Reflections of Elderly's Life: Film Review

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Abstract- **The cinematic portrayal of elderly individuals often reflects the nuanced challenges they face, including loneliness, abuse, abandonment, and depression, which collectively signify a dark phase in life. This narrative analysis delves into films that explore the intricate emotional and psychological landscapes of senior citizens, shedding light on societal neglect and interpersonal struggles. Through a close examination of selected cinematic works, the study identifies recurring themes such as isolation, intergenerational conflicts, physical and emotional abuse, and the loss of purpose. These narratives often serve as mirrors to real-world issues, amplifying the often-muted voices of the elderly. The films analysed not only depict the grim realities faced by senior citizens but also offer glimpses of resilience, hope, and the human capacity for connection and healing. By critically examining character arcs, visual symbolism, and narrative structure, the study underscores how cinema captures the multifaceted experiences of aging, urging society to address the systemic issues that exacerbate these struggles. This analysis aims to deepen the understanding of aging as a transformative phase of life, emphasizing the importance of empathy, care, and meaningful engagement to combat the pervasive challenges faced by the elderly in their twilight years.**

Keywords- **Elderly, elder abuse, film analysis, narrative, cinematic**

I.   INTRODUCTION

'Elder' and 'older' means advance in age. But we should keep in mind that the word 'Elder' is applied for people only and 'older' is used to describe things as well as people (What's the Difference Between 'Elder' and 'Older'? 2019). Regarding chronological age there are many contradictory opinions for elderly person who has retired. Though nowadays the age for retirement is differed by profession, yet for 'Elderly population' we should fix the age of sixty years to define as Elderly. In wider sense elderly people or older adults are the predecessor, who lived in former days for a long period. Elderly population includes the age of 60 to 100+ years having authority by virtue of age and experience. For a long period, the fertility rate is decreasing and working-age population is also declining and as a result the baby boomers are becoming older with their age and elderly population increases. Due to rising dependency ratio 'Elderly Population' is called as 'Demographic burden' (Elderly Population, 2019).

Generally, abuse is a kind of maltreatment with cruelty and violence and when this abuse occurred on older person which causes harm and distress on elderly people, then it is called elder abuse. Nowadays elder abuse is a recognized form of domestic violence. This abuse happens within close relationship, such as from spouse, son, daughter-in-law, neighbours, grandchildren, daughter or son-in law, even from life partner or caregiver (Elder Abuse, 2019). Elder abuse has serious consequences like physical injury, long-time depression, increment of risk of nursing home placement, hospitalization with serious injury and even death (World Health Organization, 2019). Nowadays elderly people has always a risk to be abused physically, mentally, sexually and financially at an increasing mode. Mainly abusers treat the elders as an unimportant- useless member of the family. The whole property of the elders is the only achievable target for the abusers.

Young people are more or less impatient about the older persons. In order to maintain our humanity for the future, young and old people must appreciate each other as well as the perspective of history. Actually, our self-centred motivation is responsible for the arrogant unhappy life style which offers no respect to anyone. As in modern era people live longer, and spend more time and effort on a healthier aging process, they expect, even need their value to be recognized and their talents to be appreciated. (Quora, n.d.)

Punita Govil & Swati Gupta (2016) have conducted a research on **"Domestic Violence against Elderly People: A Case Study of India".** The present paper wanted to focus on the available data in the old people and their dependence ratio. Other objective of the research was to describe the problems faced by elderly and the suggestive measures to provide social and emotional security to them. The data of the research was based on the reported cases of elder abuse and related issues collected by an NGO, HelpAge India in 2014 1nd 2015. 1200 elderly households of age 60 years and above were the sample. From twelve cities of eight states sample were surveyed. 50% male and 50% female- total 100 from each city the elderly members of the society responded. The cities were Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mangalore, Nagpur, Kanpur, Guwahati, Vishakhapatnam and Madurai. The findings showed a clear indication of the increasing tendency of elder abuse all over the India. Although the crime done by relatives, caregivers, neighbours and other near and dears but most of the cases the main perpetrators are daughter-in-law, son and daughter. Indian society showed a high rate of non-reporting tendency regarding elder mistreatment that encourages more and more the perpetrators. Report said that the main cause of abuse is emotional and economic dependence on abusers. Besides this the other reasons were apathetic attitude of society, financial crisis, erosion of values and health related issues. Most of the cases elderly people have no choice to stay alone, that's why they were often victimized. Another finding was that due to the lack of awareness about redress mechanism of legal provisions the situation becomes worse. In the part of solution research said that elderly helpline should effectively work, interpersonal relationship among family members should be strengthened, active participation of community as a whole is much more needed, Young generations are to be sensitized and active speedy and effective redress mechanism is needful to keep the life safe and secured for elderly. (Govil, 2016)

