



Jago Hua Savera: Negotiating Rural Life and Culture of the Bangladeshi Marginalized in the Urdu Adaptation of Manik Bandopadhyay's Padma Nadir Majhi

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Abstract

Jago Hua Savera (1959), an Urdu adaptation of Manik Bandopadhyay's *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1936) by the East Bengal Film Development Corporation, remains underexplored despite earning a Cannes gold medal (2016) and Pakistan's first Oscar nomination (1960). Produced amid the socio-political turmoil of 1947-1971, the film reflects tensions between East and West Pakistan. Crafted by poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, it critically examines the exploitation of marginalized Bangladeshi fishermen, employing a neo-realist aesthetic to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers. By shifting from Bengali to Urdu and Hindu to Muslim characters, *Jago Hua Savera* navigates rural life and cultural representation while preserving Bandopadhyay's narrative essence. The film's depiction of systemic oppression and subaltern struggles aligns with Althusserian Marxism and Foucault's theories of power and resistance. This study explores how the adaptation negotiates rural existence and cultural identity, offering a poignant critique of social injustices. By bridging cultural and political divides, the film serves as a lens into the resilience of the Bengali fishing community, emphasizing the intersections of power, identity, and artistic expression. Ultimately, *Jago Hua Savera* remains a vital yet overlooked cinematic text that deepens our understanding of postcolonial South Asian narratives.

Key Words: Postcolonial Cinema; Cultural Identity; Subaltern Struggles; Neo-Realism; Power and Resistance

1. Introduction

The film *Jago Hua Savera* (1959), directed by A.J. Kardar, represents a significant yet underexplored contribution to the cinematic history of South Asia. As an adaptation of Manik Bandopadhyay's iconic Bengali novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1936), the film explores the marginalized lives of Bengali fishermen through a distinctly Urdu lens, a decision that reflects the shifting cultural and political landscape of post-colonial Pakistan and Bangladesh. This Urdu adaptation, produced by the East Bengal Film Development Corporation, remains a striking

example of how art negotiates identity, power, and oppression across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Despite receiving critical acclaim, including Pakistan's first Oscar nomination in 1960 and a gold medal at the First Moscow International Film Festival in 1959, *Jago Hua Savera* has not received the academic attention it deserves, particularly in the context of its negotiation of rural life and culture in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). The film serves as a bridge between Bengali- and Urdu-speaking communities, illuminating broader socio-political themes of exploitation, cultural identity, and resistance.

The period in which *Jago Hua Savera* was produced was one of immense political and cultural upheaval in South Asia. After the partition of India in 1947, the newly formed Pakistan was divided into two geographically and culturally distinct wings: East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan. Despite sharing a religious identity, these two regions were deeply divided by language, culture, and economics. The central government in West Pakistan, dominated by the Urdu-speaking elite, sought to impose Urdu as the sole national language, a move that sparked widespread resentment in East Pakistan, where Bengali was the predominant language. The culmination of this conflict was the Language Movement of 1952, during which several protesters were killed, ultimately leading to the recognition of Bengali as a co-official language in 1954. Against this backdrop, *Jago Hua Savera* was not just a film but a cultural and political statement.

The adaptation of *Padma Nadir Majhi* into Urdu is significant for several reasons. Manik Bandopadhyay's novel, originally written in Bengali, is a poignant depiction of the lives of impoverished fishermen living along the Padma River. The novel delves deep into the socio-economic struggles of these marginalized communities, highlighting their resilience in the face of exploitation and poverty. The novel's setting, characters, and themes are deeply rooted in the Bengali cultural landscape, making its adaptation into Urdu, with a shift in the characters' religious identity from Hindu to Muslim, a bold and innovative move. The film thus becomes a platform for exploring the shared struggles of marginalized communities in both East and West Pakistan, transcending linguistic and cultural differences.

The screenplay for *Jago Hua Saver* was written by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, a renowned Pakistani poet with strong communist leanings. Faiz's involvement in the film adds another layer of complexity, as his progressive ideals are evident in the film's portrayal of class struggle and social injustice. The film's narrative remains faithful to the essence of Bandopadhyay's novel, focusing on the lives of marginalized fishermen who are caught in a cycle of poverty and exploitation. However, Faiz's screenplay infuses the story with a broader political message, highlighting the systemic oppression faced by the working class in both East and West Pakistan. Through its neo-realist aesthetic, the film emphasizes the harsh realities of rural life, using natural landscapes, non-professional actors, and minimalistic dialogue to create a sense of authenticity.

