

Contemporary Bangladeshi Commercial Cinema: A Perspective from Young Generation of Bangladesh

Shegufta Yasmin*

Abstract

This study aims to discover the attitudes of young generations of Bangladesh towards the contemporary Bangladeshi commercial cinema. Cinema is the greatest media of a country which can easily portray a country, its population, ideas, philosophy and cultures. In this modern era one does not need to watch cinema in cinema hall as it can also be available at home. But still a huge population go to cinema halls. What about the opinion of the young generation? Whether they feel interested to go to cinema hall or not? This paper tries to find out the different impression about Bangla commercial cinema between educated and uneducated young generation of Bangladesh. Through this study, the situation of cinema halls and contemporary cinema of this country will come out. This paper will also give a holistic idea about Bangladeshi cinema's directors, producers, stories, themes, titles and audiences in the eyes of young generation.

Key words: Art film, Commercial film, Vulgar, Environment of Cinema Hall, Story, Cinema Title, Audiences, Lower standard, Representing own culture, Copying.

Introduction

Cinema is like a window of a society. A country and its customs, society, people are mostly reflected through a cinema. So we can also say it is a mouthpiece of a society. This is the strongest media which can portray the pros and cones of a society.

Until 1956, Bengali cinema meant cinema made from Kolkata. It was a big industry within India since 1930s and Bengali Muslims from East Bengal were basically the consumers of the film. However, the international recognition of Satyajit Ray and artistic success of some other filmmakers like Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen from West Bengal, India had created a profound impact on the filmmakers of Bangladesh. The Dhaka-based first full length sound feature film *Mukh O Mukhosh* (The Face and the Mask) was made in 1956, just following the release of *Pather Pachali* by Satyajit Ray. Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) was established in 1957. After the independence, the first internationally recognized film from Bangladesh, *Suryo Dighal Bari* (The Ominous House, 1979) by Masihuddin Shaker and Sheikh Niamat Ali was also influenced by Satyajit Ray's neo-realist filmmaking style. After 1947, Bengali Muslims from East Bengal had got the opportunity to create Dhaka as their own hub of culture and economy. Now Bengali Muslim filmmakers are more interested in portraying their own history and culture which rarely transcend the timeline of 1947. On the other hand the Bengalis of West Bengal, instead of looking back to the common Bengali language and culture,

* Sr. Lecturer, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, ASA University Bangladesh.

are eager to get their stake in national Indian context. Observers say the future capital of Bengali literature and culture would be Dhaka. The distinctiveness between two Bengals is getting clearer as time passes. (Haq)

Bangladesh has a rich golden past of cinema. Many renowned and famous cinemas, actors, actresses, directors are here. We have enjoyed a glorious era of Black and White cinema. But now for last few years we are facing a crisis in Bangla cinema. As a nation we are very cultured, we have rich musical background, have vast natural beauty. Though we have many positive aspects which can boost up our cinema industry, we are still far behind the international standard. Bangladeshis love their country, culture, then why don't we get enough audience in our cinema halls? The young generations are the biggest part of our population and they are the future of our country. This young generation will lead their country in future. It is necessary to build up an educated young generation. To educate someone cinema can play a vital role. But our young generations are not preferring or taking it as a guide. Why? Through this paper I will try to bring the answer about. We can observe two trends of audiences- one is aristocratic educated group and other is illiterate group of people. Both groups have different and opposite kind of taste for cinema. Both get pleasure from cinema in different ways. Majority of audiences are from the second group. To keep business and entertainment in mind producers and directors make films for a target group which is often disliked by other group of viewers. Many young boys and girls feel shame to say that he / she goes to cinema hall. Now it's a matter of prestige. Behind all these some psychological reasons are there. That is present days cinema has lost its dignity, nothing to learn from it etc. But at the same time this generation feels proud to watch Hollywood films or Hindi films. Maximum Bangla contemporary cinemas are treated as lower class, vulgar and melodramatic entertainment. Whereas once upon a time middle class family members went to cinema hall together. Though many think that in the age of globalization, we have now Dish TV, DVD, VCD etc. and hence now we don't need to go to cinema halls viewing of cinema may take place at home. But still people go to cinema halls in every country. Even in the USA and European countries people go to halls. Then why don't Bangladeshi middle class and educated people go to halls regularly? They don't get healthy pleasure from cinema.

Objective of the study

- This study will show what the young generations of Bangladesh think about contemporary Bangla cinema and Bangladeshi cinema halls.
- To identify and focus the major problems of Bangla cinema in the eyes of young viewers.

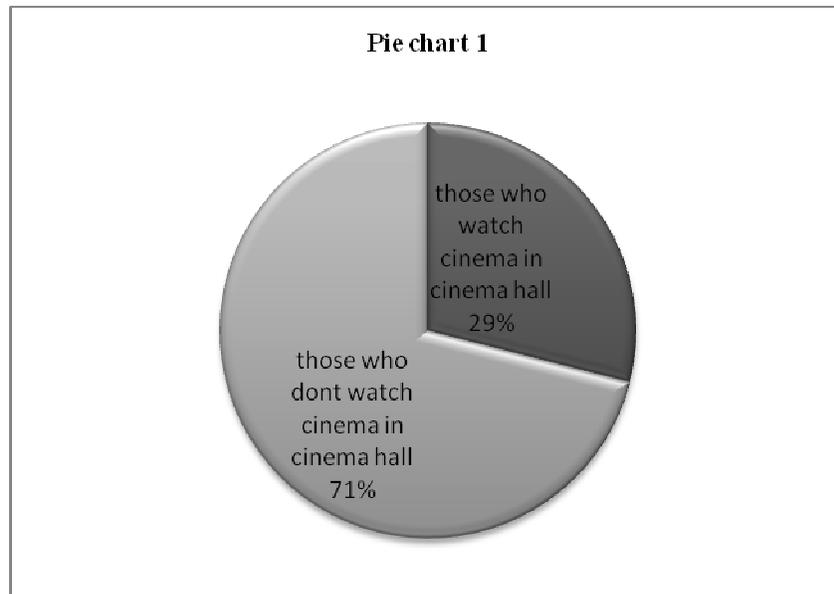
Research Methodology

- A questionnaire consisting of 15 questions is distributed among 155 young boys and girls those who belong to 19 - 35 years of age. Most of them are students of various private universities in Dhaka city and job holders in different companies in Dhaka city.
- Five different Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are arranged with young boys and girls of 18 to 25 years of age. All of them are students of different faculties and most of them have rural background upto their 18 years of age.

