

The Unseen Potential: A Study of the Situation and Challenges of Bhojpuri Cinema in Bihar

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Abstract:

The colourful rainbow of Indian culture is visible, spreading its bright colors in various forms of expression of thoughts and feelings. The talent of the artists who give shape to the diverse colors of culture is seen in the form of film. Even through virtual media, all this is a movie of the life characters around us.

Bihar, with its ancient heritage of art and culture, has always been artistically and literarily rich. Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Magahi are spoken here, with Bhojpuri being the most spoken language. According to the 2001 census, more than 8 crore people in Bihar speak Bhojpuri. Around 21 crore people worldwide speak Bhojpuri, but the irony is that the Bihar government has never given as much importance to this cinema as it should have. Bhojpuri cinema has special recognition for its cultural heritage across the world. Many countries, including various Indian states, have promoted and encouraged regional and local cinema over time. Despite these efforts, the Bihar government remained indifferent to encouraging local producers, directors, and newcomers. Even with the state's immense tourism potential, cultural and historical features, funding for Bhojpuri cinema by the Bihar government is negligible. This situation poses significant challenges for Bhojpuri cinema today. This research paper comprehensively analyzes the Bhojpuri cinema scenario in Bihar by combining various findings.

Keywords: Bhojpuri Cinema, Bihar, Cinema Hall, Digital Platform, Film Industry, Content Quality, Bhojpuri Music

OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH: The objective of this research article is to comprehensively study the scenario of Bhojpuri cinema in Bihar.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN-

A qualitative methodology has been used in this research paper. The researcher collected primary data by interviewing leading experts of the Bhojpuri cinema industry and gathering their opinions. Secondary data has been collected from previously conducted research works and articles about the Bhojpuri-speaking population in Bihar, their film-watching habits, preferences, and Bhojpuri cinema.

INTRODUCTION-

Cinema is the heritage of language and culture. Films made in any country are considered a mirror of the social life and customs of that country. Whatever good or bad, positive or negative thoughts and behaviors occur in society are visible on the screen. Bhojpuri cinema started in 1961. In this, the son of Bihar and the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, played a major role. At his behest, Bihar's coal

businessman Vishwanath Prasad Shahabadi made a bold attempt to create the first Bhojpuri film. Since the beginning of cinema in 1895, cinema has been a powerful medium of cultural identity in the changing economic and social environment and various forms of art and expression of emotions. In 1961, the first Bhojpuri film, 'Ganga Maiya Tohe Piyari Chadhaibo,' was made under the writing of Nazir Hussain and direction of Kundan Kumar. Its immense success inspired Hindi

cinema producers and directors to turn towards new Bhojpuri cinema. Between 1963 and 1968, more than a hundred films were made, including 'Videsiya', 'SolahShringaarKareDulhaniya', 'HamarBhoji', and 'JekaraCharnava Mein LagaleParnava'. According to GhoshAvijit, the condition of Bhojpuri films remained good until 1968, but between 1969 to 1976, only one Bhojpuri film, 'DherChalaki Jin Kara', was released. In 1976, 'Daku Rani Ganga' came out, which was unsuccessful. 'Dangal' made in 1977 was successful, and influenced by its success, 'BalamPardesiya' came in 1979, which was greatly liked by the audience. Between 1983 and 1984, 20 films were made, including super hit films like 'Ganga Kinare Mora Gaon'. This was the era of theme-based films of Bhojpuri cinema. After 1990, the situation started worsening again. BinayBihari, a famous Bhojpuri writer and director and minister in the art and culture department of the Bihar government, told the researcher over the phone that between 1990 and 2000, only one Bhojpuri film, 'Hey Tulsimaiya', was somewhat popular. No matter where Bhojpuri people live, this heritage keeps them fresh with the fragrant smell of the soil of their village streets. Whenever various aspects of art and especially cinema are discussed, some may say that cinema has nothing to do with the economy. However, cinema is intricately related to money, from beginning to end. It is not only a means of entertainment but also a significant source of government revenue and employment.