One of the most striking aspects of *Jago Hua Saver* is its portrayal of power and resistance, themes that are central to both the novel and the film. The film's characters are trapped in a power structure that exploits their labor while offering little in return. Lal Mian, the broker, represents the oppressive forces of capitalism, while Mian, the fisherman, symbolizes the subaltern who struggles to survive in a system designed to exploit him. This power dynamic is central to the film's narrative and can be analyzed through the lens of Althusserian Marxism and Foucault's theories of power. According to Louis Althusser (1971), power operates through ideology, which is embedded in institutions like the state, the family, and the economy. In *Jago Hua Saver*, the fishermen are subjected to an ideological system that keeps them in a state of perpetual poverty, with little hope for upward mobility.

Michel Foucault's (1977) concept of power is also relevant to the film's depiction of social hierarchy. Foucault argues that power is not just a top-down force but circulates throughout society, influencing all levels of human interaction. In *Jago Hua Saver*, the fishermen's relationship with Lal Mian is one of domination and subjugation, but it is also a complex negotiation of power, as the fishermen attempt to resist their exploitation while still being dependent on the system that oppresses them. This tension between resistance and subjugation is a central theme in the film, reflecting the broader struggles of the Bengali people under the rule of the West Pakistani elite.

The film's adaptation from Bengali to Urdu, and from Hindu to Muslim characters, raises important questions about cultural representation and identity. While the linguistic and religious shifts could be seen as erasing the Bengali identity of the original novel, the film's narrative and aesthetic choices suggest otherwise. *Jago Hua Savera* retains the essence of Bandopadhyay's portrayal of rural life in East Bengal, using visual and musical elements to evoke the cultural landscape of the region. The haunting bhatiyali tunes, traditional Bengali folk music associated with river life, are used to underscore the fishermen's connection to their environment and their struggle for survival. The use of this distinctly Bengali music in an Urdu-language film highlights the shared cultural heritage of the region, despite the political divisions between East and West Pakistan.

In addition to its cultural and political significance, *Jago Hua Savera* is also a remarkable example of neo-realist cinema in South Asia. The neo-realist movement, which originated in Italy in the 1940s, sought to portray the everyday lives of ordinary people, often focusing on the struggles of the working class. Neo-realist films typically used non-professional actors, on-location shooting, and naturalistic dialogue to create a sense of authenticity. *Jago Hua Savera* follows this tradition, using the real-life setting of the fishing communities along the Padma River to depict the harsh realities of rural life in East Bengal. The film's minimalist style, with its emphasis on the physical labor of the fishermen and the relentless forces of nature, creates a powerful sense of realism that reinforces its political message.

In conclusion, *Jago Hua Savera* is a film that transcends linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries to offer a poignant commentary on the lives of marginalized communities in post-colonial South Asia. Its adaptation of *Padma Nadir Majhi* into Urdu, while making significant changes to the original novel, retains the essence of Bandopadhyay's narrative and adds a broader political dimension through Faiz Ahmed Faiz's screenplay. The film's portrayal of power, resistance, and social injustice, analyzed through Althusserian Marxism and Foucault's theories of power, offers a rich field for academic exploration. Moreover, its neo-realist aesthetic and use of

Bengali cultural elements highlight the shared cultural heritage of East and West Pakistan, making *Jago Hua Savera* a unique and important work in the history of South Asian cinema.

2. Literature Review:

The film *Jago Hua Savera* (1959) occupies a unique position in South Asian cinema, not only as an adaptation of Manik Bandopadhyay's celebrated Bengali novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1936) but also as an attempt to negotiate cultural, political, and linguistic boundaries between East and West Pakistan during the fraught post-colonial period. Despite its historical and cinematic significance, the film has remained relatively underexplored in academic discourse. This literature review seeks to contextualize *Jago Hua Savera* within critical debates on postcolonial identity, neo-realist cinema, and cultural representation, drawing upon a range of scholarly sources to examine its treatment of rural life, marginalized communities, and the subaltern struggle.

