Making the Most of Childhood: Representation of the Child in Indian Films: A Selected Study

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by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"Making the Most of Childhood: Representation of the Child in Indian Films: A Selected Study"** submitted by **Mr. Praveen Veluvolu** bearing Reg. No: 06HCPH03 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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DECLARATION

I **Mr. Praveen Veluvolu** hereby declare that this thesis entitled **"Making the Most of Childhood: Representation of the Child in Indian Films: A Selected Study"** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Tutun Mukherjee is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Introduction

In the twentieth and twenty-first century moving images have become a dominant form of communication and visual media has become the most powerful media in the present world order. Films have served as a very useful and emphatic medium to portray social, economic and political realities of the Indian society at different times. For most Indians, cinema is integral to their lives. Its socio-cultural impact is also far-reaching. This, very rightly, is reflected in the growing field of Film Studies which is patronized by various departments of language/literature, Social Sciences, and Cultural Studies. The children's film movement in the country is but one more victim of the Indian film industry, with its fascination for adult cinema.

A well known Telugu film-director and producer Dasari Narayana Rao says, "in earlier days making a movie was a great honor, now that importance goes to spectator but not to the director or producer. There is a difference between making a film which obliges people to watch and a film which people would like to watch."[1] Anil Saari (2009) observed that "the cinema story is not about individual men and women but about situations common to a large audience. It is a cinema that must articulate collective dreams that the social system does not easily approve; the articulation of a cinema that must also confront the people with what they want out of life."[2] In most parts of India, artistic activity is an element of religious rituals and ceremonies. Saari says, "Over the

[1] See, Rao, Venkateswara Namala. *Telugu Cinema*, Hyderabad, Progressive Communications, 1997. p.iv
[2] See, Saari, Anil. *Hindi Cinema: An Insider's View*, New Delhi: OUP, 2009. p.9

centuries, these religious rituals have assumed an identity that makes the artistic activity merely a concretization of the philosophic essence of the ritual…" [3] This, in turn, fosters dogmas about the arts, the grammar of their form, and their social role.

Firoze Rangoonwalla (1982) declares that some of the Indian producers tried to make children's films but had to give up production due to lack of return on investment. According to him, everywhere in the world, production of children's films is regarded basically as a social welfare and educational activity…" [4] Image can speak more emphatically than other forms of communication, especially in particular contexts. Image can communicate powerfully with people and it can demonstrate both the realities and the imagination of the world. It is a reflection of society; it is a mirror which depicts us. So, I became interested in researching the role of children's films in the Indian context. I feel that there are movies, entertainment and amusements for adults in India but there is hardly anything for children. Their interests and likes are not cared for.

The study of films is significant in the present context. In our mediated society, films and the contemporary social life have close interrelations. Whatever is the theme - history, mythology, fiction-and however they may have been treated, films reflect the society and its conditions in some way or the other. Society or its problems, contemporary events and anxieties find expression in the films either overtly or covertly. These concerns are shaped and projected by the eye of the person wielding the camera. The way the spectator receives the film is also important because here the connection between the representations and the represented is re-established.

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[3] Ibid. p.6

[4] See, Rangoonwalla, Firoze. *Indian Cinema: Past & Present*, New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1975. p.152

Representation always involves an interpretation and an evolution, even if what it represented remains only implicit. We inhabit a media intensive world in which every aspect of life is pervaded by visual signs. Cinema, particularly, is both a popular and powerful visual medium that can impinge upon the mind. Its socio-cultural impact is also far-reaching. Cinema creates histories, narrativizes lives because it mirrors the society. Socially, culturally, traditionally, economically, regionally, religiously and linguistically, Indian cinema reflects a diversity which cannot be denied. It may be said that there is no medium which represents the various sectors in a livelier manner than the visual media which includes cinema. Earlier, folk forms like Drama, Puppet Show etc. used to entertain all, particularly children. Afterwards, the moving image came that provided entertainment to the senses. Mainstream commercial films influence children in ways beyond their mental maturity on social relations or behavior, which exclude them from childhood realities. Tom Grimes, James A. Anderson and Lori Bergen argue that the representation of violence in the media can be found in everything from cartoons to prime time programs, commercials, news broadcasts, feature films, and video games. Given the multiple definitions of violence, it is not surprising that every aspect of media expresses some sort of violence. But not all media violence is equal; some elicit more outcry than others. For example, Grimes et.al write, "Violence in children's' programmes has been a particular target… to contain even more violence that adult programs".[5] But, simultaneously, art films or parallel films have come-up with issues which are serious and sensitive. But, these art films present struggles in the society, not particularly

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[5] See, Grimes, Tom. James A. Anderson and Lori Bergen. *Media Violence and Aggression*: *Science and Ideology*, Los Angeles: Sage, 2008. p.131

concerned with child issues. Satyajit Ray, Tapan Sinha, Sai Paranjpye, Shyam Benegal, Mrinal Sen and some eminent film makers have contributed to the 'child cause'. Yet, neither inevitably mainstream commercial nor art films have adequately represented child issues. Child characters are shown as very innocent and too childish. Therefore the appeal factor loses effect and the script is left with the unwanted burden of immature characters. It is precisely for this reason that most of the film makers stay away from children's films, since the thematic balance is fine and the path is rather discouraging. Naamala Venkateswara Rao (1997) observes that "*Bhookailas* (1958), *Letha Manasulu* (1966), *Bhakta Prahlada* (1967), and *Ramu* (1968) are mythological and social theme-based films produced under the prominent film production company AVM. Those films were blockbusters, most importantly, because the films carried sentiments of the child."[6] But here, even the directors who choose to make films for children during the initial years of their careers rarely return to the genre once they have stepped out into the popular perspective of the adult feature film.

Childhood is a concept historically and culturally bound, identified by historians and sociologists who see the notion of "childhood" as a new subject for better understanding, one that is determined less by biology than by social construction. Children are conceptualized as more natural, more biologically pure and innocent, possessing an inherent beauty or aesthetic with a greater similarity to plants, animals, certainly more in common with things such as these than to the adults they will become. This perception legitimizes them as the subject of enquiry, directs the focus of study on them, with related questions about human behaviour, and focuses directly on them as

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[6] See, Rao, Venkateswara Namala. *Telugu Cinema*, Hyderabad, Progressive Communications, 1997. p.41

subject of enquiry, and justifies the research on social, cultural and biological grounds.[7]

Douglas Street's *Children's Novels and the Movies* (1983) have made valuable contributions to the ongoing debate about the "idea of cinema for children". Street's introduction to C*hildren's Novels* defines a children's film as one adapted from a classic work of children's literature. For Street, there are three kinds of canonical children's fiction: those conceived for a child audience, those written for an adult audience, and those seminal works "energetically adopted by youngsters".[8] Street then argues that it is "the timelessness and imaginative richness of… truly great literary works attracts filmmakers decades apart".[9] In other words, for Street, canonical works of children's literature attract filmmakers and are adapted into movies. And he defines that the immortal works of childhood seem to conjure up memories and emotional attachments which transcend the tactical world of the novel itself. Adult and children alike are quite possessive and vociferous about their favorites and tamper with these memories though the objective medium of the movies is to invite a reaction by and large inconceivable in any other art. Indeed the business of filmmaking for the child audience includes more variable than movies primarily intended for adults.[10]

Ian Wojcik-Andrews in his book, *Children's Films*: *History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory* (2000) describes children's film from his personal experiences. He says, "For most of the children the idea of children's films includes some decidedly adult movie. Regardless, they know that a critical knowledge and a keen eye are everything and that to

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[7] Ibid p.182

[8] See, Street, Douglas. Ed., *Children's Novels and the Movies*, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1983. p. xiv

[9] Ibid. p.xxi

[10] Ibid. p. xiii

know something about a film is to know something about how society sees them and how they might in turn see society".[11] There are, in fact, many ways of thinking about the "idea of cinema for children" including the way in which we might define a children's film. This is a rather complicated subject and involves a range of personal, pedagogical, critical, textual, institutional, and cultural points of view. There are films aimed at children, films about childhood, and films children see regardless whether they are children's films. Andrews concludes that, "Indeed, any attempt to universalize children's cinema, a children's film or the nature of the child viewer, only reveals more closely the contradictions in which children's cinema finds itself situated".[12]

One of the first film clips made by the Lumiere Brothers, *Le Repas de Bébé* (*Baby Meal*, 1895) shows the happiness and satisfaction of parents when they feed their baby. Another short film, *Watering the Gardener* (1895) portrays children's behaviour and attitude. Likewise, in the Indian context, Dada Saheb Phalke, the Father of Indian Cinema, portrays childhood and introduces child characters in his films like *Sri Krishna Janm* (1918) and *Kaliya Mardhan* (1919). His daughter Mandakini played the role of Krishna in the first movie. Therefore, we see that from the early days of history of cinema till now there have been many films in which children have acted as protagonists and childhood has been the subject. Films meant for children have been made in various Indian languages. Indian filmmakers of this genre were influenced by the trends in socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union.

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[11] Wojcik-Andrews, Ian. *Children's Films: History, Ideology, Pedagogy*, *Theory*, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000. p.2
[12] Ibid. p.19

Semiotics can help to make us aware of the way how some ideas can be represented, reminding us that we are always dealing with signs, not with an unmediated objective reality, and that sign systems are involved in the construction of meaning. This is stressed by Chandler[13]. In films, verbal and non-verbal signs are used to produce meaning, which leads to the creation of social relationships, systems of knowledge, and cultural identity. Cinema influences children more than elders, perhaps because young minds do not have the social filters in place. One can easily recall the film scenes and dialogues from films watched in childhood. In the process, cinema generates a plethora of unforgettable images in the child's mind. It is very important to remember that a child is the product of its environment and, like all individuals, is structured by the forces -- social, economic and cultural -- of the milieu it lives in. According to Venkatappayya (1982), "to get proper understanding of the child, we have to understand both their public and private circumstances".[14] Herbert P. Leiderman, Stven R. Tulkin and Anne Rosenfeld (1977) observe variations in a child's experience through culture. He points out that psychologists study the infant's social and physical environment in terms of the amount and kind of "stimulation" or the crowdedness of the home. Early history is often viewed in terms of birth order and parents' background. Leiderman et.al say studying child development has very different perspectives. Their concerns relate to the broader aspects of the physical and social environment (such as kinship patterns) or the traditional cultural attitudes and behavior patterns of the infant's social group.[15]

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[13] See, Chandler, D. *Semiotics for Beginners*. 29/11/2005.
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem10.html>
[14] See, Venkatapayya, V. *Bala Sahiti Vikasam*, Vijayawada: Siddarda Publications, 1982. p.76
[15] See, Leiderman, P. Herbert. Steven R. Tulkin, Anne Rosenfeld. *Culture and Infancy*: *Variations in the Human Experience*, London: Academic Press, 1977.

The most popular genre for children is the fantasy or adventure story. Adults are absent or ineffective in these films, allowing children to save the day. Typically, children's films are visually designed to make it appear that they can save the world or fight crime. These films tend to show bumbling and incompetent adults as the antagonists. Although most films tend to 'bend the rules of reality', this applies more to children's films which often contain elements of magic or fantasy -- things improbable or impossible in real life. The representation of children in world cinema, the complexities of children's visual culture, discourses surrounding childhood, violence and the innocent child, point to the profoundly ambivalent symbolic status of children in adult culture. Some of these themes are addressed in films made for children. But there is very often the problem of presentation. Most films are based on the assumptions of elders, their expectations and observations and so fail to provide an adequate representation of the children or their interests. Although most films feature children, they are aimed largely at an adult audience. There is therefore scope for much more work to be done in the subject.

I am trying to explore the ways children are represented in the regional films of India and what issues get highlighted in the films, the way the child is represented in each of the film texts I take up for study. It is essential in the realm of film studies to examine what has been dominated by 'popular culture'. I would like to study selected films from three language sectors, namely, Telugu, Hindi and Bengali (Bangla) to build my argument. The aims and objectives of the present study are to look at the gaps and examine the way children have been represented in the regional films of India. Analytical parameters will be drawn from Culture Studies research methodology. From

each language sector I have taken eight films from different time periods which help in understanding the development of children's films in India through regional parametres.

India has a rich heritage of ancient oral tradition of stories for children. *Panchatantra* is a collection of stories, composed probably around 300 CE, and subsequently revised and translated in two hundred languages around the world. *Betala Panchavimshati* is also a very a popular collection of stories as is *Jataka Tales*, now available in countless translations in Indian and other languages. Later Amir Khusro wrote children's poems and riddles in 1200s-1300s and after that children's literature boomed in 1800s. Indian Christian missionaries established the Calcutta school book society in 1817, establishing children books as separate genre in the country. The first magazine for children in India *Digdarshan* (1818) was published in Bengali. Peter Hunt (2005) states, "An important tradition in Bengali is that a large number of those writing for adults have also written for children, unlike writers in any other Indian languages".[16] Magazines and books for children in native languages soon appeared. In the late half of the century Raja Shivprasad wrote several books in Hindi. After *Pedda Balsiksha* (1864), it was Kandukuri Veeresalingam, the Father of Modern Andhra, who contributed for children's literature in Telugu in 1980's. So, three languages have contributed to children's literature as well as children's films. This study has been conducted by using children's film texts as primary source and various works on child, children, childhood, and Indian cinema, from social, cultural, economical, political, psychoanalytical perspectives as secondary sources.

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[16] See, Hunt, Peter. Ed., *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, New York: Routledge, 1996. p.801

This dissertation is planned in three chapters. The first chapter titled "Children's Films in India" examines the development of children's films in India with examples of films from different languages. The chapter focuses on the subject matter of childhood in Indian regional films, the directors of the films and their contribution to the children's film movement in India, as also the definitional problems of the genre. I categorize children's films into four sections in terms of the reception they have received and their themes encompassing 'childhood' and its social, cultural, economical and political conditions. This helps me in understanding the representational issues of childhood as explored in each of the films to present the child through his/her social and psychological conditions.

The second chapter, "The Child in Regional Films," is divided into three sections based on three languages Telugu, Hindi and Bengali. This chapter discusses the themes and the motifs of the films and the kind of narration depicting the child. The representation of the child/childhood in each of the film is examined through the parametres of fantasy, social, regional, special abilities and 'family cinema' and discusses the child characters in each of the selected films.

The third chapter titled "Issues of Representation" focuses on the theoretical analysis of the child, the issues that films represent and the issues that are neglected. This chapter examines the issues by discussing various levels of living conditions of a child, i.e., the child in the adult world, child and the construction of a nation, child in society, child in school, childhood and class & caste, childhood and gender construction

and the child and the self. Each section looks into the gaps apparent in the films in terms of the treatment of childhood and representational issues.

Film making requires making choices of what to represent, how, and why. There must be reasons for what to include and what to exclude, the kind of representation the film wishes to project, or, in other words, what kind of interpretation or understanding and evaluation or judgment, the representation offers of the phenomenon it represents. Films can entertain, educate, inform, excite and disturb. By taking film texts as texts of culture I have discussed my findings in the conclusion.

Chapter I

Children's Films in India

Talking about Indian films is indeed a challenging and a debatable subject. 'Indian film' supposedly has to carry many burdens of languages, cultures, traditions, and social systems. However, the term 'Indian Film' is a contested field and lacks 'oneness'. The "unity in diversity" slogan reflects its living conditions and cultures where many languages are spoken. According to the 2001 census there are more than 10,000 raw mother tongues' in India. If closely related and mutually comprehensible dialects are grouped, the number can be reduced to 1576 'rationalized' mother tongues; and with more consolidation, to 114 main languages. These 114 languages are the ones surveyed in the Indian census. Indian film producers have made films in thirty of the major languages. However, only the larger language groups figure in the arena of regional film production. These are mainly Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, Bhojpuri, Odiya, Assamese and Kashmiri. Interestingly, the forerunners are the language sectors in which theatre thrives. The obvious link between theatre and film making has been explored and established by theorists.

Like theatre, films have played a major role in developing a post-independence Indian identity. Indian theatre, after Independence tried to establish a distinct tradition for itself by going back to its 'roots' as against the European (British) theatrical tradition. Indian films, also, at the same time made a conscious effort to re-establish their lost tradition by reinforcing their values and tradition. It also served as a useful and emphatic

medium to portray social, economic and political realities of the Indian society at different times. Films had a pervasive influence on the psyche of a common Indian who often identified him/herself with the central character of the film, be it a male or a female protagonist. Cinema is integral to Indian lives. As Shyam Benegal pointed out, Indian audiences are most comfortable with and totally accustomed to the cinematic form. He mentions Indian psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar's view that Indian Hindi Cinema represents a collective fantasy or group daydream, containing unconscious material and hidden wishes of a vast number of people.[17]

In 1899, Harishchandra Bhatvadekar produced two short films in India for the first time. Dada Saheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra*, a silent film, is recognized as India's first full length indigenously made feature film. It was released in Bombay in 1913. The silent films were of several genres like mythological, folklore, historical and fantasies. Silent films were often seen in the theatres with the accompaniment of harmonium, tabla, sarangi or violin. The silent films in India had the main titles in English and also in regional languages.

The Talkie brought revolutionary changes in the whole set up of the industry and completely over-shadowed the phenomenon of silent feature films. However, it also brought into focus many peculiar problems which needed to be tackled, such as the need for dialogue. Role of writers or lyricists were brought to the forefront, the concept of prerecording was introduced along with the inclusion of songs. Minimum instruments

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[17] See, Shyam Benegal lecture on *The Indian Film Industry and Popular Cinema* on 26th October, 1995 on the occasion of 19th Nehru Memorial Lecture, London.
22/05/2009. <www.cambridgetrusts.org/assets/documents/Lecture_19.pdf>

were used as the instrumentalists had to be camouflaged behind the singer. Nevertheless, not withstanding several problems mentioned above, the talking film grew professional in popularity. The era of the Talkies brought about social awareness and represented social themes like practice of human sacrifices, social relationships, women's liberation, marriage system and so on.

There were two phases in early Indian film: Silent and Talkie. Silent films were mostly based on historical subjects, drama, mythologies and epics. Talkies included historical subjects, mythologies, epics but more importance was given to the social themes or the life of ordinary human beings.

1. Mythological movies: these are based on about eighteen Indian mythologies which include *Siva Puranam*, *Basava Puranam*, *Markhandeya Puranam*, and *Skanda Puranam*. Based on these antiquarians there were several films produced in Indian cinema, like, *Kalidas*, *Bhakta Kannappa*, *Bhaktha Siriyala*, *Manu Charitra*, and *Harischandra* etc. Most of these movies have children roles or children in the leading roles.

2. Epics: *Ramayanam* and *Mahabharatam*. Based on these two epics there are several movies made in India. From the epic *Ramayanam* there are character based movies like *Lava Kusa, Bala Ramayanam* etc; from *Mahabharatam*: *Savitri, Bheeshm, Bala Bharatham* etc. and from *Bhagavatham*: *Bhakta Prahallada, Bhakta Druva* etc. In these movies children played important roles.

3. Folklores: folklores are basically based on the oral tradition; stories which are usually narrated were adapted into movies like *Bala Nagamma, Madana Kamaraju, Mallamma Katha* etc. In these movies children played main roles too.

4. Social themes: films based on social issues with like-like characters in "real" incidents. They also illustrated the social situations and the psychology of the individuals placed in situations as follows;

    i.   Family story cinema

    ii.   Political cinema

    iii.   Action movie

    iv.   Adventure

    v.   Animation

    vi.   Children cinema

    vii.   Comedy movies

    viii.   Horror movies

    ix.   Dance/music cinema

    x.   Science fiction movies

    xi.   Serial movies

    xii.   Suspense (detective/ thriller)

    xiii.   War films

    xiv.   Documentary

    xv.   Film noir

These are common genres of cinema. The question is how "children's cinema" becomes a separate genre? "Children's cinema" can cover different genres to deal with different issues of childhood. Genres like horror and war are not meant for children but children characters can be shown in them. Children characters have been presented even in leading roles in horror films. Ramgopal Varma's Hindi movie *Phoonk* (2009) is an example. Hence, all genres can be considered part of children's cinema or rather children's cinema can be included in most of the above mentioned forms. Therefore, the concept of children's cinema as such needs to be further examined.

Here, I would like to segregate Indian films into two broad categories. Firstly, the mainstream commercial films which are made for entertainment and revenue in obvious sense. This type of Indian films usually feature songs and dance routines which in a 'good film' are expected to move the story forward. Songs are sung by professional play-back singers and lip-synched by the actors. Most non-Indians would consider an ordinary Indian film a musical. Indian commercial films, in whichever regional language they are made, tend to be melodramatic, sentimental and formulaic. They also feature romance, comedy, action, suspense, and other generic elements. Secondly, in addition to popular mainstream commercial film, there is also cinema that aspires to the level of seriousness or art. Film critics refer to it as 'New Cinema' or sometimes the 'Indian New Wave'. But the usual term for such films is 'art films'. These kinds of films deal with a wide range of subjects, but many are usually the general explorations of complex human circumstances and relationships within an Indian setting.

Whether it is mainstream commercial film or art film, India produces a large number of films. Though children's films are also included in this count, films especially

made for children are regrettably very few. A children's film should basically aim at children as its spectators. On the contrary, most children feature films are aimed largely at an adult audience. Critics and scholars have been advocating that the films for children need special focus, treatment and care especially because most often the subjects of children films deal with adventure stories, social situations, aspirations of children. A typically social film – the usual kind that is made in large numbers and is planned as commercial venture, may not be about children or be suitable for children's viewing at all. A film influences children more powerfully than it does elders, perhaps because young minds do not have the social filters in place. One can easily recall the film scenes and dialogues from films watched in childhood. In children's films, there must be a strong social message, particularly keeping the target audience in mind, to make them realize their immediate social context and sometimes also about the deprived, marginalized sections from their early age. This is done by feature's children as protagonist in order to showcase the social context of the deprived and marginalized subjects of childhood.

Whenever the subject of childhood is discussed in most of the Indian films, it is as "generalized childhood" under one broad umbrella of psychological study of the desires, aspirations and problems of growing up. This is a problem because generalizing representations of childhood homogenizes childhood, grouping all children into one category and thereby neglecting material and social realities and differences of background, upbringing, social circumstances which are relevant to understand a child's development. What is never shown or represented is one of the important areas of study concerning the oppressed and deprived section in order to understand their class/caste

condition which masks the caste structure that pervades India. Caste in most children's films gets camouflaged in the rhetoric of class and also the concept of caste does not get visualized on the screen. Does not caste lend itself to be portrayed on the visual medium? Lives and identities of children are determined majorly by the caste group they are born into. Why has it not become the subject of children's films in a film industry that has hundred years of history? As in literature, where Dalits and Dalit literature were a late entry, the medium of cinema seems to be following a parallel trajectory. For Dalits and Dalit children, except as spectator/audience, film as a medium is yet to actively engage with the subject in terms of production, direction, acting, and even in terms of engaging with film discourse. For Dalits and other deprived people watching a film is something like dream. It is something that is distant, not one's own, where one can relate to one's material realities of caste and gender. Why have children's film and the Dalit discourse remained so far from each other? Here I would like to elucidate my argument on the representational issue of childhood in the society; "The human being is social by nature s/he is bound to live in a society. The relationship between the person and the society is structured on the basis of mutual expectations and anticipation. As far as human beings are concerned, from the day of birth to the day of death their actions are shaped by social influence. The lives of children in villages are more or less similar in certain sense because of their shared social environment, their style of living and the common customs observed within the caste/class. The situation is significantly different in the environs of the city".[18]

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[18] See, Tandon, Ruchi. *Family Dynamics*, Jaipur: RBSA, 2006. p.3-208

Ruchi Tandon (2006) provides another dimension in the study of childhood and tries to explain that child psychology needs to be read as a code in class relations. In present days caste may not seem important and it has been replaced by another category -- that of class, which is equally oppressive and discriminatory, and what is precisely observed in urban environs.[19] This argument certainly may not pursue caste issue as 'double' oppressive in terms of social 'status', however, economic status of a person matters in the social system. Children belonging to backward caste but economically rich may have equal priority in social class but certainly not in the caste status. It shows the dominating and discriminating tendency of the social system. Representation of caste and class is politically manipulated in Indian cinema. In the case of children films, it has worn another mask in terms of social barriers which should not apply to childhood because their mental condition is still immature. Further, the questions of representation in children's films homogenize childhood and their representation of region, caste, gender, class, religion and language. Although children belonging to marginalized sections may be central to filmic representation, the class aspect is fore-grounded. Children are often showed as being poor, living in slums and coming from hardworking deprived families but aspire for things that are 'normal' for any child of similar age.

'What is a children's film?' Since many years, there have been discussions on 'what constitutes children's film?' There are various questions that need to be answered in this regard. Some of the questions that are often asked are: Is it made for children alone?; Are children the protagonists?; or, Is the film made especially by children?

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[19] See, Veluvolu, Praveen. *Desires of the Child: A Study of Three Films*. Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Centre for comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, 2006.

Children like comedy, adventures, sports and animal based movies. However, one cannot limit children films only to such subjects. Children like, films which have elements of fantasy, which appeal more than other genres in terms of entertainment with a 'moral' message. According to Satyajit Ray, a children's film should deal with sensitive issues discussed simply and clearly. Which means children's films should touch the feelings of children and also appeal to the elders. Ray made *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1968) which is entertaining and provides visual richness. According to Kedar Sarma, children's film should entertain and also help the growth of mental potential in a proper way but not harm children's physical and emotional life. So if a movie is made for children, then the social or psychological issues that the film is addressed should be easily explicable. Ritwik Ghatak believes that the ignored social issues should be addressed in children movies to teach the society.[20] Both Kedar Sarma and Tapan Sinha believe that children's films should address only children's mental growth. Ghatak shares Ray's position. All these eminent film makers have made children's films which are popular and highly regarded by both children and adults. They proved that children's films need to be concerned with childhood more than 'other' elements which would educate adults to understand a child's thoughts, feelings and sensibilities.

Children's cinema, then, faces a definitional problem with regard to its location and understanding within the lager continuum of Indian cinema. Here I would like to categorize children's films into four categories in terms of the subject matter:

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[20] Anand, Varala. *Balala Chitralu*, Hyderabad: Hyderabad Film Club, 1999. p.24

1. Films for children

2. Films about/on children

3. Films by children

4. Children characters in films

Films for children: In such films, genres like comedy, action and suspense are the themes. In these films the protagonist can be a child, adult, animal or machine. It can also be an animation film. These films can be mainstream popular films; they can be short films, parallel or art films, all of which addres children. Often children enjoy action movies which are violent in nature and violence is commodified in such a way that it attracts young minds. Children are influenced by these films more often and this subject has become a popular choice of the children, mainly because they do not have the social filters in place. Human life itself is an imitation of the society. From birth, a human being imitates others and continues doing so through life. From birth till death one learns from the society. Children learn more quickly than adults. The mainstream popular films deal with themes of comedy, action and suspense and are reflected in children's cinema. Such movies show romance and violence which can influence children's behavior.

Films about/on children: In such films, the themes revolve around children's lives and their living conditions. However, if we look at the parallel films, themes are usually about the socially and economically deprived or differently-abled children. Gender issue can also figure in these films. Some films also deal with certain section of children who are committed towards their goal and the different ways that they take to reach their goals which are justified at the end. In such films, methods of reaching their goals are not

important, what becomes important is the goal. So end justifies means. Here the highlight is on the class system, regional variations, religious, and caste (mostly with the mask of class) and color/race differences. These differences reinforce the existing social hierarchy and influence the tender minds of the children. Indian film-makers indulge in such differences and themes to garner audience who are mostly from middle/upper social strata.

Films by children: In India children film-makers are few. Those who try making films are not given due importance or encouragement by the film industry or the media.

For example, *C/O Footpath* (2006) is a Kannada movie directed by the eleven-year old Kishan Shrikanth. The film has been dubbed into the 5 major Indian languages and it has also been released in English. It was first shot in Kannada and the original version was released on 26 November 2006. The film is more than two hours long. The film is adapted from a short story written by himself. He is the "Youngest director of a professionally made feature length film" as acknowledged by the Guinness Book of World Records. He replaces Sydney Ling, who was thirteen in 1973 when he directed the Dutch film *Lex the Wonderdog*.

