difference between physical comedy and slapstick humor." Behind woods gave a score of three and a half stars and said that the film was "Only for those with a cast iron stomach." further citing "In conclusion, it may be said that Delhi Belly Verma's "original screenplay, which knows the difference between physical comedy and slapstick humor." Behind woods gave a score of three and a half stars and said that the film was "Only for those with a cast iron stomach." further citing "In conclusion, it may be said that Delhi Belly caters to a section of the populace that is cool when shit happens." Taran Adarsh of Bollywood Hungama rated the movie with four and a half stars and wrote – "Eventually, Delhi Belly works big time predominantly for the reason that it's a pioneering motion picture, an incredible film that dares to pierce into an untapped and brand new terrain. The unblemished, racy screenplay coupled with super performances and a chartbusting musical score will make it a winner all the way" (Adarsh, 2011). Nikita Kapoor of *Filmi Tadka* rated *Delhi Belly* with four out of five stars and wrote in her review "a special shout goes out to the writer of this brilliant stuff" (Kapoor, 2011), Akshat Verma, "Delhi Belly is a first of its kind Adult Comedy in India, this can seriously turn out to be a path breaker, trend setter, but yes I also worry, in an industry which likes to follow the 'formula', Indian shores might soon hit with gross and vulgar ripoffs of American Pie, etc." Mihir Fadnavis of *Daily News and Analysis* called the script "hilarious" and "bitingly perceptive" and gave the film four out of five stars, saying "I haven't had this much fun at the movies in a long time". Mathures Paul of the *The Statesman* gave the film four out of five stars, and wrote, "It's a fashionable film for fashionable youth" (Paul, 2011). Raja Sen of Rediff gave the movie three stars out of a possible five, saying "Delhi Belly has a tight, pacy plot which has lots of satisfying little set-ups and pay-offs" (Sen, 2011). Rajeev Masand of CNN-IBN gave the film three and a half out of five stars, saying "Delhi Belly is a filthy comic thriller that works because it's a smartly paced wild-ride". He also praised Vijay Raaz's performance, saying that the gangster's role had been "played wonderfully" (Masand, 2011).

The movie also received high praise from critics outside India. Lisa Tsering of *The Hollywood Reporter* called it a "Sexy, filthy and thoroughly entertaining comedy" and that it "marks a welcome shift in contemporary Indian cinema." She however pointed out that Aamir Khan "overstays his welcome" in his cameo at the end of the film and that "a momentary glimpse would have had more impact" (Tsering, 2011). Kevin Thomas of *The Los Angeles Times* said that "Akshat Verma's script is imaginative and funny, the film's stars are engaging and "Delhi Belly" adds up to pleasing escapist fare" (Thomas, 2011). Peter Bradshaw of *The Guardian* also praised the film, saying that "The sheer daftness and goofiness of this Bollywood comedy-farce makes it likable" (Bradshaw, 2011).

Other reviewers, however, deplored the scatological basis of most of the humor and the hackneyed scenarios in the movie. Shubhra Gupta of *The Indian Express* had this to say in her review: "After a while, the continuous bad tummy rumbles and farts, and the non-stop cussing, wears thin. And please, wearing burqas as disguise is not the only way you can have characters on the run in the grungier parts of town, even if you overlay the chase with the ultra-clever, super-catchy Bhaag D K Bose ditty. There are, believe us, other ways" (Gupta, 2011).

Accolades

In the 57th Filmfare Awards the film got nominated in the Best Film category, Best Director (Abhinay Deo), Best Supporting Actor (Vir Das) and Best Music Director (Ram Sampath) but it won Best Screenplay (Akshat Verma), Best Editing (Huzefa Lokhandwala) and Best Production Design (Shashank Tere). In the 18th Colors Screen Awards the film got nominated in the Best Film category, Best Director (Abhinay Deo), Best Supporting Actor (Kunal Roy Kapur), Best Supporting Actress (Poorna Jagannathan), Best Comedian (Kunal Roy Kapur and Vijay Raaz), Most Promising Newcomer – Female (Poorna Jagannathan), Best Background Music (Ram Sampat), Best Male Playback (Ram Sampat), Best Music Director (Ram Sampat), Best Dialogue (Akshat Verma), Best Cinematography (Jason West), Best Sound Design (Vinod Subramaniam and Dwarak Warriar) and Best Choreography (Farah Khan) but it won Screen Award for Best Screenplay (Akshat Verma), Best Story (Akshat Verma), Best Editing (Hufeza Lokhandwala) and Best Production Design (Shashank Tere).

