



# Journey of Farmer Portrayals in Indian Cinema: An Analysis in the Spectacle of "Do Bigha Zamin" and "Peepli Live"

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## Abstract

Do Bigha Zamin (dir. Bimal Roy, 1953) and Peepli Live (dir. Anusha Rizvi, 2010) are two bollywood films from different periods and contexts that show farmers walking through the same debt trap. This article analyzes the contribution of Do Bigha Zamin and Peepli Live in understanding the life of a peasant and its components which are relevant to untangle the farmer's journey in the film, and the rise of modernity which changed the trajectory of agricultural films in India after the 1990s. Shambu, the main protagonist of Do Bigha Zamin, is portrayed as a simple farmer who got entrapped in the debt cycle by the landlord and subsequently forced to quit his profession, to fulfill the decree of what he called "mai-baap". Shambu's failure to save his land is demonstrated through the rationale of "development" from enterprises and state, which had the fundamental influence on agriculturalist folks till today. While Natha in Peepli Live also falls into debt and reluctantly agreed to suicide that gets sensationalized by the news media. Deluge by the promises of politicians, Natha escape from home, thereafter, confluence happens between the politicians that showed they were using Natha's suicide for their ends. Do Bigha Zamin and Peepli Live embodied the social state of their respective times, and sketched the intangible sorrow, portrayed in other farmer based Indian films, that tell a story which is very less often gets heard.

*Keywords:* farmer, debt, suicide, social state, media

## More from Less: Agriculture, Farming, and Contemporary Cinema

Agriculture is the nerve of developing nations and it can be understood from the 1950s India, where its relevance was emphasized in the earlier five-year plans of the government to make India self-sufficient. The Indian population today is unvaried from the old days, which still depend on agriculture for their livelihood. This scenario is captured through the prism of cinema to narrate diverse stories of men, women, and children who are connected to farming. Thirty-second National Film award by the directorate of film festivals first time awarded the best agricultural film of the Indian cinema in 1985 (National film development corporation limited, 1985). The effort was undertaken by the Indian government to provide space and necessary incentive required for peasant movies to come within the ambit of mainstream films and rekindle the glorious past of its cinema, which dates from the fame of *Do Bigha Zamin* (Two acres of land). The award in 1985 was given to the Ghanashyam Mahapatra's directed and produced *Krishi Jantrapati*. The film underscored different methods of farming practices and the use of biogas to improve farmers life. Since 1984, the tradition of giving the best agriculture film award by the ministry of information and broadcasting is continuing to date. Jacobson (2017) quoted Da Grandes Heures de Rohan (1430–35): 'cinema appears as both a mirror of and a guide to rural life' to draw attention to the potential of agricultural movies to revitalize the whole sphere of films and not just agricultural films. Indian director Shyam Benegal who has mastered rural violence in his films quoted that "the cities which are shown in mainstream Indian films are not the real Indian cities" (Associated Press, 2006). Sachdeva (2019) while writing on Benegal's film notes that "Villages are spaces of caste oppression, sexual exploitation and of feudal values; but villages are also becoming spaces of resistance, identity assertions, mass mobilisation, empowerment and social change". Benegal through *Nishant* (1975) portrayed the exploitation in rural India; Manoj Kumar's *Upkar* (1967) depicted the rural life, peasant's hardship in the agricultural cinema cult of India (Gupta, 2005). The land that gives bread and sustains billions of people is exemplified in the song of *Upkar*- *Is Desh ki Dharti*. Rural India is considered as one that abstains from hoaxes, drugs, drinking, immoral ways of looting innocent persons money, and black marketing. Narendra Bedi's *Adalat* (1976) and *Khote Sikkay* (1974) display the analogous themes of rural India (Gupta, 2005) where the cruelty of stealing and forgery is shown rampant in cities in contrast to rural India.