The film *C/O Footpath* involves the story of an orphan slum boy who is adopted by an old lady who finds him on a footpath. She brings him to live with her in the slum. With his friends, he makes a living by picking up rags, an encounter with some school students who call him an uneducated brute, changes the life of this slum boy. This makes him take up a challenge to get educated. How this boy finds a way to live his dream, going to school to get an education, amidst all odds and evens is the line of the story.

Inspired by true life stories of great people like Thomas Alva Edison, Michael Faraday, and India's former president A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, it is a successful film originally released in Kannada in 2006. It successfully ran for 100 days in Karnataka.

Children characters in films: Most mainstream popular and commercial films have child characters though not in important roles. These films introduce the male or female lead with their childhood dreams and aspirations and sometimes childhood love or rivalry are decisive factors in the narrative. And the characters' dreams/desires/aspirations from the childhood become the plot/story of the film. Such themes are also found in mainstream commercials and art films. Sometimes parallel films use child characters in the plot but focus on the adult world to large 'family audience', and, publicize the film as 'children's cinema' and therefore a 'clean movie'.

Children's films in different genres need to address the question of representation; or, in other words, what kind of interpretation and evolution such representation would involve. In India, there was a time when schools showed films, very often Charlie Chaplin classics or Disney cartoons. The current educational structure, where knowledge has to compulsorily come from texts and where intense and mindless competition for scores has eclipsed the joy of learning, has little space for cinema. Jaya Bachchan maintains that parents are caught up in the frenzy of consumerist culture and have neither time nor inclination to demand or look for sensitive movies for their children. As long as a work carries the 'for children' tag, it is accepted, and no questions are asked.[21]

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[21] 07/02/2007.
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/fr/%202003/11/07/sto%20ries/2003110701270300.htm >

Indian film has been influenced by foreign film industries especially Hollywood and has totally been commercialized. It produces typical *masala* movies which do not concentrate on the reality of life or the practical society. But some film makers have made some efforts towards making different kind of films which focus on real social issues. Art or parallel films have often tackled dark aspects of society like untouchability, dowry system, child marriages, illiteracy, gender issues etc. In this process some film makers have shown interest in children's movies. For example, in the earlier decades some films like *Boot Polish* (1954), *Jagriti* (1954), *Bhai Behen*(1959), etc. were made. But, these days when children have more options in the form of cartoon channels and the internet, they do not seem to be so interested in 'children's films'. Vishal Bhardwaj, echoing the same concern says, "Children today are far more mature, at least in the metropolis and in emerging cities. With no-holds-barred exposure to foreign films and cyber world, any film that features children cannot be passed off as a children's film".[22]

Satyen Bose's *Paribartan* (1949), a Bengali movie, is considered as the first Indian children's film. It was remade into Hindi in 1954 titled as *Jagriti*. The film depicts the schooling of children and its influence on them. Raj Kapoor made *Boot Polish* in 1954 with Prakash Arora as the director. The film emphasizes honesty, hard work and education for all as the basic requirements for progress and the role of youngsters in the reconstruction of the nation. The film deals with emotional and mental makeup of the children and depicts the life of two children who live in a Bombay slum. Their inner strength and human relationships despite their deprivations form the basis of the film.

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[22] See, Khanna, Priyanka.*Children are calling the shots at the box office*, 9/10/2007. <http://www.bollywood.com /node /2753>

John Chacha who supports them and his influence on them provide the emotional quotient of the movie. It has remained a prominent children's film which documented the intellectual and social atmosphere of the country in the decades following Independence.

Kedar Sharma is another filmmaker who made significant contribution to children's films and directed more than twenty-five films. He directed the first film made -- by Children's Film Society of India, *Jal Deep* (1956). The film revolves around a lighthouse and tackles children to be courageous and united. It was an entertaining and humorous film. Some other films directed by Kedar Sharma are *Scout Camp* (1958), *Meera Ka Chitra* (1961) *Khudahafiz* (1983).

In 1960 Rajendra Sharma made *Dilli ki Kahani* for Children's Film Society of India. The film unveils the history of Delhi. The film was awarded a Certificate of Merit. Phani Majundar directed *Savitri* in 1961 which was also awarded a Merit Certificate. *Raju aur Gangaram* directed by Ezra Mir was released in 1962. Ezra Mir was a children's filmmaker who worked in Films Division and Children's Film Society of India. *Raju aur Gangaram* is the friendship between a boy and talking parrot. The parrot is Gangaram, which takes shelter in Raju's home on a rainy day. Both have an abiding friendship. The film shows how quickly and easily children can bond with birds and animal. The film was awarded a Merit Certificate in 1962.

Zul Vellani made a film on Rabindranath Tagore's *Post Office* in 1965. The film unveils the dream-world of a boy in his room. Santi P.Choudhary's *Heerar Prajapati* was adjudged the Best Film and was awarded Prime Minister's Gold Medal in 1968.

Sai Paranjpye made several impressive films like *Jaadoo ka Shankh* (1974) and *Sikandar* (1976). The well known New Cinema filmmaker Aravindan also made a children's film called *Kummatti* (1979) about the children of a remote village in eastern Kerala. Kummatti is a magician, a *mantrik* and a singer. One day Kummatti hypnotizes the children to leave the school and takes them to the outskirts of the village. There the children are transformed into various animals. Later, Kummatti restores their original forms but one of the boys is left out of this restoration and remains a dog. Villagers try all kinds of spells to restore the boy's form but fail. Noticing his mistake Kummatti returns and transforms the dog into a boy. On reaching home the boy releases his pet dog from its cage. The film conveys a subtle message to allow the children to be free and without restrictions so they can soar high and widen their horizons.

Shankar Nag, film maker and actor from Karnataka, made some children's films. Nag chose the famous novel *Swami and his Friends* of the inimitable Indian writer R.K Narayan and made a television series. In his film *Swami* (1987), Shankar depicts the joys, anxieties, apprehensions, fears, triumphs and defeats of a small town boy Swami. *Malgudi* is an imaginary town created by R.K. Narayan and all his novels are set in this place. Shankar Nag succeeded in transferring the liveliness, spontaneity and the authenticity of the original writing on to the film. The escapades of Swami sparkle with fun and humor. Most of it comes from the way children look and perceive the world. Children love to see themselves in Swami.

Madan Bavvaria's *Ankur Maina our Kabootar* (1989) depicts children in relation to an endangered bird. In this movie Dr.Bhagiratha Prasad makes efforts to protect the

pink dove species which is on the verge of extinction. When he leaves for Mauritius on his mission, his grandson Ankur accompanies him. Ankur makes friends with Maina /dove in Mauritius.

In 1990, Parvati Menon made *Triyatri*. Ravi, Adi and Surya fail to score sufficient marks in their school leaving examination to get admission in college. Depressed, the three of them commence a cycle journey from Jaisalmer to Kanyakumari. The journey enhances their awareness and helps them to learn so much that *Triyatri* became an inspiring film for children. Mani Rathnam's *Anjali* (1990) is yet another film which broke new ground in children's film. It depicts the agonies of a family with a mentally challenged child. The film deals with the interrelationships within the family in authentic and sensitive manner and shows how they respond and react to the mentally challenged.

The contribution of Santosh Sivan to children films is significant. Sivan's film *Abhayam* (1991) brought into focus the anxieties of children about their future which makes them into memorizing machines. Eight year old Vinu is an artistically inclined boy irresistibly drawn to nature. His parents try to pin him to a rigid routine. Vinu finds himself a prisoner of time in terms of his daily chores. He finds solace in thinking about his loving grandfather and his village. One day Vinu runs away. In the course of his journey, he meets and interacts with many people and faces many unusual adventures and encounters. Vinu finally reaches his destination – his grandfather's village.

Prema Karanth made a children's film *Nakkala Rajakumari* (1991) which attempted to look at the concept of democracy from the children's' point of view.

Malayalam writer and film maker M.T. Vasudevan Nair made a film *Kadavu* in 1991 which was based on S.K. Pottekkat's story. It presents the world view of a child *Kadavu*.

In 1992, Pankaj Parashar made *Asman se Gira*, a fantasy film which became a huge success. In the movie a prince is fed up with studying and meets an alien youth from another planet. They spend time happily then the alien feels homesick and expresses his desire to go back. The prince makes several efforts to send him back and finally he succeeds in sending the alien to his planet. *Mujhse Dosti Karogi* (1992) a film made by Gopi Desai received critical appreciation. It is about some children who are lost in the wilderness on the India-Pakistan border in Kutch region. The near by village lacks even basic amenities like drinking water. Surrounded by marshy soil, the border region's silence is broken only by the MIG-planes which frequently fly over the village. The film strings together the imagery that comes out of the imagination of a boy who lives in the village. The confrontation that takes places between the reality and the romantic world of this little boy forms the content of the film.

Apurba Kishore Bir made a children's film titled *Lavanya Preeti* (1993) in which he portrayed the friendship among three children. A new world opens up before Vidyullata when she makes friends with her class mates Gopal and Mayadhar. Gopal steals a golden ring from his house in order to protect a priest from getting insulted. The priest is saved from ignominy but Gopal's family faces problem which threatens the natural and spontaneous way children respond to various situations.

Santosh Sivan has made *Halo* (1996) and *Malli* (1998). *Halo* is a film about a little girl Sasa who goes in search of her lost puppy called Halo in the city of Bombay.

Her friend Anil and others like a nun, a journalist and a unit boy in a video team help her in the search. The group comes across a smuggler of dogs, a police commissioner and an editor. By the time the film comes to a close the entire city of Bombay is in a chaos. The film puts the psychological state of young children, who live in big cities, under the spotlight. Santosh Sivan chose a larger canvas for his film *Malli.* It is a beautiful poem on celluloid shot in a forest. The film conveys a subtle message on the conversation of excitement.

In 1998 A.K Bir made another film *Nandan* depicting the mischief and daring of an adolescent. The film very effectively portrays the rebelliousness and aggressiveness, which is often a characteristic feature of adolescents.

In Veerendra Sayani's *Kabhi Pass Kabhi Fail* (1999), Robin, a village boy is prodigy with numbers and mathematics. The entire village is impressed by his talent with numbers. A couple, Uncle Joe and aunt Sheela approach Robin's parents and promise them that they will arrange for his higher education. They take him along with them to the city. Instead of admitting him in school they try to exploit his prowess with numbers to make money by exhibiting it at various places. Robin is frustrated because he cannot pursue higher studies and feels depressed. All of a sudden he loses his ability to manipulate numbers. Feeling dejected and insulted Robin runs away from the city and reaches his village with the help of his pet dog. Soon after he arrives in his village he regains his computing ability. The film is an effective exposition of crooked people who try to exploit children and the trauma it creates for children.

Few other film makers have contributed to children's films, like Tapan Sinha's *Kabooli Wala* (1950), *Safed Haathi* (1978), *Dweep Ka Rahasya* (1979), *Aaj Ka Robinhood* (1987); Kedar Sarma's *Maha Theerth* (1951), *Scout Camp* (1958), *Meera Ka Chitra* (1960), *Khuda Haafeez* (1983), *Dosti* (1964); Phani Majumdar's *Savitri* (1961); Santi P .Choudary's *Heerer Prajapati* (1968); Adurthi Subbarao's *Sudigundalu* (1967) and *Maroprapancham* (1970); Bapu's *Balaraju Katha* (1970); Gulzar's *Parichay* (1972), *Kitaab* (1977); B. R. Ishara's *Kagaz ke Naav* (1975); Krishna Shah's *Shalimar* (1978); The first ever made film made in Telugu by Children's Film Society was *Gangabhavani* (1980); Shekhar Kapur's *Masoom* (1983); Jijo Punnoose's *My Dear Kuttichetan* (1984); Sandeep Ray's *Phatik Chand* (1984), *Goopy Bagha Phir Elo* (1990); Meera Nayar's *Salaam Bombay* (1988); Pankaj Parashar's *Asmaans Se Gira* (1990); Madan Bawaria's *Ankur Maina Aur Kabootar* (1990); Vasudevan Nayar's *Kadavu* (1991); Akkineni Kutumba Rao's *Bhadram Koduko* (1992), *Patha Nagaram lo Pasivadu* (1999), *Gulabilu* (2005); T.S. Nagabharana's *Naviddive Echarike* (1995);   B. NarsingaRao's *Harivillu* (2003); are some of the films that constitute the genre of Indian children films. These movies are good attempts in the portrayal of children lives.

These films show the importance children give to love, emotions and feelings. These films present ideals of children's lives. Films have become an important part of society because they influence behavior very much. Most of the movies actually address adults and only a few address children properly. Though several films are made in India to promote all-round development of children under the auspices of Children's Film Society of India, yet lot remains to be achieved in terms of the subjects they deal with. Children's film makers and the Society for Children Films have been demanding efficient

and professional distribution system and enhanced number of venues for the exhibition of their films. These can be achieved only when the activity related to children films takes the form of a movement in terms of production of 'quality' children films.

Chapter II

The Child in Regional Films

India represents diverse cultures and languages. This pan-diversity has given rise to regional films apart from the largely known as Indian Hindi films, "Bollywood." Regional films make useful addition to Indian cinema now known globally, with their diverse languages and cultures. Furthermore, some of the well known figures in Indian cinema, particularly in the film tradition, come from the regional cinemas. The diverse regional cinemas strive to maintain their typical identities and provide an important dimension of the cultural wealth and diversity to Indian cinema.

Film making in regional languages began sometime later than Hindi cinema. Mythologies and contemporary issues formed the subject matter of early films. The Hindi/Urdu film industry, based in Mumbai, formerly Bombay, is now called "Bollywood". Similar neologisms have been coined for the Telugu film industry "Tollywood" and Tollygunge is metonym for the Bengali film industry, long centered in the Tollygunge district of Kolkata. The idea of "Bollywood"[23], "Andhra Tollywood"[24], and "Bangla Tollywood"[25] represent the popular films of respective regions.

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[23] Bollywood is the informal term popularly used for the Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay), Maharashtra, India. The term is often incorrectly used to refer to the whole of Indian cinema; it is only a part of the total Indian film industry, which includes other production centers producing films in regional languages.

Hindi Cinema

The history of Hindi film started in 1920s. Following the Lumiere Moving Pictures in Paris (1895), films became a sensation across Europe and by July 1896 the Lumiere films had held its first show in Bombay. After that the first short films in India were directed by Harilal Sen, starting with *The Flower of Paris* (1898). The first full-length motion picture in India was produced by Dadasaheb Phalke, a scholar of India's languages and culture, who brought together elements from epics to produce his *Raja Harichandra* (1913). The first chain of film theatres was owned by the Calcutta entrepreneur Janshedji Franji Madan, who oversaw production of ten films annually and distributed them throughout the subcontinent. Ardeshir Irani released *Alam Ara*, the first Indian talkie film in 1931. Hindi language produces about 300 of the total Indian films in a year, while the remaining are in other languages. However, Hindi films account for about half of the total revenue generated by Indian films.

The importance of Hindi films stems from two principal attributes. One, they represent pan-Indian mass entertainment medium. Two, they cut across regional boundaries and bind not just the people in the nation but Indians around the world, an identity which tend to be Indian popular cultural. As cited in the Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema,

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[24] The cinema of Andhra Pradesh, India; refers to the Telugu cinema which is Hyderabad based. The Telugu language film Industry, nick named as Tollywood.
[25] The cinema of West Bengal (Bengali) refers to the Tollygunge-baced Bengali industry in Kolkata, India. The Tollygunge-cinema nick named as Tollywood.

Hindi cinema weaves its magic from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Bhatinda to Birmingham, from New Delhi to New York with the aid of its grand sagas, larger than-life stars, and its enormously popular music…". "There is nothing anywhere in the world quite like Hindi Cinema. It is a unique, immutable brand of cinema that, at its most typical is a fictional and seductive universe peopled by handsome and righteous heroes, ethereally pretty and virtuous heroines, and venal and wily villains besides and elaborate support cast of mother figures, patriarchs, siblings, friends, hunch men, bumbling fools, and the like. These characters exist in a never-never land marked by sharp extremes. They break into songs, dance and laugher just as easily as they weep, howl, and pour their hearts out. They express anger and resort to violence no less frequently than they spout gems of moral wisdom and hold forth on the virtues of peace and human solidarity. They are gripped as much by paroxysms of insanity and emotional excess as they are driven by the single minded pursuit of love and passion. [26]

This generalization shows that Hindi films hold pan-Indian appeal. The diverse regional-cultural backgrounds need to be re-examined in terms of the regional specificities and dichotomies.

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[26] Gulzar, Govind Nihlani and Saibal Chatterjee. *Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema*, Mumbai: Papular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 2003. P.viii, 3.

Hindi Cinema and "Bollywood":

Hindi films are made primarily in Mumbai. But popular Hindi cinema presents broad, sometimes false-notions, about Indian society and its value systems. While Bombay was, and is, the main centre of Indian film production, film industries grew up early in the century throughout the sub-continent in Calcutta, Madras, Lahore, and the other major centres – deriving their inspiration and talents from the local theatrical and artistic modes which combined western and indigenous models.

"Bollywood" is the term popularly used for the Hindi-language film industry. The term is often incorrectly used to refer to the whole of Indian cinema whereas it is only part of the Indian film industry. Unlike "Hollywood", "Bollywood" does not exist as a physical place. Though some deplore the name, arguing that it makes the industry look like a poor cousin to Hollywood', it has entered the Oxford English Dictionary. The term "Bollywood" has origins in the 1970s when India overtook America as the world's largest film producer. The term has been accepted by different people including the lyricists, film makers and scholars. "Bollywood" is a label for Hindi language films. But, as Amitabh Bachchan stated "Bollywood" is only a marketing term for Indian popular films which have followed "*masala* formula". During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hindi cinema meant family centric romantic musicals; action and comedy films were also successful. The 2000s saw a phenomenal popularity of Hindi cinema in the world and took film making to new heights in terms of quality, cinematography and innovative story lines as well as technical advances in areas such as special effects, animation etc. It gave marketing value to Hindi popular cinema. But there have always been Indian

regional/Hindi films with more artistic aims and more sophisticated stories, both inside and outside the "Bollywood" tradition'[27]. Before "Bollywood", there were films in Hindi language, and continue to be, which are different from "Bollywood" formula films as are "parallel" and documentary cinema. In 1934 Bombay Talkies launched by Himansu Rai, spearheaded the growth of Indian cinema.

Children's Films in Hindi:

Hollywood's biggest money spinners in recent years have been child fiction films that have catered to audiences of all ages. Films like adventures of *Harry Potter* (2001), and child entertainers like *Dunston Checks In* (1995), *Baby's Day Out* (1994) and *Home Alone* (1990) have been universally popular. In the Indian context too Hindi film industry took films about children seriously as it had never done before. After decades of avoiding children's films, the Hindi film industry made a number of films about children. Why producers were suddenly interested in children's film making can be an interesting question. It might be, to get big money with small budget. Recent children's films like Bharadwaj's directorial debut *Makdee* (2002) grossed over Rs.70 lacs, and *Hanuman* (2005), an animation film collected Rs.300 lacs. These proved to be turning points for the subject. Earlier *Koi... Mil Gaya* (2003) was a stupendous hit, earning over Rs.1800 lacs.[28]

Most of the children's films in Hindi are made for commercial purposes and directors hope to get awards at National or International film festivals. In case of children's films, festivals are the only platforms to bring the films to public notice. In

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[27] 7/2/2007. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bollywood>

[28] Rahul Kapoor. *Bollywood gives children some reason to smile*, September 16, 2007. 10/06/2009 <http://www.realbollywood.com /news/2007/09/bollywood-gives-children-some-reason-to-smile.html >

these films child is the subject or children enact main roles. Child fiction is one genre that has been neglected for decades but is developing now with its own style of presentation. Bhardwaj's *Makdee* (2002) and *Blue Umbrella* (`2007) left mark on audiences and critics and *Bhoot Unkle* (2006), *Bhoothnath* (2008) are examples to show how children films are becoming popular. *Makdee* and *Blue Umbrella* won several awards at National and International film festivals. Recently animation films like *Hanuman* (2005), *My Friend Ganesh* (2007), *Chhota Chetan* (1998), *and Harry Puttar* (2008) have been entertaining. Few directors have made non- children films, but which also gives importance to the child. For instance, Gulzar's films present spontaneous depictions of child behaviour. In *Kitab* Gulzar was at his best. The film sparkles with Gulzar extrapolations to the original story of Samaresh Basu. He brings out on to the screen what goes on in a child's mind. Both the children who played the main roles in *Kitab* behave like normal children of their age. Getting bored with the restrictions of school they try to break out of it. In the process they imitate their teachers, form gangs, sing and mimic film songs and jingles. All these were captured in *Kitab* in a sensitive and appealing manner. Generally, Hindi children's films subjects are mainly social, science fictions, and fantasy fairy tales.

Kairee (The Raw Mango, 1999):

The Film directed by Amol Palekar and produced by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The film is based on a short story by famous Marathi writer, G. A. Kulkarni. It has been scripted by Chitra Palekar. *Kairee* makes a daring and most telling departure. Unlike its literary source, the film chose the child protagonist to be a female. The protagonist has no name and this deliberate anonymity only highlights her intelligence, determination and a refreshing frankness.

The film revolves around a 10-year-old girl who is brought to her aunt's place after she is orphaned. Uprooted from a refined and loving household, she struggles to cope with a very hostile environment as her aunt's husband is a drunken brute, how the two - aunt and niece - face the world together. The film describes the girl's feelings and her inner voice to do the right deed. Whenever she feels strange in social situations, she remembers her parents, she speaks to herself and tries to understand and respond to a particular situation. The film presents the girl's emotional attachment to her aunt, and how they share their feelings and experiences which motivate the girl.

When Deshpandey teacher asks the girl to get money because nothing comes without money, she replies that she doesn't have money and she cannot afford money. When Deshpandey tells her to beg and get money, she quits that school and complains to

her aunt Taani with shedding tears. Taani says; '*Tu ab badi hogayi hey na, aur isse bhi badi banni vaali hey, tu iss tarhaa rotih rahee toh phir aagey chal kar kya karegi*'?; you are growing-up and you will be mature enough, If you weep, how will you prove your potential [Translation is mine]. And also she says; '*…har baar hath peecheh lethi rahien toh, haat hamesha khaali reh jaainge, agar aasaanisey nahie mila toh, jabardhasti cheen lene ki himmath chaahiyen*…; if you always take-back your hand, it will be empty. If you cannot get something easily, you need to have guts to take it forcefully [Translation is mine]; from these words, and while Taani threatening Deshpandey in the presence of the girl, the girl astonished and influenced by her aunt's braveness. She observed beauty of Taani's smile, affection and the courage she shows as whole. The girl impressed and constructs her own identity. The girl dislikes grieve over situations, or rather she likes to fight against system than weeping in the depressive atmosphere after adopting her aunt's individuality and courage.

This film was produced by Indian Government. It shows the perception of Indian state, of the child in particular and the childhood in general. The state's concern about the social system is the prime focus of the film which is carried through the film narrative by visualizing women empowerment in a sensible manner, an orphan girl's life, her understanding of social struggle, motivations and the influences on her individuality. The film opens from darkness to light; it symbolizes a girl's life journey to enlightenment. When she gets off the bus at the village, an old song plays on the bus radio which explains a girl's self reliance. '*Tadbeer se bigidi hui taqdeer banaa le, apne pey barosa hey toh daolaga le…*' when destiny seems spoilt, take a chance and have faith in yourself, as though reminding the girl to have faith and fight the materialistic

world [Translation is mine]. The peacock becomes the symbol of the child's aspirations. She is unable to glimpse the spectacular bird which appears so easily to others. But the unseen fires her imagination which will later turn her into a writer. *Kairee*, captures indefinable moments of joy which only a child can experience.

She develops individuality or identity from her parents particularly from her mother. This clearly indicates her contrasting feelings in societal relations and simultaneously, inside her mind. She notices both Tulsa and Bhaurao together having extra marital relation at Taani's house, but, she cannot understand what is happening between them and thinks of not informing Taani, because of an earlier quarrel between Taani and Bhaurao. But, she could sense the odd social behavior between Bhaurao and Tulsa. As a child she cannot go or speak against Bhaurao's behavior but she keeps it in her mind. "Patriarchy" which manifests itself in various forms of discriminations, inequalities, hierarchies, inferior status and position of women in society has been portrayed in the film. When she joins in the school she finds strange being the only girl in the school. Absence of interest in girl students in terms of studies, education position or system in the rural area is also portrayed. How a bright student is exploited by financial, cultural and social, even in gender stratum is the question that never dies down.

***Makdee* (The Web of The Witch, 2002)**:

The film directed and produced by Vishal Bhardwaj.

This is a film set in a village atmosphere which is in peace and quiet. In that village Chunni bamboozled the villagers by imitating her twin sister, by putting a mole on upper lip like Munni. She has a great friend Mugal-e-Azam, who does her homework, is regularly ordered to do ranch duties by his adoptive father, the village butcher Kallu, who feeds him next to nothing in exchange for his hard work. Mughal-e-Azam's treatment angers Chunni's sense of justice, and she plans a massive trick to exact revenge on Kallu. The trick goes twists, though, and leads to Munni in the clutches of the terrifying local witch. So frightening is the witch that no one in the village, not even adults, will enter the gates of the property in which her castle appears. Determined to save her sister, Chunni builds up her courage and goes inside and finds there that, the witch has made Munni into a chicken. Then the witch bargains with Chunni for chicken every day to eat, and she says, after completion of hundred chickens she can take her sister back. In the meantime, to avoid bringing the witch's anger upon her, Chunni must not tell anyone about the bargain, and so she must pretend to be both Chunni and Munni so that the witch's deed is not detected. Chunni, scared and miserable, must face the terrible witch alone. Finally, Chunni gets her sister Munni back with the help of her

friend Mughal-e-Azam and she becomes a great and brave girl in the village by revealing the witch's real character in front of all people.

The flow of the narrative is kept tight. It strictly is confined to the main theme. It contains the liveliness and joyfulness of a child. Witch's dark tone is set magnificently from the opening scenes, in which a boy who has stolen a few coins wanders through the witch's gates and is turned into a goat. Even the film's moments of levity have a dark edge, like the cheerful song the butcher sings about the pleasures of decapitating chickens, or Chunni and Mughal-e-Azam's cheerfulness. One cannot deny that children are fascinated by ghosts, demons, c*hudail* etc. But basing the stories on them has a hazard. Children start believing in them. But this is a film that used *Chudail* to attract children, but at the end, revealed to them how these stories are fictitious and these characters do not exist in real society. This film tells some very basic lessons about beliefs and science. It allows one to believe in the supernatural, but returns us to reality when we realize that the reality is nothing but a superb. There are some funny and typical village scenes, including the ones in the village school. The school teacher always tells the students that there is a scientific explanation for all superstitions including witches and ghosts. Of course, no one believes him, because, kids have always been fascinated by witches. They enjoy hearing and reading their stories with delight. This is the cause why the witch is exposed as a ghost. But it is realistic and the camera captures the shrivelled hands, the giant lips and matted hair with ample emphasis to instil fear in the spectator-children.

Superstitious belief is one of the social evils in human culture. As part of Indian culture and tradition, there are many mythological scriptures and beliefs which influence social system and also individuals in particular. Whereas in society some of them misuse the beliefs of people and deceive them. Adults train their children forcefully to follow the cultures and beliefs, particularly in the process of socialization. Uneducated childhood cannot take it easy but follows it, as their parents or elders do in the name of belief or tradition. This film questions it and deeply discusses the problem of superstitious belief, and also gives reason to eradicate thses social evils. Also, this film gives an impression that education for children is important to give them knowledge about society and science. It also discusses how education influences children to know about superstitious beliefs and its reality and in constructing critical thinking in childhood.