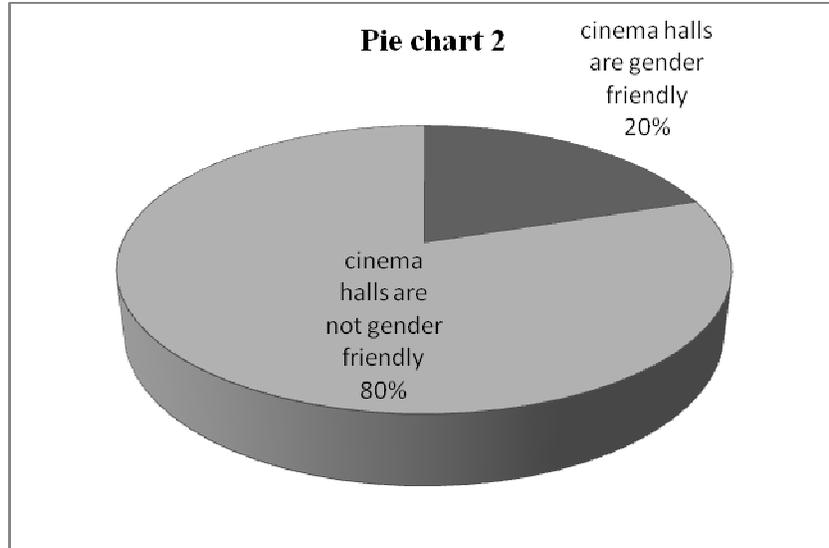
- Individual 100 viewers' intensive interviews are taken from six cinema halls of different areas of Dhaka City and Savar. All of them belong to young generations and workers of different grassroots levels.
- Five ticket sellers from different cinema halls of Dhaka City are interviewed.
- Interview is taken of a renowned Bangladeshi Film director.

Data Presentation

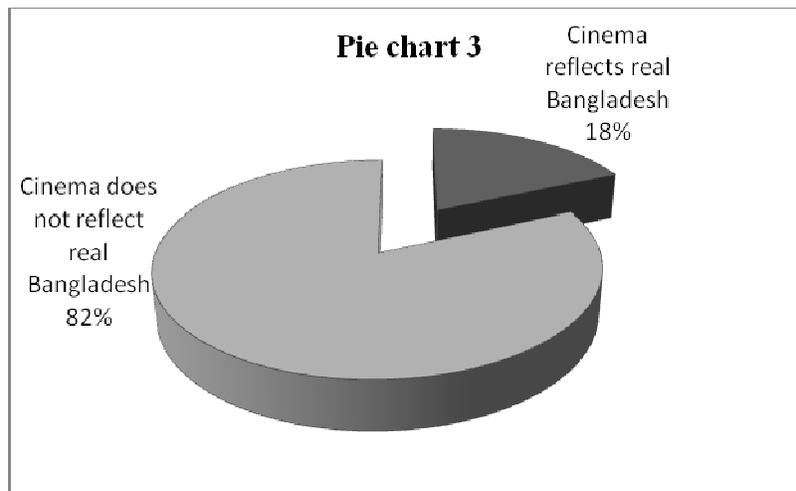
Following data are collected from 155 young (19 to 35 years age) persons' interview through a questionnaire consisting of 15 questions.



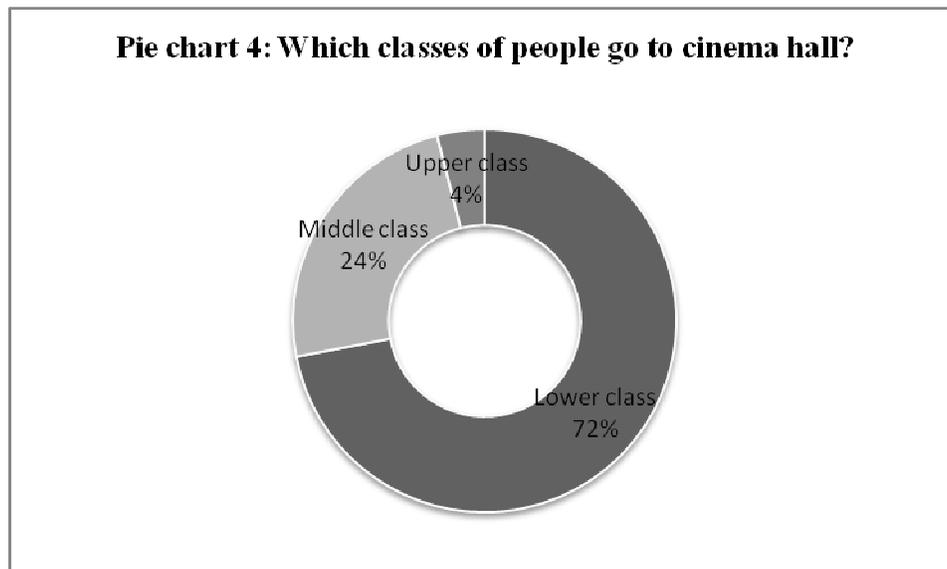
From Pie chart 1, we can see that only 29% educated young generation watches cinema in cinema halls. They are also not very regular. Whereas 71% of that group doesn't go to cinema halls. The reasons of this disinterest are - worse environment of halls, boring stories, under rated cinemas etc. The survey was taken among the undergraduate students. Many of them once watched cinema, but now they have stopped viewing Bangla cinema. The girl students said that their parents do not allow them to go to cinema hall because of hall's environment.



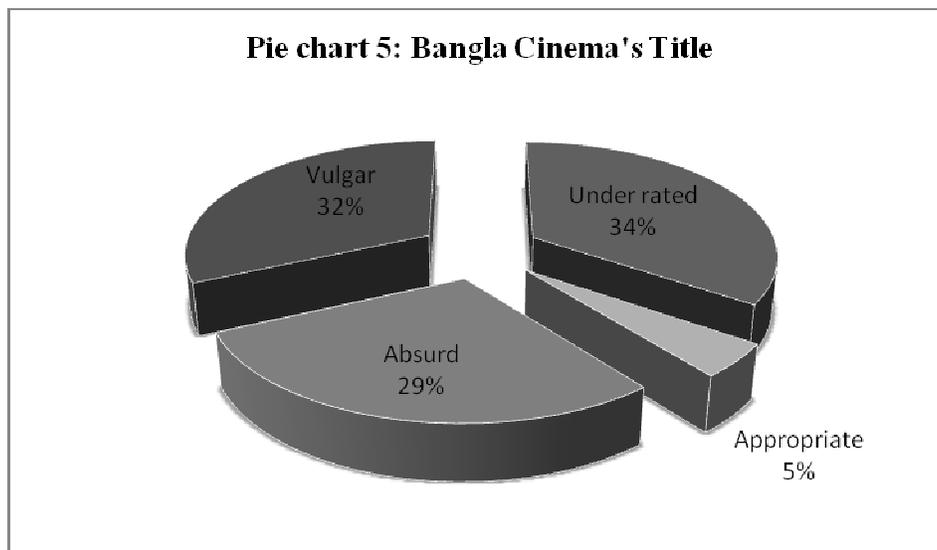
From the chart 2, we get to know that only 20% people think that cinema hall's environment is gender friendly. They don't feel uncomfortable to take their female family members to a cinema hall. Especially they mention about Modhumita hall and Cineplex in Bashundhara City. Other 80% think that cinema halls are not gender friendly. Most of the girls said that women are not treated very normally in the cinema halls.