Bollywood movies that managed to portray farmers in recent times are *Lagaan* (2001), *Kisaan* (2009), *Peepli Live* (2010), and *Kadvi Hawa* (2017). Other movies such as *Swades* (2004), *Virasat* (1999), *Dhobi Ghat* (2010), and *Billu barber* (2009) show the rural areas of the country. *Swades* and *Virasat*, in particular, illustrated that rural India should be acknowledged and augmented, by the story of Mohan and Shakti respectively, who visit the village from abroad for a short period and get influenced by their roots and decided to stay and improve the villages - or the real India. The Hindi cinema is recognized for exhibiting the bipolar nature of the peasant on the correlative scale of impairing the landlord when the debt increased beyond what farmers can pay, or portraying farmers in destitution and extreme poverty where they squabble even for life necessities. Comparable themes are endured in the peasant films from independence, except for the occasional extension of the tranche in the films such as including mass media, a politician, and state employees (*Peepli Live*, 2010; *Kadvi Hawa*, 2017). *Do bigha Zamin* emerge from the torrent of films like *Mother India* (1957), *Jalsaghar* (1958), *Upkar* (1967), *Gunga Jumna* (1961), and *Manthan* (1976) where the farmer or their common adversity landlord (*Jalsaghar*, 1958) is enacted in crisis, and the farmer is portrayed striving for a better life but still keeping the traditional and moral doctrines intact while collaborating to face life and make it better from yesterday.

This article explores the film *Do Bigha Zamin* and *Peepli Live*'s contribution in understanding the peasant's life and its components that are pertinent to unravel his journey in the movie, and the rise of modernity that shifted the trajectory of agricultural movies in India after the 1990s. The evaluation is distributed in three sections comprising: an analysis of *Do Bigha Zamin*, examining the rise of modernity among bollywood films after the 1990s, and assessing realism, comedy, and tragedy in *Peepli Live*.

### Cinematic Masterpiece: The Case of Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin*

One of the cues of farming esprit was seen in, *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) inspired, Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin* (Two acres of land<sup>1</sup>) produced in 1953. The movie became a cult in cinema annals of peasants. *Do Bigha Zamin* subsist the first Indian film that won Prix Internationale at the Cannes film festival and best film award at Filmfare. Rabindranath Tagore's poem *Dui Bigha Jomi* has a profound effect on *Do Bigha Zamin*. Tagore was *Zamindar* himself and in the poem, he recounted the oppression that the farmer has to stand. That oppression of farmers is portrayed artistically in the movie.

The film hauled the despair theme representing the story of farmer Shambu Mahato (Played by Balraj Sahni), his wife Parvati (Played by Nirupa Rao), and his son Kanhaiya (Ratan Kumar) living in a village ridden with the draught. The picture was set up when the industrialization was started by the first Nehru administration and new industries against the philosophy of Gandhiji –who advocated cottage and village oriented industries in rural areas- was erected, and the land reform phase was in operation for equal distribution of land among farmers, to peel off the effect of the zamindari system. But the industries failed to account for small and landless farmers who turned into migrant workers due to the corporatization of agricultural land. And the land reform was feeble in wiping out the landlord system. Instead, the landlord wielded leverage on local administration and judiciary - benefiting from rampant illiteracy and poverty in the 1950s- to acquire land and build industry. Shambu's story should be deciphered in this light to understand his journey from rural to an urban area, and from a simple farmer to an assertive migrant worker; who accepts the modernity of the city but is embedded in the moral and cultural heritage that he inherits from his village roots and family. In the film, Shambu gets entrapped due to the forging of his debt account by the local landlord, and subsequent, ruling by the court that Shambu should pay the requisite amount to the landlord within three months or his land will be auctioned - which is the only source of livelihood for his family. To pay off the debt, Shambu left for Calcutta- along with his son, who boarded the train without his cognizant, after the face-off, Shambu agreed to take him. The parting of Shambu from the village had a profound impact on Parvati, who become pregnant at that time, and is hesitant to send him to the place which she scarcely assimilates and thought of it as the alienated spot where morality and benignity do not exist. Her world was torn apart as all the money was lost and even utensils were sold to satisfy the landlord's treason. The Institution of justice failed the test of equality that could have lightened the hopes of the destitute family, but it remained one more nail in the hand of the big and powerful who can use it anytime to shut down and break the lives of ordinary individuals.

Following Shambu's departure to Calcutta, his family's life in the village worsened. Shambu's father struggled for medicine and daily meals while the proprietor's clerk made life difficult for Parvati outside the home. Parvati died of hunger for days and had a fever due to picking water chestnuts in cold waters. Meanwhile, Shambu also scrambled in the new city due to a lack of acquaintances in Calcutta. However, he managed to find work as a rickshaw puller while Kanhaiya worked as a boot polisher.