The partition of India in 1947 marked a significant moment in South Asian history, creating two new nations: India and Pakistan, the latter split into West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). As scholars such as Jalal (1995) and Talbot (1998) have noted, the political and cultural rift between the two wings of Pakistan was exacerbated by the central government's attempts to impose Urdu as the national language, igniting the 1952 Language Movement in East Pakistan. Against this backdrop, *Jago Hua Savera* emerges as a cultural artifact that seeks to bridge the linguistic and political divide between Bengali-speaking East Pakistan and Urdu-speaking West Pakistan. As Ramnath (2016) observes, "A Pakistani production set in the former East Pakistan and featuring Indian and British talent: *Jago Hua Savera* was unusual back in 1959 and even more rare today" (para. 1).

Bandopadhyay's original novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* is deeply embedded in the Bengali cultural landscape, portraying the lives of Hindu fishermen along the Padma River. The Urdu adaptation, produced by the East Bengal Film Development Corporation, transposes this narrative into a Muslim context while retaining the core themes of marginalization, exploitation, and rural

existence. As Spivak (1988) and Bhabha (1994) have argued, postcolonial adaptations often involve a process of negotiation and translation between cultures, and *Jago Hua Saverā* can be seen as an example of this process. Faiz Ahmed Faiz based the Urdu screenplay on Bandopadhyay's novel and "set the story about the travails of impoverished fishermen on the banks of the Meghna river in the place now known as Bangladesh" (Ramnath, 2016, para. 4). By shifting the linguistic and religious identity of the characters, the film both reflects and critiques the attempts by the West Pakistani state to impose a unified national identity on its diverse population.

Jago Hua Saverā tells the story of a fisherman struggling against extreme poverty and exploitation by a local moneylender, as well as the harsh realities of death (Raj, 2016). According to Sapra (as cited in Raj, 2016), the film is notable as Pakistan's first realistic and experimental film, diverging from the melodramatic style prevalent in Indian cinema. This deviation highlights the film's unique contribution to the cinematic landscape of its time. The film's attempt to capture a realistic portrayal of rural life is also evident in its aesthetic choices, which include the use of non-professional actors and a documentary-style visual approach (Ghosh, 2020, para. 2). Ramnath (2016) describes the film's opening, noting that it "opens with graceful tracking shots over the river before plunging into a familiar world of poverty, debt and usury. Mian (Zurain) can never save enough from his meagre earnings, his wife (Shamsun Nihar) has delivered a malnourished baby, while his sister-in-law Mala (Tripti Mitra) has caught the attention of two men: the romantic Kasim (Anees) and the exploitative moneylender Lal Mian (Kazi Khaliq)" (para. 4).

Kabir (as cited in Raj, 2016) critiques the film's authenticity, arguing that Faiz Ahmed Faiz's adaptation failed to capture the essence of Bengali identity due to his limited connection with the region and its people. Kabir also attributes the film's box office failure to its linguistic mixture of Bengali and Urdu, which was not easily comprehensible to either community (as cited in Raj, 2016). This critique underscores the challenges of cultural and linguistic adaptation in cross-cultural cinematic projects. Ramnath (2016) further notes that "*Jago Hua Saverā*'s reputation has built up over time, partly because it was barely seen in the country of its origin. Its use of neo-

realist elements – non-professional actors, naturalistic acting, real locations and socialist philosophy – was out of place in Pakistan at the time” (para. 12).

In an interview, Faiz Ahmed Faiz himself pointed out that ideological and aesthetic gatekeepers often obstructed films like *Jago Hua Savera* from reaching audiences, thus affecting its impact (as cited in Raj, 2016). This highlights the broader issue of how political and ideological barriers can influence the reception of films.

The film’s use of *bhatiyali* music—a traditional folk genre associated with the riverine communities of East Bengal—serves to maintain a connection to its Bengali roots despite the shift to an Urdu-language narrative (Ghosh, 2020, para. 1). This musical element adds depth to the film’s neo-realist aesthetic and highlights the shared cultural heritage of the Bengali and Urdu-speaking communities (Khan, 2020, para. 5).