In chart 3, we find that only 18% of youth think that Bangladeshi cinema reflects the real Bangladesh. Their argument is that few cinemas display some aspects of Bangladesh but not totally. But majority 82% think that our cinema does not reflect the real Bangladesh at all. The ways our actors/ actresses talk, their dress up, dance do not reflect our real culture. These are only imitation of foreign culture, especially our cinema industry is compared with the distort image of Indian film industry.



From the Pie chart 4, we can assume the impression of young generation about the audiences. They think that 72% of viewers are from lower class of our society. Here ‘class’ is determined with their social and economical condition. 24% of audiences are from Middle class and rest of 4% is from Upper class. Now-a-days most of the cinemas are produced thinking about the lower class people, that’s why their number is the highest. Many expect that if the themes of the films are changed, then they will be able to attract more audiences from middle class and upper class people.



Most of the persons oppose the title of Bangla cinema. From pie chart 5, we see that only 5 % think that titles are appropriate. But 34% think that maximum titles are inappropriate. 32% consider them as vulgar and 29% think them as absurd. Their opinion is that the film makers give such kind of title which can attract the target people. But others feel no attraction for viewing the particular cinema after knowing the title.

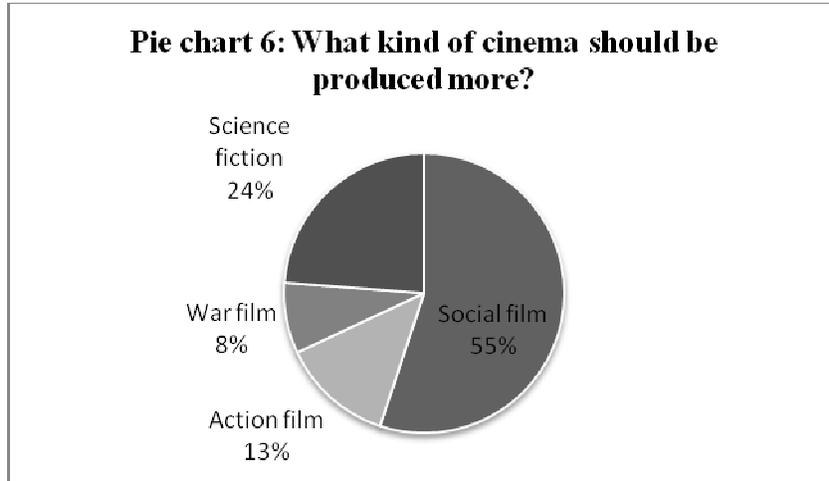
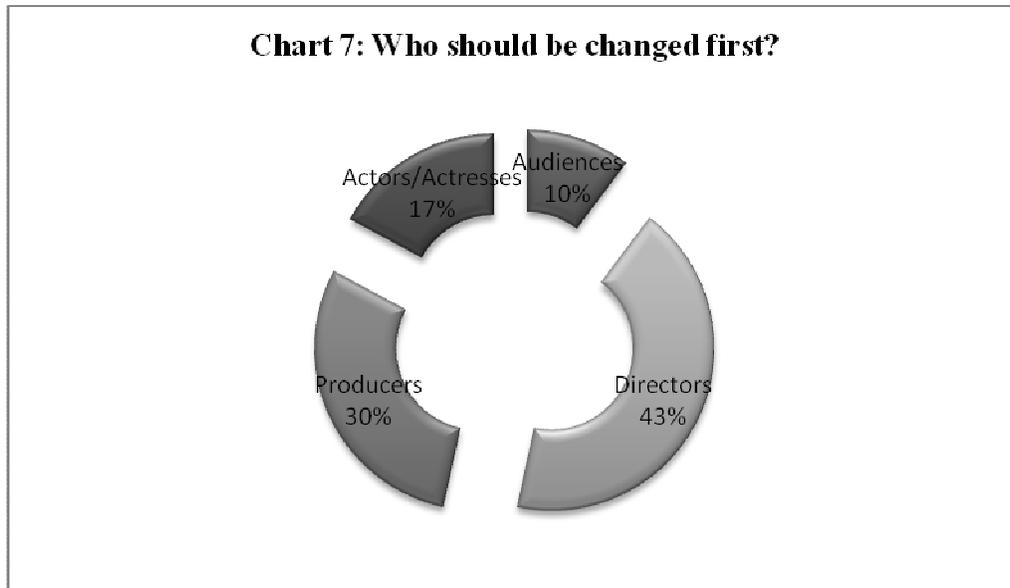
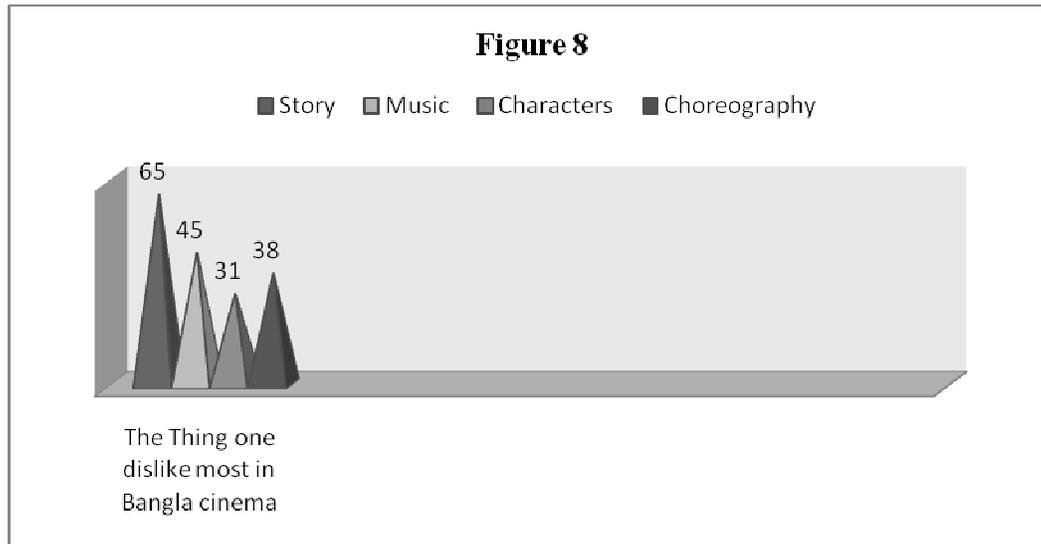