Shambu's character in the film upholds the values and culture amid delusion from the decrees of the government - that see industries as a one-step solution- which he barely grasp and thinks of the landlord as “*mai-baap*” (Upadhyaya, 2019). Shambu who pleaded for his rights in the village from the judiciary and landlord parted the ways in the city. He becomes assertive when city commuters refuse to give him two *annas* for his service: *apne hi to kaha tha tin aadmi bitha lo to do aane or denge laiye do aana or dijiye na* (You told yourself that if three men will sit then you will give two annas more. Give the two annas). Commuter replied *de de bhai de de kyo do aane ke liye nich aadmi se behas karta hai* (Give brother give, why to argue with the lowly man for two annas). Shambu said *hai hai hum to nich hi aadmi hai laiye paisa dijiye* (Yes, I am a lowly man, give me money). This behavior of Shambu is in contrast with earlier Shambu in the village who don't fight for his right. When the landlord's accountant tried to play with the Shambu receipt, he avoided any confrontation and submitted to what had been said. However, Shambu refuses to forgo his morality and cultural virtues both in the city and village. His character is shown consistent here as when Kanhaiya steals money for his medicine, Shambu beats him: *Kisan ka beta hoke tuney chori ki* (Being the son of a farmer, you stole). Similarly, when the children lacked fare for traveling to school, Shambu took them to school without money.

Over the male protagonist, Shambu, *Do Bigha Zamin* illustrates the socio-economic and socio-political scenario of that time. Both the urgency to last and look after the family, and judicial compulsion to pay more than triple the amount which he owes to the landlord composed the tragedy in the shambu life that ultimately cost him the land. In the end, the visit of Parvati to Calcutta highlights the insecure cities for the ‘second gender’ and unfolds the juxtaposition employed by Bimal Roy to differentiate the experiences of Shambu and Parvati while traveling on the same road. Parvati faces an attempt of rape and ran into the car to avoid the physical assault. All the money saved by Shambu and Kanhaiya goes into the treatment of Parvati in the hospital. The film ends with the note that the two acres of land are now under the control of the landlord and a mill had been set up there. Shambu, Parvati, and Kanhaiya depart from there empty-handed and Shambu's father goes insane seeing this. He says that – now the whole earth is our home and the blue sky is our roof.

The farmer that was produced as a consequence of the corporatization of agricultural land commencing from India's independence still has a fundamental influence on the agriculturist folks. The seizure of agricultural land by enterprises for 'development' rationales as demonstrated in Shambu's example created miseries in farmers' lives that lead to deserting of professions to find other work. The new farmer, amid industrialization, carried the old dilemmas - that enveloped them in the colonial era- like securing a livelihood, a fair price for the crop, and paying the debt. Farmers in India are known as '*annadaata*' and are considered a beacon along with a national army embodied in the slogan: *Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*, given by the second Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri. Thus, the sentiments are richer in the case of soldiers and farmers in India, and any turmoil related to them leads to nationwide fervor. Scholars such as Anuradha Malshe, Esha Shah, S. Mahendra Dev, and Jyoti Tyagi have evaluated the farmer in post-independent India (in advertisements, films, newspapers, and music records) in the context of the corporatization of farming, a migrant worker and small farmers in India. The farmer is docked as the 'backbone of the Indian economy', a stature that gets divided due to the high suicide rates and migration of farmers into the city.

Farmer avatars in the films are denoted as a custodian of the family, and devout parent who is unfeigned to the duress of children, and one who stands nonchalant of a progress-regress binary of the life and gobbles through it by nyctophilia of labor, city's cathexis, and village fogdog. The farmer is reckoned with the dialectics of misery and effulgent, legerity and numbness, and bullish and bearish. *Do Bigha Zamin* illustrates the farmer who becomes a migrant worker in the city: "For that is what Sambhu is, a beast of burden; but if for Sambhu the oppressor is always, but always, fully human, the ontology of the oppressor is such that the oppressed ceases to be fully human, and is sometimes not human at all" (Lal, 2008). Tyagi and Jain write that "Bimal Roy presents both the good and the evil sides of rural and urban life. People in the village live a simple sort of life with their very limited resources but are harassed by the landlord. Illiteracy and meager employment opportunities lead to a vicious cycle of poverty". Tyagi and Jain observation that the farmers are harassed by the landlord subsists pertinent since this explains the "unjust nature of the rural economy where the moneylender who does not lift a finger to do any sort of cultivation receives a lion's-share of farmers' harvests and lives in luxury" (Ganti, 2013).