The moment where Chunni and Mughal-e-Azam together realize that the witch is a normal woman who does all inconsiderate things, her confidence grows and individualist nature leads to take the challenges in hard times. Even though she is bad in studies, she believes in her teacher's words that '…*vignaan; bhoot, preth yaa kisi chudel mein vishwaas nahien karta*', science does not believe in paranormal existence [Translation is mine]; it is important to identify the character of a child who believes science that she has learnt from 'school'. But even though Munni is a good student, studies well and gets good marks, she believes in superstitious powers as the whole village believes in. But, Chunni deconstructs the belief system of the village, given a chance, and moulds her naughtiness as her strength by proving that she is brave.

Particularly in the case of Chunni, the character is very sensitive. Chunni is a character who is smart and naughty in her village and in her family, but to save her sister she uses her naughtiness as her strength. The character of Chunni was constructed with bold nature. Chunni deeply regrets when she fears that her troublemaking had cost her sister's life, but her triumphs are inspiring. Even though some of Chunni's antics have selfish motives, others are driven by her strong sense of justice and her desire to protect Mughal-e-Azam. She also has all the opportunity of provoking the anger of her school teacher, Kallu (the village butcher) and her father. Munni is a polite demure child and an ace student. Her brash sister Chunni shoots her mouth off, steals food, cheats in school, and causes confusion. Here, Chunni's character never compromises with depressed situations, rather, she finds every possibility to rescue her sister in a given time.

In the film, the village Sitapur signifies superstition, where people live in the civilized environs but still are ignorant and irrational beings. Even Munni is educated but irrational. The witch signifies social evil in the name of superstitious power, where she cheats village people as witch and tries to steal ancient monument. Masterji signifies education and science, where he as an intellectual trying to bring the rational realities into the society. Chunni signifies educated who deals with the social system pragmatically. And Moghal-e-Azam signifies child labour and a common man who is also a liberal.

***Bhoot Unkle* (2006):**

This film directed by Mukesh Saigal and produced by Krishan Choudary and Anish Arjun Dev.

For 12-year-old orphan Shyam, life had been nothing but a series of tragedies and hardships. He is ill treated by his aunt, while his uncle watches helplessly. One night, Shyam unexpectedly stumbles upon an idol of Lord Shiva in a haunted lighthouse. The mystery of the missing Lord Shiva idol, which Shyam accidentally solves, makes him come face to face with a dead pirate Bhoot Unkle, who had robbed the idol a hundred years ago and is trapped in the lighthouse. Shyam is entrusted with the responsibility of saving the idol from the clutches of the corrupt MLA and installing it back in the temple.

SK and his friends always try to annoy Shyam. In the class room Deepak steals Geeta's video game and tell in the class that Shyam has stolen it. And in another situation SK steals his father's golden watch and says it was stolen by Shyam. These two incidents make Shyam run away from home because of the fear of allegation, and by adding to his aunt's anger, he becomes more fearful. Shyam's loneliness comes to an end after his interaction with Bhoot Unkle and his miracles which rescue Shyam from death.

In this film the protagonist Shyam is innocent and calm. He faces many hurdles from his cruel aunt. He represents a parentless boy who stays in their relative's house and bearing with problems in that house. His character focuses clearly on how much a child needs parents' love, affection and caring. Shyam is also discriminated by few of his

classmates but his group of friends support him. But still he is depressed and seeks care and affection from somebody. Shyam represents the pain of an orphan. Shyam questions the idea of 'family' in the pragmatic conditions. His worries, depressions and loneliness are less cared by the adult society, at 'family' and outside the family, even though adult world is well-versed with the fact that the child is 'dependant'. Shyam sense of 'family' fails when he decides to run away from home in a particular context.

Other important roles in this film are that of the 'bad' kid's group leader SK who is the son of a MLA, who is contender to Shyam in this film. Another character is Shyam's cousin, who is plump, always eats something and always blames Shyam in all situations. These two characters represent meanness. In most children's films the antagonist is either an adult or an evil natured child ('bad' children). Likewise SK is a boy who imitates his father's cruelty from his childhood and creates hurdles for Shyam. Other friends of SK are also involved in this, including Shyam's cousin Deepak. These situations show in general how children learn from their parents and elders and imitate them, finally becoming anti-social beings.

Past life of Boot Unkle is visualized by animation. A look through it shows that the narration of flash-back is hundred years back. Therfore, the film maker wanted to present it in folk tale, where folk tales for kids by and large are picturisied with animation technology. Even though, animation part is technically not advanced but it is an advantage to this children's film in narrating story *for kids*.

Nanhe Jaisalmer **(2007)**:

The film directed by Samir Karnik and produced by Top Angel Productions.

This film is about importance of education. The protagonists of this film are a ten year old, Nanhe and his idol Bobby Deol a Bollywood film star. The story is located in the desert city of Jaisalmer. The narrative encompasses a short period in Nanhe's life where he learns his life's most important lessons from the person who he believes his most important friend, Bobby Deol. Bobby Deol and Nanhe share emotions together in various situations, where Bobby Deol's words of wisdom help Nanhe to overcome various obstacles. Bobby Deol teaches Nanhe to stand up for himself, Bobby Deol makes him realize the true worth of his family and most importantly he makes Nanhe to understand the importance of education and Nanhe decides to start attending school. All of this appears possible after his meeting with Bobby Deol.

Nanhe's character is very much visible in common Indian environs. He lives in a tourist place where he interacts with many people of deferent cultures, characters, languages and minds. Nanhe speaks many foreign languages like French, Italian, German, and English etc. which he never learns from books or from teacher. He is a boy

who believes in his ability for living. He knows how to love people who are around him and he is also affectionate towards animals. For his livelihood, he has a camel named Raja. This Camel is not only for his substantial needs but it also becomes part of his family. There are many people around him who are elder than him. Khemaji, a drunkard and Jussuji, a womanizer and few more people who are having deferent social behaviours which are strange to children to understand, but Nanhe instead of being influenced by them, always tries to tell them not to make mistakes. He is well learned in social sense by the experiences from life itself.

His motivation comes from within him rather from his belief in his idol personality which he wants to be like or which he admires. His imagination motivates him to overcome the lack he has in his life. His fare relations with society make him confident for his future. That becomes the reason of his success in earning money for his family, for his sister's marriage, for getting back his camel which was sold by his mother and for fight against the humiliation by Maggu who is elder than Nanhe and colleague in safari. Even in going to night school, he hardly listens to his mother's warning and Madamji's concerns till he realizes to go to school and study. He recognizes the reality after his success. The film examines a wide range of emotions displayed by Bobby Deol and lessons learnt by Nanhe from his perspective as a child. It also underlines the fact that any lesson that is taught by the person one idolizes stays fresh all our lives.

Taare Zameen Par (**Stars on Earth, 2007**):

The film directed and produced by Amir Khan.

It is a tale of a small child who has learning difficulties and is largely misunderstood by his teachers and even his parents. The film is a story of a playful eight year old boy Ishaan Awasthi who lives in his own world. He is lagging in his school subjects, doesn't listen, but gifted with a very good sense of imagination. A child nowadays, lagging academically is termed as a below average child -- the film questions that notion.

Ishaan has a very normal family - hard working dad, a committed mom, loving and intelligent elder brother, who is an example of a perfect and "good boy". In contrast, Ishaan is always mocked by his fellow students and often he would get into fights with them. For his school teachers, he is just sort of a black sheep. But here is a boy whose world is filled with wonders that no one else seems to appreciate. Colors, fish, dogs and kites are just not important in the world of adults, specifically his parents, who are only interested in things like homework, marks and neatness. Moreover, this boy just cannot seem to get anything right in class.

The treatment of the child in this film is very positive Ishaan writes some letters and numbers in reverse, like mirror like images. He cannot read because he sees the letters differently. But his mind is full of imagination and dreams and he can express

them in his art. His parents, being very troubled with his behavior and low grades, decide to transfer him to a boarding school so that the teachers there could discipline him more instead of understanding him and asking for professional help. Ishaan almost falls into depression and seclusion.

Rajan Damodaran is another student in the boarding school who is physically challenged but gets first grade in the class. Rajan is a symbol of physical inability but can study well than other students, like wise Ishaan has inability of a common intelligence but unique in terms of addressing things in every aspect of studies. Seemingly, the physical inability and dyslexia are similar problems of an individual where both need care and attention, which has been portrayed in the film.

One of the sensitive scenes is a particular moment showing of the flipbook which shows a family with one kid moving away (or just shunted away from his family) as the pages turn. This particular scene shows the entire film, especially, the message that it intends to convey to the people. The film addresses difficult social issues, which in this case was the flawed education system and it's incapacity to cope with the problem of a child's severe dyslexia.

Taare Zameen Par is not only a film about dyslexia. It's also about parents and children, about the pressures adults put on children, about how adults push them into becoming assembly-line products instead of encouraging them to find their own unique strengths.

***Tahaan* (2008)**:

Tahaan was directed by Santhosh Sivan and produced by Shripal Morakhia and Mubina Rattonsey.

The story tells the tale of the journey Tahaan takes to try and win back the donkey from running a race, to meeting strange '*baba*s' to even things much more sinister than his immature mind can make sense of. All he wants is his donkey named Birbal. The story is told from the point of view of the boy - Tahaan. For him, bringing his favourite and pet donkey Birbal back home is the sole purpose in occurrence. Liberation for Tahaan by ensuring he achieves his goal of retaining the donkey by the end of the film. 'Birbal' the donkey in 'Tahaan' film is an effective way of humanizing the fiction which takes place in the geopolitical context of Kashmir. This film also uses the donkey to not allow Tahaan to encounter a number of oddball characters, but to advance the narrative in a way that seems unforced and natural. In many films, it is children who always make the adults around them see the value of humanity by placing their faith and even trust in animals.

Tahaan follows the man as he passes through military checkpoints, tries to bargain with merchants, and receives kindness from strangers, all while seeking to get his pet out of possession. His father has been missing in action for more than three years, his grandfather has died, and his mother is mute and he assumes himself as the man of the family. When an elder tells him, 'Without a purpose, there is no meaning to life,' Tahaan is bewildered. 'What is my purpose?' he asks his grandfather. In his attempt to retrieve his beloved donkey, the young Tahaan becomes a tool in the hands of the rebel group. Ominously, a possible answer emerges when a Kashmiri rebel tells Tahaan to throw a hand grenade into an army camp. This film is a representation of the fact that society and the government need to be more responsible, in order to shape up a child's personality and attitude where children play military-terrorist with their broken cricket bats. The unrest in Kashmir valley in terms of terrorism and agitations is affecting the children of the valley. *Tahaan* conveys a message to self-centered people who are ruining the atmosphere of the societies all around the world and it is a reality that whatever conflicts happen in life it affects children.

"Who does this land belong to?" is the key question that a rebel asks the boy Tahaan, promising him that the answer will bring back his beloved donkey, the only reminder of his missing father. The family was forced to sell the donkey due to their financial crisis. Searching for the answer, the boy sets off on a difficult path across the wild and charming Kashmiri countryside, which military conflicts threaten to destroy. It seems that the long sequences of mountains and plains and the water stream, leaves and the play of light rays as rendered which again reflect the key problems of the absurdity of

privatizing nature and destroying it in military conflicts. Also on a metaphorical level – the donkey Birbal, whose return becomes the boy's sole purpose in life, is merely a metaphor for the senselessness of disputes over privatization, which is overcome by a child's attachment, kind-heartedness and friendship.

Tahaan is not only the first Indian film to show the Kashmir issue through the perspective of a Muslim family but any film which chooses to implement a balanced approach to what is still a contentious subject is sure to be viewed with some suspicion. The affects of the Kashmiri conflict are most readily felt in the plot line of Tahaan's father. Declared missing, many know that this is something the Indian military chooses to endorse in fear of being accused of illegally detaining suspected Kashmiri militants. Though this seems like a convenient way of focusing the narrative on the young boy, it works in reminding us of the terrorism both sides inflict upon one another. Tahaan's father acts as an invisible symbol of the continuing repression and persecution faced by Muslim families in an India controlled Kashmir.

Tahaan has a choice between life and death and the film never really makes it clear what exactly Tahaan is instructed to do with the grenade he has been asked to carry in exchange for his donkey, Birbal. Nevertheless, the exploitation of the child by the militant for political purposes is a realistic manifestation of the self destructive way in which the future of an entire generation has been compromised purely to further an impossible political cause. The film suggests that the Indian military is in fact responsible for the illegal detention of his missing father. The final moments of the film seem to blame both the militants and the army for failing the people of Kashmir.

***Bhoothnath* (2008)**:

Bhoothnath is directed by Vivek Sarma and produced by BR Films.

Banku is a seven years old boy, only son to his parents, born in a rich family and lives in an urban-culture society. This is a story about a naughty yet innocent boy, who unknowingly turns a foe into a friend. It says a child's love is innocent and honest. It can transform relationships. It is believed that children have the strongest connection to God. They have the ability to perceive goodness in everything and everyone. Child's love can transform relationships; it comes with no expectations and no boundaries.

This film is entirely a work of fiction. Interestingly the beginning of the film gives vigilance for children by the film maker, "angels and ghost is not in real life. It is generally how children feel fear of evil powers and believe in god or angles." And the director of this film says that he has belief in angels. This film gives the impression to children that the angels are good and nice. Banku asks his mother that what is Bhooth and his mother says, 'Bhooth (evil) is not there, but angel is there.' So, it gives impression to Banku that every super natural power is an angel but not evil. With that trust when he sees Bhoothnath, he is not scared instead he tries to make friendship with Bhoothnath. All

these situations show that kids trust their parents or elders and they follow their words. From beginning when he sees Bhoothnath he feels it is a human, then he gets to know that it is a super natural power. This film deals with this point in a convincing way by adding a sub-plot i.e. Bhoothnath and his son's relation and how Nath has became 'Bhooth' instead of a 'peaceful soul' which is not supposed to be around human beings.

Every moment discloses the nature of characters in this film. With the character of this boy, the film describes two dimensions in childhood. How the boy react with his innocent mind and how he reacts with his experience of social influence of his living surroundings. Kids think while watching a film that they are influenced by the characters of that film. In this particular film school kids figure two groups and fight together, as Vishal Bhardwaj said, 'children today are far more mature, at least in metropolis'[29]. In this film one of the songs shows the nature of this attitude in kids with their way of costumes, way of their style, dance etc. To elevate Banku's character there is another song which describes Banku's naughtiness. More importantly this film gives the meaning to the way how children are attached to the relations, and how they feel sad if that relation breaks, that is why in the climax Bhoothnath comes back to Banku and promises him that whenever he wants Nath he will appear. In certain sense this film's main aim is to say present generation should understand their parent's feelings and respect them, otherwise parents' souls will not get peace after death. Dealing the child in this film is to carry on this purpose from the childhood to adulthood.

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[29] Khanna, Priyanka. *In 2007, Bollywood took to children films in a big way*. 20/08/2008. <http://www.bollywood.com/node/2753>

Thoda Pyaar, Thoda Magic (**A Little Love, A Little Magic, 2008**):

Directed by Kunal Kohli, produced by Aditya Chopra and Kunal Kohli.

The film is about four children, Vasisht, Aditi, Iqbal and Avantika. *Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic* distills the essence of children's cinema into a sort of attempted formulae. Ranbeer Talwar one of top business tycoons, is a loner. In a court verdict, Ranbeer is ordered to look after four kids, who hold him responsible for the death of their parents. The children hate him, and he hates them too. They try every trick to make his life a living hell. The children succeed, but long for parental love and affection, at the end of the day, they are a bunch of unhappy kids. One night, they pray to god for help, and god obliges. He sends a bubbly angel in the form of a nanny, to take care of the children. An angel who doesn't know what love is, a man who always lost love, four orphans who need love, all come together to live the life for love and affection. Film speaks about love, relationships and family.

There is similarity between Ranabir and the four children in terms of loneliness in childhood. Ranabir lost his parents when he was ten years old, afterwards leads life

without family relations. His loneliness drives him into depression which was the cause of his stubbornness and unaffectionate. Likewise, the four children feel lonely after the death of their parents and here their loneliness leads them to take revenge. Both lives are in the same condition of losing love and care and have to live together where both the sides build up a happy relationship. Ranabir's interest towards the children is because his childhood went through depressive conditions which he does not want them to go through, and himself realizes the need for an affectionate relation which he has lost long back. On the other hand children's hope for love and care has come again through Ranabir and Geetha which they thought that they have lost. This film advocates the strong need of relationship between individuals to share the pleasure of living experiences.

Human life is a bunch of 'comforts' and 'discomforts' or 'happy' and 'unhappy' moments or events. Ultimate emotion in both stages cause tears in most of the cases. In the film living-pleasure is symbolized with tears. The four children and Ranabir share the affection when they are getting united with tears, and by realising the importance of forgiveness, which gives the meaning of human. An angel cannot experience it till she senses the tear and at once become human. But the idea of tear becomes an obstacle in human life in other hand which god would like to pursue the intensity of it and give solutions. Here, as humans both Ranabir and the four children are having 'discomforts' in life i.e. lack of love and affection which causes distress hence god was covinced in helping them. But in the case of Iqbal intensity of loneliness has not been addressed either by God or by the angel Geeta. Iqbal is having insecurity in his life because he is a Sikh and rest of the three kids are Hindu. So Iqbal is having a tough time in school. It

signifies that the human life is entirely different than the god, even though they can be happy but the obstacles in 'comfortable' life make them unhappy. Also they are different in sharing their love for each other which god cannot compete with it and fails in taking back his daughter Geeta to heaven.

Above films discuss childhood and the social lacking in terms of material and emotional lives. *Boot Unkle*, *Bhoothnath* and *Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic* deal with supernatural beings, where as *Makdee* was a film with natural human but till pre-climax we can't find it is a normal human being. *Makdee* and *Bhoot Unkle* have a somewhat similar narration where children explorer the place. The only difference is that there was a crooked witch in *Makdee*, where as in *Boot Unkel* there was a friendly ghost. And the treatment of every child protagonist in the respective films is portrayed in a different manner. In *Bhoothnath* and *Boot Unkle* two children are seeking love but in a different situations and contexts. Banku in *Bhoothnath* wants to be with a ghost, whom he calls an angel and of course, he has good parents who love him so much and never scold him for any reason and for anything. But still Banku develops affection for Bhoothnath and he doesn't want to be away from Bhoothnath. Where as in the film *Bhoot Unkle*, an orphaned kid Shyam who hasn't got any love and affection from his maternal aunt and helpless uncle, suddenly meets a ghost and gets love from him. In *Makdee*, Chunni and Munni are scared to go in front of the house where the witch lives. But in the four films Banku, Shyam, and Chunni are not scared of ghosts; instead they face it bravely. Where as in *Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic*, four children do not know that Geetha is an angel who has come to them to give love and affection. Even though Geetha is an angel she cannot do miracles in front of the children so they cannot respond to her super natural powers

and instead they take it as 'magic'. Chunni, Munni, Banku, Shyam and the four children in *Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic* are raising the issue of family relations and child's expectations from family setup which effects children emotional life.

Kairee, *Nanhe Jaisalmir* and *Taare Zameen Par* discuss the conflicts in material life of a child and the influences on them. Nanhe and The Girl in *Kairee* supposedly need education but the notion of education (for Nanhe) and the schooling system (for The Girl) disclose the problem of 'learning' in socialization of childhood. Whereas in *Taare Zameen Par* Ishaan faces difficulty from family and society (school). Three of them represent the denied childhood from adult world. Tahaan's depiction of life is more alienated and dangerous from the society of mainstream children of the Nation. Tahaan is caught in living conditions where his purpose of life becomes a question but he builds up hope to fight and resist.

Children's Films in Telugu:

The first Indian talkie was released on 14th March, 1931 in Bombay (presently, Mumbai). In the same year a Telugu talkie film *Bhaktha Prahallada* was released and thus the Telugu talkies also started in 1931 by H.M Reddy who is hailed as the 'father of Telugu cinema'. Earlier, the films were in black and white and the sound system was also not good. In the middle of 20th century, Telugu cinema developed good technology. After 1960, Telugu cinema became a colourful affair, including genres like romance, comedy etc. Early Telugu cinema started with mythological subjects with as much as 20 poems and 15 songs in a single film. In those days historical subjects were dealt by the folk arts

like *Burra Katha* and the audience did not appreciate historical themes. However, they enjoyed mythological themes in early cinema.

Telugu cinema started in 1931 and it was recognized as an entertainment tool. The early stage of Telugu cinema saw the adoption of religious scriptures. After that it included folk tales, social issues, crime etc. In this process, Telugu film makers came up with children's films which dealt with child behaviour, their sorrows, their happiness, etc. In these they combine social values and morals and simultaneously tried to educate the adult. In Telugu, apparently there were no films especially for the child's mental growth or empowerment. This kind of discussion has been happening on why there are no good number of children's films in Telugu. In the Children's Film Festival (2009) one of the producers of Telugu cinema industry Tammareddy Bhardwaja gave a statement that "There is no gutsy man (used in masculine sense) who can make good children's films in Telugu" in response to the statement made by Telakapalli Ravi (2009) in the newspaper article which said "Telugu film makers are passionate about popular/mainstream commercial films,' they are not giving any space to children and also women." He also complained that "Because they expect more profits out of films, they are ignoring children's films."[30]

But there were films which gave great entertainment to children. Most of the folklores like *Kasi Majili*, *Chandamama*, *Kashmir Raju* stories, *Arabian Nights* and various subjects in Telugu have been entertaining children for many years.

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[30] Ravi, Telakapalli. *Mana Cinema-alu Pillalu*, Vartha Daily News Paper, November, 27, 2009. p.6

The first children's film in Telugu was *Dhruva–Anasuya*, directed by C. Pullaiah and produced by the East India Film Company in 1936. In this film all characters were performed by children who told stories of *Sathi Anasuya* and *Bhakta Dhruva*. This was followed by *Bala Bharatham* (1972) and *Bala Ramayanam* (1996) which was also made with children portraying all characters. Children acted in main roles in many Telugu films and succeeded in giving entertainment to child audiences through such films, like, B.N. Reddy's *Bangaaru Papa* (1956), Bapu's *Balaraju Katha* (1970) which has tackled social issues of the children and also broadly worked on themes of family planning. AVM Productions' *Ramu* (1968) and *Maaku Swatamtryam Kaavali* (1986) are about the relations between children and animals or pets. Few films have come in Telugu with religious themes; in those, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* have been adopted into films with all child characters. In 1972, *Bala Bharatam* was made by Kamalakara Kameswara Rao, and in 1999 *Bala Ramayanam* directed by Gunashekar and produced by M.S. Reddy. There were some other films like, *Papa Kosam* (1968), *Bhale Paapa* (1971), and *Papam Pasivadu* (1972). In *Papam Pasivadu* a boy is found missing in the forest and spends days and nights in the forest. These films portrayed children in various situations. *Pillalu Techina Challani Rajyam* (1960), *Repati Powrulu* (1986) were message-oriented films. In 1990's *Aditya 369* came out, which was a science fiction film, *Sisindri* (1995) was a free remake of a Hollywood film but with commercial Telugu film formula. Some films can be called children films in a certain sense, especially when the film's plot revolves around the character of a child or children. *Pasivaadi Pranam* (1987), *Jagadeka Veerudu Athiloka Sundari* (1990), *Sahasa Veerudu Saagara Kanya* (1996), *Devi Putrudu* (2001) etc. were films that had significant roles for children. Some of the directors had

child roles in most of their films, especially K.Viswanath. His films *Sankarabharanam* (1979), *Sagarasangamam* (1983), *Swayamkrishi* (1987), *Srutilayalu* (1987), *Swatikiranam* (1992) etc. are a few examples.

Some of the directors have been making films with children as their targeted audience. Akkineni Kutumbarao's *Amulyam* (2007), *Gulabilu* (2005), *Patanagaram lo Pasivadu* (1999) are children's films and *Bhadram Koduko* (1992) is a film about street children. Tatineni Prakashrao's *Ganga Bhavani* was made in 1979. *Asala Pallaki* which came out in 2005, was produced by V. Sagar and was directed by Perala. R. S. Raju's *Nandi* in 2003. Vasiraju Prakasham and Gangadhar are some of the others who have contributed to children's films in Telugu.

***Little Soldiers* (1996)**:

The film was directed and produced by Gunnam Ganga Raju.

It is the film about two naughty kids, Bunny and Sunny who were orphaned in an accident and were forced to live with their new guardian, the strict disciplinarian and army man - their grandfather. They have never seen him before due to differences between their parents and the grandfather. They get a first-hand experience of the reason

for these differences. How the grandpa and the children eventually warm up to each other, and the various troubles that the cook and other family members go through trying to raise the children.

This film has a critique in portraying childhood without overly showing their innocence. It dipicts the child characters as mature enough and makes them sound like adult, the charm and innocence that is usually associated with the kid's picture is lost. The serious disconnect between the age of the character and the type of speech certainly upsets the emotional attachment the audience has with the character, and so on with any subsequent dialogue spoken by that character. Bunny says to her mother, "*Ammaa, nenu first vochaa*, (Mother, I was first..." as the kid jumps into the arms of the waiting mother, "*Ye subject lonae*? (In which subject?) asks the mother surprisingly, "*Class lonchi bayatiki first vochaa*! (First person in coming out of the class room)" proudly proclaims the three-year-old kid. In the song "I am good girl…" the 3 year old kid walks into a store, looks around and grabs a toy plane. She walks to the counter, pulls out her baby purse and gives the store keeper a fake fifty rupee note. He looks at the kid, at the fake note and in a condescending tone says "*Ivi nijam dabbulu kaavammaa* (This is not original cash)". Patcomes the reply, "*idi nijam plane kaadu kadaa*? (Is it a real plane?" Situations such as these illustrate the writer's understanding of the kid's age and his or her mental makeup. What would become quite obvious at a later age, starts off being curious at a young age. What turns into a complex situation at a later age, seems so simplistic at a young age. The mettle of the writer lies in looking at the complex scenarios of later ages through the simplistic lens of a young age, offering amusing, and sometimes practical and realistic solutions.

When they were living with their parents, they were naughty, especially the younger child, Bunny. Sunny always complains against her to their parents that she is fighting with his friends and they are complaining to him. Whenever he goes to play she always comes there and spoils it. Even at home she is a pampered child. She doesn't wakeup early; her pet dog gives her brush to clean her teeth. She enjoys long baths. She doesn't like to do schoolwork at home. Her mother shouts at her to eat food properly. She always likes to play with his brother Sunny and she troubles him. She defends herself after every mistake, whereas her brother Sunny is very caring about her. He faces troubles with her at school, home and also at the playground. Sometimes, if someone bothers them, both Sunny and Bunny will teach them a lesson. Their pet dog also joins them in some situations to fight with their friends. They listen and learn music from their father who is professionally a musician. They love their parents and live as a happy family.

While they are living with their paternal grandfather after their parent's death, they see a totally different lifestyle. Their grandfather is very strict; this they had known from their father. After he took them to his house in a village, their lives become silent and calm. A person named Gun is their only relief in that house. They play with him at green fields and they share feelings with him. But when their grandfather is around, they can't talk much. They should do exercises every day, have to do things in time etc.

After they reach their grandmothers place they live in a different situation where they enjoy life without restrictions. Their grandmother gives love and care which they

desperately needed. She promises them that they need not go to separate schools; they can study in one school. They play with their pet dogs at home and enjoy their life.

One day suddenly a snake enters into their bathroom while Sunny was taking bath. The snake was sent by the person who wants to kill Sunny's family to capture their property. But Sunny bravely catches the snake. His grandfather feels happy for that and gives him a medal and tells him to be ready to join in a Sainik school. But the kids do not want to be apart and also Sunny does not want to become a military soldier. But, with the decision of elders, Sunny is forced to go to one school and Bunny has to join another one and they are unhappy. Before they join the school, both Sunny and Bunny decide to escape from their grandfather and go to their maternal grandmother's place. For that they hide in the dickey of a car. Unluckily, the car was brought by a person there to kill both the kids. When the killer finds them in the car after some time, he tries to kill them off by throwing them in the river. But both kids happily swim in the river and escape from the hazard. They again follow the car to get their bag and the address of their grandmother which they forgot in the car. For that they consult police and get the address. After one day of catching the car they get to know that they have reached their grandmother's place.