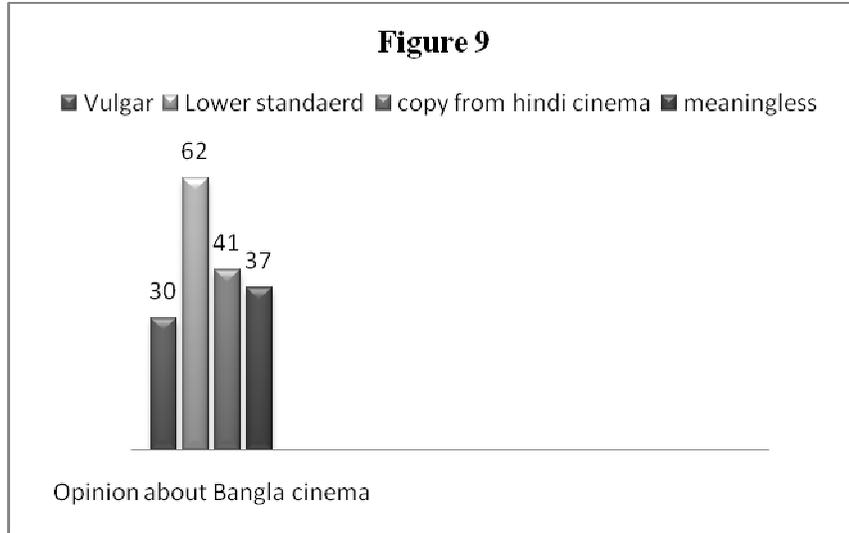
Chart 6 reflects people's interest for the social films. 55% think that only social films can play the role of a guide. Through them society's various problems can be identified and rectified. 13% give opinions for Action films and 8% are interested in war film. As young generation viewers have attraction for Hollywood's science fiction movies, so we find that 24% give emphasis on cinema based on Science fiction.



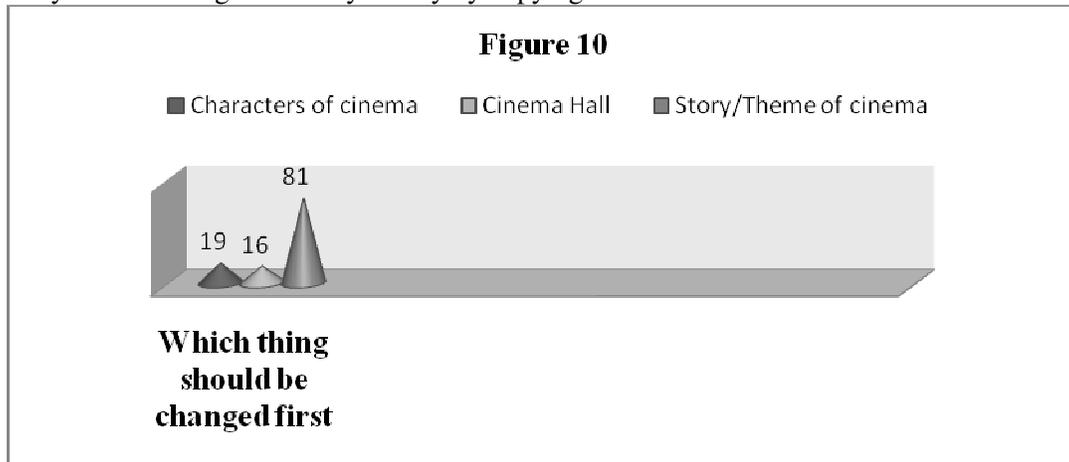
In chart 7, 43% viewers give opinion that Bangladeshi Directors should change their attitudes first. 30% think that if the attitude of the producers of cinema change first, then Bangla cinema will be improved. 17% think that actors/actresses should get changed first. Whereas only 10% think that audiences should change their mindset first. If so, then all the problems will be solved. If audiences wish to watch new kinds of cinema, directors will make so and producers will invest for them. As a result our actors/actresses will try to change themselves according to demand.



From the Figure 8, we see that 65% dislike most of the story line of Bangla cinema. They think that most of the stories are irrational, illogical and far from the reality. 45% dislike the music of Bangla cinema. They think that most of the music is copied from Hindi cinema. Lyrics are often vulgar. 31% dislike the characters. Most of the actors and actresses cannot act in a natural manner. Exaggeration of voice, body language, loud emotion, melodrama makes it irritating. 38% dislike the choreography. They think that often it does not go with situation, story of cinema. Most of the choreography is copied from Hindi cinema. But they are the cheap version of copying.

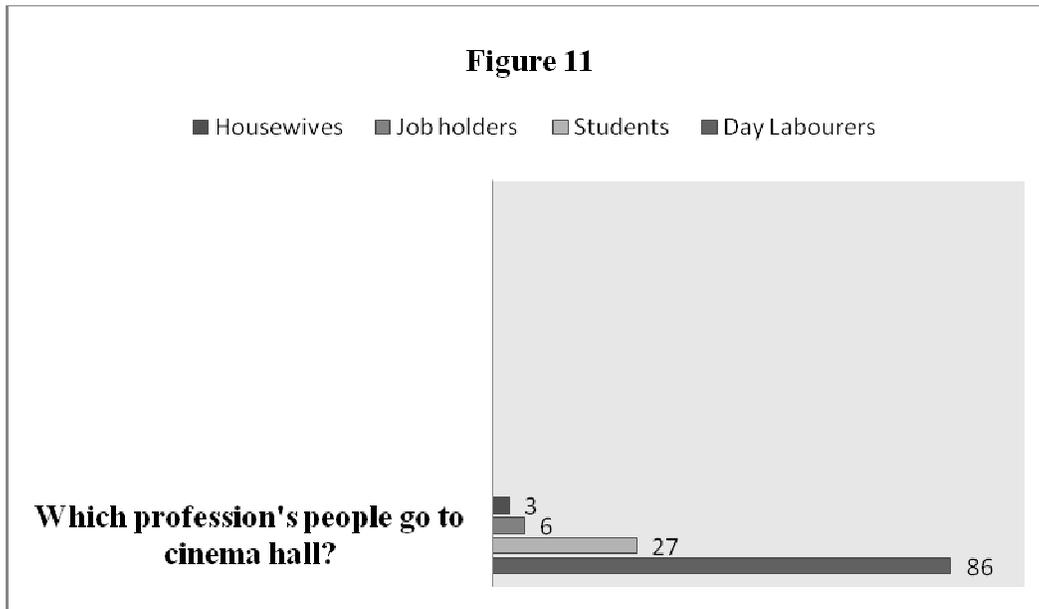


From Figure 9, we can have opinion on overall impression about contemporary Bangla cinema. 30% viewers think Bangla cinema is vulgar. 62% describe it as of lower standard. 41% claim that Bangla cinema is copied from Hindi cinema. 37% think it meaningless. All of them recall the films of 1960s to 1990s as good and fair cinema. They proclaim that after that our cinema industry started losing its identity slowly by copying from other films.

