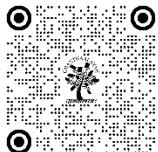


A STUDY ON THE USAGE OF CAMERA TECHNIQUES FOR COMMUNICATION IN CINEMA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MRINAL SEN'S BHUVAN SHOME)

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ABSTRACT

Communication is one of the most important parts of human life. We cannot live without communicating with each other. There are many forms and mediums of communication among which cinema is considered one of the most important modes of communication. Not only this it also has the power to influence the mass and bring about some changes in the society. It has the power to shape the mind of people and give them a new direction in life. Films are made in many different spoken languages, but cinema has its own visual language as well. Camera techniques are one of them. A lot is conveyed through cameras in movies which at times even dialogues cannot convey. The camera is not just used to record the act done by the actors, but it is the bridge between the audience and the performers which helps to connect them to each other. Using camera techniques in a way which leaves a good and long impact over the mind of the audience is difficult and only good directors gave the capability of doing so. When we watch any movie, we are taken into the journey of characters by the director and camera plays the role of a vehicle which helps us to go on this journey. Thus, camera can be considered not just equipment but a tool for making the story telling process more interesting and the process of communication more impactful.

Keywords: Cinema, Camera Techniques, Communication Process, Mass Media

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is considered as one of the most important elements for the survival of human kind. Just like food and air communication is also very important for humans. Communication is broadly divided into four types – intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, group communication and mass communication. Among which mass communication has the power to influence audience at a large scale. Communication may be defined as a process of establishing commonness between entities through transmission of any information in the form

of messages through one or more means such of signs, symbols, words, pictures and so on. Choudhary and Bhattacharyya (2014) There are many medium through which communication is made possible at a mass level cinema being one of the most popular one. It is one such medium which is considered as the mirror of the society and people get to learn many things from it. Cinema has the power to bring about major changes as it reaches a huge mass and is liked by almost everyone. Cinema is a huge part of Indian society and plays a crucial role in people's growth in various ways. Cinema not only entertains us, but it also educates us and opens our minds to new possibilities. This artistic medium has been around for almost a century and will continue to influence people's lives for many more years. Because India is a diverse country with people speaking many different languages, films are produced in a number of languages. But cinema cannot be said to be confined to a particular vocal language. Apart from dialogues and actions camera techniques are also used a lot to communicate many things which even words are unable to convey. Different angles and movements signify something or the other in the cinema and contribute to communicating the story and essence of the film. Television and film use conventions which are referred to as the grammar of the audiovisual medium. These conventions suggest that editing techniques and camera angles convey meaning and thus modify the interpretation of a given scene Chandler (2001). Camera angles communicate about things such as the characterization of the character and emotions of the scene. They help the audience to feel more connected to the characters of the movie and play a significant role in carrying the story forward. Camera angles and movements are a major part of the cinematic language and help the director to communicate many between the line messages. Proper use of shots and angles helps in emphasizing the correct thing without using any dialogues. Thus, it won't be wrong to say that camera is a language which is used by the director to communicate with the audience irrespective of the verbal language that they speak or understand.

In this paper the researchers have tried to analyse the use of camera techniques for the purpose of communication in Mrinal Sen's movie, *Bhuvan Shome*. This movie is considered a master piece and its camera work is unique and creative. The movie does not contain many dialogues and most of the communication has been done by the expressions of the actors and the camera movements, shots, and angles. This movie is about a journey both physical and metaphorical and these two journeys have been very well communicated with the help of camera techniques.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anketa Kumar in his paper, "*Bhuvan Shome – An analysis with reference to 5 codes of Roland Barthers*", studied the hidden meanings in the movie *Bhuvan shome* based on Roland Barthers codes. Barthers has given five codes for the analysis of text or content to dig out the deeper meaning. These codes are, - Proairetic code which includes any element of action that indicates further actions and create a sense of suspense. The second code is Hermeneutic code which is about any element which is left unexplained in the beginning so that the audience does not loses interest in order to find the explanation to that element. The third one is the semantic code which is the element which suggests any connotative meaning. The fourth one is a symbolic code which is similar to semantic code but has some deeper meaning to the element. The last one is the cultural code which is any element which is of common knowledge of the audience, and they understand it easily. Together these codes functions like a weaving of voices. The researcher picked up few scenes from the movie and disentangled the hidden meanings of those scenes based on