Carrying the plot of the movie on their shoulders, the lyrics moves the story along, letting the audience glimpse at the unseen facets of a character or a situation that does not normally come across or which could not normally be put forth in the spoken

word. Song thrives in such situations. "Gooti billa[31] aadadhaam, sixeru kodadaamu (Shall we play *Gooti Billa*)", "*Correct game kaadu ayinaa baane undi* (It is not correct game but still joyfull)", "*Cheruvu lona dhookudhaam eetalu kodadhaam* (will dive in the pond and swim)", "*Buffaloes ki bathroom kaadaama mari*? (Shall we build a bathroom for Buffaloes?)" and such lyrics shows the poetic conversations between a servant and the kid. Again with the emphasis on the mental make-up of the kid, this song describes the level of a three-year-old girl and a casual conversation by a child. "*Tannula koddee pencil lannee swaaha chaestaavae,* (you vanish tons of pencils)   *tinavae tallee antoo unna annam thinavaemae* (why can't you eat food properly?)*, bunny paeru chepitae oorilo andaroo baaboy antunnarae* (everybody was scared of Bunny)*, daani brother antae nannae mundugaa antaa thantunnaarae* (all are beating after-knowing me as Bunny's brother)". The words never leave the ground, the thought never grows beyond the age.

'*H.M.nae naenu aithae* (If I am Head Master...)

vaammo entha danger (much danger...isn't it?)

nakkoodaa meesamuntae (If I have moustache...)

comics class books chaesi chadivisthaa (...make students to read comics as class books)

all days holidays aadukondi antaa (declare everyday as holiday and tell children to play)

exams vastae appudu elaa mari? (If exams starts, what will you do?

maarkulu koodaa manamae vaestae sari… (We will give the marks)'

This song tells that, if kids become teachers, how they will perform. This song represents children's feelings about school environment and system.

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[31] A Teenager's play with two piece of sticks; It is knowingly played by rural people which has considered as idiotic play.

This film discusses child behaviour in various circumstances: joy and naughtiness of childhood, children's life with parents, children without parents, life with strict care takers, braveness in children, love and affection between children and between child and animal, spontaneity in children, hobbies and skills children develop from the family like how Sunny and Bunny take to music with their father's influence and environmental influences when they are with their grandfather, how they go to forest to play war games with military costumes and teach lessons to criminals who try to kill them. While the plot is sad and sympathy-evoking, the film itself is very light-hearted to a large extent.

***Amma Naanna Kaavaali* (We need mother and father, 1996)**:

The film was directed by Sai Prakash and produced by C.V.Reddy.

This film is about a family where a wife and husband decide to seek divorce and the mother takes the girl child saying that the father has gone abroad, the same way father takes away the boy and tells him that the mother has died. After a few years, the children get to know the reality of their parents. This film describes how these children fight for their 'right to have their parents together'. And how they finally succeed in the struggle makes up the rest of the film. This film describes children's emotions around family

systems and their basic needs of love and affection that they need from both mother and father.

The boy Raja and the girl Munni both study in the same school and are friends without knowing that they are siblings. While growing up, the children develop the lack of love from their missing parent. Ramu tells his son that his mother has died, and Sitha tells her daughter that her father is in United States. When Munni wants to see her father on parents' day her mother lies to her that her father is busy and he can't come. This situation makes Munni to fight against her mother to get her 'Right of having parents'. When Raja knows that Munni is upset with her mother, he supports Munni with a few more friends to fight against the state and the law which is seen as the reason for not providing proper parenting.

To keep their parents together, how the children struggle is shown through the songs of this film. One of the song in this film questions parents:" After you both become separate, if your kids asks 'why you made us alone?' what is the answer from parents?" The other song describes children's depression; this is a song performed by the children at a school function. It gives examples from Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata. They say from Ramayana, Lava and Kusha grow up without a father and they miss their father's love and affection. From Mahabharata, there is Karna, who was dishonoured by the society because of his mother. Another song of children questions the state why the judiciary gave divorce without considering the children. And they question what the children's mistake is. And they demand the state to amend the law of divorce. The film is a family drama, but the film represents an important life of the child. Also the film

discusses a lot about children in the given small screen time. Mental state of the child and the love and affection towards their parents has been represented strongly in this film.

There is a song in the film "*Amma, naanna kaavaali… naanna, amma kaavaali…*" (Mother! we want father…, Father! we want mother…) which questions the system why elders are not showing their concern for children when they are divorced. In the song the children give a few examples from Indian mythological scriptures. They mention Lava and Kusha who are children of Rama and Sitha who are considered as Hindu gods. Lava and Kusha are born in a forest because their father Rama leaves his wife Sitha in the forest. Lava and Kusha never see their father till they become teenagers. Another example from Mahabharatha was Karna who was an orphan. Karna's mother leaves him in the river after his birth. Once Munny approaches the Judge of court and asks questions like "Who made this divorce law and why they made it?", 'Why they did not think about children before they make this law?" When she asks this question, the Judge answers that "Whoever made this law is not a child that is why this law has emerged". With these examples Raju and Munni question the system of divorce and its effect on the child. It implies that children's education has taken a huge change in the present urban scenario. And modern childhood bothers about their future and looks critically at the present social system.

In another song, the children raise strong reservations on law. "*Yendhuku E chattam? Yevariki mee nyaayam? Yemiti maa neram? Yedi samadhaanam? Bhaavi powrulam aduguthunnam… panthaalaku parents vidipothey maa gathi yenti? Vidaakula chattanni savarinchandi… Peddala salahaa meraku vidipoyi, pillalni anyaayam chesy*

vaariki E adhikaaram deniki? Mee thappuki memippudu thalalu vanchukuntunnam…"
(Why is this law? Justice is for whom? What is our mistake? Where is the answer? We, future citizens are asking… if parents break because of their obstinacy, what about us? Amend the divorce law… why this power to elders who are parting with the suggestion of elders? We are ashamed of elders' actions… [Translation is mine])

The film *Amma, Nanna Kaavaali* represents childhood in a particular situation where the children question parenting failures and the law which is elders biased. This is very important in the Indian scenario where we have problems of raising orphans, brutal killings of girl child, child sexual abuses and so on.

***Little Hearts* (1998)**:

The film is directed by I. Sreekanth and produced by Sri Venkateswara Film University.

The film deals with orphan children and their life in the orphanage and how they are concerned about other children in the society. It has the subplot which deals with a person named Raghupathi who is kind-hearted and is the caretaker of the orphanage.

Raghupathi struggles in his childhood with his alcoholic father and his innocent sister who wants to go to school but kills herself because of her father's cruel behaviour.

In this film, the children collect money to save a girl who is suffering with heart disease. In this situation elders can't help but children do it and prove that children can do many things which elders are unable to. Once, they also participate in the national children's festival when Raghupathi is hospitalized with heart attack. Even under that pressure, children perform in the festival and win first prize. It expresses the hard working nature of children and their commitment to human relationships and to their dreams and desires.

This film also portrays the education system and the learning environment. Orphan children love their schools and respect their correspondent Raghupati. They learn kindness, honesty and integrity with education. With their moralistic understanding of society, they decide to help a two-and-half-year old child who is suffering with heart disease.

The film maker constructs a sub plot in the film to understand Raghupati's commitment towards orphans with his personal childhood story. It gives a comprehensible idea about social commitment through an insider's view. Raghupati as a child had faced many hurdles in his childhood because of his own drunken father. To share his miseries, except his friends and younger sister, he doesn't even have a mother. To study and to send his sister to school, he struggles a lot. He works in a hotel but his father takes his money for liquor and keeps them waiting with hunger. Raghupati's every step describes his social struggle, and his disagreements and fights with the cruel father

who sends away his daughter as a domestic help. Raghupati goes to school in the day and in the evening he works at a hotel. After his duty, he takes food for his sister and father. His responsibility makes his father more sloth and hopeless. When Raghupati gets to know the truth that his father's irresponsibility was the reason behind his sister's suicide, he breaks down. The oath he took before his sister's death now makes him stronger and he establishes the orphanage.

In Raghupati's childhood, his friends and schoolmates give him food, help him in studies and support him in hurdles. Friendship in childhood has been portrayed in an ideal way. One day Raghupati looks sad because of his father's behaviour and his sister's struggles to go to school. He decides to quit studies and get into a job to get food for his sister. His schoolmates tell him that he need not quit studies for food; they will get food for him and for his sister. This describes the friendship among children.

Rahupati's sister is an example of how depressed childhood can be, especially for the girl child. She loves her brother and is also worried about him and his education. As she is a girl, she is never sent to the school even though she is very fond of going. Her father is a drunkard and only worries about his liquor bottle. When she asks her father to send her to school, he tells her to go and work as domestic help to get money. She works at various houses and earns money for her studies and gives it to her father to get notebooks and stationery for her studies but her father takes it and buy liquor. After knowing that he had spent the money for liquor she is very depressed. She sleeps with hunger most of the times because of her father's irresponsibility. When she suffers with fever, her father never bothers; instead he sells things from home and buys liquor. All

these make her commit suicide. She burns herself in fire and dies. The sister's character in the film portrays a helpless child with a hopeless future. She is unable to live her life because she is a girl whereas her brother can study even with many hurdles. But why is she not able to study? this is a question that rises in the film.

The film helps to understand orphans' social and emotional life closely. Their feelings towards society, peer group, personal behaviour, social responsibility etc. have been portrayed in this film. Also they seek parental love and care which they cannot get from parents. In the film they sing a song on mother's love. *"Neelo naalo oopiri amma ra..., Ye maatalaki andani janma ra..."* (Mother is the breath in you and me. The creation of mother cannot be described with language [Translation is mine]. The value of mother is described in this song of orphans.

The children participate in the program and get the first prize. After they receive the prize, they speak about themselves.

Prize andukunna memu, IAS kodukulam kaamu, mantrula manamallamu kaamu. Vedaalu puttina E punya bhumi lo puttinanduku garwa padaalo, leka amma naanna leni anaada brathukainanduku bhaadapadaalo teliyadam ledu... savaalanu ghanamga saaganamputhu lakshalu lakshalu daaraposi, vigraha prathistalu chesthunnare, mari nityam chasthu brathukuthunna maalaanti vaallaku meeru yem chesthunnaaru?...

'We are neither the sons of IAS officers nor grandsons of ministers, who won this prize. Should we be proud of taking birth in this pious Vedic

land… should we regret for leading lives as orphans, we don't know… you are giving grand farewell to corpses and installing statues… spending millions. What are you doing for the downtrodden like us?' [Translation is mine]

These words are the main concept of the movie. The film says that every citizen of the country should contribute something to the downtrodden children. The film also depicts the margin between the orphan life and the society.

This film represents the children whose parents have left them, and who become orphans. Also this film portrays orphan children's naughtiness in their living environs and school environs. These children compare themselves with ideal personalities from Indian epics, like Karna. Karna was the son of Surya (Solar deity) and Kunti. He was born to Kunti before her marriage. She placed the baby Karna in a basket and set him afloat on a river in the hope that he would be taken in by another family. Likewise, the children in this film claim that they are like Karna.

***Pathanagaramlo Pasivadu* (The Boy in Old City, 1999)**:

The film is directed by Akkineni Kutumbarao and produced by P.Ravi Maruth and B.V. Ram Kumar.

This film is about a ten-year-old boy Chandu who lives with his mother and father in 'Hyderabad new-city'. The boy fancies a pet puppy like his neighbour's puppy Sibbu. His very affectionate mother warns him to not to take up kittens and puppies and concentrate on studies, but his father always supports him and takes part in his joys.

Other than his parents, Chandu likes Nizamuddin, who is a watchman in Chandu's neighbouring house who is also fond of Chandu and allows him to play with his master's puppy. Nizamuddin loses his job when he is in lost in his dreams and has to join as watchman in a bank in the old city area, nearby Charminar. Remembering the famous poem of Gurajada Apparao, "*Sontha labham kontha maani poruguvadiki thodu padavoi*" (Give up your own gain and help other person), which he read in his school lessons. Chandu sees her searching for her grandfather and takes Nurzahan to Charminar area and tries to locate her grandfather. In the process, he loses his way and attracts police attention on himself. They take him and Nurzahan to the police station. After a series of comical escapades, they two reach home and in the process Chandu picks up all the pets presented to him by different people.

This film portrays the old city of Hyderabad as an unsafe locality, and deals with sensitive subjects in an insightful manner. A ten-year-old boy and a six-year-old girl go to 'old city' and get memorable experiences of humanity which is the actual focus of the film. The film also deals with children's desires, hopes, innocent dreams and fears. Their struggles to realize these dreams are portrayed realistically and sympathetically in film.

The film's titles show a few paintings of puppies which describes that the boy is fond of pets and the dog is a subject matter in this film. Introductory shots of the film

show the boy Chandu's desire for a pet dog. Few scenes explain that he plays with a puppy in his dreams and while sleeping, he holds a doll of puppy in bed. These shots show the boy's strong feelings about having a pet dog and desires to have it in his daily life. Chandu does not have any siblings and he wants to have a sister to play with. That is the reason he asks his parents about his intention and also he says he does not have anybody to play with him, either a sister or pet animals at home. . Once Chandu's mother scolds him by saying that 'i*s there any animal in the universe that you does not want to adopt*?' Basically, the film shows children's attachment with animals in their life, and also the love and affection towards the animals.

This film questions the school system in a few particular contexts. When Chandu writes imposition for many times, it portrays the burden of school age. The film tries to portray the environment of school, how it should be and how it should not be like. Chandu's teacher named Sumalatha is an 'ideal' teacher. She gives story books to students and asks them to read and write something on that and also asks students to write poems as punishment.

Chandu brings creepy-crawly, fish, and frogs to the class room, the teacher Sumalatha observes this in the class and she finds that other children are playing with these animals. When she finds Chandu with the frog, she punishes him by asking to write a poem on frog, and when Chandu brings fish in to the class room, the teacher gives him a story book "*Nalla chepa pilla*" (a small black fish) and tells him to read it at home. When teacher asks Chandu to write a poem, he writes a poem which describes his love and affection towards the fish. The poem goes like this: "*Kappa pilla ante, ammantha*

ishtam, sweet antha ishatam, chandamaamantha ishtam, Joy Wilson antha ishtam";   (I like frog the same how I like my mother, sweet, moon and my friend Joy Wilson [Translation is mine]. In contrast, another teacher of the same school always beats and scolds children in the classroom. It shows the behaviour of the children in class room with varied social engagements and their learning processes. Teachers' different approaches influence the child's mind. It shows the state and the system ignoring the children's learning through the living environment.

This film deals with different issues through the child's eye, like Chandu asks his father 'why he smokes cigarette, why he doesn't has a sister' etc. and the film also deals with friendship among children, student and teacher relationships. This film particularly reflects on the childhood in different scenes, like how a child does home work, adopt kittens and puppies, makes friendship, play sports inside the room, how the child decorates his room with favourite popular personalities etc. The general behaviour of childhood of posing questions to elders is portrayed in this film. Chandu poses questions to his father about cigarette smoking. Also he counts how many times his mother shouts at him saying "Shut your mouth…" These examples show how children engage with adult behaviours and how they understand social life in the context of family. While reading these lines from his school book, he asks his father why the neighbour-uncle dismissed Nizamuddin, who was working as a gate keeper for a small mistake. Chandu's question was that "Why do elders commit mistakes and they tell kids to not-to-do mistakes?" With this Chandu feels that elders are incorrect in many contexts. But Chandu's father answers that "If you are cordial to others, any time the good-nature helps you back," and Chandu trusts those words finally. When Nizamuddin comes to his house

and says that he got a new job in the bank located in old-city, the context explains Chandu practicing the line he read and what his father said.

The intention of the film title itself says that "old-city" is a special area located in Hyderabad infamous for communal riots and is also a very crowded area. Common imagination of the old-city of Hyderabad is that of a strange place which is unsafe. The city has a culture that is distinct from the rest of Andhra Pradesh and is deeply conservative. When Chandu takes Noorjahan to the Charminar area to find her grandfather, they experience many things on their way to old-city. As an "innocent-child' Chandu does not feel new in the city apart from the busy market roads and unknown streets. This clearly indicates that the children are independent and they have adaptive nature with new places. Here, the film depicts two different images: the old-city not as the imagined violent place and the second one of the modern child exploring things as an individual and thinking independently. At the same time, the fear in the children is also portrayed when Chandu and Noorjahan reach Charminar and search for Nizamuddin and in the process, lose their way and attract police attention. The police take them to the police station. The night they experience loneliness and hunger.

One scene in the film tells about the religion and language disparity in the friendship between the two kids. In this scene, Chandu and Noorjahan while walking through a small galli, are confronted by a Hindu who asks them where they were going and where their house is. Chandu replies in Telugu that their house is nearby and the girl is his sister, and that man tell them to go home. After some time, they meet a Muslim person on the same road who asks the kids the same question, and then Noorzahan replies

in Urdu to convey that both are Muslims. Both Chandu and Noorzahan try to rescue the other from such situations. Here we can observe that both kids are aware of the situations in the old-city. It conveys that present-day children's knowledge about the politics and anti-social situations in the society. Also, these children help each other to escape from situations where they felt they were not safe.

The movie also talks about children and their interest in pet animals. But the film's title gives two different opinions on the film. The one about the imagined opinions on Hyderabad's Old-city, and secondly, how Chandu obtains pets from old-city and how the old-city experiences helps him to get his desired pet dog. When Chandu walks down the old-city roads, he finds a pigeon-selling shop. Chandu is fond of pets and wants to buy a pigeon. He asks Roshan Ali, who is an 8-year-old boy who sells pigeons in the shop. Roshan Ali first refuses to give pigeons without money but after knowing about Nizamuddin, agrees to give a pigeon to Chandu.

While walking in the old-city, Chandu finds a cat in front of a house and he wants to take the cat with him. To ask the owner he enters one building where women were singing Qawwali. There Chandu recites a poem:

"*Mastaru dhandam pedatha, kopanga choododhu*
badini jail cheyyodhu, betham tho kottodhu
yekkalu raledhantu, pikka pattukunnappudu
kaapeelu raayaledani, chevi melithippinappudu
ammochi vidipisthey baagunadani anipinchindhi
amma paita kongu lo doodralanipinchindhi
cheema chinthakaayala kosam madyahannam badi maani

niddarochi tharagathi lo thoogo thoogi pothunte

bench pai nilabedithe, yentha siggu vesindho

thoti pillala navvulu choosthey, antha kopamochindi"

'Master, I salute you; don't look at me with anger

Don't beat me with stick, don't make school as jail

When you pinch me, if I do not say multiplication table…

When you pinch my ear, if I do not complete copy-writing…

I expect my mother to come and rescue me

I feel like hiding behind the mother

And when I was feeling sleepy in the class

To get *cheema-chinthakai* (Sweet and sourish local wild fruit), when I was absent in the class

As a punishment, when you told me to stand on the class bench

I felt ashamed in front of my classmates, and I got angry...' [Translation is mine]

This poem is very important in the context of school going children's lives. This poem tells about their feelings and desires in their personal life and also their love and affection for their mother. They are requesting the state to stop corporal-punishment in schools, which is one of the rights of the child. Chandu gets a cat as a gift for his poem.

Finally, after reaching home with the help of police, Chandu feels very happy with the pets he got from the old-city journey. He also strongly believes that if one helps somebody, it will give good return, as Chandu gets all his pets by helping Noorzahan to reach her grandfather Nizamuddin.

Hero **(2003)**:

The film is directed and produced by P. Sunil Kumar Reddy.

Hero is about a school going boy Rahul, who is not very much interested in studies and ranks and is more interested in sports. Rahul is a middle class boy and he cannot spend money for extracurricular activities because his family can afford only for his education. His father always scolds him to study well and not to go for any sports. But Rahul is always interested in playing. This gives a bad impression of Rahul to his father. And some of his school mates always tease him about his nature. One day, his teacher asks Rahul to study well and only then will he introduce him to a good sports coach to go for cycling competition for which Rahul strongly wants to participate to give a lesson to his school mates and to prove himself as a 'hero'. That day onwards, Rahul studies well and starts getting good marks in his studies. After meeting the sports coach, Rahul is suggested by the coach to get a sports cycle for practice. Then, Rahul decide to participate in a dance competition with the help of his friends David and another girl and wins the prize money. Finally, he gets a cycle with the help of his coach and wins in the state level cycling competition. That gives a good impression of Rahul to his family and school.

This film is about an exploration of oneself, part of it is how childhood desires can hold the child's mind strongly. The film shows different categories of childhood mentalities-ego clash, enmity, grudge, individuality, social obligations, competitive spirit etc. - that takes place in the child's mind. Childhood construction and conflict with society are portrayed through Rahul's character. When he needs a sports cycle, Rahul believes his family that they give money. But 10th rank in the class did not convince his father's dream about him, getting 1st rank. Rahul's desire increases because of his individual nature. Childhood desires, friendship, family needs, 'popular' society and social preferences may be the reason of distinctiveness in Rahul.

The film starts with children going to school by cycle. An urban school environment is shown in the film. Childhood is explored in the process of socialization. His father thinks that sports can give neither food nor status. But Rahul can never imagine giving up cycling; rather he agrees to give up his studies. Individual spirit never bothers Rahul's social obligations. His teacher promises him that he will help him reach his aim, but for that he needs to study is the positive condition in the deal. Also the shows how in the education system children are pressurized by rank system and the marks and how this rank system develops egoistic nature in human mind. With this, the ego develops in the self, and it causes mutual hatred among people. But beyond that Rahul take up the challenge to become a cycling champion. After the intense coaching, Rahul wins the state level competition. His father feels proud of his son Rahul at the end of the film. Tackling with childhood desire is a crucial part in a chosen situation in the film, where strong intentions about some child's desires need to be established. So, desire always increases in socialization of childhood which is established by Rahul's character.

The film discusses one more character in a contrasting way from childhood aspiration. David is Rahul's classmate and a close friend. David never bothers about his studies; he likes to spend time in the playgrounds and likes to be always with friends. Interestingly, he appreciates his friends who struggle a lot to reach their goals, like Rahul. He knows what has to be done and what not to be done but still he does all the things that he wants to do. This is the typical character of the child who is represented by David. David sometimes cheats his father harmlessly to escape from his father's anger. Likewise, he does all naughty things and makes himself happy and helps his friends in need. Finally, he feels happy when his friend Rahul reaches his aim. But still he is with his own world with many hurdles. David's father hopes for his son's aspiring conduct to explore himself. All these variations of childhood show the uniqueness in David's character. The film deals with varied characters as discussed on child and childhood.

Songs of the film also portray children's feelings. When Rahul struggles to buy a sports cycle, by chance, he participate in a dance competition. In his performance he expresses his feeling through the song. "*Manasu cheppindi cheesy nee dari lo nuvvu nadichey, yeduru debbalaku navvey, O nammakamtho nuvvadugey…*' (Do whatever your heart says, walk in your own way, smile in hurdles, step on with trust…) [Translation is mine] This song represents the self confidence and struggle to achieve. The film tries to inspire children through this song.

There is another song from the film about children's emotions in their social life. "*Sneham kosam yemaina chestaam, vokariki vokaram praanam istham…, Class lo andaru 1st le avvalantey yela ra…, E chaduvula bhaaramtho naluguthundira balyam, E*

markula mothalatho karuguthundira pratikshanam…", We will do or die for friendship, how a whole class will get 1st rank, childhood is annoying by education system, with the burden of marks childhood is dissolving. [Translation is mine] This song explores childhood individuality and courage. But children as depressed social beings pose questions to the system or reacts to the state with their problems.

In the film, the boy Rahul represents a common child who likes to play more than to study. And his character shows the uncompromised nature of a child. In the same film, another boy David is always helpful to Rahul to reach his goal. David is also bad in his studies, but always tricks his family and escapes from his father's wrath. The whole film gives an impression that every child should be good in all activities.

Chinuku (**Raindrop, 2005**):

Chinuku was directed by Nirdesh Nerse and produced by Akku Laxmana Rao.

Chinuku is the story of a boy, Simhadri, who is from a fishing community family which is economically and socially deprived. His father goes to work to get money for his son's education and does not came back for a very long time because of a storm in the sea. With his mother, the boy suffers a lot for food, money, and for his education. After

rejoining the school, he studies well, and in the annual exams, Simhadri gets the first rank in the whole district. This film conveys the importance of education for every child. In this film Simhadri represents various roles of the society including that of the economically deprived child, socially deprived child, domestic help, as well as a good student where he never compromises with his studies in any situation.

Commitment and confidence of an individual is portrayed in Simhadri's character. His obstacles make him stronger towards studies, or rather, he motivates himself to make choices. He joins as a domestic help in an officer's house. Simahadri gives reasons on why he wants to work at someone's house as child labour. Out of the commitment towards his studies, Simhadri is ready to become a domestic help. The officer also has two children who are studying in the same seventh standard as him and with these reasons Simhadri convinces his mother to an agreement that he will read simultaneously with the officer's children while he is working.

Childhood mental pressures and social obstacles are the main reasons for school dropouts among deprived sections. In Simhadri's case, by chance, his choice makes him reach his dream. The purpose of working as a domestic help becomes the first obstacle for Simhadri. Officer's wife hesitates when the watchman introduces Simhadri to her and says the boy is a dropped-out student. But, it was not told to her that he is also an economically poor child. In the initial days of his work, Simhadri keenly observes and learns from the tuition classes for the officer's children Rojy and Williams. They help Simhadri to keep his confidence alive. But, Simhadri is also troubled by Williams. Sometimes he is humming lines; "*Geylupu vachu varakoo alupu ledu manaku…*" (We

don't have rest till the victory) [Translation is mine]. This reminds him to not to lose his faith.

As an economically deprived child, Simhadri's introduction scene opens with a street light and a boy writing under the street light on a road. Looking at Simhadri's social background in a particular context, it depicts clearly his social roles as an economically deprived child, a socially deprived child, a domestic help, yet a good student. In the film, Simhadri has been potroyed a good student, domestic help and as an economically poor child. But his marginalized social identity which is reason for his obstacle is not portrayed in particular. Looking into the film in the Indian context, one can get more details of Simhadri's social status which is not the homogeneous childhood. Simhadri takes birth in a fisherman caste whose profession and social identity are the same. In the film Simhadri is portrayed as a 'lower class', but it is clear from his life style and culture that they are from 'lower-classed caste'. Here, I would suggest that 'class' is a mask to hide the 'caste' reality. The most important difference between class and caste is concealed by cinema in a particular sense. Caste always matters in the Indian context shown through various factors like education and profession. Looking back into Simhadri's life from the caste lens, his poverty not only comes from his parent's profession but also with the associated caste-status. Simhadri's father Appanna is a fisherman and he does fishing which is his caste or community profession. So, Simhadri is born and brought up in the fisherman community which is an underprivileged caste of India[32]. *Chinuku* clearly depicts it by Simhadri's character. The boy never comes out of the clutches of caste culture and caste status in the whole film. In the end, the district

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[32] Jaalari is a caste given under Backward Class status by Indian constitution (Article 340).

collector is impressed by Simhadri's district rank and promises him in helping with scholarship money through government. This is again a social identity that comes from the state policy. It proves that Simhadri's economic status is part of the caste culture/ identity.

Observing the whole film one gets an impression that every child should study well, and they should take good steps for their future. Metaphorically, the film's title meaning 'Rain drop' represents a helping hand in this particular context. The boy Simhadri is economically poor and has deep interest in studies, but his situations cannot afford him proper education. In the process, a few helping hands make it possible for Simhadri. Like a dry land eagerly waiting for rain, a few helping hands become rain drops in Simhadri's distressed life and his studies. Simhadri's character is established as one of a courageous child. He never thinks of other options instead of education. His observation of social life, his parent's provocation and his personal choice explains that education is not only his choice, but a necessary onefor social survival.

***Bommalata* (A Belly Full of Dreams, 2005)**:

The film is directed by Prakash Kovelamudi and produced by K.Ragavendra Rao and Rana Daggubati.