Thus the movie canvasses the farmer's personality in the deserted corridor, whose windows are broken, and diminishing light through it snatches out the slightest hope left. Although, Shambu's futile endeavor to save the land flunked to erode his character and become the inspiration for other films to exhibit realistic themes in Indian cinema. The problems exalted in the movie like a land issue, government policy effect on individuals, and tribunal and police functions become an inspiration for movies in the 1960s-70s but get fizzled after the arrival of masala films or a blend of action, comedy, romance, drama, etc. which become the heavy demand amongst the audience.

The farmers' plight of the debt cycle and exploitation by the corporates, and corruption in the state just not made the farming vocation distasteful but also alienated Bollywood from making any more agriculture-based films. The advent of consumerism and migration of the population from rural to urban areas pushed Indian film industries to cater to the need of the modern urban rich who thronged cinemas for entertainment intents. Moreover, liberalization and privatization had a profound impact on agricultural cinema and rural areas. The next section examines these changes in the trends of peasant portrayal and changing times in Bollywood that made the depiction of rural areas difficult.

### **Forbidding Peasant—and Miseries: The Rise of Modernity in Postmillennial Cinema**

After *Do Bigha Zamin*, a small number of films were made on farmers, mainly after the 1990s, because of the inclination of Indian filmmakers to the diaspora of India and the urban population. In her work "Desertion of Rural theme from Hindi Cinema: A Study", Negi writes that:

"According to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture, the total number of suicides committed by farmers for agrarian reasons in the last three years stands at 3313 which was appalling. Maharashtra the state in which the Hindi film Industry is placed has seen the maximum number of such suicides and yet the industry has not made even 10 films in which the farmer is either protagonist or an important supporting character since 2001" (Negi, 2017, P. 335).

Famous Hindi filmmaker, Karan Johar -known for laying the trend of NRI movies like *Dil Wale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) - states in his defense that: "We do not see NRIs as people who are separate from Indians. They are all Indians and in fact the NRIs are more Indian at

heart then any of us in India" (P. 338). The mainstream directors resultantly abandoned the rural-based and realistic theme movies, and rather focused on the rich lifestyle of urban and developed countries, detaching the audience from the realities of Indian society; the socio-economic and socio-political aspects got waived for commercial content in the Indian cinema along with the non-representation of native Indian people primarily workers, and farmers in Hindi films. However, multiple causes are present for the trend than just the non-inclination of filmmakers in farmer pictures. Striving to be politically correct and ease of getting marketable content, along with huge return from the box office stand the explanation which impeded farmer movies trend in India.

Although excluding farmers themes, parallel cinema in India was visible sporadically during the post-globalization phase and early 2000s through small budget independent films and "Hinglish" movies (owes the name Hinglish due to the use of both English and Hindi language in the movie) such as Mr. and Mrs. Iyer (2002), Everybody Says I'm Fine! (2001), English August (1994), and Being Cyrus (2005) (Roy, 2013). Despite being moderately profitable in the intermittent cosmopolitan centers of India and overseas markets, these movies were outcast for having appealed only to the specific middle-class elite audiences (Ibid). Lately, parallel cinema movies such as Peepli Live (2010), Ship of Theseus (2012), and The Lunch Box (2013) (Khanna, 2013) had success at the box office which has heralded a change from post-globalization trends set in Indian cinema for parallel movies and socio-cultural alteration among cinema-goers (Appadurai, 1990). Consequently, new filmmakers have come to light in Indian cinema such as Ritesh Batra, Kiran Rao, Anand Gandhi, Ashim Ahluwalia, and Chaitanya Tamhane (Devasundaram, 2016).