I.   ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF FILM

After watching some films, the researcher has tried to explore the elders' mistreatment in a psychoanalytical and topic-based narrative approach. The following description will add a qualitative angle to this psycho-social degradation through the analysis of renowned Movies or Short films collected from the various internet sources. Somewhere it shows the senior -junior relationship, Loneliness of elders, somewhere it describes the story of parents' heart breaking, the tragic story of being deprived by their children, and the story of living the dark phases of old age drowning in despair- each of which exactly matches the reality of human life.

A.   *Baghban (The Gardener):*

Directed by Ravi Chopra, Venus Movies, October 3, 2003.

The film Baghban was released in 2003. The film is based on an actual family photo. This is a story about how elderly parents who have dedicated their entire lives to raising their four sons have been denied of them in their later years. The offspring of this well-established married family are now completely successful in everything once the four males have grown up. After their father retires from his position, a significant shift occurs. None of the four boys are prepared to assist the couple in their later years, despite the father having put all of his money into his Pension Gratuity Provident Fund for the kids. As the underprivileged elderly man and woman, Raj Malhotra and Pooja have been crucial characters in this story. Salman Khan portrays the elderly couple's liability as a stranger or divine messenger in the part of Alok Raj. Wives and husbands were compelled to live apart for every six months in each of the four sons' homes throughout the old age when they needed to be near one another. The stairs that the youngster climbs for a while are thrown away from the family like an additional piece of broken kitchenware in the house when the time is over and the stairs are no longer needed. The film was produced by B.R. Chopra,

starring in the lead role Raj Malhotra and Pooja as Amitabh Bachchan and Hema Malini played a marvelous character. (Chopra, 2016)

Fig. 1 Film- Baghban

B.   *Gotro:*

Directed by Shiboprosad Mukherjee & Nandita Roy, Windows Films, August 23, 2019.

The movie centers on a 70-year-old Hindu widow, an elderly woman, and a child of a different religion who is tasked with taking care of her. Currently, no city is safe for senior citizens. In a large home, a woman lives alone. Her son's residence is overseas. The son finds a 29-year-old prisoner who looks for his mother after just leaving a correctional facility. He received assurances from a top officer at this detention facility that the accused youngster was a good man who could look after his mother. For his mother's protection, he therefore hired the accused. Mainly, the elderly woman disagrees. However, as the day went on, the elderly woman continued to believe in that boy. The narrative claims that the elderly woman and her caregiver were the targets of a scheme. In addition to providing the necessary safety as the sole caregiver for the elderly, the film tells a beautiful tale of humanity that transcends religion. In a similar vein, the movie asserts that social communication needs to be improved. Shivaprasad-Nandita's photograph conveys the idea that a self-centered society is eager to take an elderly person's property at any opportunity. (Roy and Mukherjee, 2019)

Fig. 2 Film- Gotro

C. Dadi:

Film by Sana Ahmed, HelpAge India, 16th May, 2016.

The elderly grandma resides at home with her granddaughter, son, and daughter-in-law. On his way back from work one day, her son brings Singara (Samosa) from a famous candy store. In front of that elderly woman, the entire family gathers to eat singara with tea. The elderly woman wants to see it. The elderly woman grew avaricious upon realizing this. "Is this the Singara of that Nathuram sweet shop?" she asked again. How do they create it now? They once provided spices and nuts. With those comments, the elderly woman will say a lot of things, which subtly conveys that she wants to eat Singara. She received a piece of Singara from the grandchild. However, the son responds with a mild reprimand: "No mom, you can't take it". The elderly woman insisted as well. The fact that the son and daughter-in-law are playing with her is beyond her comprehension. The son brought the Singara plate and held it in front of the irate old mother as she was ready to leave the house while muttering many depressing things. The elderly woman enjoyed playing it. The term "second childhood" refers to the reality that everyone becomes a child as they age. Family members may grow wary if the elderly act impulsively or capriciously like children, but occasionally, if they indulge in minor pastimes, their loved ones also find fulfilment, which further cements the generational tie. Ahmed (2016)

Fig. 3 Film- Dadi

D. Dadu ki kahani:

Directed by Harsh Gupta, HelpAge India, 17th October, 2017.