these codes. It was observed that the movie contains many hidden meanings which the audience may or may not have been able to decode. The movie is about the journey of self-realizations and exploring new things getting out of one's comfort zone. It is also about the rural urban divide and how the behaviour of a person does not depend on his education level or how much he earns, but it depends on the ground values that one has. The movie uses fixed frames at many places to give the notion of the negative aspects of the character of *Bhuvan shome*. Semantic and symbolic representations have been used throughout the movie. It won't be wrong to say that this movie has communicated lot non-verbally through the connotations and has given a strong message about human relationships and trust. We can see *Bhuvan's* transformation not just in his behaviour but in this clothing also. In the last scene of the movie *Bhuvan* is seen to throw away the bureaucratic clothing and adapt to basic village clothes, this scene has a very deep meaning indicating that a man who used to live in his cocoon is now ready to blossom out as a butterfly and explore different things in the world which are completely out of his comfort zone, and he is actually enjoying this phase of his life. The codes used in the movie help the audience to understand the psyche of the character and how cultures represent the identity of a person. [Kumar \(2019\)](#)

Andreas Michael Baranowski and Heiko Hecht in their paper, "*Effects of Camera Angles on Perception of Trust and Attractiveness*", talked about the influence of camera angle on the scene and characters and its interpretation by the audience. The researchers said that television and films use convention known as the visual grammar in the form of editing of camera techniques and these conventions contribute towards the interpretation done by the audience while watching the film or television program. Various camera angles have various meanings and when these angles are use in the film, they automatically communicate a lot about the scene or the character creating a perception in the mind of the audience. There are many types of camera elevations, and they communicate different things. The main focus of the researchers through this paper was to study the effect of camera elevation on trustworthiness and attractiveness. A lot of research has been done in the past which focus on the source credibility of the television program, but in this research the researchers have put more focus on the person in front of the camera and how the camera elevation affects their credibility. Camera angles and movements communicate a lot non-verbally and knowingly or unknowingly create a perception about the actors in the mind of the audience. Through the research it was concluded that, actors were rated the most trustworthy when filmed from eye level and less when camera was lowered or raised. It was also found that camera elevation has no effect on attractiveness. The researchers also found that context plays an important role in how camera angles interact with actor's perception. Thus, it was observed that camera angle affects the trustworthiness and therefore it has the power to create an impression of the actors on the minds of the audience and hence camera angles should be used properly and in sync with the context of the content. [Baranowski \(2017\)](#)

Garth Jowett and James M. Linton, in their research paper, "*Movies as Mass Communication*", said that the introduction of cinema study at university level was initially considered not very important. The study of motion picture has never been very seriously. But with the change in the education system, art and aesthetics have gained a lot of importance in the academic circle. Study of film can be said as the study of image as a text with the structure and form of an art. Movies today are a big part of our society and play an important role in shaping the society it is who we are and how we grow. Mass media helps a lot in developing the mind of the people by helping them learn new things and get a wide range of exposure. Movies are not only

a part of entertainment but are also huge source of information. They help us to learn new things, get knowledge about other cultures and also keep us updated with the latest trends. Since movies have such huge reach, it is important that the film makers are aware enough about what they are making and use this medium to shape the mind of people in a good way. The medium should be used for positive effects, and this depends on the way the director opts to tell the story. Thus, movie as a mass communicator has huge responsibility on it and should be made consciously. [Jowett \(1991\)](#), [Kumar \(2013\)](#)

3. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To analyse the communication done with the help of camera angles and shots in cinema.
- 2) To analyse the communication done with the help of camera movements in cinema.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has done a qualitative research using the method of semiotic analysis on the selected movie. Semiotic analysis is method of research in which the research studies the verbal signs as well as the visual signs. This study helps in understanding the meanings of the visual and verbal signs and symbols and their effects.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Movie – *Bhuvan Shome*

Director – *Mrinal Sen*

Year – 1969

Language – *Hindi*

Genre – Comedy Drama

6. ABOUT THE MOVIE

The movie *Bhuvan Shome* is based on the novel written by, *Balai Chand Mukhopadhyay*. The main character of the movie *Bhuvan Shome* is a lonely, uptight bureaucrat who works at a high post in railway and is very particular about rules and regulation and is very strict about following them, so strict that he even terminates his own son from job on not abiding by the rules. *Bhuvan*, bored of his routine life, starts a new hobby of bird hunting. The story of the movie is about his bird hunting trip to a far-off village where he meets a local village girl who teaches *bhuvan* to love others and live a free and happy life, this girl forces *bhuvan* to rethink about his way of living life. Being with this young girl, *bhuvan* learns to laugh and relax and be comfortable in his surroundings. The story as it proceeds unfolds *bhuvan's* journey of self-exploration and realization. *Mrinal sen* the director of the movie has made this movie in a documentary style. The movie has it all, satire, comedy, emotions, realization; it is about living life and enjoying it. The film was funded by Film Finance Corporation, the predecessor to the National Film Division Corporation. *Satyajit Ray* said that this movie is a “Big Bad Bureaucrat Reformed by Rustic Belle”. Non-verbal form of communication has been used a lot in the movie to indicate a lot of things.

7. MESSAGE GIVEN BY THE MOVIE

The movie communicates the importance of relationship of human beings and how the absence of it can create a void in your life. *Bhuvan* was always lonely and irritated but when he meets *gauri* and observe her perception of life he experiences some major change in his own behaviour. These changes make him happier, and he realizes the importance of a friend in life. He also realizes that life cannot be lead by only following rules you have to flexible only you will be able to accept yourself and others. Thus, the main message of the movie is that we should know how to maintain relationship and how important they are in life.

8. CONTENT ANALYSIS

Table 1

Table 1 Camera Angles and Movements							
Time of Scene	High Angle	Low Angle	Dutch Angle	Pan	Tilt	Track In/ Out	Combination
04:34							Camera tracks inn towards the cop – focusing on his embarrassment
8:49							Shaky shot – to show disturbance / discomfort – Riot
26:40							Both the bull & cart owner are shown from low angle – indicating that both are powerful & ready to fight
45:40							Pan shot to show the entire location and where they have to go
49:44							Stop motion has been used to show eating of food – eating a lot
54:04							Zoom in – out continues on photo of boy with harsh train sound with <i>bhuvam's</i> face at times – shocked / bad/ wrong
1:05:56							Zoom in and out is used to indicate <i>gauri</i> is swinging in a swing
1:22:97							Shaky camera – disturbed state of mind

Table 2

Table 2 Camera Shots							
Time of Scene	Extreme Long Shot	Long Shot	Mid Long Shot	Mid Shot	Mid-Close up	Close up	Extreme Close up
7:15							Tyre moving – cycle of life
14:25							Silhouette of <i>Bhuvam</i> – indicating the darkness in his life
19:10							In the shot the cart is inclined such that the man who owns the cart is shown upwards – indicating that he has the power of the vehicle
44:06							<i>Gauri</i> is seen sitting & <i>Bhuvam</i> standing – the height difference is a clear indication of difference in power they have

48:50	<i>Bhuvan's</i> close up to show the extremeness of his reaction
1:15:14	Long shot of <i>Bhuvan</i> sitting in the middle of dessert – shows his loneliness – the shot slowly moves to close up – focusing on his emotions and loneliness.