Despite numerous efforts for the promotion of regional films across the country, the Bihar government has not paid adequate attention. The success of 'SasuraBada Paisa Wala' in 2004 was a surprise for Bhojpuri cinema, leading to the release of 275 Bhojpuri films between 2004 and 2008. Manoj Tiwari emerged from a singer to a hero with 'SasuraBada Paisa Wala', re-establishing Bhojpuri cinema. However, even after that, the attitude of governments towards Bhojpuri cinema remained indifferent.

Other states of India and European countries have understood the impact of regional films. Between 2000 and 2010, local governments in Norway created agencies to provide economic support for regional cinema development. These agencies encouraged local cinema directors and producers,

leading to positive results across Europe. By 2009, more than 195 film agencies were promoting such films at the local and regional levels. Governments fund agencies for regional cinema, focusing on quality and culturally significant films. For instance, rules have been established for showing Marathi films in multiplexes, benefiting Marathi cinema, once synonymous with obscenity, now recognized for quality and content. Since 2001, more than 20 Marathi films have been nominated for National Awards, and several have been remade in other languages, including Hindi. Despite the challenging market conditions, grants have significantly contributed to Marathi cinema's revival.

Bihar had over 310 single-screen cinema centers, now reduced to around 70 by early 2022. The Bihar government has not provided any concession in entertainment tax for Bhojpuri films. Experts like singer Bharat Sharma, musician Rajeev Gupta, litterateur Manoj Bhavuk, and director BirendraPaswan state that lyricists in Bhojpuri cinema prioritized vulgarity in songs over content. Bhojpuri cinema's veteran producer and distributor AbhaySinha is now the president of IMPAA (Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association), the largest organization of Hindi cinema producers in the country. He has also been continuously talking about helping the film producers through Impa, The producers of Bhojpuri cinema are so frustrated that even their films are not releasing as per their plans. After the Corona transition period, Bhojpuri stars are again doing film after film, but there is no data available anywhere on how many of these producers were successful in recovering their costs, nor is the record of these Bhojpuri films made publicly available. Only arrangements have been made so far. The government overlooked this aspect as well. Over 26 crore people worldwide enjoy Bhojpuri cinema and music. To elevate Bhojpuri cinema, the Bihar government should provide grants like the governments of Maharashtra and Karnataka. This will benefit people working in Bhojpuri cinema, the government, and local people, creating new employment opportunities. The condition of Bhojpuri cinema is such that the directors here consider themselves Sanjay LeelaBhansali. By talking big they get the

producer to invest money in the film, but there is no recovery. A good cinema is not made because the hero takes half of the entire budget of the film and compromises on half the budget to make the film. Common people are not able to know this because music has become digital and the same artist gathers crowds of spectators by doing stage shows. In the name of releasing films in the distributor, distributors buy the films for free and release the film as soon as they get a theatre. They themselves don't know which theater will be vacant and when? The producer thinks that he will earn from satellite rights, but here also the business of Bhojpuri film has become like Kanda Batata that bought for Rs 20 and sold for Rs 25. The business of Bhojpuri cinema has become something like this. The problem lies in the government's thinking that cinema makers are a different category of people. Bihar government has not considered it as a major part of art and culture nor made efforts in this direction.

Uttarakhand, through the Uttarakhand Film Development Council, offers grants of up to Rs 25 lakh for films in regional languages, giving filmmakers a new direction. Additionally, a grant is provided if more than 75% of Hindi films are shot in the state, attracting Hindi cinema to shoot in Uttarakhand. The government offers up to a 50% discount on using the tourism department's guest houses during shooting. The Uttar Pradesh government subsidizes Bhojpuri and Hindi films, focusing more on Bhojpuri cinema. This has increased the number of Bhojpuri filmmakers but has led to a lack of content competition, affecting the quality of Bhojpuri cinema. The Bihar government has not taken positive initiatives in this regard.

CONCLUSION

In our country, which produces the largest number of films globally. A film involves 100 to 1000 people in its making, creating employment at every stage from shooting to release. Just as a public welfare government strives to fulfill public concerns and aspirations through various aspects of social development, it should also work to protect and promote Bhojpuri cinema. The dual vision with which Bhojpuri cinema is viewed

today impacts Bihar. The state government should understand this cultural fabric and support films made with good scripts. It should form a committee and provide subsidies to every deserving film, helping Bhojpuri cinema in talent-filled Bihar advance to the production of mainstream films like Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi cinema.

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