The process is similar to the American system where a pool of parallel filmmakers can be seen after graduating from film schools and later on they get subsumed in the mainstream cinema industry to bolster the horizon of the latter's cultural capital (Berra, 2008) and to have the unitary voice. John Berra writes that the prominent mainstream Hollywood studio system makes a deal with independent film directors to imbue all audiences i.e. parallel cinema and mainstream cinema audiences for their product. This instance is seen in India when director Karan Johar decided to make a bid for Rakesh Batra's The Lunchbox so that his name can be associated with the film (IANS, 2013) and also decided to direct one story in the film Bombay talkies.

From new filmmakers, some continue making films independently and some made alliances with the big production house. Advancements in technical expertise and the need to reflect the social realities have further broadened the scope of independent films (Das & Pandey, 2014) and the incentives of new actors in the leading roles have artistically tainted these films that have been found to have more appeal among the elites (Sarkar, 2012). However, a mix of commercial and parallel cinema works well with the masses (Ibid). This requirement of blending in the movies like action, comedy, drama, suspense, etc. in one place has made the task difficult particularly for the movies that deal with realism (Allemand, 2014). At Berlin or Cannes Film festival, the parallel cinema of India has found its presence while the typical Bollywood films for which India is known in overseas and domestic market remains unidentified (Ibid).

Allemand (2014) studied two parallel films of India: Salaam Bombay! (1988) and Dhobi Ghat (2010), in the context of urban poverty and observed that the situation in Mumbai where both movies were shot is still the same as portrayed in Dhobi Ghat. Salaam Bombay! explored the issue of child labor and prostitution while Dhobi Ghat explored the dreams and hopes of cosmopolitan dwellers. One of the recent feature films from Shyam Benegal's Welcome to Sajjanpur (2008) narrates the story of Mahadev (played by Shreyas Talpade) who wants to become a novel writer but ends up writing letters for illiterate people in the village. The film touches on the issue of superstition, widow remarriage, and the caste system through satire and comedy by various characters that come to present their life story apparently from letters. In the content analysis of Welcome to Sajjanpur, Naresh and Prakash (2015) note that "we see a change in Shyam Benegal's style as well. Where he would be stark and bleak in his presentation he has used a pleasanter style to bond with his audience, ensuring greater financial success in this film than in his earlier films" and the film had "used commercially viable actors rather than art house actors". This change in presenting the social spectacle in form of humor and satire differed from the 1950-1990s era where the realities were reflected as it is. Examples of these films are Achhoot Kanya (1936), Manthan (1970), Pakeezah (1972), Ankur (1974), Gaman (1978), Ardh Satya (1983), etc. In the present context, the blend of social reality with the commercial dimensions in the movie has proven to be beneficial for filmmakers and attractive to the audience.

The World Cinema Film Festival 2011 embraced the ‘Soul of India’ theme for eighteen Indian films that come outside of Bollywood including *Peepli Live* (2010), *Dhobi Ghat* (2010), and *Gandu* (2010) among other short, animated, and documentary films. London Indian film festival director Cary Sawhney remarked that:

“Rather than the standard Bollywood audiences across four generations, we’re aiming for the younger generation, who are disenfranchised by [the] Bollywood of their parent’s era and want something more cutting-edge” (Verma, 2011).

Rahul Verma noted that ‘a new wave of Indian independent film is breaking the all-singing, all-dancing stereotype of Bollywood via low-cost, offbeat movies and edgier subject matter’ (2011). Although the movies are less in number but it has started the debate in the public sphere about the necessity of such content in the present times. For instance, an article in *The Hindu* newspaper discussed that the:

*“First half of 2011 saw filmmakers trying new themes, focusing on fresh issues without pandering to the box office demands. With the audience becoming highly stratified, very few are targeting a family entertainer. Till last year, who thought a Hindi film with two female actors can score at the box office, but Raj Kumar Gupta’s No One Killed Jessica shattered the long-standing stereotype that you require a male star to draw the audience. If Kiran Rao’s perceptive Dhobi Ghat showed Mumbai in a new light ... Onir impressed with his measured audacity in I Am ... Similarly Shor In the City nailed the cacophony of corruption. It is no longer about, hero, heroine, villain and five songs” (Kumar, 2011).*

This has paved the way for realism as a new technophile public wants diverse and niche content that requires a broad spectrum of films to be produced in the country. The next section discusses a blend film that has artistically portrayed realism under the guise of black humor. I selected *Peepli Live* for this study because its sole priority is farmers and under present conditions.