Jago Hua Savera also engages with the subaltern concept as described by Gramsci (1971) and Spivak (1988), portraying the fishermen as marginalized figures entangled in a cycle of poverty and exploitation. Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s screenplay frames the fishermen’s struggle as part of a broader critique of capitalist exploitation, consistent with Marxist theory (Raza, 2018). Foucault’s (1983) theory of power dynamics further elucidates the complex relationships of resistance and subjugation depicted in the film.

The adaptation of *Padma Nadir Majhi* from Bengali to Urdu raises significant questions about cultural representation and identity. While the film shifts the linguistic and religious identity of the characters, it retains many elements of Bengali culture, including the use of *bhatiyali* music, to assert Bengali identity within an Urdu-centric narrative (Chatterji, 2010). This approach reflects a form of cultural resistance and highlights the film’s role in bridging cultural and political divides.

In summary, *Jago Hua Savera* occupies a unique position in the history of South Asian cinema, negotiating complex issues of language, culture, and identity while remaining faithful to the neo-realist tradition. The film's portrayal of rural life and marginalized communities reflects the broader socio-political conditions of post-colonial South Asia, offering a profound critique of power, exploitation, and resistance. Through its adaptation of *Padma Nadir Majhi*, *Jago Hua Savera* transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries to provide a significant commentary on the shared struggles of Bengali and Urdu-speaking communities.

While existing scholarship has acknowledged *Jago Hua Savera's* aesthetic achievements and its position within neo-realist cinema, gaps remain in understanding how the film navigates the cultural and political tensions between East and West Pakistan. This paper aims to address these gaps by exploring the film's adaptation from Bengali to Urdu and its depiction of rural life, contributing to a deeper understanding of its engagement with postcolonial identity, cultural representation, and social justice. This study will utilize qualitative, interpretive methods, including a detailed textual and visual analysis of the film and an examination of Marxist and Foucauldian frameworks to analyze power dynamics and class struggle.

3. Discussion

Jago Hua Savera (1959) stands as a profound cinematic work, capturing the socio-political tensions that characterized postcolonial Pakistan and East Bengal, now Bangladesh. The film, directed by A. J. Kardar, is one of the earliest and most significant attempts to portray the struggles of marginalized communities in the newly formed state of Pakistan. Despite its historical and cultural importance, *Jago Hua Savera* remains relatively underexplored in scholarly discourse. However, the film provides a rich and layered narrative that lends itself to in-depth analysis through various critical frameworks, including postcolonial theory, cultural representation, and neo-realist aesthetics.

At its core, *Jago Hua Savera* is not merely a film about the struggles of a fishing community in East Bengal; it is an allegorical representation of broader socio-political issues in postcolonial South Asia. The film is set against the backdrop of a deeply divided Pakistan, where linguistic and ethnic tensions between East and West Pakistan were steadily escalating. By examining *Jago Hua Savera* through postcolonial theory, particularly the works of Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, this discussion seeks to demonstrate how the film negotiates power dynamics, language politics, and subaltern identities.

Additionally, the film's engagement with Marxist themes, particularly class struggle and economic exploitation, situates it within a broader discourse of resistance against oppressive structures. The screenplay, written by the renowned poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, imbues the film with a strong Marxist critique of the socio-economic conditions that prevailed in both East and West Pakistan during the 1950s. Faiz's ideological leanings are evident in the film's depiction of class struggle, as the impoverished fishermen battle against an exploitative system that keeps them in perpetual economic servitude. Through this lens, *Jago Hua Savera* can be read as a cinematic articulation of Marxist concerns regarding labor, capital, and the alienation of the working class.

Furthermore, the film's aesthetic choices align it with the tradition of neo-realist cinema, which emphasizes social realism, non-professional actors, and location shooting to depict the harsh realities of everyday life. Drawing inspiration from Italian neo-realism, particularly the works of Vittorio De Sica and Roberto Rossellini, *Jago Hua Savera* employs a minimalist narrative structure to foreground the lived experiences of its characters. The use of natural light, long takes, and minimal dialogue enhances the film's authenticity, allowing the audience to immerse themselves in the stark reality of the fishermen's lives.

This discussion will draw from primary sources, including the film itself, as well as secondary resources such as postcolonial theorists, scholars of South Asian cinema, and Marxist critics. By weaving together these diverse critical perspectives, this analysis will argue that *Jago Hua Savera* offers a multi-layered critique of class struggle, cultural imposition, and resistance in postcolonial South Asia. The film's significance extends beyond its historical moment, providing valuable

insights into the enduring tensions surrounding identity, culture, and power in the postcolonial world.