This film deals with children's fantasies and passions. Street children, orphan child's life style and their sorrows, happiness, juvenile crime are also described. The film is about a ten-year-old boy Ramu who is a rag picker. Ramu is fond of education and this film is about how Ramu has goes through many hurdles to reach his goal. In the process of reaching his goal, some people play significant roles in his life. Ramu's family is economically poor and socially downtrodden. This is the reason for depression or frustration that has grown in Ramu's family. His father becomes an alcoholic, mother dies eating *gutka* and these circumstances influence Ramu's life. Ramu felt his mother died because of his 'illnesses'. Ramu has a friend Chotu who helps Ramu in every problem in his life. The film raises different issues in general and also about children and society. The film depicts the current position of the deprived section in society; and about how folk forms are being wiped out from the Indian society. This film has shown how family, social organizations, state etc. are shown as the main reasons for illiteracy.

The film starts with a puppet show where puppets narrate the story. It shows that generally humans play with puppets whereas here in the film puppets plays with human beings and they tell humans how to carry out their life and how to come out of these hurdles. In this film illiteracy is shown as an illness of the human heart and reffered to contagious illness called as a 'hole in the heart'. How this illness is cured and how the hole is filled forms the rest of the film. The title itself gives two aspects to understand the film. Usually in a puppet show, a story teller uses puppets to describe a story. Likewise in this film, puppets narrate a story about a boy. Another understanding of the title is how puppets play a game with human beings which are unusual. So, these two perspectives of the film help to understand (in a sarcastic way) in dealing with the subject.

The introduction of the protagonist in the film starts with sarcasm. In an observation of sarcasm in this film, attempts visualizing Ramu's character in real life with poverty, depression, agony, hope and honesty. Whereas puppets describe him by dialogues that Ramu has a hard-working father, a kind-hearted mother, a beautiful white suit, a super car, an orange school bag and everything in his life, which are not there in real life. Also, puppets introduce Ramu's dream which is portrayed as a hole in his heart which can be considered as a lack in his life, that is, education or literacy. To explain or locate the problem of that 'hole' many people come into the scene-professionals like doctors, engineers, lawyers, philosophers, bureaucrats, even an aeroplane pilot-but no one is able to do anything about it. Using aeroplane pilot can be a symbol of overseas aid to Indian children's education in general. Also, his father is negligent and irresponsible; mother is unkind and selfish and super car is symbol for his footwear. Use of sarcastic portrayal for each character lends an interesting political perspective to the film.

One day Ramu takes an amulet from a road side black magician to change his fate and hopes for an education. It is one of the major issues taken up in the film. It shows how people trust on fate or god which is invisible. But in the film it is shown as a satire against such beliefs in the society.

The character of Ramu in the film symbolizes illiteracy in India in general and particularly that of street children. Also, Ramu as a subject is a question to the state and the system which is demonstrated in the film. Ramu is a street child who has a burning desire to go to school. His desire or dream is symbolized as a hole in the heart which always disturbs his sleep, which he always thinks about and which he always struggles

for. As a rag picker he knows that he cannot afford school education, but he never gives up. His motivation towards education takes him to the alternatives which can give him support and hope. Part of it Ramu's hope approaches the religion to make use of magical thinking and fulfil his dream. For that he meets a person who gives a talisman. Ramu has to be generous to the wizard man by giving money. Whereas he could not succeed in his spiritual belief system and even after the spiritual trial, he tries to take the help of fellow beings.

Fortunately, Ramu has an interaction with a social worker Vaishali who asks Ramu to bring children for a protest against child labor. In return she promises him that she will help him in joining school and also promises him money. This episode is about social responsibility organizations and their selfish nature and also irresponsibility towards society. One day Ramu is deceived by Vashali, the next day Ramu's mother passes away because of his father's cruel beating. Ramu regrets his trust on people. He tries to drown his sorrows, but his sorrow drowns him instead. Then finally he decides that he will not let life beat him down. Here, the film questions the social system and the state policies in particular. How a street children's voice is always suppressed by the state or system has been clearly portrayed in the film.

Hardened by life, he finds the courage and strength to battle with the problems and he takes the first step to go to school. For that, he needs money which he cannot afford. He loses even his savings, unfortunately. When he meets a research fellow Swathi, who is working on street children and their lives, he again gets the confidence to go to school. That day, he manages little money by his friend Chotu and gets into school

anxiously. But the same day, the school is accidentally met with fire. Ramu rescues a minister's son from the fire and the principal appreciates Ramu's bravery and promises him in arranging scholarship for his studies. But unfortunately, the school closes down because of the fire accident. Helpless Ramu is upset with the situation. For his braveness, he is also called for the President's Award, but the school committee tries to manipulate and refer minister's son Vasu for the award.

Previously, he gets a gift of a tooth from a girl who gives the talisman to strangers by her father's order and she says to him that to "Keep the tooth under pillow while sleeping, so that, deity will fulfil his desire". Ramu follows it and goes to sleep. In his sleep he dreams that Vasu agrees his mistake and tells the truth to the police and also Swathi helps him in getting the Award. Finally, his dream fulfils his desire. In this episode, the tooth fairy is symbolized as Ramu's self confidence. Till he believes in himself in fighting against troubles and fulfil his desire, he cannot reach his goal. Ramu's character starts with a dream and ends with a dream in the film. It clearly indicates that the position of Indian street children is still in a dilemma or still lies in hoping for the future. The film ends with an unending hope which Ramu carries in his dreams for a better tomorrow. Also, only his self confidence can help him fulfil his dream. The film gives the reason that when Ramu trusts himself, his dreams will come true.

Social issues have been enormously dealt in the film through street children's life in general and Ramu's social and economic status in particular. This film gives an idea about the origin of poverty. How Ramu becomes a street child, the reasons behind it are deeply discussed. Ramu's father was a puppeteer and puppetry was his only employment.

After many years, puppet shows falls out of fashion and his family gets into poverty. Because of poverty, Ramu becomes a street child and a rag picker. But still he wants to go to school. This gives a clear image that because of globalization, cultural professions are dying and artists and their families are suffering.

The problem of child labour exists because of poverty. Looking at street children's life in the film gives an impression that the state and the society is irresponsible towards helpless children. Humiliation of street children has been portrayed in the film in several situations. While junk shop keeper weighs garbage, he cheats rag pickers by putting a magnet under the weighing scale. When Ramu questions his mistake, he gets angry and tries to beat Ramu and other rag pickers. Even a police constable cannot stop it, instead the policeman supports the shop keeper and threatens the children and gives them very little money for higher priced items. There is another example from the film about social organizations and street children. When the social worker Vaishali takes street children for a protest against child labour in the society, she uses children for her political leverage. She asks Ramu to bring children for money, but she refuses to give money to children after her work is done. It clearly describes the exploitation of street children by the state and the society.

Chinnari Pantulamma **(A Little Teacher, 2006)**:

The film is directed and produced by J. Afshan.

The film is about the value of education at any age and is mainly aimed at education as an important aspect in everyone's life. Most of the parents are sending their children to schools in present society, knowing the importance of education. But the illiterate adult's life without basic education is also a problem in the civil society. They can't go to school and learn in that age because of various reasons and hesitation. This film is concentrated particularly on adults, their sensitive life and the importance of female literacy.

The film's main plot is seen through a girl child Priyanka. Priyanka is an eight-year-old child who tries to make her grandmother literate. Sub-plot of this film tells about child's loneliness vis-a-vis parents' busy life, and how children's study and play become 'mechanical' in present social life. These issues are particularly focused in the film.

The girl child character is developed by certain issues like child not getting time to spend with busy parents, global culture's influence on urban children's life style, and child should understand the life style of the parent and survive her/himself. The beginning shot in the film explains that the child is dull or feels alone if either mother or father is not there with her/him. And also the introductory scenes of the film show that Priyanka does not eat food properly, she does not concentrate on anything and she

isolates herself. The next phase of film shows Priyanka's blissful life with her grandmother's love and affection. She learns a local game along with local cultures and traditions instead of computer games.

Cultural conflicts or differences happen in childhood in the process of socialization. When Pinky's grandmother comes to Pinky's home she feels happy to be with them. But, certainly Pinky notices many strange cultures in her grandmother. On the day of arrival, Pinky's grandmother gives her a local sweet called *Athi rasaalu* which she likes very much and one day she requests her grandmother to prepare special sweets for her friends. In food items there are cultural variations which the urban child look upon as strange. Pinky senses these cultural changes before her usual sleep when her grandmother tells fairy tales in the night bed. The differences in cultural environment are focused by Pinky's character. After knowing the childhood play pattern in the urban environs and the culturally transformed children's game, Pinky likes to play *Gujaana Gullu* when her grandmother explains to her that, in the game children conduct marriages with dolls and call relatives for feast. So, when Pinky decides to invite her grandmother for the feast, she adopts that culture and wears a piece of cloth like a sari, even though she does not know how to wear it. This is part of a child's socialization, when children imitate adults in cultural customs. During the feast, Pinky arranges food for her grandmother with urban style of foods, like, fried-rice and chocolates. It clearly shows that she brings together the pattern in village atmosphere and urban popular children's food. So, the cultural change in Pinky's life has taken another step in knowing different cultures. Priyanka cuts vegetables in the kitchen and asks her grandmother what she is doing and her grandmother says that she is learning to cook. In their friendship, Priyanka

learns ethnic games and food which her grandmother had in her childhood whereas Priyanka knew only 'fast food' culture and video games in her city life. After observing the scenes, it is shown that the girl is supposed to adopt traditional feminine roles from the childhood itself. This film tried to portray children's needs, but mainly focuses on adult education and not on the child.

Pinky as a school-going girl has only family and peer group interests than any awareness of social needs or social concerns. But, when Pinky is upset about her home-work, she couldn't find a person who can help her in her regular school activities even when she has educated parents. So, her need leads unknowingly to a social concern by creating a subplot in the film on women's education. It is more concerned with the importance of girl child's literacy or woman's literacy. Whereas Indian nation has expressed a strong commitment towards education to all, especially, the state's concern on girl child primary education, female literacy rate is very low in the country. The film attempts not only to speak about education in general, but also focuses on other social issues of girl child in general and female education in particular.

The film discuses the loneliness of the child, emotional attachment between the child and family, cultural difference between generations, structural problems of gender and need for social considerations. The intensity of Pinky's emotion is portrayed through her starvation. Because of her loneliness, Pinky questions her mother about her late arrival at night. Because her mother's reply cannot make her happy she stops complaining of the situation. This episode portrays the child's emotional world in a sophisticated way.

The question of loneliness arises in urban environment mostly, particularly in children's day-to-day life. The reason can be nuclear families of urban society. In the process of urban development, nuclear families have increased. From skilled and un-skilled working class to middle and rich classes are economically settled in a particular urban area. And all the classes from urban area, a certain percentage of the families have properties in their native places where they came from. These families maintain their ancestral families back home. This situation has been pointed out in the film when her mother calls Pinky's grandmother from the native village to city be with Pinky.

Pinky's idea of asking her grandmother's help in her home-work represents the present, past, and future generations' need for women's literacy. Pinky is the reason for her grandmother's happiness because she teaches her how to read and write. Before that Pinky's grandmother has a dream of writing letters to her husband which she couldn't. Whereas now when she writes a letter to her husband, she feels so happy of her education. Pinky's grandmother cannot read and write, which is the reason she could not help her with her home-work. If, Pinky could not read and write she would not be aware of many things like her grandmother. This is the idea the film plot has constructed and has also choosen most of the female characters in the film.

The film's major concern is female literacy. Reaching out to the girl child is central to the efforts of the state policy of girl child education. "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" or 'Education for All' programme recognizes that ensuring girl's education requires changes not only in the education system but also in societal norms and attitudes. The

low level of literacy not only has a negative impact on women's lives but also on their families' lives.

The films analyzed above concentrate on the social issues of childhood. *Patanagaramlo Pasivadu* and *Little Soldiers* particularly discuss the braveness of children. Chandu, Sunny and Bunny are same in doing things confidently, even though their paths are different in terms of the situations. Chandu's belief in helping people makes him brave and smart where as in the case of Sunny and Bunny, it was retribution.

Amma, Naanna Kavali and *Little Hearts* question the social system. Raja and Munni lack love and care from divorced parents; whereas the orphan children from Ravuri Gurukulam need care and affection from society. These children seek justice from society where children are denied such. Both films deal with the social cause by pointing at judiciary system and social concerns.

Hero and *Chinuku* deal with self-confidence in children, and conflict between the 'self' and circumstances. Rahul and Simhadri struggle to reach their aspirations because of their financial positions. However, both of them fight against hurdles they cross through and finally gain what they want. In *Bommalata*, Ramu also struggles to reach his goal, but could not carry on with the confidence which Rahul and Simhadri have. Three of them are similar in making up plans to achieve their dreams. Rahul wants to become a sportsman and Simhadri wants to reach higher studies, whereas Ramu wants to join a school. Three of them and their socio-economic conditions are different but the motivation they carry with them is the same in nature. Simhadri and Ramu have similar social circumstances which lead them to choose education for community development

rather than self aspiration; where as in *Chinnari Panthulamma*, Priyanka and her grandmother represent a need for female literacy which is at a very low percentage in the country. Priyanka teaching her grandmother conveys that female literacy was not taken care in older generations, which is also one of the reasons for continuing social oppression. Here, Priyanka, Simhadri and Ramu are marginalized in different terms, but accomplish the tasks they have taken up.

Children's Films in Bengali:

In 1897, films were shown for the first time in Calcutta. Couple of years later, Hiralal Sen from north Calcutta started making films at the Classic Theatres. In 1901, Hiralal Sen set up Royal Bioscope, produced scenes and dance sequences from popular Bengali plays. At Calcutta's Star Theatres, Amritlal Bose screened a package of 'actualities' and 'fakes' along with plays and variety shows. Back in those days, bioscope was an added attraction to popular theatres. In 1898, the multinational Warwick Trading Co. had commissioned 'Panaroma of Calcutta' newsreel. In 1917, *Raja Harishchandra*, the first feature film in India was made by Dadasaheb Phalke. The first Bengali film was *Billwamangal* in 1919 which happened to be a silent film. From Bengal, Debaki Bose and Pramathesh Barua gave a new dimension to Indian cinema. Debaki Bose directed *Chandidas* in 1932; this film is noted for its breakthrough in recording sound. Sound recorder Mukul Bose found out solution to the problem of spacing out dialogue and frequency modulation.

The first Bengali talkie, *Dena Paona* was released in 1931, directed by Premankur Atarthi and produced by New Theatres.

There was a group of directors in parallel cinema (art film), which was continuing experiment with this medium of art. The biggest event of Indian cinema was the release of *Pather Panchali* in 1955 made by Satyajit Ray based on a novel of Bibhutibhusan Banerjee. This film connected Indian film to the rest of the world. The film was acclaimed throughout the world especially in the Western world as a symbol of humanity. Satyajit Ray made a series of three films starting with *Pather Panchali*, the other two being - *Aparajito* and *Apur Sansar*. The three films are well known as Apu-Trilogy. Apart from Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak made internationally acclaimed films followed by a group consisting of Budhhadeb Dasgupta, Gautam Ghosh, Utpalendu Chakrabarti, Aparna Sen, Rituparno Ghosh.

Paribartan (1949) a Bengali film directed by Satyen Bose is considered the first ever children's film produced in India. It was also remade in Hindi as *Jagruti* (1954). The film depicts the schooling of children and its influence on them. The film also portrays the various experiences children undergo during the ten year long schooling though at times the child characters in the film express opinions, which are inappropriate to their age. At that time it was considered a good children's film. Satyen Bose himself played the teachers' role. Later Satyen Bose made *Dosti* (1964), it is his important film in which he highlighted the selfless love and affection between two physically handicapped youngsters.

Tapan Sinha who dealt with human values and relationships very sensitively in all his films also made similar films for children. According to Tapan Sinha the development of Indian children is irregular because education is not accessible to many,

and hence children's films ought to take up social issues and explain and analyze them in manner comprehensible to children. All children's films reflect his ideology. In his *Kabuli Wala* (1950) Tapan Sinha succeeded in translating Rabindranath Tagore's original ideas on to the celluloid in visual terms. He made a similar effort in his *Safed Hathi* (1978). K*abuli Wala* won the best music award at Berlin film festival while *Safed Hathi* won the national award as film for children. *Shobuj Dweeper Raja* is yet another adventure film made by Tapan sinha in 1979. Both *Safed Hathi* and *Shobuj Dweeper Raja* were produced by Tapan Sinha for Children's Film Society of India (CFSI).

Satyajit Ray set a new trend in children film with his *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1968) and *Heerak Rajar Deshe* (1980). Sandeep Ray followed his father in this new trail and mode *Goopy Bagha Phire Elo* (1992) continuing the story line of the earlier two films.

***Bari Theke Paliye* (Runaway, 1958)**:

The film is directed by Ritwick Ghatak and produced by Chandrakalpa.

The film is adapted from the novel *Bari Theke Paliye* by Shibram Chakraborty. In the village, a boy Kanchan always punish by his father for his mischief. Kanchan's biggest dream is to visit Calcutta and earn a lot for his mother. One day he manages to run away and reaches the city of his dreams - Calcutta. But soon this little boy's dreams are broken. A difference between his dreams and realities becomes bigger. He finds Calcutta to be a city of contradictions with the refugees searching for shelters on one side and on the other side, rich and elite people's amusements and joyful life.

Kanchan walks into the Howrah bound train and arrives at Calcutta. The film shows the exploits and adventures of Kanchan in Calcutta and the diverse atmosphere and individuals he has to combat. The big city is observed with an outsider's perspective, through the eyes of a village boy who fantasizes Calcutta. The film shows Calcutta in the 50s and a lot of real cinema. How Kanchan's initial wonder at the majestic spectacles of the city and his optimism for finding work and sending money to his mother are slowly transformed by a cruel and heartless city into disappointment is the root of the narrative. The film ends on a hopeful note as Kanchan still has a home to return to where he is re-united with his mother, and his father, and finally succeeds in getting out of the clutches of the cruel environs of Calcutta.

Kanchan experiences several things, like-the railway tracks and the local trains that daily bring to the city an incredible number of commuters and homeless, displaced people looking for a livelihood, the iconic Howrah bridge: the gateway to Calcutta, *maidan*'s mounted police controlling football spectators; slums, ships at *ghat*, cows and ambassadors keeping company, beggar mafia, hawkers, nostalgia-filled office *adda*,

pickpockets, glowing advertisement boards at night and the dark alleys during the day, magicians, day labourers, wedding reception, dinner and post-dinner impromptu classical music, the gentlest of class warfare between city kids and the outsider village boy, and the fiercest of survival battles where homeless street dwellers, barely surviving, chase dogs away and scrape for leftover food in dustbins in a scene is evocative.

Kanchan feel unpleasant at home because of his strict father. With mother's pampering he does naughty things also. Other than that he is interested in extracurricular activities. That leads him to fulfil his desire of visiting Calcutta. Kanchan's living conditions change drastically; his experiences in getting food, sleep, strange social conditions and relations make him reorganize his notions.

Kanchan's first realization begins after knowing the past life story of Horidas. Horidas run off to Calcutta for a better life which he does not find. Relationship between them shows Kanchan's disposition towards Calcutta. Kanchan's various strange circumstances finally are clarified by his own experiences and close observation of Horidas. Finally, Kanchan comes back home by the suggestion of Horidas and carries his memories.

***Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha, 1968)**:

Directed by Satyajit Ray, produced by Purnima Pictures. As a sequel to *Goopi Gaine Baga Baine* Satyajit Ray made another film *Hirak Rajar Deshe* (1980).

The story revolves around Goopy, the son of a poor man from a village. Goopy wants to become a singer but has a hoarse voice. Persuaded by village elders to sing for the king, he does so and is driven out of village on a donkey for waking the king with his terrible singing. Exiled into a forest, he meets Bagha, another exile from nearby village sent to the forest - in Bagha's case, due to playing a drum badly. They start singing and drumming, initially to scare off a roaming tiger, and in the process they attract a group of ghosts who are fascinated by their music. The king of ghosts grants them three boons: They can get food and clothes whenever needed by clapping their hands; they are given a pair of magic slippers with which they can travel anywhere; and they gain the ability to hold people in awe with their music.

They travel to Shundi, where a benevolent king appoints them as court musicians. However the king of Halla is planning to attack Shundi, after being poisoned with magic potion that makes him evil given to the king of Halla by his self-centered prime minister. Goopy and Bagha travel to Halla in an attempt at preventing the attack, but are captured instead. Since they have now lost their slippers, they can't escape by magic, but manage to do so instead by strategy. They arrive singing and drumming when the soldiers are

about to launch their attack, capturing the king of Halla, who is returned to Shundi. The two brothers are reunited and Goopy and Bagha marry the daughters of the two kings.

Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne was popularly known as a children's film in terms of the narration of the film, costumes and properties the characters used, dialogue and nature of the lead characters. It is a folk tale; folk tale which teaches morals and cultures of respective region. Folk tale is part of childhood's preschool learning. Children start understanding strange characters in society from various stories they hear from elders. *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* is a folk tale of two adult characters who were innocent and talented, Gopi and Bagha. The way they react to society is innocent. Their crown shapes and costumes they wear symbolize animated characters from child's imagination. The Ghost king's costumes and the lighting used for that character is realistic in a child's imagination.

Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress, 1974):

The film was directed by Satyajit Ray and produced by Government of West Bengal.

This film was based on Satyajit Ray's novel *Sonar Kella*. This film revolves around a boy Mukul. Mukul is a young boy who is said to be able to remember events of his previous life. He stays up late in the night and draws sketches that he claims are of battles he had seen. His father decides to take him to Dr. Hajra, a parapsychologist, for treatment. On discovering some drawings by Mukul that represent scenes from the past, Dr. Hajra believes that a fortress in the drawings may be in Rajasthan. Dr. Hajra decides to take Mukul on a trip to Rajasthan in the hope that it might be a cure.

A newspaper report on Mukul and an interview with Dr. Hajra alerts two men by the names of Amiyanath Burman and Mandar Bose. They think of gems as a hidden treasure and plan to kidnap Mukul in hope of getting their hands on it. Alarmed by the failed kidnapping of his son, Mukul's father engages the service of Pradosh Chandra Mitra, popularly known as Feluda, a private investigator, to help protect his son. The detective Feluda is engaged, along with his assistant Tapesh, to recover the child. Dr. Hajra finds out that Mukul's father was a gem-cutter, so the gems mentioned by Mukul have nothing to do with treasure. But Burman and Mandar Bose don't know this. They push off Dr. Hajra from a cliff and kidnap Mukul. After all this happens, finally, Feluda confronts and captures the villain and finds that Mukul is cured, and return to Kolkata.

Mukul's psychological condition is the central issue in the film. Concerning characters play major role in narration. This film is popularly known as children's film because of Feluda character which was created by Satyajit Ray and the character exposed adventurously. Another child character in the film is Topsey. Topsey is Feluda's cousin who stays with Feluda. His character shows the strength of a child and

his adventurous mind helps Feluda in critical situations and to rescue the boy. The plot itself creates interest in children because the suspense relates to historical background.

Sabuj Dwiper Raja **(1979)**:

The film is directed by Tapan Sinha, produced by Children Film society of India.

This film has a boy character Santu who is brave and intelligent and helps his uncle in an official investigation. A criminal gang is set to plan a theft in a remote island belonging to the *Jarowas*. They know that the local *jarowas* have no idea of the exact value of the energy source that the criminals are planning to attack and they use it as a source of abundant natural energy. Government sends a detective, Mr. Talukdar alias Kakababu to solve the problem in Andamans. The ten year old Santu joins his uncle. They both leave Kolkata by ship for the Andamans. Santu's soon detects the criminal gang before they leave to Andamans. Unexpectedly the criminal gang also travels to Andamans to steal the meteorite. Santu is active in helping his uncle to prevent the criminals. After all the chasing and fighting they find the light of the meteorite which is kept in an abyss. Here the tribal leader misunderstands Kakababu and tries to kill him but

finally the criminals are caught by the police. The tribal leader realizes Kakababu's genuineness and his honest intentions and they respect him.

In this film the boy Santu has courage. The character of Santu is shaped as an ideal for children. Santu has a habit of writing dairy, and he takes notes of everything about the criminals which help him in estimating the criminal's plan and actions. He also fights with criminals, which shows his braveness. Santu's introduction in the film starts by his observation of two strange persons exchanging suitcases. When he sees them in the same boat he travels he starts observing their actions keenly. If, he notices something strange he tries to pursue it alone at most of the times.

This film was produced by Children Film Society of India which represents the notion of the government of India. State productions preferably see the plot consisting morals and motivation towards nation building, particularly focusing on child characters in the production. This particular film has the national song "*Vande Mataram…*" which intends of welfare of nation in terms of its natural resources which film represents the issue of protecting the forest resources and the culture of the Indian tribe, and to that, need of young children's contribution to the nation. In this context, children need to gain the courage, intelligence and commitment towards building a nation which is the central point of the film.

***Phatik Chand* (1983)**:

Phatik Chand is directed by Sandip Ray based on his father, Satyajit Ray's short novel by the same name.

The film starts with an 11 year old boy named Bablu, son of an affluent and rich advocate, getting kidnapped by four goons while returning from school. While they are taking him in a car, it meets with an accident which crushes the car. The driver and one more goon die on the spot. Bablu is thrown out of the vehicle losing consciousness. Upon recovering from the shock of the accident Shyamlal and his associate inspect the situation and think that Bablu is dead too.

Bablu regains consciousness and gets picked up by another truck in the morning. The truck driver takes him to a highway dhaba and tries to find out about him, but Bablu suffers a memory loss due to a head injury and could not say anything about himself or the accident. Another gentleman in the dhaba observing the conversation, volunteers to take care of Bablu till Kaharagpur for a medical check-up. On his car he explains that after his treatment, he would handover Bablu to the police. Due to his childish fear for the police, Bablu runs away from the Doctor's chamber towards the railway station.

He gets into a Kolkata train where he gets noticed by a Bohemian street juggler, who introduces himself as Harun-Al -Rashid, the badshah of juggling. Harun seeing a young kid traveling alone suspects something weird and tries to speak to Bablu. When he asks him his name, Bablu recollects a name 'Phatik Chandra Paul' from a calendar he has seen at the Doctor's chamber and tells the same.

After that Harun organizes a day job for Bablu as a serving boy, in a tea café. Some times Bablu accompanies Harun in his shows. Bablu helps him collect the cash and woks like an assistant to him. Gradually the bond between them becomes stronger.

One day the same kidnappers who survive the accident visit the cafe and notice Bablu. Bablu fails to recognize them, but they resume their kidnapping plan once again. One day while Harun is demonstrating on maidan, the kidnapers attack Bablu. Somehow, Harun is able to escape along with Bablu. While returning in a taxi Bablu suddenly regains his lost memory. Finally, Bablu reaches his home with Harun, but Bablu's father misunderstands and insults Harun. After knowing the reality Bablu's father sends five thousand rupees bank cheque with his son. Harun refuses by saying that he can't take money for taking care of his brother. He asks Bablu to look out for the circus to arrive at Kolkata and gifts a set of juggling balls as a parting gift. The train leaves the station Bablu looks at the leaving train.

This film depicts a young boy from a well-to-do family, but suddenly loses his contact with the disappearance from the home. The boy spends his time in experiencing the so far unseen areas in his life, like, encounters with bazaar people, robbers, jugglers, plunderers, magicians and hood winkers of varying types. And also, he comes to hang

out with them and sees that he is completely enmeshed in that circle of behavior and forgets his familial background and social barriers. Bablu has the experience of two lives-that of a rich brat who is dependent (the general sense of childhood) and the independent boy, who earns money and survives by himself. This experience gives him confidence in leading individual life.

***Goopy Bagha Phire Elo* (The Return of Goopy and Bagha, 1992):**

Directed by Sandip Ray and produced by Government of West Bengal. This film was a sequel to previous two films, *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* and *Hirak Rajar Deshe* made by his father Satyajit Ray.