### **Realism, Comedy, Tragedy... and the Cinema: Documenting Anusha Rizvi’s *Peepli Live***

The farmer is portrayed amidst the political, economic, and media fulcrum in Aamir Khan produced satirical black comedy movie *Peepli Live* (2010). The film is directed by Anusha Rizvi and Mahmood Farooqui but it remains under the shadows of Aamir Khan's storyline depicted in mainstream cinema (Raghavendra, 2010) through various films such as *Taare Zameen Par* (2007), *Dhobi Ghat* (2010), *Secret Superstar* (2017), etc. The all-around success of *Peepli Live* in overseas and domestic cinema is credited to Aamir Khan who capitalize on his stardom stringently to assure the success of *Peepli Live* (Devasundaram, 2016). Khan is considered as often the only viable producer of non-mainstream content of Bollywood in the 2010s (Ibid). Devasundram (2016) noted that "Aamir Khan was instrumental in bridging the Bollywood and alternative domains through films such as *Taare Zameen Par* (2007) and *3 Idiots* (2009)".

*Peepli Live* was India's official entry into the 83rd academy awards in the foreign film category and was also nominated for the best film in the 2011 Filmfare awards (Chakravorty and Singh, 2010). The picture starts in *Peepli* village which is the constituency of the Chief Minister (CM) of the state- Mukhya Pradesh (MP) where elections are about to happen. Natha (played by Omkar Das Manikpuri) and Budhia (played by Raghubir Yadav) are shown as two brothers residing in *Peepli* village as agriculturists along with their mother and Natha wife Dhaniya (Shalini Vatsa) and their three children. Both brothers are depicted as alcoholics who flunk the daily work and choose to spend time drinking. Due to this, repayment of loans to the bank seems impossible. And if they don't repay the loan to the bank, their home and farm would be taken over by the bank. To escape this, the elder brother (Budhia) decides to commit suicide after both brothers conclude -following a meeting with the local politician *Bhai Thakur* who first ask them to visit government offices for the loan and later suggested that *bhaiya ji sarkar bhi bina liye kuchu deti nhi hai, tum ek chiz to de sakte ho, apni jaan de do sarkar ko* (Brother, even the government does not give anything without taking something in return. You can give one thing to the government- give your life). Budhia later verified the same from *Bhai Thakur* associate *Gudda Babu*, who reassure Budhia that the news of the government giving money after a suicide has also come in *Janmorcha* newspaper- that government gives one Lakh rupees to farmers who commit suicide.

In the turn of dialogue between Natha and Budhia, it is decided that Natha will commit suicide instead of Budhia. Budhia exhibits that he can't allow the land of his forefathers to go into the hand of banks and rather he will oblige to suicide for this purpose. Deceived by emotions, Natha says that he will commit suicide that gets consolation from Budhia that dying is effortless work of two minutes, and it is the same thing -whether he commits suicide or

Natha. This deception from Budhia can be seen in the eyes and silence of Natha throughout the film who in the mid of the film tried to convince Budhia that he want to avoid suicide. But Budhia evades his argument. P Sainath (2013) noted that 'at least 270,940 Indian farmers have taken their lives since 1995'.

The issue of farmer's suicide gets discussed in the media where the union agriculture minister Salim Kidwai (played by Naseeruddin Shah) says that farmers are not suiciding rather these are natural deaths and the government can't be held accountable for such deaths. In meantime, a local journalist named Rakesh (played by Nawazuddin Siddiqui) visits Peepli where he heard that a farmer named Natha is suiciding. This news gets published in the local newspaper- Janmorcha and the incident receive high attention from the media and local and national politicians who start to criticize each other for the situation of the farmers in the country. The film exhibit the appalling state of bureaucracy in the country that revolves around *namaskar and jai hind* sir to pacify their political masters and contribute very meager to society and rather is encircled in the politics like a person wandering in closed round hallways which has no exit. Devasundaram (2016) writes that the socio-economic disparity that existed between cities and villages of India at the time of Independence persists even today and bureaucracy apathy towards marginalized class have worsened that disparity even further. After Natha news gets published, the district magistrate suspends the license of Janmorcha newspaper for publishing such unfavorable content. While Bhai Thakur beats Natha and Budhia for planning the suicide.