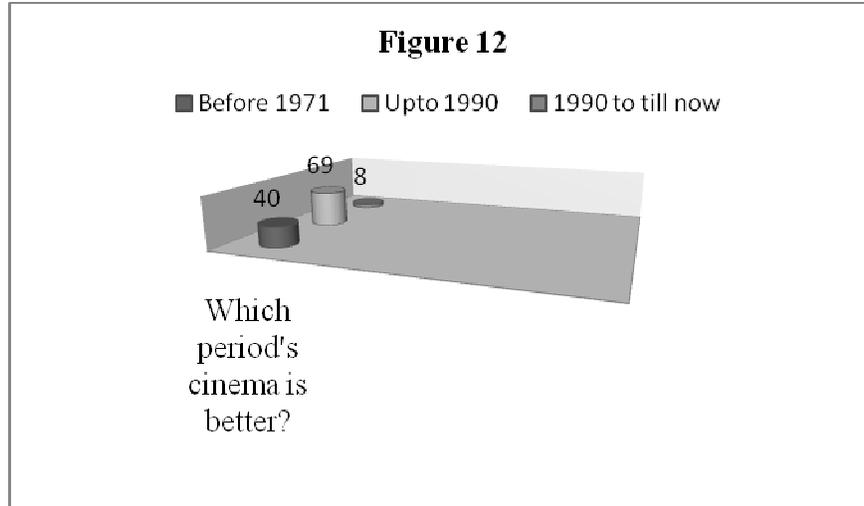


From figure 10 we get to know that 81% of audiences want that story or theme of Bangladeshi cinema should be changed first. Then 16% want to see the changes of environment of cinema halls. Lastly 19% want to see the changed form of characters. It proves that people are mainly annoyed with the story of Bangla cinema. They think if theme or story changes, everything will be changed automatically. If story changes, characters will have to change for story's demand.

Then better audiences will come to cinema hall and environment of hall will also be changed as per demand.



In Figure 11, it is shown that 86% audiences are day labourers who go to cinema hall regularly. Then 27% are students, 6% are job holders and lastly 3% are housewives. It shows that women's presence in cinema hall is very poor. Most of the viewers think that as majority audiences are day labourer that's why the quality of our cinemas is poor. Because according to demand it is produced keeping the audience in mind.



In figure 12, our young generations express their views about golden era of Bangla cinema. 40% think that cinema before 1971 was better. 69% think that cinema upto 1990 was better than those of today. Only 8% appreciates cinema from 1990 till now. They said that many films were produced in last 20 years which are very good but apart from these others are of very lower standard. Those who support the period from 1971 to 1990 as better time for cinema, argue that in that period our cinema industry was not polluted, did not develop the tendency of copying.

Table 1: Titles of Contemporary Bangla Cinema:

Social film	Action film	Romantic film
1. <i>Baba keno chakor</i>	71. <i>Parle thekao</i>	127. <i>Bolbo kotha bashor ghor e</i>
2. <i>Chaina jamidari</i>	72. <i>Moron Kamor</i>	128. <i>Keyamot theke keyamat</i>
3. <i>Biye bari</i>	73. <i>Pagla ghonta</i>	129. <i>Ek buk jala</i>
4. <i>Bostir meye Suria</i>	74. <i>Tornado Kamal</i>	130. <i>Phul nibe na ashru</i>
5. <i>Pita er ashon</i>	75. <i>Palabi kothay</i>	131. <i>Sathi re khuji tomay</i>
6. <i>Judge Shaheb</i>	76. <i>Rajdhani er buke</i>	132. <i>Anarkoli</i>
7. <i>Shamol Chaya</i>	77. <i>Nishiddho nari</i>	133. <i>Debdas</i>
8. <i>Dui duari</i>	78. <i>Bish e vora nagin</i>	134. <i>Mon boshena porar table e</i>
9. <i>Lalu Bhulu</i>	79. <i>Gunda number one</i>	135. <i>Moner majhe tumi</i>
10. <i>Amilir goyenda bahini</i>	80. <i>Momotaj</i>	136. <i>Taka er cheye prem boro</i>
11. <i>Aguner Poroshmoni</i>	81. <i>Ora egarajon</i>	137. <i>Prem er Tajmohol</i>
12. <i>Meherjan</i>	82. <i>Juary</i>	138. <i>Priya amar Priya</i>
13. <i>Dojjal Shashuri</i>	83. <i>Lagao baagi</i>	139. <i>Matir phool</i>
14. <i>Debor-Bhabi</i>	84. <i>Killer</i>	140. <i>Pach taka er prem</i>
15. <i>Raat er por din</i>	85. <i>Matha Noshto</i>	141. <i>Chakor er prem</i>
16. <i>Jamidar barir bou</i>	86. <i>Poran jai jolia</i>	142. <i>Anondo Ashru</i>
17. <i>Shuvo bibaho</i>	87. <i>Palabi kothay</i>	143. <i>Ek buk valobasha</i>
18. <i>Pitar ashon</i>	88. <i>Ora amake valo hote dilo na</i>	144. <i>Piriter agun jole digun</i>
19. <i>Sotter mrittu noy</i>	89. <i>Agun</i>	145. <i>Ami je tomari</i>

20. <i>Koti takar kabin</i>	90. <i>Kopa Samsu</i>	146. <i>Dhakaiya chele</i>
21. <i>Moroner pore</i>	91. <i>Teji</i>	<i>Barishailla maiya</i>
22. <i>Shoshurbari zindabad</i>	92. <i>God Father</i>	147. <i>Moner manush</i>
23. <i>Boro loker dash din goriber ek din</i>	93. <i>Dhakaiya Mastan</i>	148. <i>Sobar age prem</i>
24. <i>Golapi ekhon bilete</i>	94. <i>Sodorghat er coolie</i>	149. <i>Sujan shokhi</i>
25. <i>Shami keno ashami</i>	95. <i>Coolie number one</i>	150. <i>Jaan amar jaan</i>
26. <i>Vat de</i>	96. <i>Aghat palta aghat</i>	151. <i>O shathi re</i>
27. <i>Kajer chele</i>	97. <i>Luttoraj</i>	152. <i>Akhash choya valobasha</i>
28. <i>Ammajan</i>	98. <i>Beiman</i>	153. <i>Premik purush</i>
29. <i>Abbajan</i>	99. <i>Number one Shakib Khan</i>	154. <i>Tumi amar prem</i>
30. <i>Chacchu</i>	100. <i>Lal badshah</i>	155. <i>Ki jadu korecho</i>
31. <i>Rickshaw walar prem</i>	101. <i>Bagher thaba</i>	156. <i>Goriber prem</i>
32. <i>Pita matar amanot</i>	102. <i>Khoj the seach</i>	157. <i>Na bolo na</i>
33. <i>Ek takar bou</i>	103. <i>Khuni Shikdar</i>	158. <i>Phul er moto bou</i>
34. <i>Dadima</i>	104. <i>Jora khun</i>	159. <i>Bolona valobhashi</i>
35. <i>Ma 185oron a bou boro</i>	105. <i>Mastan er upor mastan</i>	160. <i>Valobasha dibi kina bol</i>
36. <i>Baap betar lorai</i>	106. <i>Boma hamla</i>	161. <i>Bolo na tumi amar</i>
37. <i>Shami chintai</i>	107. <i>Leader</i>	162. <i>Prem 185oron a taka boro</i>
38. <i>Mollabarir bou</i>	108. <i>Rongbaz</i>	163. <i>Valobashar lal golap</i>
39. <i>Jamela shundori</i>	109. <i>Gunda number one</i>	164. <i>Ridoy er kotha</i>
40. <i>Vondo</i>	110. <i>Vega biral</i>	165. <i>Bachelor</i>
41. <i>Khamatar lorai</i>	111. <i>Ferari ashami</i>	166. <i>Evabei valobasha hoy</i>
42. <i>Shahoshi manush chai</i>	112. <i>Bachao</i>	167. <i>Third person Singular number</i>
43. <i>Mayer hater bala</i>	113. <i>Tero gunda ek panda</i>	168. <i>Prem er shomadhi</i>
44. <i>Mayer adesh</i>	114. <i>Thanda mathar khuni</i>	169. <i>Monpura</i>
45. <i>Mayer hate beheshter chabi</i>	115. <i>Dui nagin</i>	170. <i>Valobaslei Ghor Bandha Jay Na</i>
46. <i>Baba 185oron a shoshur boro</i>	116. <i>Langra Masud</i>	171. <i>Deshantori</i>
47. <i>Baba jokhon bicharoc</i>	117. <i>Jobor dokhol</i>	172. <i>Nag naginir prem</i>
48. <i>Boro Manik</i>	118. <i>Tarzan konna</i>	173. <i>Milon hobe koto dine</i>
49. <i>Bou shashurir juddho</i>	119. <i>Noy number bipod songket</i>	174. <i>Gohine shobdo</i>
50. <i>Mem shaheb</i>	120. <i>Khaisi tore</i>	175. <i>Priyotomeshu</i>
51. <i>Char sotin er ghor</i>	121. <i>Ami ek amanush</i>	176. <i>Keno valobashlam?</i>
52. <i>Dacter bari</i>	122. <i>Stri Hotta</i>	177. <i>Prem korechi besh korechi</i>
53. <i>Noshto chele</i>	123. <i>Palabi kothay</i>	178. <i>Moumachi</i>
54. <i>Bostir meye</i>	124. <i>Kata lash</i>	179. <i>Princess Daina</i>
55. <i>Narir mon</i>	125. <i>Kata Rifle</i>	180. <i>Raja Bangladeshi</i>
56. <i>Mayer koshom</i>	126. <i>Last border</i>	
57. <i>Mayer doya</i>		
58. <i>Khayrul shundory</i>		
59. <i>Shoshurbari Zindabad</i>		
60. <i>Amar ache jol</i>		
61. <i>Amader choto shaheb</i>		
62. <i>Rickshaw walar chele</i>		
63. <i>Ma amar jaan</i>		
64. <i>Chacchu amar chacchu</i>		