In the present film, the magical powers pass on to Goopy and Bagha by the ghost, they continue to rule Shundi and Halla kingdoms. They keep worrying about their lost 'childhood'. Meanwhile they receive an invitation form the king of Anandapur. On their way to Anandapur, Goopy and Bagha have a chance meeting with the cunning man named Acharaya who has achieved mysterious powers from a 'mantrik'. Acharya promises Goopy and Bagha that he will bestow them with their lost youth provided both

of them help him in procuring three valuable diamonds through twelve year old Bikram. In Anandapur all boys with the name Bikram disappear mysteriously one by one. But Goopy and Bagha notice a boy named Bikram is not kidnapped. Parents who have lost their sons go to meet Acharya. Finally Goopy and Bagha rescue all the missing boys from the custody of Acharya.

Sandip Ray follows the footsteps of his father Satyajit Ray in terms of costumes and the behaviour of the characters which make this film a children's film. Bikram is newly introduced in this sequel along with Goopy and Bagha. And, Bikarm's character carries the legacy of Goopy and Bagha, and the supernatural powers which are carried through the adventure series of Goopy and Bagha. Bikram is the character of new hope to the next generation after Goopy and Bagha. He has the power which comes from 'good spirit' and helps him to be concious while Goopy and Bagha sings where others can not even move. And interestingly, Goopy and Bagha could not solve the problem of Anandapur where as the boy Bikram is supposed to do it. Here Bikram becomes the key role of the final sequel of Goopy and Bagha which is their departur.

Patalghar **(The Underground Chamber, 2003):**

The film is a science fiction film based on the story of same name by Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay and directed by Abhijit Choudhury, produced by Neti Sony Gourisaria.

The film revolves around the discovery of a machine. Aghor Sen, a genius scientist lived 150 years ago in a village - Nischiintipur. While discovering a rat disposal machine, he mistakenly invented a device that sound waves can put any living being to sleep. Vik, exiled from planet Nyapcha, lands with his space shuttle on the outskirts of Nischintipur. He gets to know about the machine and tries to steal it but Aghor puts him to sleep. With Aghor's death the instrument is lost. 150 years later Dr.Bhootnath Nondy finds Aghor Sen's diary mentioning this device. Bhootnath reads the diary at a science seminar announcing his plea to search for it. Others too realize about this and want to own the machine. Begum, a gang leader, looking for an outstanding machine, sends her goons after Bhootnath to get that machine. Aghor Sen's device is in his laboratory - Patalghar. To reach there, one must solve the mysterious rhymes mentioned in the diary. Suddenly foreigners wanting to buy houses attack Nischintipur. At this juncture, Begum and Bhootnath operate in search of the machine.

Kartik, a very intelligent and brave boy, lives with his maternal uncle Subuddhi. A lawyer reports to them that Kartik is the only legal heir of Aghor Sen's Nischintipur. Thus the both reach there. Begum asks them to sell their house but they refuse.

Bhootnath meanwhile becomes Karthik's best friend. Meanwhile Vik wakes up and starts running from pillar to post looking for the device which had put him to sleep. Subuddhi joins the theatre chief of the village and searches for a unique character who could depict Mahommadi in the play. He meets Vik in the forest and selects him for the character. Finally Bhootnath and Karthik unravel the path for the entrance to Patalghar and rediscover the machine. The Begum and her goons die in a fight with the alien Vik and finally Vik is once again put to sleep by the joint efforts of Bhootnath and Karthik by the use of the musical machine. Bhootnath flies off to Nayapcha with the unconscious Vik, and Karthik remains on the earth inheriting the glorious legacy of Aghor Sen and Bhootnath Nandi. The great machine ultimately gets destroyed.

Patalghar carries the essence of 'Goopy and Bagha adventures' in terms of makeup, costumes and the dialogues of the characters which give the brand of children's film to it. Karthik is a boy who likes to explore new things. The narrative has a whole bunch of characters who aid and act as deterrents to Kartik's journey of discovery. More than the story *Patalghar* works as an exploration of the feelings and the world of a child, his love of mechanical devices, his expectations, his yearning and his loneliness.

***Neel Rajar Deshe* (In The Land of The Blue King, 2008)**:

Directed by Ringo Benarjee and produced by Rajeev Mehra.

This adventure story revolves around a boy Raja, comes home during holidays, located in the pleasing foothills of the mountains. While he is playing with a bunch of friends and his sister Choti, near the big water tank he discovers a child covered with festering wounds from rat bites and mice bites, hidden in a big hole in the ground. He gets information from a television news channel that Neel, the son of wealthy parents, has been kidnapped and the kidnapers are demanding money. The chief kidnapper Ghajradh Bhai and a sinister character named Makhan are hiding in Raja's house. In a moment of greed, Raja's father Manoj gets involved in the kidnap. The kidnaper panics when he realizes that Raja has chanced upon the truth and holds Raja's family captive in their own house. After that, he asks Manoj to kill that boy and he can't differ, so he goes to kill the boy. But at that time Raja comes there to rescue the boy; unfortunately Manoj shoots his own son. Finally Raja and the little boy Neel get away from the dangerous condition.

The film is narrated through Raja and his point of view. Raja, in the beginning of the film, says about the place they live in, Neel Rajar Desh. It shows about how the boy is attached with his place and environment where he is living. Pleasant atmosphere symbolizes childhood and its fun in this film. Contrastingly, vicious nature of the adult

spoils the atmosphere. The film discusses the conflict between children and adults, and the intimacy between children. Raja is courageous and intelligent. He loves his family and father is an ideal figure to him. But he cannot take help from his family because of his father's involvement in the kidnap. Even though Raja wants to fight with the situation but shot by his father. Raja is committed in the relation with the members of his family and his friend Neel. He fights with a goon for beating his mother and goes to rescue Neel even when it is dangerous. Raja's character shows in taking risks in his regular life. While playing with his peer group he climbs a big water tank and reads horror stories in the night. These scenes describe his bravery. The film proposes to children to be helpful to others and be brave in critical situations.

Above discussed Bengali films illustrates various characteristics of childhood(s). One of the Classic films of Satyajit Ray's *Goopy Gyne , Bagha Byne* and Sandip Ray's *Goopy Bagha Phire Elo* are made for children spectators in terms of behavior of the characters and visualizing of the narration which gives visual pleasure to children. In the same way, *Patalghar* also carries the essence of Ray's characterization particularly in terms of the dialogues and costumes. Kartik is enthusiastic about knowing new things, out of that interest he engages with machines like radio and tries to experiment with them. Kartik's character shows the intelligence of the child.

Observing the characters of Kanchan in *Baritheke Paliye*, Mukul in *Sonar Kella*, and Phatik in *Phatik Chand* discuss about the conflict in childhood. Three of them have different strange life experiences. Kanchan realizes and goes back to his previous life with a hope, whereas Phatik's experience is unknown to him except getting a new

experience which gives him confidence to reconstruct his notions on society and its system. But, Mukul has a different experience in his life which he cannot live in, but tries to locate it, and afterwards leads a usual life.

Santu and Raja in *Sobuj Dweeper Raja* and *Neel Rajar Deshe* respectively portray child's character with courage. They reframe the nature of the childhood as a marginal in social strata into a committed citizen. Both of them contribute to society in terms of nation building.

Representations of the child and its characteristics in Hindi, Telugu and Bengali have various interpretations and inclinations. Children and their presence in respective films discuss the particular character in terms of the narration of that film and its ambience. Every child character is to shown to have political, social, cultural, economic and psychological characteristics within the space of childhood and the conflict within them and also with the adult world. These films stand out because they revolve around the child protagonist, unlike in general mainstream films in which children are treated almost as 'props'. The directors of these films show remarkable sensitivity in treatment of the narrative and characterization.

Chapter III

Issues of Representation

Every film whether for children or for adults is made by an adult (with one or two rare exceptions). What to present and what not to represent are choices an adults makes even in the 'children's world.' This chapter tries to look at the issues of representations in children's cinema.

Morals and ethics are part of human existence in a civilized society. In Philippe Aries' view, once the institution of childhood began to emerge, the situation of the young person began to change in the society. First they were called children, thereafter, a theory of innocence of the child emerged, which meant children had to be protected from adult reality. The facts of birth, death, sex, tragedy, world events were hidden from the child. Children, the new creation, were segregated by age and 'age' became an important deciding factor.[33]

The education system around the world brought several reforms in 'childhood' development in terms of social norms and conditions. These features of adult understanding of children's requirement have taken over the childhood from a child's world. Child psychologists John H. Flavell and E. M. Markman (1983) argue that representations are not simply copies of the real world, but are actually filtered, reduced

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[33] See, Aries, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, New York: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1962.

and interpreted versions of that world.[34] It is crucial to understand the difference between representation and reality in situations where two diverging issues may be depicted in the image.

Lowenthal's argument on the necessity of censorship in mass media maintains that censorship is needed to monitor violent and sexual images in the mass media. Popular movies, music and television shows could lead to 'moral pollution' as producers can do anything for commercial gain. And children are bombarded with images of sexual promiscuity, brutality and violence against women and child. Lowethal thinks a rigorous system of censorship will keep the social system from descending into barbarism.[35] Moral policing is a controversial issue and revolves around the ethics of nation-building by propagating religious morality, social concerns, cultural and traditional values which are, sometimes imposed and sometimes socially 'learned'.

Children are still perceived by many researchers as powerless subjects, incompetent in terms of cognitive and emotional developmental criteria, and so incapable of accurately describing and analyzing their own experiences. Therefore adult researchers, parents, or teachers, must serve as informants for children's everyday lives. This contradictory thinking on childhood has been aggravated by Globalization which has on one hand broadened the understanding of the diversity of kinds of childhoods but has on the other hand created a universal concept of childhood. Alan Prout states that one needs to move away from false dichotomies, such as 'culture' and 'nature' in the analysis

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[34] See, Flavell, H John. and Ellen M. Markman. *Hand book of Child Psychology: Cognitive Development*, New York: Wiley, 1983. p.420-494

[35] See, Lowenthal David . *Censorship is necessary*, Ed. Egendorf, K Laura. "Censorship." USA: Green Haven Press, 2001.

of childhood.[36] Child, children and childhood are all social constructions that contribute to understanding in different ways. The child is an individual, although the concept is often used to refer to a hypothetical representative exemplar from the collective population of children. 'Children' refers to a social category which is constructed on the basis of shared experience and is used to set apart this population from adults.

The Child in an Adult World: Analysis of Some Children's Films

Films have become an important part of society because they have palpable influence on the behaviour of the spectator. Children in the process of socialization would learn and practice with what he/she believes in. The figure of the child is crucial in social strata as an obvious symbol of innocence but also as a contrast between the casual brutality of the adult world and the rationality of the one occupied by children. Children continue to act as the perfect vehicle for allegorically exploring a range of issues in a particular society without resorting to obvious polemical film making. Sometimes we find child actors or child characters in mainstream films, but they are either way insensitive or objectionable or un-childlike. When film actors or directors or producers declare, 'this is a family movie, it's a clean movie, and you can watch it with your kids' that does not imply that the movie is a children's movie. Usually, such movies have romantic and family themes in them but they never raise a point about the child and may not even address the child. Family cinema in India mainly deals with love and affection in joint families and between families and also sorrows, differences within one family or many families. This family

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[36] See, Prout, Alan and Pia Christensen. *Anthropological and Sociological Perspective on The Study of children*, Ed., Sheila Greene and Diane Hogan. "Researching Children's Experience: Approaches and Methods". New Delhi: SAGE, 2005. p.42-60

cinema does not tackle child as a main subject but children are used in those films as important characters.

Thoda Pyar Thoda Magic (2008) *Thoda Pyar Thoda Magic* (2008)

Thoda Pyar Thoda Magic deals with a fantasy theme. It is considered as a children's film in terms of the slapstick comedy content and lead roles played by children. An angel comes to earth to make both the children and Ranbeer as one family, but, the film turns into another direction when Geeta and Ranbeer falls in love with each other and eventually become foster parents of the four children. In the climax of the film, god comes to earth and says to his daughter Geeta that he always fails in front of love. The director might be saying that love is an emotion on earth which can change even god's agenda for human beings. There is another episode between Ranbeer and Malaika (Ranbeer's girlfriend) in this film which shows the complexity of adult relationships. Malaika's over possessiveness towards Ranbeer cause him to hate her. To separate them, Geeta uses the children and disturbs Malaika's birthday party. When Ranbeer talks to Avantika, a five-year-old kid about his abhorrence for Malaika, Avantika is not able to understand what Ranbeer is saying. The scene does not address children; instead it talks

more about the adult world and the confusions for children in understanding the adult relationships of love and romance.

The film starts with Ranbeer's childhood, a fatherless child living with his mother. Schoolmates and neighbours humiliate him and tease him. He is a bright student in the school and his teachers like him, whereas Ranbeer prefers to be away from all except his only friend, his neighbour. He does not have anybody to share his feelings with after his friend leaves and his mother dies. The film shows the reason why Ranbeer was speedy in his personal life. Ranbeer as an accused is punished by court to take care of the kids. His hasty nature makes him a killer, but his childhood experiences give an impression that his behaviour develops from social inequalities. And so he realizes the value of social relationships by the end of the film. This film highlights the adult relationships rather than focusing on children who are parentless. Erik and Krishnaswamy (2001) argue that "it is an imaginary reference point for many narratives in which the experience of childhood on the streets[37] provides the moral justification for the protagonists".[38] Indian popular films have been showing such themes from the 1970's and even earlier. This popular film formula has been portrayed in this film too.

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[37] Here *street* conveys 'exclusion' from society.
[38] See, Barnouw, Erik and S. S Krishnaswamy. *Indian Film*, USA: OUP, 2001.

Bhoothnath (2008)

Similarly, *Bhoothnath* deals with the moral responsibilities of children after their parents have grown old. In this film *Bhoothnath* is a dead soul who revolves around his house as a ghost and never allows anybody into his house because his son Vijay leaves him in India and flies off to America with his family. Banku's father and mother calls Vijay to perform *shradh*[39] to give peace to his father's soul. In this plot, the child character is a vehicle to carry the love and affection between two generations and also give a message to present-day children to respect and honour their parents by all means. The film portrays Hindu rituals and beliefs of India's popular social system. Rachel Dwyer (2006) observes that Indian cinema keeps religion very much in the public eye, and often privately controlled rather than state-owned.[40] Indian social system has been practicing religious rituals as compulsory for all events since Hindu religion emerged in India.

Film starts with the introduction of *Bhooth* (ghost) by an adult couple which comes to the house for a holiday trip. It conveys that the film addresses mostly a common

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[39] A Hindu ritual generally practiced by son after his parents' death so that parents' soul reach heaven peacefully.
[40] See, Dwyer Rachel. *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, New York: Routledge, 2006.

audience but not the child spectator. Looking into the child character in the film, it has mostly been influenced by Bollywood stardom in terms of the characterization and costumes he uses. Banku as a school-going naughty child maintain peer groups and fights in the school. The need for a child role in the film seems only to lengthen the plot rather than dealing with a child's perspective of family customs and responsibilities or duties.

Amma Naanna Kavaali (1996)

In the Telugu film *Amma Naanna Kavaali*, a typical melodrama; a married couple's life before their wedding and after their divorce is portrayed. Half of the film deals with women's social empowerment and the gender discrimination they face in the society, as well as adult love, affection and marriage of the couple. The second half deals with problem of divorced couples, mental depression and how their children help the reunion of their parents. Pre-climax of the film portrays children as victims of the divorce system in India. It gives a memorandum to the state regarding divorce and its legal practices. This film addresses problems in the adult world but does not look at the issue through a child's point of view where it can be addressed as a child's issue as well.

Sonar Kella (1974)

Sonar Kella's story revolves around a child character but the narration lead by adult characters. It is basically one of the series of "Feluda" films from Satyajit Ray.[41] Feluda comes to investigate the mystery behind a child's past life memories. The story revolves around the child, but it portrays Feluda as the lead of the plot and his investigation, intelligence and mannerism are the objectives of the film even though Mukul is the subject in the film.

Little Soldiers (1996)

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[41] Feluda, is a fictional private investigator starring in a series of Bengali novels and short stories written by Indian film director and writer Satyajit Ray. Feluda first made his appearance in a Bengali children's magazine called *Sandesh* in 1965, under the editorialship of Satyajit Ray and Subhas Mukhopadhyay. His first adventure was *Feludar Goendagiri*. Feluda is always accompanied by his cousin Topesh, a young boy who helps in investigations. *Sonar Kella* (The Golden Fortress) also has thriller writer Jatayu or Lalmohon Ganguli as one of the characters in the film. It is the very first film of Feluda on silver screen.

Little Soldiers is the title of a Telugu film, which sounds like the title of a thriller children's film. Indeed *Little Soldiers* mixes the thriller genre with children's film. *Little Soldiers* deals mostly with the adult world and ill-will. Children's paternal grandfather and maternal grandmother take the responsibility of children and save them from killers. For all the risks and all the twists and turns, *Little Soldiers* is yet another film made by adults, for adults.

Here I would give a few examples of how film makers neglect the role of child in mainstream-popular films. The first Talkie film in Telugu, *Bhakta Prahllada* (1931) has the leading role acted by a child but, in critical discussion of the film, people hardly mention the child character. Sometimes, they mention the child character by describing him/her 'cute' and 'smart,' but the characters and its representations are ignored. In the book *Alanati Chalana Chitram*, K.N.T. Sastri wrote on films *Bhakta Prahalada* and *Lava Kusa* (1934) where he talked about the leading characters of the film but not about the title role done by a child. Similarly, whenever the subject of the child in 'Indian film' comes up, it hardly focuses on children's films.

Child and the Construction of a Nation:

The concept of an exclusive cinema for India's children was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru whose affection for children was well known. It was he who inspired the founding of Children's Film Society of India (CFSI) in 1955. The objective of the CFSI was to undertake and organize production, distribution and exhibition of feature films and screen for children, provide them healthy entertainment, aim to improve their knowledge, develop their character, broaden their perspective and

help shape them into useful citizens of modern India. Tom, James and Lori (2008) suggest that media is a potent force in the vulnerable population, but good parenting, good education, a good society, or even good choices can reduce one's vulnerability to a manageable state.[42] Observing both national and societal perspectives of understanding popular media including film, there has been overt representations which rather promote idea of a nation to the citizens of India. Anil Saari (2009) in his work on Hindi cinema declares that the psyche of a nation, if at all there is such a thing, can surely be conveyed with subtlety and imagination through films that are not in the outright commercial mould. The films of Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak in Bengal and Adoor Goplalakrishnan, G Aravindan, and John Abraham in Kerala depict many complexities of life with charity, beauty and integrity. They have been, in a sense, the cultural ambassadors of Indian cinema abroad,[43] Jyotika Virdi (2002) in her work supports Saari's point that popular Indian cinema is national cinema proper not only because it is produced and consumed predominantly within national boundaries, but also because of other factors that identify a national film industry: inheriting and circulating notions of national identity, negotiating conflicts experienced by the imagined community, producing new representations of the nation, and constructing a collective consciousness of nationhood through special cultural referents.[44] Indian cinema reflects a diversity which cannot be denied. The 'diversity'[45] of Indian society socially, culturally,

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[42] See, Grimes, Tom. James A. Anderson and Lori Bergen. *Media Violence and Aggression*: *Science and Ideology*, Los Angeles: Sage, 2008. p.48.

[43] See, Introduction ; Saari, Anil. *Hindi Cinema: An Insider's View*, New Delhi: OUP, 2009.

[44] See, Virdi, Jyotika. *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian popular films as social History*, New Jersey; Rutgers University Press, 2002. p.7

[45] Using *diverse* in this context conveys that the India is still cannot identified rather addressed in main stream about certain issues like caste, particularly in children's films.

traditionally, economically, regionally, religiously and linguistically intermingled with the associated moral and ethical values supposedly create the citizen. Anil Saari takes this argument to a different level by saying that the films have become an agent of liberation for the children from the dogmatic, idealistic world of morality and religion and from the deprivation of parents.[46] However, deprivation is always a counter to 'individual' in question. Every individual has his/her own circumstances in the living environment which is poked by social system in terms of moral values. C. K. Ogden argues that most of the moral rules which the child learns to respect she/he receives from adults, which means that she/he receives them after they have been fully elaborated, and often elaborated, not in relation to him/her and as they are needed, but once and for all and through an uninterrupted succession of earlier adult generations.[47] Taking Ogden's opinion in the case of nation-building through children can be proved by children films in India. Whenever children's film addresses any subjective matter of childhood, it is narrowed-down to social obligation which deals with moral values of a social system or nation-building and in terms of 'good' and 'bad'. Film has that power to hold society by portraying realistic world and raise the deprivation question on behalf of an individual or society. But, contrastingly, Tom (et.al.) remind us that visual media's power from another view point that we are concerned because media can turn the good into bad.[48] One of the principal arguments they bring out is that media content is an important socializing influence for the child and can shape adult behaviour.[49] They mention the influence of

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[46] See, Saari, Anil. *Hindi Cinema: An Insider's View*, New Delhi: OUP, 2009. p.7

[47] See, Ogden, C.K.. *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Oxon: Routledge, 1932. 1999, 2001 rpt. p.2

[48] See, Grimes, Tom. James A. Anderson and Lori Bergen. *Media Violence and Aggression*: *Science and Ideology*, Los Angeles: Sage, 2008. p.48

[49] Ibid. p.45

popular media on child, "for *same* children under some conditions *some* television is harmful. For *other* children under the same conditions, or for the same children under *other* conditions, it may be beneficial. For *most* conditions, *most* television is probably neither particularly harmful nor particularly beneficial".[50]

Nanhe Jaisalmer (2007)

The construction of a child aligned with the nation-building process has been portrayed in many Indian children's films by representing Indian child in terms of socio-cultural and economic background. In the Hindi film *Nanhe Jaisalmer*, Nanhe's family represents the typical patriarchal society of India. Indian hierarchy is clearly visible in Nanhe's family. He attends night-school offered by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan[51] (SSA). He is the only source of survival of his family; he has to work hard to earn money, even though he has an educated teenage sister who is not allowed to work. Before he is attracted to night-school, he could not read and write, so he always takes help from somebody who can tell him about his favourite Bollywood star Bobby Deol's news.

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[50] Ibid. p.47

[51] Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment to the constitution of India making free and compulsory education to the children of 06-14 years age group.

When someone writes *gadha* [52](donkey) on his camel, which he uses for safari and also writes on him that he is also a donkey he regrets his ignorance and decides to study. This film questions the state policies, particularly the right to education for children in terms of the economic struggle of a child who belongs to a lower middle class family. However, many NGO's and child and family empowerment organizations have been arguing with government about the economic conditions of children and their family's need to be considered in state organized literacy policies before its implementation. The film, instead of raising the issue of economic status of a child, manipulates it by saying Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a policy which helps in empowering illiterates by including them in state's literacy statistics of the country.

Telugu films, *Chinuku* and *Bommalata* also discuss education and literacy, but not like the character of Nanhe who is inspired by a Bollywood film star and goes to school. Here, the story is one of social motivations and self initiation to overcome the social barriers in terms of economic and social conditions of a particular child. *Chinuku* addresses a child, Simhadri, who represents the underprivileged sections of Indian society

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[52] The words "donkey" and "ass" have come to have derogatory or insulting meaning in several languages, and are generally used to mean someone who is obstinate, stupid or silly.

struggling to study in school. He becomes a domestic help, but with his talent, he manages to become a student in a school while hoping for state scholarship. When he gets district-level first rank, he says that "*Akshara chinukulalo e desamantha thadavaalani…, appudu e desham lo chaduvuleni manishe undadani, undakoodadhani na aasha…*' (My wish is that whole nation is drenched in the rain drops (metaphor for 'words') of education, and then the country wouldn't have illiterates). It depicts the importance of child education for nation-building. Simhadri belongs to an oppressed caste and struggles with economic deprivation at a place where there's state mobilization for complete literacy because of social barriers. In the film *Bommalata*, Ramu as a street child aspires for education and puts maximum efforts to register as a student in a school. In this film, illiteracy has been portrayed as a '*hole*' in the heart. Whenever the film mentions *hole* it is a metaphor for illiteracy. A puppet narrates the story of Ramu, where Ramu meets people in his dreams. Ramu and other street children are deceived by NGO's or social activists, and later he receives gold medal from the Indian president. All of these examples worry about a nation that is being built without providing education for street children or for children who cannot go to school due to family conditions. In the climax of the film, where the President addresses the need for adoption of street children and makes them educated, he declares the state's interest towards street children's empowerment and how nations will be unable to eradicate illiteracy of street children in India.

Hero (2003)   *Hero (2003)*

There is a Telugu film *Hero* which talks about a boy interested in sports, rather than studies. When Rahul's school principal motivates school teachers towards student development which helps in building the nation, one teacher inspires and tries to help Rahul by introducing him to a cycling coach. After Rahul wins the state level cycling competition, everybody appreciates him for becoming a proud citizen of the nation. Cycling coach Surya tries to convince Rahul's father. He says that sports is not only a physical activity but it also raises the nation's pride in the world. Importantly, *Hero* has songs which portray religious-tolerance, integrity in diversity and child as a nation-builder which are part of India's sloganeering at occasions showing patriotic fervour. Rahul as a lower middle class boy needs to be educated to get job and settle down in life, in the view of his father, but for others, Rahul needs to become an expert in cycling to enhance nation's pride. Patriotism is a common subject for children's film in India. J. Huizinga (1949) reminds that "It might seem at first sight that certain phenomena in modern social life have more than compensated for the loss of play-forms. Sports and athletics, as social functions, have steadily increased in scope and conquered ever fresh

fields both nationally and internationally".[53] Nation constructs childhood with socially obligatory norms of 'good' and 'bad' that are implied in Rahul's father's concerns regarding his future which is shown by him impeding Rahul from cycling and warning him to get 'good'-marks in studies and not to play.

Amma Naanna Kaavaali (1996)

Amma Naanna Kaavaali (1996)

The Telugu film *Amma Naanna Kaavaali* deals with the constitutional problem of divorce in the context of the state. How children suffer from the lack of love and affection after their parents get a divorce has been portrayed in the film. There is a climax song in the film which questions constitutional state that '*Yenduku ee chattam?, Yevariki*

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[53] See, Huizinga, J. *Homo Ludens*: *A Study of the Play-element in Culture*, London: Routledge, 1949. p. 195

mee nyaayam?, Yemiti maa neram?, Yedi samaadhaanam?…, (Why such laws? Justice for whom? What is our mistake? and What is the answer?). Raja and Munni fight with the judiciary for the reunion of their parents and for that they demand thegovernment for constitutional amendment in the case of divorce.

Each of these films is talking about diverse problems of children in terms of heterogeneous childhood(s) coming under one broad umbrella of constructing a "nation". Nanhe belongs to Rajasthan which is part of Indian Territory but is a struggling state with people having severe livelihood issues. Nanhe is a seven-year-old boy who carries the family's burden by working as a guide with a camel safari. Whereas Simhadri in *Chinuku*, is belongs to an oppressed caste community and is struggling to continue his studies. In the same way, Ramu is a street child who gets swindled by social organizations which work under the state control and even government cannot help. State regulations and judiciary are creating social barriers for the proper development of children and this can be observed in other films also. In the case of Rahul, the school system and family which are modern social constructions in this particular juncture expect marks and ranks instead of encouraging children in extra-curricular activities. On another side, Munni and Raja are victims of state judiciary system where they are separated from parents' love and affection. Jyotika argues that representations of sexuality, gender, caste, religious minorities and the state become battlegrounds to define the nation.[54] Indian childhood, in particular those of the suppressed sections struggle to reach the Indian citizen the way which Jawaharlal Nehru had wished, when he declared

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[54] Virdi, Jyotika. *The Cinematic ImagiNation: Indian popular films as social History*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002. p.22

that 'Today's child is tomorrow's citizen'. This is because the concept of nation was created by a dominant system, if not, problems of childhood should be the same for every child. It did not happen at the level of the state, but by the hierarchical social system in the country which idealizes a nation.