3.1 Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Hybridity

One of the key areas where *Jago Hua Savera* can be analyzed is through the lens of postcolonial theory, particularly the works of Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Both scholars emphasize how postcolonial texts navigate the complex terrain of cultural translation, identity, and representation in the wake of colonialism. The film, an adaptation of Manik Bandopadhyay's *Padma Nadir Majhi*, makes a significant cultural and linguistic shift by translating the Bengali source material into Urdu, thus reconfiguring the identity of the characters and their socio-political context. This adaptation process can be seen as an example of what Bhabha (1994) terms "cultural hybridity," wherein postcolonial societies forge new identities by negotiating between inherited traditions and imposed colonial or national frameworks.

The notion of cultural hybridity becomes even more relevant in the context of Pakistan's nation-building project, where the ruling elite sought to construct a unified national identity based on Urdu and Islam, often at the expense of regional cultures. By changing the language from Bengali to Urdu and shifting the characters' religion from Hindu to Muslim, *Jago Hua Savera* reflects the political context of post-partition Pakistan. However, it also critiques the imposition of a singular national identity by maintaining key aspects of Bengali culture, particularly the use of bhatiyali music, a traditional boatmen's folk genre. This tension between adaptation and retention is a clear example of Bhabha's notion of "mimicry," where the colonized or marginalized adopt aspects of the dominant culture but in a way that subtly subverts its authority (Bhabha, 1994).

Through its hybrid representation, the film exposes the political contradictions of East and West Pakistan. The inclusion of Bengali cultural elements in an Urdu-language film challenges the central government's attempts to create a homogenized national identity, pointing to the resistance of East Bengal to such cultural impositions. This resistance was not merely artistic but deeply

political, culminating in key historical moments such as the 1952 Language Movement, in which Bengalis protested for the recognition of their language, and later the Liberation War of 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. By maintaining Bengali cultural motifs while operating within the framework of an Urdu-language Pakistani film, *Jago Hua Savera* highlights the unresolved tensions between regional identity and state-imposed nationalism.

Another important aspect of hybridity in the film is the portrayal of land and water as symbols of identity and survival. The Padma River, central to both the novel and the film, represents the lifeblood of the Bengali people, anchoring them to their traditional livelihoods and ways of being. However, the characters' entrapment within economic structures imposed by middlemen like Lal Mian reflects the disruption of this traditional way of life. In this sense, the river functions as both a source of sustenance and a symbol of oppression, mirroring the hybridized reality of the East Bengali subaltern, who exists between cultural autonomy and economic dependency.

3.2 Representation of the Subaltern and Class Struggle

Moreover, Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern is particularly relevant to understanding the film's portrayal of the marginalized fishing community. According to Spivak (1988), the subaltern cannot "speak" within dominant power structures and is often rendered invisible by the forces of colonialism, capitalism, and national hegemony. In *Jago Hua Savera*, the fishermen are subaltern figures, oppressed not only by economic structures but also by the state's cultural and linguistic hierarchy. Their plight mirrors that of the Bengali population in East Pakistan, who were marginalized politically, culturally, and economically by the Urdu-speaking elite of West Pakistan. The film, through its focus on the everyday struggles of these subaltern figures, gives voice to those who are often silenced in the larger national narrative, thus aligning with Spivak's call to "represent the subaltern" in postcolonial discourse.

The film's aesthetic and narrative choices reinforce this subaltern perspective. Rather than presenting a grand historical or political narrative, *Jago Hua Savera* focuses on the lived

experiences of the fishermen, their families, and their struggle to survive within an exploitative system. The slow pacing, long takes, and documentary-style cinematography serve to immerse the viewer in the rhythms of their daily life, emphasizing their physical labor, emotional exhaustion, and limited agency. In doing so, the film challenges conventional cinematic representations that often marginalize or exoticize the working class, instead offering a nuanced and humanizing portrayal of subaltern existence.

