

## OUR FILMS

### Outline:

1. Film is one of the most powerful media of communication. Our films have failed to keep pace with the times. Regional and Urdu films are substandard.
2. Punjabi films are popular but that is no indication of its qualitative worth. They are formula films with accent on sex and crime. They do not reflect authentic Punjabi culture.
3. Urdu films are marred by saccharine romances and unrealistic plots. They do not grapple with the socio-economic and psychological realities of the time.
4. Producers are rich but lamentably low educated and narrow versioned. The same is true of the stars. They know nothing \* the theory and practice of drama.

Theory of films has been further weakened by competition Television, and plays spectator sports and VCR.

### The Essay:

Film is one of the most powerful media of communication, entertainment and education in modern times. It is a source of both good and evil. If it provides healthy entertainment and purposeful education, its influence is salutary. Contrary to this it can do a lot of lye. Considered in this context our films have not made much head way during the last thirty-five years. They have increased in number but there has been little or no qualitative change. Our motion picture industry has failed to keep pace with the time and finds itself in a quandary today.

Our industry turns out scores of regional and Urdu films every year but most of them are substandard from any point of view. This is in spite of the fact that it is a protected industry. Left to itself it would have died long ago. Even so it is finding it mighty difficult to face some of the competitors who have entered the arena in recent years.

Our regional films are more popular because they are made in the language of that region and reflect the culture of the area. Their popularity has no relation with their quality. For the most part they cater the taste of the illiterate.

Let us take the example of our Punjabi films. Except for one or two films most of them are made in accordance with a set and hackneyed formula. The accent, as usual, is on sex and violence. Even the songs are not in good taste. There is hardly any story worth the name, for most of the episodes are forcibly woven in the matrix of the other elements. To a sensitive and understanding film-goer, a Punjabi feature film is an oppressive experience. The din and the shrieks continue to ring in his ears long after he has forsaken the cinema hall.

Producers of these films claim that they hold a mirror to Punjabi culture. This is far from the truth. Nowhere does a bevy of young girls dance around with gay abandon in our villages nor is bloodletting so common on such a large scale. Usually a gangster or a dacoit is the hero of the film. Film-makers spare no effort to glamourize his exploits.

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Breaking of the law is extolled and decent gentleman are shown to be sleek-headed boobies. Such repeated lessons in crime and violence are having a bad effect on the people.

Urdu films continue to move in the same rut. During the thirty five years since independence they have not changed the monotonous pattern of their stories. The plot still revolve around the boy-meets-girl episodes with a landlord tyrant father threatening death and destruction in the background.

Many members of the intelligentsia demand simplicity and realism Films need to grapple with the socio-economic and psychological problems which surround Pakistanis today. Conventional themes do not satisfy them any longer.

The trouble with our motion picture industry is that it is not equipped to meet the challenge of the times. The producers are mostly men of wealth but often of lamentably poor education and narrow vision. Looking neither to the story nor to the setting, they enter into contracts with some of the best known 'stars' and get them to play principal roles in a feeble story. The 'stars' themselves are mostly illiterate and know little or nothing about the theory or practice of the dramatic arts. The producers do not have the courage to experiment with unusual and daring themes for fear of losing money. The net result is that our films remain backward and lack the capacity to entertain or educate.

Some other factors have cropped up to darken the future of our film industry and rob it further of the desire for self-improvement. English and American films, television, both national and Indian, stage plays art. Spectator sports pose serious competition for our feature films. The most dangerous challenger in this context is television which not only offers excellent plays but a variety of feature films as well. Amritsar Television, with its Bombay movies, has further weakened our industry. VCR has proved to be the last nail in the coffin of Pakistan film industry.

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