9. CAMERA ANGLES, MOVEMENTS AND SHOTS TABLE ANALYSIS

The camera in this movie has been very beautifully used to say a lot of things non-verbally. Many scenes and shots have lots of deep meanings and many things have been signified beyond the lines through the cinematography of the film. Basic shots such as zoom in to emphasize emotions, shaky shots to indicate disturbance, low angle shots to show *bhuvan* powerful than the other people around him and high angle shots to show other characters as powerless has been used a lot. In one of the scenes were the cart owner fights with the bull, both the bull and the cart owner are shown in low angle to indicate that both are powerful and ready to fight. Many wide shots of the dessert have been shown with *bhuvan* walking indicating his loneliness. Even though the movie was made in the year 1969, technique such as stop motion has been used in many scenes. In one of the scenes were *gauri* is showing *bhuvan* various parts of the castle, in one corner she stands and says that, once there was a swing over here and she stands with her hand doing the action of holding the strings of the swing, the frame for one second becomes still and then the frames start going back and forth just like a swing, it is a very beautiful piece of work by the cinematographer to indicate the swing in that scene. In one scene were *Bhuvan* is disturbed, a shaky camera movement has been used to indicate his disturbed state of mind. Throughout the movie, mid shots of bulls of bullock cart and trains' engine have been shown, this indicate the journey of *bhuvan's* life and how he unfolds many things throughout this journey, these shots are often point of view shots, which might also mean that, the journey is a metaphor for *bhuvan's* life and how his point of view of looking at life changes as he completes this journey of bird hunting. In the beginning of the movie, whenever *bhuvan* gives any clarification about his character the frame freezes and becomes narrow, indicating the narrow point of view that he has towards life. In one of the early scenes, *bhuvan* is shown in a silhouette, indicating the dark side of his life or the loneliness of his life. In one the scenes the bullock cart is shown such that the driver is shown sitting at a higher level than *bhuvan* and he instructs *bhuvan* how to sit properly in the cart, *bhuvan* in the same scene is shown in a low level, this indicates that though *bhuvan* was more powerful than that man but at this point the man was the owner of the cart and had more power and control on his vehicle. Many times, a mid-close up shot of wheels have been shown, indicating the journey of life and its pace. Thus, a lot have been non-verbally communicated through the camera in this movie.

Apart from the shots, this movie has also used a lot of cartoons and animations to indicate many things beyond the story.

10. CONCLUSION

From the above research it can concluded that the use of camera angles, shots and movements have been done a lot in the movie to communicate many emotions. The movie starts with the shot of train's types moving signifying the journey of the

movie and the journey that *Bhuavan* will be undergoing both physically and mentally. Wide shots have been used at many places which signify the feeling of lost that *Bhuvan* experience. It also communicates the feeling emptiness that *Bhuvan* has as a result of his uptight behaviour with everyone around him. Shots of roads and moving vehicles have also been used again and again to maintain the feel of a journey that the characters are in and to keep the audience also remains in the same zone. This shot may have also communicated the journey of life and how it is filled with ups and downs just like the roads of the village. The movie has only two three characters among whom *Bhuvan* belongs to the city and is a bureaucrat and the rest are villagers. This class difference has been time and again communicated through low and high angle shots where *Bhuvan* was most show through low angle indicating that he is powerful and strong as compared to the other characters. But in one of the scenes when he is sitting in the bullock cart and tries to give directions to the bullock cart owner but the guy does not listens to him and rides the way he likes, *Bhuvan* is shown weak here through high angle shot and the other guy is show through low angle communicating that he is in power of the situation. Pan shots have been used at many places to establish the location and zoom in and out have also been used to direct the audience's focus towards any action done by the actors. In many scenes the camera can be observed to be shaky which communicates the disturbed state of mind of *Bhuvan*. In one of the scenes *gauri* shows *Bhuvan* various parts of a palace and in one corner she stands with her hand as if holding a swing and the camera moves to and fro to make it look as if she is swinging on a swing.

Thus, from the entire study it can be said that the camera techniques have been used in the movie in such a way that it has communicated a lot more than the dialogues and helped make the movie more artistic and visually pleasing for the audience.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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