Baishe Srabon (Movie)

Anandabazar Patrika gave *Baishe Srabon* 8.5 of 10 stars. It was the official selection at the 2011 Dubai International Film Festival, the closing film at the 2012 London Indian Film Festival and an official selection at

the Darpan Film Festival in Singapore and the Alliance Francaise Film Festival in Kolkata. The film ran for 105 days, making it one of the most successful of the year. *Baishe Srabon* received 41 awards. At the Mirchi Music Awards, it won for Best Upcoming Lyricist (Anupam Roy for "Ekbar Bol"), Best Lyricist (Anupam Roy for "Ekbar Bol"), Best Background Score, Best Film Album (Popular Choice), Best Film Album (Critic's Choice), Best Song (Popular Choice) for "Ekbar Bol" and Best Song (Critic's Choice) for "Gobhire Jao". At the Kalakaar Awards, it was the best film; at the ABP-Friend's FM Bangla Music Awards it won for Best Music Director, Best Male Playback Singer (Rupankar for "Gobhire Jao"), Best Song ("Je Kota Din") and Best Film Album. *Baishe Srabon* won the inaugural Best Movie Poster Award at Srijon Samman 2012; at the 12th Telecine Awards it won the Best Director, Best Supporting Actor (Parambrata Chatterjee) and Best Male Playback (Anupam Roy for "Ekbar Bol") awards. At the Zee Banglar Gourab Awards 2012, the film received nine awards from thirteen nominations: Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor Critic's Choice (Prosenjit Chatterjee), Best Supporting Actor (Parambrata Chatterjee), Best Music Director, Best Screenplay and Dialogues, Best Male Playback (Rupankar for "Gobhire Jao"), Best Cinematography and Best Editing. At the 2012 Star Guide Bengali Film Awards the film won the Best Director, Best Cinematography and Best Male Playback (Anupam Roy for "Ekbar Bol") awards. At the International Bangla Film Academy Awards at Pattaya, Bangkok, *Baishe Srabon* won the Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Gautam Ghosh), Best Male Playback Singer (Anupam Roy), Best Cinematography and Best Critic's Choice Performance (Parambrata Chatterjee) awards. Raima Sen received her first award for her performance in the film with the Shoilojanando Mukhopadhyay Memorial Award. The film won six awards at the IBFCA Indo-Bangladesh Film Awards: Best Lyricist, Best Composer, Best Playback Singer (male) for Anupam Roy, Best Supporting Actor (Parambrata Chatterjee), Best Actor (Prosenjit Chatterjee) and Best Director. (Wikipedia, 2014)

Methodology, Analysis and Key Findings

I have surveyed (random sample survey) 200 students as sample from different streams (science, humanities and commerce) of the colleges of Kolkata district (both male and female) studying at the undergraduate level about the above mentioned two movies and one play, their usage of language, their effect on society, the storyline and the slang languages and its reactions on them etc. They responded with their valuable thoughts and suggestions which ultimately reflected the thought of the future generation at a very primary level. These are:

1. 92% of the students have liked and enjoyed at their fullest the usage of slang languages in the above mentioned forms of media. They thought that we should not be biased and blind about any specific genre. If Hollywood can use them randomly without the simplest hesitation then why we should not. Sometime

or the other someone has to start which these 2 movies and the play has started. We should be bold enough to move ahead with our strong conceptions and thoughts and open enough to accept things.

2. Among these 92% of students, 45% were female and 47% were male. 5% of the students reacted opposite to the above mentioned 92%. They said that the usage of these languages were too much, these could have been minimized. Actually ours is not western society so we should not compare us with them. Some way or the other we are still traditional in our thoughts. If we cannot watch a movie or a play sitting with our family then we are actually disturbing our aesthetic value.
3. The rest 3% of the students said “no comments”. When asked why you don’t want to answer, some said that we didn’t watch them; some said that though we have watched the movies but did not watch the play, some said that we have watched only one movie and the rest.
4. 95% of the students (who viewed all the three forms of mediums) have liked the storyline very much but with the remaining 5% responded otherwise. They thought that the storylines of the two movies were splendid and extremely attractive but the play could have been much better. The play didn’t appeal them vehemently due to the non catchiness of the storyline.
5. 100% of the students (who viewed all the three forms of mediums) have liked the acting, the songs, the background score, the screenplay, the comedy, the thrill, the excitement, the passion and the rest.

Conclusion

Over the years we have seen media in its different forms with lots of etiquettes and mannerisms. Indian media especially, have shown all the potentialities of customs and traditions. We honor and salute our culture, customs and traditions. But that essentially does not mean that all western deeds are uncultured and social evil. It is high time that we should grow up. If we can use such languages in jokes, text messages, MMS or in daily life then why we should pretend of not knowing this culture or even showing hatred towards it. Why we are getting ashamed of using such languages. Our survey report have suggested that the young generation have liked and endorsed this culture (and its usage) which shows that our society is changing or is totally prepared to get changed. The common mass has reacted effectively towards this change and accepted this newer trend in languages. We should be open enough to all the sensibilities whether eastern or western. This survey report is based on a very selective class of respondents who are youngsters though surprisingly many of the teaching staffs of the colleges have preferred for a “yes” to this culture and very few have reacted towards “no”. Hence, we welcome and salute

these creative forms of mass media and mass communication holding the hands of these legendary personalities like Aamir Khan, Srijit Mukherjee and Bratya Basu.

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