Interest in life fades when people experience illness in their final years, when loneliness and melancholy become commonplace. The older folks then give up. Such a screenplay can be seen in the short film "Dadu Ki Kahani." The same room contains multiple beds that are monitored by nurses. This house is occupied by an elderly man. Occasionally, the elderly man becomes agitated and loses his anger. In the bed beside him is a five-year-old girl who is ill. Over time, his connection with that little youngster likewise matured. The link between a grandfather and granddaughter is similar to a blood relationship. They were content with one another at all times. Days pass. Grandpa once told the boy that he would put him to bed today and tell him a story tomorrow. When the baby's bed was empty the following day, the elderly man asked the nurse, "Where is the baby?" The youngster was a sick heart patient, the nurse responded, and she passed away during the procedure last night after quickly deteriorating. Once more, the elderly guy lost himself in loneliness and depression. Another baby boy was admitted to that bed a day or two later. The elderly guy saw that the young child refused to eat anything that the nurse offered. When Grandpa saw it, he stood up, sat down next to the boy, and began to tell him stories. The story between grandfather and grandson was recreated along with their bond. The film ends here. These young children are like a bandage

on a terrible wound for the lonely elderly. If an elderly person finds their grandchildren by their side or spends time with them, loneliness might vanish in an instant. Gupta (2017)

Fig. 4 Film- Dadu ki kahani

E. The End:

What loneliness does to ageing parents- Hindi Short film, Written and directed by Tabish Shaikh, Weekend Filmworks, Aug, 23, 2017.

An elderly man who is lonely is the subject of the movie. He is accompanied at home by a radio, books, an aquarium fish, a phone, and some sentimental old family photos. Every now and then, the elderly guy would cry while holding the ancient family album to his chest. All of the food and beverages at the market must be handled by him alone. He can eat this fish with a little of whatever he eats. He called his son and hung up, indicating that he was busy. The elderly person has a life of intense loneliness—suffocating loneliness—because he has no one with whom to converse. No one is there to express his feelings. One day, he is going to cut his hand nerve with a knife and is on the verge of suicide because he is so depressed and lonely. The aquarium breaks when it falls to the ground at this crucial point. On the floor, the fish started to move. The old man witnessed his lone friend fluttering on the floor in front of his eyes. He sprinted to the tap water after picking it up with both hands. The fish comes to life again and begins to play after receiving water. The old guy experiences the flavour of survival once more at that precise moment, if only briefly. He reiterated his wish to live for his partner, forgetting the call of death and the despair of living. This suggests that an elderly person is constantly searching for a companion, a partner with whom he may converse, be by his side, and stay in contact. They can regain their taste of life if they find such acquaintances or companions. Nevertheless, the truth is that elderly individuals are left alone by their own children and family members at this age. (Shaikh 2017)

Fig. 5 Film- The End

II.   CONCLUSION

The above narrative exploration of elders' experiences in films reveals a poignant reflection of the multifaceted struggles they endure, including loneliness, abuse, abandonment, and depression. These cinematic depictions act as a mirror to societal attitudes, highlighting the systemic neglect and emotional isolation faced by senior citizens. Through recurring themes of despair, loss, and the search for meaning, these films invite audiences to confront the darker phases of aging and the consequences of societal indifference. However, amid these challenging portrayals, many films also offer narratives of resilience, rediscovery, and human connection. They underscore the potential for healing through empathy, intergenerational solidarity, and meaningful social engagement. Such representations challenge stereotypes about aging, reframing it as a complex, albeit often difficult, phase of life that deserves dignity and compassion. This analysis highlights the critical role of cinema in shaping societal perceptions and sparking conversations around elder care and well-being. By amplifying the voices of the elderly and their stories, films can inspire collective action to address the systemic issues that contribute to their struggles. Ultimately, fostering a culture of understanding and inclusion is essential to ensuring that aging is seen not as a burden but as a vital chapter of the human experience.

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