A crucial moment in the film that illustrates subaltern resistance is when the fishermen express their collective desire to own a boat rather than remain dependent on Lal Mian. This aspiration represents a form of economic and symbolic resistance, as ownership of the means of production would grant them greater control over their labor and livelihoods. However, the economic and social structures that keep them in perpetual debt and servitude make this dream nearly impossible. The film does not offer easy solutions but rather exposes the systemic barriers that prevent subaltern communities from achieving self-sufficiency, echoing Spivak's assertion that the subaltern is trapped within structures of power that deny them agency.

3.3 Marxist Critique and the Exploitation of Labor

Faiz Ahmed Faiz's screenplay imbues *Jago Hua Savera* with a Marxist critique of the socio-economic conditions of both East and West Pakistan. Faiz, a known Marxist and progressive thinker, brings his ideological leanings to the film, particularly in its depiction of class exploitation and the power dynamics between the fishermen and Lal Mian, the middleman who profits from their labor. Drawing from Louis Althusser's theory of ideology, it becomes clear that the film's portrayal of this economic relationship reflects the broader capitalist structures that oppress the working class (Althusser, 1971).

Althusser argues that ideology functions to maintain the dominance of the ruling class by shaping people's perceptions of their place within the system. In *Jago Hua Savera*, this ideology is embodied in the figure of Lal Mian, who controls the means of production and uses his power to

exploit the fishermen, keeping them in a cycle of debt and dependency. The film's portrayal of the fishermen's labor—their long hours of fishing, their physical exhaustion, and their dreams of owning their own boats—serves as a poignant illustration of Karl Marx's theory of alienation (Marx, 1844). According to Marx, workers in a capitalist system become alienated from their labor, from nature, from others, and from themselves, as they exist solely to serve the demands of production rather than to fulfill their own needs and aspirations.

The film also critiques the false promises of economic progress that were central to the developmental rhetoric of Pakistan's early years. While the ruling elite promoted industrialization and economic modernization, the reality for many working-class communities, particularly in East Pakistan, was one of continued exploitation and neglect. The stark contrast between the fishermen's aspirations and their material conditions highlights the illusion of upward mobility within a system designed to benefit the few at the expense of the many.

3.4 Conclusion: Resistance Through Cinema

Through its neo-realist aesthetic, postcolonial critique, and Marxist analysis, *Jago Hua Savera* emerges as a powerful indictment of the socio-economic inequalities and cultural tensions of postcolonial Pakistan. The film does not simply depict the struggles of the fishermen as an isolated issue but situates their plight within the broader context of colonial legacies, national identity formation, and class oppression. By foregrounding subaltern voices and resisting the dominant cinematic narratives of the time, the film functions as an act of cinematic resistance, challenging both the artistic conventions and political ideologies of its era.

Although *Jago Hua Savera* was largely overlooked upon its release and faced censorship and neglect, its significance has grown in recent decades. It serves as a historical document of a rapidly changing society and a testament to the power of cinema as a tool for critique and resistance. In analyzing the film through postcolonial, cultural, and Marxist perspectives, we gain deeper insight

into its multi-layered engagement with issues of language, identity, labor, and power—themes that remain highly relevant in contemporary discussions of postcolonial South Asia.

4. Conclusion

Jago Hua Savera stands as a landmark in the history of South Asian cinema, a film that not only reflects the socio-political climate of its time but also serves as a powerful artistic intervention into the ongoing discourse on postcolonial identity, cultural representation, and class struggle. Its adaptation of Manik Bandopadhyay's Bengali novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* into an Urdu-language film is a deeply significant cultural act that negotiates issues of linguistic hegemony, regional identity, and the resilience of the marginalized. In doing so, the film transcends mere storytelling to emerge as a nuanced political statement, reflecting the tensions between East and West Pakistan and, more broadly, the struggles of the subaltern in postcolonial South Asia.

The film's significance lies in its ability to engage with multiple layers of meaning, functioning simultaneously as a postcolonial critique, a Marxist commentary on economic oppression, and a pioneering example of neo-realist aesthetics in South Asian cinema. At the heart of *Jago Hua Savera* is its portrayal of the lives of Bengali fishermen, whose existence is shaped by cycles of poverty, exploitation, and systemic neglect. The adaptation from Bengali to Urdu, while a reflection of the linguistic and political tensions of the time, does not erase the cultural specificity of the original text. Rather, it highlights the complexities of identity and belonging, illustrating how language functions as both a marker of unity and division within the postcolonial nation-state.