65. <i>Daruchini er dip</i>		
66. <i>Dipu number two</i>		
67. <i>Runway</i>		
68. <i>Rakhal raja</i>		
69. <i>Meyerao manush</i>		
70. <i>Dui bou ek shami</i>		

Opinions from Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Five Focus Group discussions with young boys and girls of 19 to 25 years age group (FGD) were held on the topic of Bangla cinema. Following observations and opinions came out from these sessions.

1. Most of the time Bangla cinemas have extremely dramatic story.
2. Cinema's story and theme should be more realistic.
3. Most of the Bangla cinemas reflect vulgar and artificial emotion.
4. Bangla cinemas' titles are very weird.
5. Total presentation is very weak.
6. Camera's focus and angle is very vulgar and perverse.
7. Hindi cinema's music, choreography, story is far better than that of Bangla cinema, that's why they watch Hindi cinema.
8. Most of the Bangla cinemas' story and title is copied from Hindi cinema.
9. Other foreign cinemas are not responsible for the poor quality of Bangla cinema. It itself is responsible.
10. Bangla cinema is far from our rich culture.
11. Our actors/actresses' acting and dress sense does not reflect our culture.
12. Bangla cinema does not show our real problem-that is economic problem or moral degradation, corruption etc.
13. In the love stories, usually it is shown that an upper class girl and a lower class boy falls in love and they overcome the class conflict-which is absurd and usually does not happen in reality.
14. Cinema's dialogue should be more sober and realistic.
15. Educated directors and producers are badly needed in Bangladesh.
16. Environment of most of the cinema halls is very dirty, unhealthy.
17. Middle and upper class women usually do not feel comfortable in most of the cinema halls. Only there are very few good cinema halls where women can feel comfortable.
18. We should have such kind of cinema which will deal with other ignored factors of Bangladesh.
19. Directors and producers should change their target group of audiences. If they make cinema for educated and cultured audiences, then, of course, they will go to cinema halls regularly.
20. We need stronger sensor board which will be strict enough to sensor a cinema.
21. We need better technicians and international-standard equipment.

22. If they get better cinema in better environment, they will of course go to cinema hall.
23. Our directors and producers make film for a certain class of people that's why their stories and title are of lower standard.
24. Most of the time cinemas are of low budget. It causes the low quality.
25. Some aggressive cinemas lead the young generation to be violent and encourages for eve teasing.

Observations from Cinema Halls

The author of this article visited six renowned cinema halls in Dhaka City and Savar. They are – Balaka, Madhumita, Star Cineplex, Sony, Asia and Savar Sanna Auditorium. Total 100 persons (both male and female) were interviewed in these five cinema halls who came to watch films on February 3 to 5, 2011 during 12 pm to 6 pm. All of them belong to the age group of 20 to 35 years. All these 100 people have various social and economic background. Most of them are rickshaw pullers, garments workers, pion, service holders, students, hawkers, housewives etc. Only exception is Star Cineplex of Bashundhara City. Here most of the people come from middle and upper class of our society.

i) Balaka Cinema Hall, New Market, Dhaka:

In this hall, most of the viewers are students, housewives, daily labourers, service holders etc. 50% of the viewers go to halls regularly. 30% go twice or thrice in a year. 20% go to halls very often. Most of them like social and romantic films. Very few like patriotic and political films. 95% of them dislike the cinema's title. 80% say that environment of cinema hall is not good. Maximum viewers dislike the stories and posters of cinema. Most of the viewers expect better direction in films with new faces.

Ticket seller: Ticket seller (Joy) of this hall says that almost 70% tickets are sold everyday except Friday and Saturday. During these two days almost 95% tickets are sold. Every kind of people come to watch cinema but students and couples come frequently. Most of the viewers come to 12pm, 3 pm and 6 pm's shows.

ii) Madhumita Cinema Hall, Motijheel, Dhaka:

Most of the audiences are garments workers (60%), rickshaw pullers (20%), students (12%), small businessmen (6%) etc here. Maximum of them prefer love story and action films. Viewers of this hall comment that now-a-days Sakib Khan is the top hero who is found in most of the films. Besides him people also like Dipjol, Maruf. Modhumita hall's inner environment is satisfactory. Most of the viewers of this hall come here almost once in a week. All of them give opinion in support of music of Bangla cinema. They have no objection about the posters and titles of cinema. Audiences wish that in future Bangla cinemas' stories will be improved.