Child in the society:

In the social system, children play essential roles to create a 'good' society. It is represented through children's films in various forms. 'Social character' and its function determine the survival of the society. From the individual's stand point, its function is to prepare him/her to survive successfully in a society. Though the social character can be determined by many factors, its roots are built into the child by his parents. Since their character conforms to the 'social character', they mould the child's character accordingly. In this way, "the family becomes the psychological agent of society" according to Erich Fromm[55] and directs the child's relation to the adult world and its social relation. Socialization of the child is his/her response to the other members of the society. A child's attitude on religion, morality, friendship, honesty, and the other questions of life is constructed through socialization and cultural influences of that particular society. Tandon (2006) says that the social heritage of man. It includes the whole range of life. It includes attitudes, judgments, morals, values, beliefs, ideas, ideologies and the social institutions: political, legal, economic, science, and philosophies.[56] Sheldon Berman (1997) pursues that social responsibility, on the other hand, focuses on the nature of a

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[55]See, Fromm, Errich. *The Influence of Social Factors in child Development*. 11/12/2008.
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/fromm/works/1958/social.htm>
[56] See, Ruchi Tandon. *Family Dynamics*, Jaipur: RBSA, 2006. p.81

person's relationship with others and with the larger social and political world.[57] And he also indicates that educationally, teaching social responsibility incorporates the development of social skills, ethics and character. Although it also includes developing political knowledge and skills, it gives primary attention to the way we live with others and our responsibility for furthering the common good. Therefore, unlike citizenship education, social responsibility cuts across the curriculum and the culture and organization of the school.[58] Child learns responsibilities and norms of 'good' and 'bad' from family, peer group, society and school to become the ideal person as she/he is supposed to be. In the process of listening, visualizing, consuming and reflecting on their real life stories, children they learn their values and conditions. Films as visual media develop sensitivity towards societal norms, expectations, acceptable attitudes and standards of behaviour in a person. They also direct children to learn from them. All these factors lead the child to pursue the social norms and concerns knowingly or unknowingly in the given circumstances.

Makdee (2002)

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[57] See, Sheldon Berman. *Children's Social Consciousness and the Development of Social Responsibility*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997. p.12
[58] Ibid. p.14.

Hindi film *Makdee* discusses the mystery of a village of several years which could not be solved by anyone in the village. They fear the presence of a witch and they stay silent because they want to believe that it is a witch so that they need not fight or resist the trouble they are facing. Even when Chunni, a little girl, escorts them to enter the witch's house, they are still afraid. But Chunni manages to hide her fears and at any cost has to stand firm before the witch, because she needs to get back her sister Munni from the witch's web. Whether Chunni believes it or not that the witch is not a witch, but a normal human being, she never reveals anything about that to anyone in the village; not even to her father till she loses complete hope on her sister's rescue when the hen[59] the witch gave goes missing from her house. When Chunni could not get the hen to give the witch, she tries to convince the witch to eat candies instead of the hen. These instances convey Chunni's braveness and her self confidence in her struggle to save her sister even after being held up in the witch house. Chunni never takes a step back from her struggle, instead, she tries to convince the witch to release them.

In the film, the witch talks about Chunni's characteristics which convey how Chunni is different from the rest of the villagers. "*Mujeh maaloohm tha, ke munni ko bhachaneh keliye thu kuch bhi karegi…, iss liye mieneh thujeh iss mehnath sey bhach diya…, pichileh paanch saalonse nah janeh kitne aye aur ghei, per thuj jaisa chatur chalaakh na ayaa aur abhi ayegabhi kya…*' (I know you will do anything to rescue Munni, that is the reason I haven't harmed you even it was risky, many of them have come and gone but smart kids like you haven't come till now and may never in future).

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[59] Witch gives the hen to Chunni when Chunni asks witch to release her sister Munni. So, after Chunni take the hen to her house she pretends that the hen is Munni.

[Translation is mine] This conveys the bravery of Chunni and the step she has taken led to resolve the problem.

Sobuj Dweeper Raja (1979)

Bengali films *Sobuj Dweeper Raja* and *Neel Rajar Deshe* depict the intelligence of young children and how these children face dangerous situations, commonly considered as situations children cannot deal with. Shantu in *Sobuj Dweeper Raja* is an intelligent and brave boy who helps his uncle in an investigation. He is self confident in facing difficult situations. Shantu goes with his uncle to Andaman for a pleasure trip, but he notices goons who are travelling with them to Andaman with some illegal plan. Shantu follows them to find out their plans and creates hurdles in their plans. His investigation to locate goons puts him many a times in danger. Criminals try to kill him several times, but Shantu stands firm and fights them. Here, we need to notice that Shantu is portrayed as an individual who does investigation for the spirit of adventure, but not for a public cause. He writes a diary to remember the goons he met. He doesn't disclose the details of criminals even to his uncle who is officially assigned to pursue the case. He

engages strategically in the situation and takes steps in finding the criminals. His efforts finally give clue to his uncle to take decisions on the situation when it is needed.

Neel Rajar Deshe (2007)   *Neel Rajar Deshe* (2007)

Neel Rajar Deshe deals with a kidnap of a child and how Raja, the protagonist tries to rescue the boy who was kidnapped. Raja was not intentionally trying to rescue someone, but instead was trying to help a boy who was in agony. Even before he watches the news in television about the boy's kidnap, he finds the boy and tries to help him. After knowing about the kidnapping, he brings him out and tries to share with him some happy moments. Raja wouldn't disclose to anybody about the boy. His concern about an unknown child conveys Raja's commitment towards a cause where an inhuman action existed. Raja's innocence in rescuing the boy leads to a dangerous situation where he is shot by his own father. His intention was clear that the child needs to be happy with comforts and that is the reason he imagines that the boy and he was playing along with all his friends and sister. It conveys Raja's views towards children's community and their joyful life in social circumstances.

Chinnari Panthulamma (2006)

Telugu film *Chinnari Panthulamma* focuses on women's education and its necessity in the present society. Pinky finds her grandmother as an illiterate who cannot help her in doing her homework. So Pinky decides to teach her how to write and read. Pinky keeps it a secret and would not disclose that she is making her grandmother literate because her grandmother does not want let others laugh at her for learning at this old age. Pinky's commitment reminds of the importance of women education's in present world order. Where female literacy rate is low as compared with male literacy in India, it reminds Pinky's effort towards a just cause. In the film *Amma Naanna Kavaali*, both Raja and Munni argue to amend the divorce system and its legal proceedings of present social order. Their intention is to be with their parents and get the love and affection which they have been missing since they were born. Their actions and reactions with the society address the reservations of children. When both Raja and Munni realize that the problem they are pursuing is a question of legal justice, they question it in a public platform for a solution. They gather a big crowd of school-going children and make a huge protest rally in city roads for justice. It may be a context where two children feel the lack of their parents' affection but it leads to a social cause where many parents' realize their mistakes done towards their children when thinking solely about their self-comforts.

Little Hearts (1998)   *Little Hearts* (1998)

Another Telugu film, *Little Hearts* depicts a child's social commitment. It discusses how a boy's survival struggle leads to a social responsibility cause. Raghu goes to school in the day and works at a hotel in the evening to acquire some food for his sister whereas his father never bothers about them and instead takes money from Raghu and make his daughter work as domestic labourer. The father's irresponsible nature makes the girl commit suicide. His sister's death makes Raghu think about children who do not have parents and who struggle to survive. Raghu's life is portrayed as one which lacks social needs and family support. It provokes him to establish an orphanage where parentless children can get love and affection and education which his sister wanted and could not fulfil. Another episode in this film shows how orphans react to a newspaper advertisement which is about a girl who is suffering with a heart problem and in need of financial support for operation. All the children of the orphanage comes together to help her by giving their savings and collect money from several sources. When orphans ask money from people, some of them respond rudely. These two examples convey that orphan children have difficulty in surviving and need to be taken care of by the society. Raghu's commitment towards a social cause and orphans' commitment in saving a girl's life conveys the children's moral responsibilities and their commitment towards society.

Child in the School:

School is the place where the child receives essential learning to understand the society and its systems. Schooling includes imparting knowledge, training and guidance to face the society. It also develops the child's capacities and talents in terms of his/her interests in a moralistic way and during this phase, character building also takes place. Education is important from both individual's and society's point of view. At the individual level, a child's mental, cultural and social personality and character building develops. From society's point of view, one has to develop into a responsible citizen, serve the society and country to remove the social evils, build a better society, develop leadership qualities, and learn to serve in a democratic manner in the state paradigm. One learns about culture and religion in school. School environment provokes one to take pride in one's culture, religion, community and country.

Several children's films in India have taken school as a theme and tried to emphasize the issue of schooling in a child's life. They discuss school environment, child issues at school, burden of class curriculum, social relations in school environs, self-construction etc. They certainly homogenize childhood under one roof by hiding class, culture and caste discriminations among school children.

Taare Zameen Par (2007)   *Taare Zameen Par* (2007)

Taare Zameen Par is a Bollywood film that deals with different school environments with a critical view. Ishaan's character deconstructs the constructed notions of education system by looking at capabilities of the students that goes unrecognized. The film starts with a teacher announcing the exam marks in the class room loudly and we hear that Ishaan has failed in all the subjects. It conveys that the school or education system is caught in the clutches of 'merit' or rank which has certain practiced norms. These conditions have become the sole measure to recognize a student's abilities. When the children cannot recognize or locate themselves within a system, they lose confidence and self-esteem. She/he becomes de-motivated in studies, loses the joy of learning and school becomes a burden and educational system finally labels them 'stupid' or 'lazy'. Even parents think in the same way. Ishaan's character is constructed through these events and deconstructs the notion of measuring the abilities of a child purely through exam marks. When Ishaan bunks the class and walk around through city roads, his parents never ask him about his problem in school. Instead his father slaps him and scolds him. The teachers in the school and his parents at home never notices his abilities, rather they consider him 'stupid'. This film focuses on 'another' world of a child who is excluded from a mechanized-childhood. Ivan Illich[60] has observed that education in a mechanized culture has little to do with bringing forth the person's inner life but is reified, as schooling is a standardized, mechanized system for delivering and controlling learning. Ron Miller also states that "an education that neglects the deep creative source of selfhood will result in a deadening, mechanical routine of schooling that negates rather

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[60] See, Illich, Ivan. *Deschooling Society*, New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

than honours childhood".[61] In this context, childhood has become simulated by creating or constructing through adult world's imagined childhood. Ishaan's world is different from other children in the school. He imagines a new world through his eyes and cannot concentrate on formal education which the school provides. His condition is identified as *Dyslexia.* About 10 per cent of children of a society suffer from this handicap or learning disability. That is, in a school of 1,000 children, at less 100 could be dyslexic (Mahmud, 2008).[62] The film questions the school system in not recognizing dyslexic children and in contrast locates them in privileged sections. It defines a child as a being that lives in his/her own world which includes his/her imagination which can make him/her an intelligent being. The film also describes a teacher's influence on child in terms of self construction. Nikham as a teacher develops confidence in Ishaan's life. Previvously Ishaan used to get only scolding and beating from his previous schools and the boarding school because of his inability in recognizing letters and numbers in his class books. But Nikham brings out or recognizes Ishaan's abilities and trains him to overcome Dyslexia. School has become mandatory in childhood, not only by the state but even by the societal conditions. Childhood is thus always controlled by the normative conditions of school system, part of which the teacher influences in the cognitive development of the child as explored in the film.

School is always seen as a burden for a child due to several reasons in the primary stage of socialization process. Those burdens can be related to the child's social, economical and cultural conditions. Socially 'unprivileged' or suppressed castes,

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[61] See, Ron Miller. *Educating the Child's "Inner power"*. 03/06/2011
<http://www.pathsoflearning.net/articles_Educating_Childs_Inner_Power.php>
[62] See, Mahmud, Jaffar. *Child Psychology*, New Delhi: A P H Publishing Corporation, 2008. p.39.

economically 'lower' class, and culturally 'undeveloped' communities are represented by several children's films in India. Certainly those films portray the child's aspirations towards education but neglect the realities of childhood and its environment.

Nanhe Jaisalmir (2007)

Nanhe Jaisalmir talks about a child who cannot attend school because of his economic and family conditions. Nanhe has to work and earn money for his family's survival. For him school is a place where students can get education and start earning money, after their studies they get more 'respect'[63] in the society. Yet, he attains both money and respect without education in his daily life. This film's narrative emphasizes the necessity of education for everyone in the name of 'position,' which involves financial status and social status in civilized society. In the night-school, the teacher asks everybody what they want to become and the answers are different for every one; some want to become MLA (Member of Legislative Council) and MP (Member of Parliament), some want to write poetry, one wants to learn accounts to develop business, and a boy says that he wants to become a soldier. Whereas Nanhe says that he does not want to become anything. This episode reveals that the 'social status' is a major outcome from education system. The observation emphasizes that school practices are nothing but

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[63] Socially constructed notion of 'honor'.

transformation of social institution obligated to the social system. Illich in his book *Deschooling Society*[64] claims that it is patently false to claim that most learning is the result of teaching. On the contrary, the teacher in a modern school is in fact acting in three roles: as a custodian of societies' rituals, as a therapist and as a preacher. Illich proposes instead a learning society, where skills' training is widely available and divested of the ritualistic elements of schooling, and where citizens freely associate to develop a critical education, perhaps guided by 'masters'. Illich sees in modern schools a false myth of salvation. He points to the fact that however much money is poured into public schooling, it always requires more and the outputs do not increase. It is chasing the myth of unlimited progress. He sees educational credentials as an element in this. One gets credentials to enter the next level but credentials don't measure competence so much as attendance at a school.

Kairee (1999)

Kairee is a film that discusses the issues of a girl child and her experience in school. When she comes to her maternal aunt's house and joins a school, she finds a strange teacher who teaches less and beats more. Corporal punishment is one of the

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[64] See, Illich, Ivan. *Deschooling Society*, New York; Harper and Row, 1971.

reasons pupils are scared to attend schools and it has been pointed out in the film. Deshpandey is a cruel teacher and punishes pupils all the time in the school where *Kairee* attends school for the first time in her aunt's village. Deshpandey is a smoker, beats students and also asks money from students and says it is the fee for teaching. Public schools in villages are shown to have many problems compared to urban schools in providing trained teachers and proper infrastructure, controlling corporal punishments and misusing power which is given by state and society. There are some reservations from pupils and parent in this regard because when a teacher cannot concentrate on allotted responsibility in school, the teacher loses his/her interest in teaching and assumes that he/she is state's representative can misuse the profession. Deshpandey belongs to this category of teacher who misuses his supremacy in the school. He asks the girl to give money for teaching and she finds it odd. Her social conditions make her arrogant with her teacher and she decides to quit school. She gives a different reason to quit school saying that she is the only female in the school where she feels isolated and the boys in the school tease her because she is a girl. These two reasons convey that the public school system in the village has to deal with more issues and state should concentrate more energies there.

There is another episode in the film which depicts the next school she attends where few girls also attend school with boys and the teacher of the school is portrayed as an ideal educator, named Jadav master. Jadav encourages her in achieving her desires and helps her dreams come true. Jadav treats her as an intelligent student even when she imitates his inability (hearing impairment) out of nervousness in the class. In the end, the

grown-up girl becomes a well-known writer and meets her Jadav master. This episode epitomizes the importance of good teachers in the student's life.

> Schools are constructed, administrated and shaped by adults for children. As social institutions, they play a central role in the construction of children's perception of themselves, of the social world and of their place within it. This 'structuring of childhood' through an extended compulsory period of schooling is a relatively recent phenomenon, yet appears to be taken for granted as a natural part of childhood. Taken for granted especially by adults, who generally attest to the benefits of long term schooling for personal and social development, as well as to economic gain by societies.[65].

 Ivan Illich argues that not only education, but social reality itself has become schooled. It costs roughly the same to school both rich and poor in the same dependency[66]. Both Devine and Illich argue that the school is a socio-political construction which is controlled by the state and the society to create the childhood for a better society for the nation. Ishaan's self-inclination is never noticed by the society and school but restricts him to do or not do something. Nanhe's survival is never addressed by the state and the system. In the film *Kairee*, the girl feels isolated in the school among boys and experiences shock when her teacher Deshpandey's cruelty makes her depressed. When school is discussed in films, it creates only a homogenized childhood in school environment, but it mostly avoids showing social realities of caste, class and cultural

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[65] See, Devine, Dympna. *Children, Power and Schooling*: *How Childhood is Structured in the Primary School*, Sterling: Trentham Books Ltd., 2003.
[66]See, Illich, Ivan. *Deschooling Society*, 1970. 06/10/2011.
<http://philosophy.la.psu.edu/illich/deschool/>

realities of their life. Secondly, the discussed films depict school's importance in childhood and the problems children face in the schooling system which have raised several questions in the socio-political world.

Childhood and Class & Caste:

Social status is the "standing", the honour or prestige attached to one's position in society. It determines the attributes that guarantees a degree of respect, prestige and influence in the society that very often depends upon the individual's occupation, income, ethnic group, religion etc. A poor member of the lower class or oppressed caste is likely to be in lower status and therefore receive less prestige and respect from the society. This lack of prestige is transmitted to the children early in life and this somehow tells the deprived child that she/he has less than the 'other'. Others also communicate information to the child about his/her relative position in the community itself. For example, the lower class child learns that she/he is rarely asked to come over and play at the home of a middle class child. Money is an enormously important identifier for the social class. Upper class status depends on financial basis, once this base is lost, the upper class may lose its status, unless it can find some other financial resources.

Children cannot have social barriers in their life but the process of socialization creates 'good' and 'bad', purity and pollution, 'higher' and 'lower' in their mind and it becomes part of their life till they realize the social realities. Society surrounds the individual with all sorts of mores and inhibitions, regulations, rituals, and taboos, which frequently serve to build up more or less impermeable barriers to the ready satisfaction of his/her needs and demands. It sets up an economic system requiring that people satisfy essential needs through money and then makes the acquisition of money a difficult and,

at times, impossible act. Society sets up social caste and class systems, preventing or hindering free social locomotion, so that a member of one caste or class may be thwarted in his desire to become a member of another and to acquire the privileges of that caste or class. Class system emanates from and profoundly influences the whole mode of life within the community. Social classes are more or less spontaneous formations, which are expressive of social attitudes.

Chinuku discuss the story of a seventh standard school-going-boy who drops out and re-enters the school to reach a position where he decides to spread literacy in the country. Simhadri is born in a deprived family, which is the reason for his drop out from school. His motivation towards school resembles his economic conditions. Simhadri belongs to a social category, which comes under Backward Classes (BC) and which has been humiliated, discriminated, and excluded from dominant category. Mohanty, Mansingh and Das (2010) in their studies on a fishing community discuss education in the particular caste located at Visakhapatnam region where Simhadri and his family hail from in the film. Their work brings out that around only 11.46 percent of the total population is literate out of which the number of higher-educated persons is very less. The number of dropouts is higher because most of the children help their parents to go for fishing to earn their day-to-day livelihood.[67] However, Simhadri dropping out from school has been defended in another situation in the film. The given reason establishes that his father goes for his job, fishing, and does not come back home for a few days. This situation makes Simhadri become a domestic labour in a coast officer's house.

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[67] See, S. Mohanty. L. Mansingh and C. R. Das. *A Social Transformation of Arkhakuda, an Ethnic Coastal Village near Chilika Lake*. OHRJ, Vol. XLVII, No.2, p.65-73. 02/012/2010. <http://orissa.gov.in/emagazine/Journal/Journal2/journal.htm>

Simhadri's caste culture and his exclusion from dominated society has been eliminated from the film.

Chinuku (2005)   *Chinuku* (2005)

In India, mostly caste is a symbol of occupation even in present days. Culture, region, religion, tradition, caste, class and social environment are the most influential factors in a person's livelihood which cannot deny in understanding social system of the one. When Simahadri walks with his parents on seaside, he taunts his father with a riddle, '*Vollantha kallunna indrunni kaanu, manishi savaari lekunte nadavalenu, naaku praanam ledu kaani jeevulni champuthaanu, nenevarni…*', (I am not *Indra*[68], though my body is full of eyes; I cannot move, if no one carries me; I can kill living beings but I am not a living being, who am I? [Translation is mine]) The answer is fish-net, which is carried by someone to catch fish and the grid gaps of a net is a metaphor to Indra's eyes. Here it comes back to the issue, Simhadri, who can understand varied social cultures of his world and always lives in his inherited identity, his caste identity, which is the reason of his economic deficit, but is portrayed as a class issue. Simhadri's question comes from

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[68] King of the gods or deities and lord of haven in Hindu mythology, Indra possesses hundreds and thousands of eyes all over his body.

his family culture or traditional occupation, but transcending the issue reveals his caste identity even in the context of his financial position, called as lower class or economically poor.

Bommalata (2005)   *Bommalata* (2005)

Bommalata discusses a street child's struggle to attend school and how his economic position and social status become hurdles for him in reaching his dream. Ramu's family belongs to a Schedule Tribe (ST) which is identified by Indian government as a semi-nomadic tribe or denotified Tribe. In Andhra Pradesh, these castes groups are called by different names but their occupation is the same: puppet show performers. These tribes migrated from Maharashtra to Andhra Pradesh and started their life with the same caste identity. In a representation to the Government of AP, these groups mentioned that, " Majority of the people are poor, illiterate, socially and economically backward and are leading a miserable life by getting their livelihood as agricultural coolies, mill workers, rickshaw pullers, *jatka* drivers, puppet showers and even as street beggars. They are called as *Are-Marathi*, *Maratha* (Non-Brahmin) and *Arakalies*. Their traditional and present occupation is staging leather puppet shows, locally known as *Bommalata* and they are treated with disrespect and are socially and

economically backward.[69] Mothiraj Rathod describes the denotified and nomadic tribe's social backwardness; the nomadic and denotified tribal's have no means of production and livelihood as a result of which they have to move from village to village in the form of a caravan. Also, the children are deprived of education. They cannot take education through regular school systems in a settled society due to this unstable lifestyle. They are left away from the mainstream of life and are fossilized in poverty, superstition and ignorance. They have remained backward economically and socially[70]. Accordingly, socially backward children carry the tag of caste and economic backwardness and struggle to live with the 'other' children who carry their elite status. Ramu is characterized in that fold, where there is no scope to get into a school. His living conditions are romanticized by the depiction of Ramu as a street child who lives with hopeless parents, and desires to go to school to keep the nation's pride by attaining education through charity.

Here, both Simhadri and Ramu have struggled and fought with the hurdles to get education with the help of state reservations and social charities and they have achieved their dream of getting educated.

Childhood and Gender Construction:

From the social perspective, gender is a society's division of people into differentiated categories of "women" and "men." Gender operates at one and the same time as an individual social status, a relational factor, an organizational process, and a system-level

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[69] 22/09/2009. <www.aponline.gov.in/APPORTAL/Departments/.../MARATHA.pdf>

[70] See, Mothiraj Rathod. *Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra*. Transcripted from Budhan, "The Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Rights Action Group Newsletter". April-June and July-September, 2000. 23/04/2011. <http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html>

social institution. Each level supports and maintains the others, but - and this is the crucial aspect of gender - the effects of gender work top-down. When gender is the building block of social orders, it gets built into organizations, floods interactions and relationships, and is a major social identity for individuals, says Judith Lorber and Lisa Jean Moore (2002)[71]. Film as an aspect of the mass media is a major social and economic institution through which notions of masculinity and femininity are promoted at a symbolic level. It is suggested that the role of a film is to maintain cultural hegemony through providing us with socially constructed ways of viewing and making sense of our world.

Hinduism places a high value on purity and modesty and therefore favours the seclusion of women. In patriarchal societies, such as in India, traditional views on women's roles and relationships were interpreted from the legends and law codes of Sanskrit scriptures. Some of these views include child marriage, a ban on widow remarriage, and the prohibition against female literacy. Women were considered as a separate and inferior class, and the purpose of their existence is centered on child bearing and compliance to family,[72] which are majorly part of patriarchal dominance. The biased attitudes regarding females that are embedded in the Indian culture serve to provide restrictive views about females' capabilities and their roles within a society. Such biased attitudes influence parents to keep their female children from attending schools, and limit females' confidence, aspirations, and expectations. Thus, the discriminatory treatment of

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[71] See, Lorber, Judith and Lisa Jean Moore. *Gender and the Social Construction of Illness*, California: AltaMira Press, 2002. p.4

[72] See, Walsh, J. E. *what women learned when men gave them advice: rewriting patriarchy in late-nineteenth-century Bengal*. "Journal of Asian Studies", 56(3), 1997, 641-677.

women begins at birth when families are thrilled at the birth of a male child and show disappointment at the birth of a female child. From then onwards, they each receive deferential treatment that informs them about their roles in society. Films are a major cultural form and, as such, are concerned with the promotion of the dominant culture's value system. It promotes the dominant ideological structures that maintain and reinforce the existing power structure while denying the right of existence to alternative and oppositional ideologies. Film perpetuates the dominant ideology by constructing a consensual ideology for all the people in its society. The perpetuation of the dominant patriarchal ideology is a reflection of the interrelatedness between film and the broader socio-cultural, political and economic systems of a given society.

The dominant cultural influence in terms of gender construction has been portrayed in some children's films like *Chinnari Panthulamma*, *Nanhe Jaisalmeer*, and *Tahaan*.

Chinnari Panthulamma (2006)   *Chinnari Panthulamma* (2006)

In the film *Chinnari Panthulamma*, Pinky is a school-going child who lives with her mother, who is an officer and is a typical Indian woman. Most of the leading roles in the film are female. Pinky, her mother and grandmother, share their equal-gender in

different stages. Particularly, Pinky's living conditions take a change after her grandmother arrives at her house. Culture and tradition of femaleness, which dominantly portrayed by media, is illustrated through Pinky's character by bringing changes in her regular life. Pinky's play patterns changes in the initial stage. Earlier she used to play computer games with her peer group including boys. However her grandmother introduces a game to kids, from which children can learn the traditions and culture of a particular society, also their food, clothing and the duties of a woman. The play is named as *Gujjanagullu,* where children arrange a marriage to two figurines which commonly represents Hindu religious god and ideals - *Rama* and *Sita* in this play. *Sita* is the ideal woman for the Hindu woman because she is owned by the Hindu god *Rama* in *Swayamvaram*[73] and becomes the goddess. Coming back to *Gujjanagullu*, after marriage, the child invites her relatives and friends for traditional feasts. *Gujjangullu* is a play for girls to learn their womanly responsibilities and duties at home in the society. After Pinky knows about this play by her grandmother, she invites her grandmother by wearing a piece of cloth like s*aree* and putting a *bindi* on her forehead which is part of the Hindu culture and practices and belongs to females alone. The game has been brought in this film to show the rural cultures and give the children knowledge about particular cultures and traditions. It also shows or gives an impression to a girl child about culturally assigned duties in a constructed system which leads to gender inequality.

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[73] *Swayamvaram* is an event arranged by a bride's father where kings can attend and need to take the challenge or competition and prove his *masculinity;* after all he will win the girl even if she is not willing.

Nanhe Jaisalmeer (2007)

Nanhe Jaisalmeer is a film that deals with a boy's life story, his struggles, desires, and status. Nanhe is a seven-year-old boy who is the only economic support of his family. He lives along with his mother and 16-year-old sister who is educated. This film depicts male domination in the domestic financial matters or male responsibilities in taking care of the household. Nanhe's sister is educated, she writes letters for him, and reads news for him but cannot work and support her family economically even though she is older than Nanhe. Nanhe's mother says at some point that Nanhe's earnings are going to be spent for his sister's marriage. Nanhe is physically weak and younger than his sister but he has to work and earn money for the survival of his family. It conveys that the education or empowerment of women is merely in the statistics of a government but not in the existing living conditions of certain societies. It also gives an impression that the male, whether a child or an adult, is allocated to work and the female has to be at home and get married and can work only in the domestic sphere.