However, the event attracts the attention of the opposition political leader of the Natha's caste *Shri Pappu Lal Ji* of *Jan Samaj Dal* who visit his house for giving a Television set and lauding Natha- *Ye waqt balidaan ka hain. Natha ne ye kadam utha kar apni jati or apna desh ka naam upar kia hain* (This is the time of sacrifice. Natha has raised the name of his caste and his country by taking these steps). Before this, the government has provided a hand pump to Natha under *Lal Bahadur Shastri Punarvas Yojana*, but the compensation for fitting the hand pump was absent from the scheme leading to the hand pump becoming a symbol of detested help from the regime. CM of Mukhya Pradesh, Shri Ram Yadav irked by Pappu Lal's aid to Natha asked the district collector to give relief to Natha under the state-run schemes, but Natha's case was covered under no scheme of the government. Meanwhile, due to constant attention to Natha by the media and the expected confluence between CM and Shri Pappu Lal, Bhai Thakur visits Natha's house and threatens Budhia to kill to death if Natha remains alive for two more days.

In New Delhi, the Agriculture ministry send the issue of suicide to the law ministry as they think that it is a legal matter and a committee must be formed under retired judges to assess the whole issue first. Agriculture minister, Salim Kidwai, says that this is the utter defeat of CM (Ram Yadav) of Mukhya Pradesh as Peepli is his constituency and if such situations are prevailing in Peepli then what will happen in other constituencies. CM soon replied that he is undefeated and everyone knows that farmer is not suiciding first time in India: see in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab...what central government been doing since the 1990s?

The media's role is shoddy in the film. Consumerism's advent after the 1990s is visible in the spectacle of mass media particularly news media. The news is wrapped in such a way to assuage the modern cosmopolitan demographic of India from sensationalist news coverage. Moreover, consumerism underlines the rupture that exists in India between the urban capital cities "consumers" and rural defunct "exploitee". Different media outlets fight with each other in the film for news stories and higher TRP (television rating point) in the film. Nandita, a news anchor of ITV news whose genre is not agriculture gets forced to cover the Natha story. When the Natha suicide is shown on prime time on ITV news other news channels blindly start competing for the coverage of Natha stories and grilled to copy each other. Deepak, a news anchor of Bharat Live, has shown to be promising Mukhya Pradesh CM twenty bites in favor of his party before the upcoming by-election. Conversely, Rakesh, who first discovered the Natha tragedy gradually seems bewildered by the processes and consequences of covering such a story. Hori Mahto, a farmer in the Peepli village influenced Rakesh, who use to dig the soil from barren land: after his land get auctioned. Mahto use to sell the soil to local brick kilns for living. One day he died in the same pit in which he was digging. This moved Rakesh who tries to convince Nandita to cover the Mahto story but Nandita scolds him that the research suggests that Natha's story is important and if he can't handle it then he is probably in the wrong profession. The discussion left few options for Rakesh than to follow the Natha news.

The media tried to sensationalize every opportunity that they get even the defecation of Natha was analyzed to predict his mental state. News media assured the politicians that the battle is going on and everyone should score points against each other through sensationalist statements and actions to swing the public opinion to their side. The

announcement, thereof comes from the CM of Mukhya Pradesh this time of one Lakh Rupees to Natha against the announcements of TV set of opposition leader, visit of Bhai Thakur to Natha house and blame of central government that CM is doing nothing. Union agriculture minister soon discarded this move of CM that how one can give money when there is an ongoing code of conduct in elections and CM of MP should resign on ethical grounds. Similar statements were issued by the Election commission of India that denied any remuneration to Natha. The central agriculture minister was clear that if the CM does something then he will trap him and if CM remains silent then also he will trap him. In this light, the agriculture minister asked the secretary to bring a Natha card that will give monetary benefits to all the farmers of the country who fall below the poverty line and thinking about suicide. The reason for bringing the Natha card was that the central government doesn't have to pay for the Natha card as it is the responsibility of respective states to manage funds for this scheme.