Ticket Seller: The ticket seller (M. A. Hamid) of this hall has been working in this profession for last 42 years. He informs that almost 40 to 50 percent tickets are sold every day. But on Friday number of audiences is more than that of other days. Most of the people come to the show of 6 pm. Maximum audiences are from lower class of our society. Demand for romantic and action films demand is the highest here.

iii) **Star Cineplex**, Bashundhara City, Panthapath, Dhaka:

This is the only exceptional hall where all the viewers are happy for its environment. They said the posters used here are comparatively better because better films are shown here. Most of them like the songs of films but not the making of all films. Some of the viewers expect that there should be competition of films, then producers and directors will encourage making better films. Maximum viewers like romantic and social films. They think if we have better cinema halls like Cineplex then people will come in greater number. Same cinema is shown in different cinema halls, but viewers vary for cinema hall's environment. Viewers expect better technology for cinema. As it is an age of globalization, we are used to watch foreign films. So our viewers can easily find the differences between Bangladeshi cinema and foreign cinema. Real life story is expected to be incorporated in cinema. Most of them gave negative impression about cinema's title. They think bad and vulgar titles do not attract most of viewers.

iv) **Sony & Asia**, Mirpur, Dhaka:

These two halls are mostly popular among lower class people. Most of them are found as rickshaw pullers, drivers, garments workers, hotel workers etc. Most of them have no objection about posters and titles of cinema. Few of them have complaints about the environment of halls and characters' dress-sense. Many expect better story in future. Producers and directors' better sense is also expected by few audiences. All of them like action, romantic and social films.

Ticket Seller, Sony Cinema Hall: Ticket seller (Kamal) says almost 500 tickets are sold every day. Maximum audiences are available at evening shows and night shows. 80% audiences they find from lower and lower –middle class, 10% students and 10% from other classes. People usually like romantic and social films.

Ticket Seller, Asia Cinema Hall: Ticket seller (Ariful Islam) says almost 400 to 450 tickets are sold everyday but on Fridays almost 500 to 600 tickets are sold. Evening show is the most popular. People like romantic and social film most. Their maximum audiences are garments workers and students. He thinks the hall's environment is good.

v) **Savar Sanna Auditorium**, Savar:

This hall is comparatively neat and clean. Audiences are happy for the hall's environment. Students, drivers, tailors, garment workers, housewives etc frequent this hall. People like action, romantic and social film most. People don't appreciate vulgar scenes or films. Many of them object about posters and titles. But many say posters attract them. Songs and stories are often liked by viewers. A few viewers think that now-a-days the same hero is found in all the films which is very boring. New faces should be launched and promoted.

Ticket seller: Ticket seller (Moksed Ali) informs that almost 150 tickets are sold every day. But in the afternoon show (3 pm) on Fridays audiences come most. Maximum audiences are garments workers. He is happy with its environment. According to him it is the best hall in Savar. People like love story most. But he thinks social films should be made more.

Interview of a renowned Bangladeshi Film Director

Author of this article took an interview of a National award winner renowned Bangladeshi film director (name is kept unwritten with the request of the director) on February 13, 2011. He talked in detail about the pros and cons of Bangla cinema.

His opinions are written here in author's language.

He thinks as rickshaw pullers are our main audiences, so most of the present day films are produced keeping them in mind. According to this class of audiences, only two kinds of films exist – art film and commercial film. To make profit hall-owners and distributors want only commercial films which will bear songs, dances, fighting etc. Rest of the films are treated as art films. As a result only a specific class of people come to hall for a certain kind of film- which is not enough profitable for them who take it as a business.

Young girls and boys who live in villages usually visit cinema halls but the city young girls and boys are not regular in cinema hall. A class of youth and couples visit cinema halls only to pass time as city has no adequate place for their recreation. Middle class and upper class people often come to Bashundhara Cineplex, Madhumita hall etc to watch extra-ordinary films and often English films. Most of the time cinema halls attract audiences, not cinema itself. In this modern time, all kinds of cinema are available in DVD or VCD form, so people usually don't feel interested to go to halls. Only with 30 taka a person one can watch five films in a DVD.

Earlier there were 1200 cinema halls in Bangladesh, now it has turned into almost 700. Approximately 500 cinema halls are converted into shopping complex or markets. It's an alarming situation for our cinema industry. Bangladeshi audiences usually compare Bangla cinema with Hindi or Hollywood films in terms of quality. But directors have no way. If they make film with Dolby digital sound system but our maximum halls cannot give technical support for it. Because our halls still use mono-system sound. That is why directors have to make film dialogue based, not making based.

We also produce films in 35 mm like others but for our lab's quality, we usually find hazy, scratch films. Most of the hall owners think about their business, that's why they encourage such kind of films which attract more audiences. Many young people want to enter in this industry to make films but they are discouraged for the lengthy selection process. A man has to achieve seven certificates from seven different areas (example: Directors association, Producers association, Editors association etc) and after passing those, he has to pay a specific amount to each association to have certificates. This certificate is valid upto one year, if one fails to produce anything during this period, he will be disqualified and have to face the same process again. This whole process is a barrier to encourage newcomers to this industry.

Right now this industry has 320 listed directors but we don't find that number of new cinema. Often we find that few new directors make film with handy-camera and distribute it in DVD form whereas 35 mm format is more expensive than it. It is disappointing for those who genuinely love cinema and want to make it in 35 mm.

The director also expressed his grief for unequal allocation of Government budget for cinema. Those who have good link with particular body, can have govt. allocation very easily. Our Sensor

Board should be modified and young generation should have access here. Most of the audiences blame the storyline and dialogues- but in Bangladesh there is scarcity of Screen Play writers. A group of people are doing this job generation after generation. They don't have latest knowledge of technology and they don't face any problem to continue it as they have dominated this sector. Often many directors write their own screen play for the lack of qualified screen play writer. Many illiterate directors just copy Hindi cinema. There are many records of taking the whole cinema from some other countries and just changing the title turn it into a Bangla film. Directors don't improve themselves. Many good films do not get popularity only for lack of publicity. In an average earlier 100 films were produced yearly, but now this number is 40 to 60. He identifies scarcity of hero, heroine and audiences are the main reasons behind it. Now a days one hero is occupying most of the films, because audiences want to see him that's why producers and directors also want him.

In Bangladesh now average budget of each film is 50 lacs. It is a cheap amount and it's not possible to make a good film with this budget. From late 90's to early 2000 – is a bad time for Bangla cinema. Many vulgar cinemas, actors, actresses came in this industry. Pure romantic and perfect films were not made during this period. Though we have good lyricists, music composers and singers- but they are not always used in cinema. Rich emotions and art are not found in today's songs. But there are always exceptions. Whenever we get a good film, good music- all classes of people run to cinema halls. But the number of these kinds of cinemas is very poor. To run an industry smoothly this little number of good films are not sufficient.

In other countries we see that freshers come to film industry after taking training or degree in particular sector, like direction, editing, acting, music composition etc. In the same manner our industry should be more liberal to accept new thoughts with new faces. It is proved already that if good films are produced, audiences will also come to cinema hall. We need support from the government to send our technical hands abroad to learn modern techniques. The director still expects that golden days of our cinema industry will come sooner or later. But for that we have to be more patriotic.