Tahaan (2008)

Film *Tahaan* takes this issue to another level. It has portrayed male dominance in family system. Tahaan is a seven-year-old boy who practices male superiority at home. Tahaan's past experiences in a patriarchal family setup makes him understand the difference in gender and dominance. When his inability is questioned by female members of the family, his notion of *mardon* (adult men) make him feel superior about his gender. At home, his sister's usual warning provokes his male ego and he responds "*Yahien ki mardon ka kaam kitna mushkil hota hein…*" (Here, men do difficult works), which conveys that Tahaan's childhood travels through parallel gender construction. Even when he talks to his father, he says, "*Papa iski baton par dhyaan math dena, ye maamla hum mardon ke beech hein…* (Don't listen to her (Tahaan's sister) words as the issue belongs to men) which portrays the accultured gender supremacy. Tahaan's strong notion about male superiority of body and mind, which make him chase and get Birbal back, also, unfortunately, involves him in the militancy issue.

Tahaan, Nanhe and Pinky, all three of them, practice 'constructed' gender roles in a family environment. Consideration of the larger system of family relationships is important, first, because children acquire information about gender roles and norms via

their exposure to other dyadic relationships in the family. For example, children may observe sex-typed behaviours in their mothers' and fathers' interactions with one another or be exposed to a sex-typed division of labour in the marriage relationship. Experiences with different family members also provide a point for social comparisons. Children's schemas about gender roles may be shaped by their differential experiences with their mothers versus their fathers and by the differential treatment of sisters versus brothers in their families. Siblings, indeed, have been relatively neglected in the story of family gender socialization. Sibling's influences may be both direct, as when sisters and brothers serve as models or social partners, as well as indirect, as when they serve as sources of social comparison, help to shape the structure of their families, and influence everyday family activities and routines.

Kairee (1999)

Kairee deals with the subject of a girl child and her experience in a patriarchal world. Here she stands for empowerment, individuality and success. Title of the film gives a meaning of rawness of a girl and her unexpected experiences of gender. She is orphaned, and comes to Taani mausi's house because she needs care to grow up as a

woman. The intention of coming to Taani's house itself is showing the insecure circumstances of a girl. The girl's experiences about womanhood as an underprivileged category in the social system make her a strong and successful individual who later returns as a great writer. Gender as a constructed system involves violence, discrimination, humiliation and dominance, which the girl observes in Taani's house by Bhauvrao's male chauvinism. Bhauvrao never shows any concern for his wife Taani, instead he beats her. Taani has to take decision on the girl's future by sending her back to Sreepumama's house because of Bhauvrao's extramarital relations with their domestic servant which could be a bad influence for her niece in understanding the humiliation in gender. But, Taani trains the girl in choosing life without compromise. She teaches her to be brave and to fight for existence, and explore her identity and individuality.

Cultural texts (both representational and lived) are a part of the gender regime in various institutional settings. Notions of femininity and masculinity are constructed in everyday social practices within institutions, and it is represented at the symbolic level in the films as cultural ideals. The versions promoted serve to provide the basis for women's subordination. K. W. Connell (1987) suggests that the forms of femininity and masculinity that are constructed at the ideological level rest on the premise of the global dominance of men over women.[74] A. Ram (2002) employed ethnographic methods to examine how Indian cinema contributed to the construction of gendered identity. It was

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[74] Connell, R.W. *Theorizing Gender*. In N. Grieve A. Burns Eds., *Australian Women: New Feminist Perspectives*, Melbourne: OUP, 1987. p.342-357.

observed that Indian cinema valorised cultural identity and contained gendered national discourses which viewers could identify with. [75]

Child and Self

The study of the minutiae of social interaction in everyday life is treated with major importance by many sociologists, in part, because it is at the level of human interaction and interpersonal relationships that the fabrication of the self arises. There are several traditions of sociological thought that study the self in the context of social interaction and daily life, and these traditions can be used to develop interesting interpretations of self, society and their mutual interaction.[76]

The self for Freud is structured by unconscious promptings-desires, wishes and fantasies. By contrast, George Herbert Mead's theory of the self does not rely on a theory of unconscious forces at the centre of mind and the self. The self is seen as primarily cognitive by symbolic interactionists because the seeds of self-consciousness are understood to derive from individuals consciously manipulating and constructing identity in accordance with that 'conversation of gestures' established through engagement with the social process. From a Freudian standpoint, however, Mead and his followers set up a conception of the relationship between self and society that is too smooth. As the self is constructed entirely through interaction—the individual looking at the self, as it were, as others see him or her—there would seem to be little or no conflict between the individual and society. So there is no recognition of the tension that Freud referred to in books like

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[75] See, Ram, A. *Framing the feminine: Diasporic readings of gender in popular Indian cinema*. "Women's Studies in Communication". 25(1). 2002. p.25-52.
[76] See, Elliott, Antony. *Concepts of the self*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. p-22,23

Civilization and its Discontents (1962),[77] between individual desires, wishes and fantasies on the one hand, and the requirements for social control and cultural order on the other.[78]

According to Mead's theory, the self is inherently social in the sense that it entails seeing oneself from the standpoint of another, an ability that arises in interaction. Mead's idea that "the self is composed of an "I" and a "me". Mead's "I" is the individual who feels, desires, wills and acts. The "me" is the presence of social others within the self. The "me" endlessly offers its opinion about the "I" and dialogues with it".[79] Mead makes a crucial distinction between the 'I' and the 'me' in conceptualizing the self. The 'me' is the socialized self, made up of the internalized attitudes of others as experienced in the early years of life. The 'I', as Mead uses the term, is the unsocialized self, an assortment of personal desires, needs and dispositions. These more spontaneous wants and wishes of the 'I' serve to distinguish the self from others, and can be said to inject something new, creative and innovative into the social process. The achievement of self-awareness, says Mead, arises when the self is able to distinguish the 'me' from the 'I', and hence attain a level of reflective distance from the demands of society and culture.[80] Mead places great emphasis upon the social self; each of us, as individuals, fashions a sense of our own selfhood through engagement with other selves. No clear dividing line can be drawn between our own sense of own selves of others. According to Mead, 'since our own selves exist and enter as such into our experience only in so far as the selves of others

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[77] See, Freud, Sigmond and James Strachey. *Civilization and its* Discontents, New York: Nortan, 1962.
[78] See, Elliott, Antony. *Concepts of the self*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. p-29,30
[79] See, Mageo, M. Jeannette. *Theorizing Dreaming and the Self*, Ed., *"*Dreaming and the Self: New Perspectives on Subjectivity, Identity, and Emotion". Albany: State University of New York, 2003. p-8
[80] See, Elliott, Antony. *Concepts of the self*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. p-27,28

exist and enter as such into our experience also'.[81] For Mead, theory of the self is at some considerable distance from such determinism, since he holds that each individual responds to social relations in a particularistic or unique fashion. 'The self for Mead is at once individuality and generality, agent and recipient, sameness and difference. Bluntly put, what this means is that the self is the agency through which individuals experience themselves in relation to others, but is also an object or fact dealt with by its individual owner as he or she sees fit'.[82]

Gergen (1977) broadened Mead's conception to include not only role taking but other mechanisms by which the individual incorporates other's views of the self.[83] Many developmental theories share the assumption that self-understanding is inherently relational, developing hand-in-hand with understanding of other persons. This idea is central not only to theories of self development per se (Mead, 1934) but to theories of attachment (Bowlby, 1969).[84] Object relations (Mahler, Pine & Begman 1975[85]); (Winnicott, 1965[86]), and friendship (Youniss, 1980[87]). The individual is viewed by Goffman (1922-82) as at once drawing from and transcending specific roles and norms in the strategic manipulation of impressions in everyday life. In other words, identity might be constructed through the adoption of, and adherence to, social role and their validation by social institutions, but the individual is the creative and reflective agent who decides

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[81] See, Mead, H. George. *Mind, Self, and Society*: *From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, Ed., Charles W. Morris. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1934. p-164

[82] See, Elliott, Antony. *Concepts of the self*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. p-26

[83] Ibid. p.47

[84] See, Bowlby, J. *Attachment and loss: Volume 1. Attachment*, New York: Basic Books, 1969.

[85] See, Margaret S. Mahler, Fred Pine, Anni Bergman. *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant Sybiosis and Individuation*, Great Britain: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1975.

[86] See, D. W. Winnicott, *The Family and Individual Development*, London: Tavistock, 1965.

[87] See, Youniss, James. *Parents and Peers in Social Development: A Sullivan-Piaget Perspective*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

— and in doing so constitutes self-identity — on how to carry out such roles as well as the staging of role performances.[88]

We often think of the self as primarily a private domain, an inner realm of personal thoughts, values, strivings, emotions and desires. Sociology demonstrates the need to look at the impact of other people, the wider society, as well as cultural forms and moral norms, in the making of the self.

> Under the impact of these social forces, according to conservatives, the self withdraws from public life and political obligation, moral bonds recede in favour of an overwhelming desire for instant narcissistic gratification, and intimate relationships fragment into short-term, provisional and episodic encounters.[89]

I take self to be a domain term that refers to all aspects of being a person. Identity, on the other hand is the cumulative result of affirming "that is me" and "that is not me"; it develops through acts with persons, groups, and representations in the cultural world (Mageo 2001 b; Mageao and Knauft 2002).[90]

Childhood and self is a study that comes across socialization of one individual. Self of a child consists of complications and conflicts. When "I" cannot identify as part of self in children's life, the "me" dominates and influences the childhood and "me" as a 'social self' always complicate daily life in social interactions. Within the family and peer

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[88] See, Elliott, Antony. *Concepts of the self*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. p-32
[89] Ibid. p.39
[90] See, Mageo M. Jeannette. Ed. *Dreaming and the Self: New perspectives on Subjectivity, Identity, and Emotion*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.

group relations, and broadly in social relations, child tries to identify his/her self with surrounding people which gratify its desires within the self or "I", when "I" has complications in projecting unique features of his/her self then "I" conflicts with "me". Damon and Hart (1988) reviewed this research and concluded that active and physical notions of self predominate over social notions during childhood and that children do not make social comparisons of self until 7 or 8 years of age. Inasmuch as identity is that sense of self that derives from successive acts of identification.[91]

Kanchan in *Bari Theke Paliye*, and Phatik in *Phatik Chand*, reorganize the self after their interaction with various social groups. And Shyam in *Bhoot Unkle*, and Chandu in *Patanagaram lo Pasivadu* enhance their living conditions within the family setup. Probably, Chandu and Shyam having individual desires and lacking in their lives make them to reform situations. Four of them have self narratives which portrays the self, childhood and conflict.

 Bari Theke Paliye (1959)   *Bari Theke Paliye* (1959)

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[91] See Chapter 6, 8 and 9; Damon, William and Daniel Hart. *Self-understanding in Childhood and Adolescence*, New York: CUP, 1988.

In the film *Bari Theke Paliye*, the boy Kanchan, runs away from home and arrives at Calcutta which is his dream destination. After reaching Calcutta, Kanchan interacts with a strange society. He notices many incidents in his travel. Meeting Horidas is his first shock in social interaction. Horidas lives in Calcutta, changes his appearance as an old man in public life and comes back to his original getup at home. Horidas shares his sorrows and troubles with Kanchan. Kanchan could not understand Horidas and his pathetic situation and he realizes it after many bitter experiences in Calcutta. His encounter with Calcutta makes him understand the struggle for survival. He observes the slums, beggars, goons, street children and their awful situations, exploitation, and sufferings. Once, he is thrown out by the cashier because of not paying the bill in a restaurant. One old woman gives him food when he is in hunger. He meets a girl Milli, who introduces him at her home and treats him like a family member, but he could not stay there because of his feelings of inferiority. All these interactions make him realize the lives of 'the other' society where he wants to earn money and send to his mother. But the troubles he face, and his transformation into realization, is the reason that he goes back to home. His dream of Calcutta shatters. His social interactions mould his fantasy into real life. He thinks, observes and understands the social realities and finally recognizes himself within the social system. Kanchan's painful question: "*Ei sahore eto dhukkho keno*" (why so much sadness in this city?) – is echoed in the day labourer's assertion: "Kolkata *sahor – dayamaya kuchhu nei, ja ghare chole ja*" (this is Calcutta, it does not care about anyone, go away, go back home) and speaks the same language of broken dreams.

Phatik Chand (1983)   *Phatik Chand* (1983)

The film *Phatik Chand* tells about a boy named Bablu who is kidnapped and gets a chance to escape and convert himself with another name Phatik Chandrapaul. His past and present lives are quite different by nature. Bablu was a son of a rich father who comes from a dominant caste. But in the present life, Phatik is a lower class/caste child labourer, who lives with a Muslim juggler Rashid. Phatik lives his present life with no self identity. He does not know who he is or what his name is or where he has come from. But, life for him is quite comfortable till he gets into trouble again with the same kidnappers. He recognizes himself with many others like Rashid. His interaction with the new world gives him an identity where he could recognize himself as an unidentified brat. But his social interaction makes him live in those conditions where he can work and earn money and also understand the social barriers. He goes back to his home with his experience of the abandoned livelihoods of marginalized people on the day he remembered the past life which he had forgotten for a few months. His engagements and encounters with Rashid motivate him in constructing a social self (Identity). Sharing and struggle together build self-possession.

Both Kanchan and Phatik stay away from home and gain experiences through society and its system. Both reorganize their desires and motivations within the self. Both realize the social realities which they have not experienced earlier. There was a big difference in time period between Kanchan and Phatik, *Barithekey Paliye* in 1959 and *Phatik Chand* in 1983. But unfortunately, there was not much difference in the lives of marginalized section people in India. Kanchan and Phatik belong to dominant caste and their interactions happen with the lower class sections. It gives them a space to have a glance at society rationally, rather than being ignorant of social realities. Phatik could not avoid Rashid, even when Phatik's father disrespects Rashid without knowing Rashid's concern for Phatik. The same way Kanchan's realization allows him to go back home and lets him live responsibly, though he was an unruly child before his visit to Calcutta.

Pathanagaramlo Pasivadu (1999)   *Pathanagaramlo Pasivadu* (1999)

On a different note, *Pathanagaramlo Pasivadu* describes the story of Chandu, and his interaction with family and society. His day starts with plenty of questions to the adult world. He does not know why his teacher has given him an imposition for 500 times, why his father can smoke cigarette but he cannot, and why his mother often asks him to shut his mouth. With such questions, he compares childhood with adulthood. This nature

makes him to take his own decisions in given situations. His reactions to the situations and people are confident and enthusiastic. Chandu as a child could not understand the adult world where he finds social barriers between adult and child relations, as well as teacher and student relations. But he is always conscious about his desire for pets and his relation with other people. His conversation with his father in sharing doubts and with his teacher in accepting mistakes in positive manner, and maintaining genuine relation with his friend, in the same way, Chandu's affection towards Jahangeer make him help Noorzahaan. And finally his desires come true by getting a gift of a pet and appreciated by his teacher and the police and others whom he meets. He is also motivated by the words of Gurajada Apparao; "*Sontha labham kontha maani, porugu vaadiki thodu padavoi…*" (Give up your own gain and help another in need) and his parents description of these words. That is the reason he carries on with positive thinking and maintains positive relations with people he meets in his journey. All these experiences of social self make him positive towards the society.

Bhoot Unkle (2006)

Like Chandu, in the film *Bhoot Unkle*, Shyam believes the words of his teacher: "*Jo doosron ki help karthey hey, Bhagavaan unkey help karthey hey*" (God helps people

who help others). These positive advices influence Chandu and Shyam in different circumstances. Shyam's life is miserable. He faces humiliation at both home and school. He is trapped into SK's plan for theft. When he is in fear of the people around, he feels hopeless for his own life. His strong belief in what he has learned from school changes his hopeless future to a bright and happy one. His self is constructed by learning from the society and circumstances. He is harassed by his aunt, MLA and SK, but he also observes his uncle and friends, and it motivates him to help find the *bhoot* of a dead pirate.

Kanchan, Phatik, Chandu and Shyam have re-organized their desires, wishes and pragmatic conditions through the situations that they have travelled through the past. As Mead says, "the demands of society entered into the construction of the self"[92], and Miller extends it by saying, "personal experience provides a privileged site for the social construction of self".[93] It explains that the self is "I" or/and "me" which is constructed by the society for social life through self consciousness. Self is psyche which reacts to the society and is reconstructed within ("me"), in various times for various reasons and revert to the self ("I").

Ian Wojcik-Andrews says, "Playfully or seriously, mainstream and/or counter cinematic children's films contain moments of self-awareness or self-discovery that lead to equally important moment of choice"[94]. Another explanation which he gives to the children's films is that, "Often the child's body *itself* is the source of exploration, discovery, and transformation. Indeed, the presence of the child's body as the alternative

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[92] See, Elliott, Antony. *Concepts of the self*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. p-30
[93] See, Miller. et.al., 1990. p- 47
[94] See, Wojcik-Andrews, Ian. *Children's Films: History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory*, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000. p-9

world is a characteristic feature of films starring children and films aimed specially at children …"[95] Whether the child is a protagonist or not, the choice of film to children is significant in the alternative-film-era. Satyajit Ray's classic children's film, *Goopy Gyne, Bagha Byne* is a social film. After Ray's sequel *Hirak Rajar Deshe*, Ray's son Sandip Ray made another sequel, titled *Goopy Bagha Phire Elo* by following up on his father's movie. Both films and Abhijit Choudury's *Patalghar*, which seems to be influenced by Ray's film, portrays the characters of the film, costumes they wear, properties they use and acts of character illustrates children's perspectives and addresses children in terms of visual pleasure.
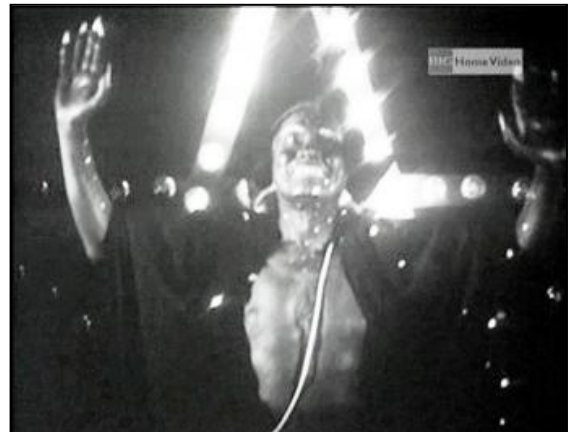
Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (1968)   *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1968)

Satyajit Ray's *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* does not consist of child characters. The characters in the film Goopy and Bagha are innocent, and enthusiastic. Both have common interests in music. Goopy sings and Bagha plays drum. Both are awful in their respective talents, but their passions lead them to an adventurous way of life with three magical boons which they get from ghosts and become great musicians. The costumes of

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[95] Ibid. p-10

these folklore characters Goopy, Bagha, King of Shundi/Halla, the magician Borfi and the other characters create a perception to the children of their imagined folk stories heard from the grandparents or elders. With the magic slippers, Goopy and Bagha think of flying to Shundi to visit its king, but by mistake they reach Hundi where they sense freezing cold and then Jhundi where the weather is burning heat. All of these give much fun to the child audience. The design of the crowns of these folk characters is eye-catching and comical to child spectators. Ghost king is the character who helps Goopy and Bagha in their adventures. Making the character of ghost king, and the dance with real ghosts innocently, making it rather attractive to children.

In *Goopy Bagha Phire Elo*, Goopy and Bagha successfully defeat the foe, but with the help of a child named Bikram. The story is written by Satyjit Ray and directed by his son Sandip Ray. Whereas *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* does not have child characters, *Goopy Bagha Phire Elo* consists of child characters, even though the role of the children is not lengthy but a crucial role played by the child character towards the end of the film which is an interesting point in the trilogy of Goopy and Bagha. Bikram is a twelve-year-old boy who becomes the cause of the death of Brahmananda who is a spiritualist, having supernatural powers and death comes to him by a boy as predicted by the spiritual preceptor, teacher of Brahmananda. In the sequel, Goopy and Bagha have the same qualities which they had in *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*. They can fly, their songs can freeze people, they do magic tricks but they cannot defeat Brahmananda because they had boons by the ghost but not by the god, whereas Brahmanada gets his powers from the spirit of 'goodness', while ghosts represent the bad. This may not have an effect on the main plot of the trilogy because the ghost has given boons to the individuals which cannot affect

the people, except in singing. However, Goopy and Bagha with the help of the ghost king and Bikram rescue children from the clutches of Brahmanada in the end of trilogy of Goopy and Bagha. These films were basically made keeping the young viewers in mind and are strewn with elements of comedy and hilarious scenes.

Patalghar (2003)

Patalghar (2003)

Abhijit Choudury's film *Patalghar* consists of many things at once, each intermingling with the other, a science fiction tale, a children's fantasy, a comic and most importantly, the loneliness of childhood. The film exists in two time zones, one in the past where a scientist Aghor Sen invents a device which can put people to sleep for 150 years, and the next where the protagonist, Krathik inherits the property-a place where the two time zones converge, belonging to the scientist which has within its premises the secret of that invention. *Patalghar* works as an exploration of the feelings of childhood and the world of child, his love of mechanical devices, and his desire to invent. The film is about the progress of Kartik whose journey through the narrative makes him aware of some of life's lessons. Each character in the film creates a distinctive comedy for the child spectator.

Representation of childhood is an assumption of the adult. Looking at the films and the themes they have chosen for children's films, we can certainly see the adult vision and perception which they have taken for granted to (re)present childhood in the absence of the child's world. Themes of these films are mostly compiled with social, cultural and economic world of a common society and within that the children become the tool to understand it, but not to understand the child as unique entity.

Conclusion

"Good children's films shall be made when we allow children themselves to write and direct them"[96] said Satyen Bose. Vishal Bhardwaj stated, "It was a vicious circle. Whatever children's films have been made over the years were low-budget endeavors of a handful, well-meaning, creative lot. With fewer outlays for children, the outcomes have not been too spectacular and hence for most Bollywood film makers; this genre has remained a risky proposition." [97] How can the children's film be defined? Children's films must learn from children, be not only about children, but to see the world through their eyes. When our actors or directors or producer say, 'this is a family film, it is a clean film, and you can watch it with your child', does not imply that the film is a children's film. Usually those kinds of films have a romantic theme, intended for adult audience (*Amma Nanna Kavali*, 1996; *Little Soldiers*, 1996; *Thoda Pyar Thoda Magic*, 2008). A children's film is a film for children. But this does not mean that it has to be about the child or children, it could be on anything, as long as it targets the children spectators.

But these days when children have more options in the form of cartoon channels and internet, they are somehow not incredibly interested in children's films. Children today are far more mature, at least in the metropolis and emerging cities. With no-holds-barred exposure to foreign films and cyber world, any film that features children cannot be passed off as a children's film.

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[96] See, Shishir Goutam. *Children's Films and India*. Fried eye: The Magazine. Vol.II, Issue.22, 12/01/2012. <https://www.friedeye.com/2011/11/childrens-film-andindia.html>
[97] See, Priyanka Khanna. *Children are calling the shots at the box office*. 12/06/20011. <http://www.bollywood.com/node/2753>

"Child and animal play because they enjoy playing, and therein precisely lies their freedom"[98]. For the adult and responsible human being play is a function which he could equally well leave alone. Play is surplus. The need for it is only urgent to the extent that the enjoyment of it makes it a need. Play can be deferred or suspended at any time. It is never imposed by physical necessity or moral duty. It is never a task. It is done at leisure, during "free time". Only when play is a recognized cultural function, as rite and a ceremony it is bound up with notions of obligation and duty.

Usually, every activity of a person is directed by a motive, either conscious or unconscious, that can be determined by need and necessity. One may be attracted towards literature, music, sports, social and political issues or anything because in some way they may impact upon one's daily life. Motives and desires of human beings are not transparent that they can be easily identified or understood. They can be complex and unaware. (*Kairee*, 1999; *Patanagaram Lo Pasivadu*, 1999; *Makdee*, 2002; *Patalghar*, 2003; *Hero*, 2003; *Taare ZameenPar*, 2007; *Tahaan*, 2008)

According to social learning theory[99], much social learning take place from books, film, television, and other mass media. According to the cultivation theory[100], the repetitive lessons that people learn from film may serve as a basis for a broader world view, therefore, making film a considerable source of values, ideologies, beliefs, and images. Film has become the most widely shared image and message making medium for

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[98] See, Huizinga, J. *Homo Ludens*: *A Study of the Play-element in Culture*, London: Routledge, 1949. 1980 rpt. p.8

[99] See, Bandura, A. *Social cognitive theory of mass communication*. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman EDs., "Media effects: Advance in theory and research." Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1994. p. 61-91.

[100] See, Gerbner, G., L. Gross, M. Morgan and N. Signorielli. "Growing up with Television: The Cultivation Processes" in J. Bryant and D. Zillmann Eds., *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993.

people and new methods of transmission provide for even deeper penetration and integration of dominant patterns of images and messages into our everyday lives. These two theories suggest that if children are given the opportunity to develop skills and concepts that could enable them to understand and decode the way in which film assists in the construction of their own version of realities, then they would be less dependent on and more critical of the cultural environment created by the film. It is true that children's films have been tried on like secondhand apparel passed down by the adult media system. The social situations were obviously far more complicated and sinister than the films would lead to believe.

In the world of globalization, when human community is becoming increasingly susceptible to mechanized life in which the economic interest, social status, high levels of earnings kill human initiative, and parents are not bothered about their children, the lack of parental love and care can bring a child to the street and can spoil the joy of its precious life (*Baritheke Paliye*, 1958; *Phatik Chand*, 1983; *Little Hearts*, 1998; *Chinuku*, 2005; *Bommalata*, 2005; *Nanhe Jaisalmir*, 2007; *Taare Zameen Par*, 2007; *Tahaan*, 2008). A vulnerable group of the urban poor is growing rapidly in cities. The street children and working children are without shelter, care and food. Many of them may just be runaways the result of broken homes being sucked into the corruption of the street life of the cities.

Society surrounds the individual with all sorts of mores and inhibitions, regulations, rituals, and taboos, which frequently serve to buildup more or less resistant barriers to the ready satisfaction of his/her needs and demands. It sets up an economic system requiring that man satisfy essential needs through money and then makes the

acquisition of money a difficult and, at times impossible act. The society sets up social cast and class systems, preventing or hindering free social locomotion, so that a member of one caste or class may be dissatisfied in his desire to become a member of another and to acquire the privileges of that caste. Class system emanates from and profoundly influences the whole mode of life and through within the community. Social classes are more or less spontaneous formations, which are expressive of social attitudes. However, participation in society is necessary for the development of personality. One's culture and sub-culture vary according to one's socio-economic class. Personality is influenced through a process called socialization in which agents such as playmates, teachers, and media play a role.

Just like there are different books meant for children and for adults; so is the case with cinema. In a child's film, there should be optimism and hope that the world can be a better place. Marketability can interfere with art, particularly in the film industry. Usually children watch films with much violence and revenge, carried out by heroes of the film and there by valaorizing them. (*Bhooth Unkle*, 2006; *Boothnath*, 2008; *Neel Rajar Deshe*, 2008) Children are attracted to what they see. Today most films are like this, dealing with personal retribution as the only means to meet the ends of justice. The mechanism of law and justice in India must accommodate wide-ranging socio-political and economic changes, have been taking place and the common feeling among large sections of the urban population is that the system does not have adequate protection to ensure social justice. The appeal of taking the law into one's own hands is great in most of the mainstream Indian films.

We know that child's rights have been formulated by government and non-government organizations. There may be child rights but the child's need to assuage hunger gives the exploiter the opportunity to stamp over their rights. The present trends of mechanization and scientific advancement have made humans mere cogs in a machine thus putting them under pressure and demands. Therefore, it is the right of the child to seek that their rights are implemented. Children are the future of the society and must have their share in its evolution. They have been under the control of their parents for too long and are often ignorant of their rights. Children have no voice to question what happens around them and become victims of all sorts of damage.

Cinema for children is very important for social awarerness. A systematic approach to make them a part of students' curriculum, a positive change can definitely be brought about in the society. This idea would help children films and its development in modifying the norms of the social system. This would ensure a place for children's film in the mainstream popular films. Children can be encouraged to analyze films to understand moral and ethical values. Children's films need encouragement to create a positive ambiance and ethos in the country which would enrich its culture and social structure by educating the future generations about personal and social values.

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