From a postcolonial perspective, the film serves as an embodiment of Homi Bhabha's (1994) theories of hybridity and mimicry. The linguistic and cultural shift from Bengali to Urdu encapsulates the tensions within Pakistan's nation-building process, where a dominant Urdu-speaking elite sought to impose a monolithic identity on the diverse linguistic and cultural landscape of the country. However, the film subverts this imposition by retaining significant elements of Bengali culture, such as the use of *bhatiyali* music, which serves as an assertion of

regional identity within an Urdu-language cinematic framework. This act of cultural resistance aligns with Gayatri Spivak's (1988) critique of subaltern representation, as the film amplifies the voices and experiences of the marginalized fishing community, challenging their erasure from dominant historical narratives.

A Marxist reading of *Jago Hua Savera* further reinforces its critical stance on socio-economic exploitation. The film vividly illustrates the class struggle through the figure of Lal Mian, the oppressive middleman who embodies the capitalist structures that keep the fishermen in perpetual economic bondage. Drawing on Louis Althusser's (1971) concept of ideological state apparatuses, the film exposes how economic and social systems reinforce class hierarchies, ensuring that the working class remains subjugated. The fishermen's aspirations for self-sufficiency, symbolized by their desire to own a boat, reflect a collective yearning for autonomy that is systematically thwarted by exploitative economic forces. This critique of capitalism and class oppression situates the film within the broader tradition of socialist and Marxist cinema, making it a compelling study of resistance and agency.

The film's neo-realist aesthetic further enhances its political message by grounding the narrative in the lived realities of the marginalized. Inspired by Italian neo-realism, *Jago Hua Savera* employs on-location shooting, non-professional actors, and naturalistic storytelling to create an unembellished portrayal of rural life. This commitment to realism not only heightens the emotional impact of the film but also serves as a formal strategy to foreground the authenticity of subaltern experiences. By rejecting the melodramatic conventions typical of mainstream South Asian cinema at the time, the film positions itself as an alternative cinematic discourse—one that prioritizes social realism over spectacle and political critique over escapism.

Furthermore, *Jago Hua Savera* challenges conventional notions of nationhood and cultural identity by presenting a narrative that transcends rigid linguistic and political boundaries. The film's collaborative production, involving artists from both East and West Pakistan as well as India and Britain, reflects a cosmopolitan approach to filmmaking that defies nationalist exclusivity. This

transnational dimension reinforces the film's broader themes of interconnectedness and shared struggles, positioning it as a work that speaks not only to the historical specificities of Pakistan's postcolonial condition but also to universal themes of resistance, solidarity, and survival.

In revisiting *Jago Hua Savera* within contemporary academic discourse, its relevance extends beyond its immediate historical context. The film's exploration of language politics, cultural representation, and economic exploitation continues to resonate in present-day discussions on nationalism, regional autonomy, and labor struggles in South Asia. The themes it engages with—the imposition of linguistic hegemony, the resilience of marginalized communities, and the structural inequalities of capitalism—remain pertinent in contemporary global debates on identity and power.

By offering a critical reevaluation of this underexplored cinematic text, this study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on postcolonial cinema, South Asian film history, and Marxist cultural analysis. It highlights the importance of *Jago Hua Savera* as a cultural artifact that not only documents historical tensions but also provides a lens through which we can examine ongoing struggles for representation and justice. In doing so, the film asserts itself as a crucial site of resistance—one that challenges dominant narratives and reclaims space for the voices of the marginalized within both cinematic and historical discourses.

Ultimately, *Jago Hua Savera* exemplifies the power of cinema as a medium of political expression and cultural negotiation. It is a film that resists simplification, demanding to be read through multiple critical frameworks to fully appreciate its depth and complexity. By engaging with issues of language, identity, class, and artistic form, the film remains an enduring testament to the role of cinema in shaping and contesting historical and ideological narratives. Its legacy, though overlooked for decades, continues to offer invaluable insights into the intersections of art, politics, and society in postcolonial South Asia. As such, *Jago Hua Savera* is not just a film about the past; it is a film that speaks to the present, urging us to reconsider the ways in which cinema can function as a space of critique, resistance, and transformation.

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