Conclusion

Bangladeshi cinema can also achieve world class quality. We have a lot of creative hands. We need a revolution in cinema industry. Every sector of a cinema should be improved. Then our young generation will be encouraged to watch Bangla cinema. Clean, morally sound, social cinema is liked by all. Not only educated viewers but also illiterate viewers like clean films. No one likes vulgar posters, illogical titles. Ultimately majority viewers are aware of vulgar scenes in the films. Whether he or she is educated or not but most of them agree at one point that if better films will be produced, more audiences will come to cinema halls. Now most of the parents don't approve of bringing their children to cinema hall whether he is a rickshaw puller or cleaner or an educated father. Environment of cinema hall is very important. Most of the people from lower class agree that they don't feel comfortable to bring their wives in cinema hall. If we want to bring back our young generation to appreciate our own culture then we have to struggle against the existing dirt of this industry.

From the data analysis we get a clear picture of our young audiences' attitudes towards contemporary Commercial cinema. They treat Bangla cinema as vulgar-melodramatic entertainment which does not go with their education, status and taste. They think related technicians, techniques and authorities should be changed and improved. They emphasize on the improvement of cinema's story line, characters' improvisation etc.

It's an important question –whether as our lower-class people go to cinema hall, the hall's environment is not good or else hall's environment is not suitable for middle and upper class people that's why lower class people go there? If the first condition is right, then a question comes –if the same cinema is shown in better hall, will upper class people watch it? Better film is not always art film- so if a commercial film is produced with better qualities then of course other people will also watch it. Problem lies not in making of commercial film, problem is the way it is made. If a commercial cinema is made with the cleanliness and qualities of art film or other film, definitely both types of audiences will go to hall. When we find that our lower class people also expect better films, then there is no problem. It is not written anywhere that a lower class man always thinks in lower standard. We find many lower class cinema viewers who protest for the existing commercial cinema. If cinema is made with larger budget and producers and directors give priority to art, culture, quality, definitely everyone will be attracted to it. Number of educated cinema lovers is not small in Bangladesh. We have only to bring them out from home to hall. To make this bridge between cinema lovers and cinema halls, we need good films- whether it is an art film or commercial film. A commercial film can be social or romantic or action film. People have no obligation for commercial films- just some changes in mentality is needed for this kind of cinema. If a young viewer can watch Hindi or Hollywood's commercial film, then why not Bangla commercial films? Viewers need healthy entertainment from cinema which will be realistic, standard, quality work. To bring them in hall, we need both good films and goon environment of hall. If good films are made regularly, people will come to hall and hall authority will be concerned to make hall's environment better.

But the rickshaw pullers or lower working class people also don't appreciate all the aspects of existing commercial cinema. Then for whom these are made? Maximum number of audiences from that 100 people who were interviewed in various cinema halls, also made negative comments about cinemas' posters, titles, stories etc. So it proves that the people for whom these low quality cinemas are made, also don't like these cinemas always. They also expect better stories and songs. Now they are watching it as they don't have any alternatives. If they find better cinema, they will accept it and also will encourage their family members and children to watch. But presently 90 % people don't support to watch cinema by their children or siblings. Most of our directors and producers don't bother about audiences' response. At the moment our youth and children watch Hindi and Hollywood movies which are more vulgar and obscene, but they don't object. Because those films' technical quality, making etc overcome other negative sides.

From the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), we get clearer picture as to how our young generation analyse Bangla commercial cinema. The negative sides they discussed are the reasons of their disliking Bangla cinema. The points we got from viewers – can be interpreted by what we came to know from the director's interview. He made many existing obstacles clear to us.

Like other industries, this cinema industry is also suffering from pollution which is created by a few persons. We cannot allow our cinema industry to be spoiled day by day as we had a rich historical background. Cinema is not only a tool of entertainment; it also helps a nation to explore its culture to outside world.

Recommendations

- Better cinema should be produced based on real life stories.
- Environment of cinema halls should be improved.
- Technical qualities of cinema should be of international standard.
- Titles and posters should be tasteful for everyone's acceptance.
- Sufficient money should be invested in this sector.
- All kinds of corruption should be eliminated.
- Educated actors and actresses should be there.
- Directors and Producers should be adequate educated and cultured.
- More cinemas should be produced for the educated audiences.
- Censor Board should be watchful, tasteful and stricter.

References

- Braudy Leo & Cohen, Marshall (ed.) (1999). *Film Theory and Criticism*, Oxford University Press.
- Haq, Fahmidul, "Communication and Culture of Bangladesh", internet version.
- Sinha, Sugata (2009). 'Ritwik ghatak and Bengali identity'. *Jamini: Cinema and Identity*, vol 5, no. 1.
- Raju, Zakir Hossain (2009). 'Bengali or Muslim?: Islam, Identity and Art Cinema in Contemporary Bangladesh'. *Jamini: Cinema and Identity*, vol 5, no. 1.

Annex: A: Questionnaire for young generation

Name: _____

Age: _____

1. **Do you watch Bangla cinema in cinema hall?**
a. Yes b. No why? -
2. **Which things do you like or dislike most about Bangla cinema?**
a. Story b. Music c. Characters d. Choreography
3. **Which one makes you disliking Bangla cinema?**
a. Environment of hall b. cinema itself
4. **What is your opinion about Bangla cinema?**
a. Vulgar b. Lower standard c. Copy from Hindi cinema d. Meaningless
5. **Which thing should be changed first?**
a. Characters of cinema b. Cinema Hall c. Story/Theme of cinema
6. **Do you watch Bangla cinema in television?**
a. Yes b. No Why?
7. **Do you think Hindi cinema is responsible for our disliking Bangla cinema?**
a. Yes b. No Why?
8. **Which classes of people go to cinema hall in Bangladesh?**
a. Lower class b. Middle class c. Upper class
9. **Which profession's people usually go to cinema hall?**
a. Day labourers b. Students c. Job holders d. Housewives
10. **Do you think that cinema halls are gender friendly?**
a. Yes b. No
11. **Which period's cinema is better?**
a. Before 1971 b. Upto 1990 c. 1990 to till now
12. **What is your opinion about Bangla cinema's title?**
a. Under rated b. Appropriate c. Absurd d. Vulgar
13. **Who should be changed first?**
a. Audiences b. Directors c. Producers d. Actors/Actresses
14. **What kind of cinema should be produced more?**
a. Social film b. Action film c. War film d. Science fiction
15. **Do you think Bangla cinema reflects the real Bangladesh?**
a. Yes b. No Why?

Annex: B**Questions for audiences in the cinema hall:**

1. Name of the viewer, profession, age.
2. Do you come to cinema hall regularly?
3. What kinds of film do you like most?
4. Do you like the bangla films' title?
5. Do you like cinema hall's environment?
6. Which thing does attract you most- story /characters/songs?
7. Do you like the posters of films?
8. What is your suggestion for the betterment of bangle cinema?
9. Do you think present days films are better than before?

Questions for Ticket Seller of cinema hall:

1. Name, designation.
2. How many tickets are sold every day (approximately)?
3. In which show people come more?
4. What kinds/ classes of people come usually?
5. What kinds of films are favourite to maximum audiences?
6. Your opinion about bangle cinema.
7. Give your opinion about cinema hall's environment.