Learning about the circumstances that no money will be given from the CM, Natha escapes from the site but gets captured by the men of Bhai Thakur who tried to hand over him to Salim Kidwai. However, CM and the agriculture minister in last make a deal of understanding that can be advantageous to both sides, while the media falsely conclude that Natha has died in an accident. In reality, local journalist Rakesh died in that accident, and Natha is shown working as a construction worker in the city lost in the dust from the incidences that happen to him and the kind of life waiting for him in the future. After three months of the incident, no Natha card was given nor compensation was given by the government for the death of Natha to his family. All markets, festivals, and fairs ceased as the media exits the village.

Peepli Live through Natha's story explains the "nexus between the media, capital and politics" that move together to create a place that favors only a few- who are part of the system and become a punishment for those folks who lack any stand in this trio. It is seen at the end that Natha was just a means for the system to fulfill its objective of better deals between the players who matter. In this story, CM and the agriculture minister had the major stakes and were real recipients while Natha was a pawn who mistakenly thought he was going to get something.

The film finds its intertextuality in Indian literature especially in Premchand (particularly godaan) novels and post-liberalized Indian movies (Devasundaram, 2016). The overall "development drive" of corporates and government in post-independence and post-liberalized India shakes off the agrarian lives completely. Privatization of banks and media, and "debunked" state policies crippled agriculturists that weaves the way for Indian peasants to stride from agrarian class to marginalized class. India's postmodern technological changeover also alienated the rural class of India from the benefits of digital technologies access which is portrayed in Lunchbox (2013) (Kool and Aggarwal, 2006). In Peepli Live, Natha seems to have no understanding of technology and started shouting when he first sees the camera. Similar instances were noticed in Do Bigha Zamin when Shambu visits Calcutta first time and is unable to differentiate between home and a double-decker bus. Shambu even gets confused after seeing the Howrah bridge. Peepli Live lead actors- Omkar Das Manikpuri and Raghubir Yadav are folk stage actors and haven't played any role in Bollywood films before – especially the former which has accentuated the reality element of the film. The striking acting of the actors in the movie has intensified the realities of the script and made the audience forget that they are watching the movie (Malani, 2010). Peepli Live as Do Bigha Zamin has expressed the indebtedness of peasants but unlike the latter, Peepli Live has cautiously avoided the question of how two brothers get indebted (Raghavendra, 2010). The scriptwriter leaves it to the audience to guess the possible reason for it and beyond.

## Conclusion

Both Do Bigha Zamin and Peepli Live issue a peasant statement on how farm debt has encircled the lives of farmers and their families, and the aftermath of the debt cycle. The farmer's journey through emotional and physical disruption reveals the hidden fissures in the form of rotten government institutions, the culture of technological and cinematographic media, and fraternizing of power by the state. The peasant is portrayed as one who failed to identify the manufactured fatalism by the hegemonic state powers and their subsidiaries. Shambhu in Do Bigha Zamin did manage to give all the debts, but still, get dragged by the proprietor into the judiciary where the judge announced an amount that can't be conferred by him. Therefore, all of Shambhu's story moves into the pursuit of the unalterable target. As the country transitioned from close to the neoliberal economy, society transitioned too causing the rise in modernity after the 1990s in Bollywood. The Socio-economic and socio-political aspects got waived for commercial content in the Indian cinema along with the non-representation of native Indian people primarily workers, and farmers.

The trend was interrupted by the renaissance of parallel cinema in the country and the rise of independent filmmakers in the 2010s. Peepli Live is an example of this rise in parallel cinema, but this time with a blend of realism and commercial content. Natha, the main protagonist of Peepli Live, lacked capital and got denied formal passages due to the intellectual vacuum that persuaded him to reach the fragile local political leadership in the film, which recommended suicide options to him. The complexities of postmodern hyper-reality and spatiotemporal models knitted through mass media have inhibited any logical decision from Natha aside from fueling uncertainties. George Bernard Shaw (1922) in the "Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy" notes that "there are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it". Natha met the former tragedy and decided to leave home after receiving a deluge of promises from the state. Lately, what has happened is the reiteration of hegemonic norms or the lessening of importance, cause the system seems indifferent to significance. Do Bigha Zamin and Peepli Live were two different movies of different times and contexts embodying the social state of their respective times, and they sketched the intangible sorrow, also present in other Indian agricultural films, that tell a story which very less often get heard.

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