

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## A Study on P Sheshadri's Bharath Stores as a Mirror on Impact of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) on Retail Sellers

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**Abstract:** Cinema address various contemporary issues using its story. There are many attempts to bring the developing issues, current social problems, and their impacts in cinema. Foreign Direct Investment is one such problem faced by the developing country, India. The retail businessmen were on the receiving end of this problem because they could neither compete with malls nor survive. 'Bharath Stores' is a Kannada movie directed by P.Sheshadri and released in 2012. This film portrays how Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has affected the small traders in India in a compassionate way. How retail business people have suffered both economically and emotionally because of the mall culture is touched in the movie. This paper discusses how cinema acts as a medium to portray people's problems in the retail business. The researcher used contextual analysis and Semiotic analysis to analyze the cinema.

**Keywords:** Cinema, Kannada movie, FDI, Small traders, Development, Mall culture, Semiotics

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### Introduction

Today cinema has become the essential need of people. It has the power to change the emotions of people. Cinema is all about motion and emotions. It is purely the magic of moving pictures. Cinema is an art that entertains, informs, and elevates us. Some do not accept cinema as art, but analytically, it is a better and more powerful form than all other art forms. Cinema can connect with our subconscious mind. It reflects our values, customs, styles, and life. This art form enlightens us and at the same time educates us. Cinema is the only art in history in which scientists and artists worked together and brought a revolution in communication and entertainment.

Cinema not only reflects culture but also shapes culture. When we consider Indian cinema, we see how it has promoted modernization, westernization, urbanization, new ways of life, a sense of secularization,

the freedom of women and the rights of minorities, and the relationship between the Hindus and Muslims. The cinema has played a central role in Indian society and has generated discussions and influenced public opinion on drugs and violence issues.

Cinema is consciously expressing those truths, imaginations, and ideas that languages labor to tell or write. Sometimes, filmmakers disseminate their ideas, messages, their vision, or philosophy in an abstract way. The audience needs to delve deeper into those cinemas to decode the message.

The cinemas that define its actual meaning are art movies or new wave movies to see cinema's reality. There are still some debates about art cinema and commercial cinema, even though it is difficult to categorize a cinema as art or commercial. So, many directors like to call it parallel cinema rather

than art cinema. According to Rasmussen, New Wave Indian Cinema, also known as Parallel Cinema, contains elements of realism, naturalism and has an overall more serious nature than classic Indian cinema. The new wave films are rife with culture and political nuances and aim to have more substance to them than just entertainment [1].

### **Film and Society**

We cannot deny that cinema is a reflection of society. The cinema reflects both past and present of humanity and communicates it to the audience in visual effects. The cinema depicts society and its problem, and sometimes it leads the community with the solutions too.

We have seen that the power of audiovisual communication has been manifested and exploited politically, socially, and economically throughout history. It can turn into a propaganda tool to some when it is an awareness-creating tool to others. However, our society has made the best use of cinemas as and when it is necessary.

The cinema is an effective medium to throw lights on contemporary social issues, which discusses the issue's cause and effect. As cinema can influence people, it is an excellent platform to reach the people and make them aware of what is going on in society.

A good cinema can entertain, educate and inspire a human being in many ways. Every cinema is set and developed in a particular culture. There are instances when our prevalent beliefs and ideologies are challenged in films. We sometimes reexamine ourselves and agree with the change. We also must thank the audiovisual medium because of which we witness the cultural and social changes or problems all over the world.

### **Foreign Direct Investment**

Foreign Direct Investment is one of such issues which is causing the threat to the small traders. FDI, as defined in the Dictionary of Economics, is an investment in a foreign country through the acquisition of a local company or the establishment there of an operation on a new (Greenfield) site. To put in simple words, FDI refers to capital inflows from abroad invested in or to enhance the Economy's production capacity [2]. Foreign Direct Investment is an investment

made by one country into business interests located in another country. In other words, it is a practice of starting or investing in a business in foreign countries. It was a threat to many small traders of India. FDI did not come to India overnight. With the initiation of a new economic policy in 1991, India takes up specific steps to liberalize its socialistic Economy. Later in 1997, it allows FDI in Cash & Carry (Wholesale). The major problem started in 2012 when India announces a policy on FDI in Multi-Brand Retail and gets approval in parliament.

Let us see how it is a threat to the retail sector. FDI in the retail industry means that foreign companies in specific categories can sell products through their retail shops. They own independent retail shops that we call malls and marts and sell their products with offers that threaten India's retail shops who lose their business and cannot even afford the advertisements and discounts as mall and marts do.

### **Bharath Stores (2012)**

In the backdrop of Globalization, the Indian Economy started acquiring a new modernization face through liberalization over the last 20 yrs. Glittering Malls & Marts were seen as some of the symbols of modernization. City dwellers who were solely dependent on Kiraana (neighborhood) Stores getting attracted to Malls & Marts leading to societal turmoil forms the subject of "Bharath Stores."

After nine years after her marriage, Bharathi comes to India to repay Govinda Shetty's dues as she promised to her father. Govinda Shetty was carrying forward his family business inherited by his ancestors and was the Kirana Shop owner called 'Bharath Stores.' The bus stop in front of Bharath Stores was named after it, and as Bharathi came to Bharath stores stop, she was shocked to see there was no such shop anywhere on the premises.

She tried asking the people around, but all her attempts went in vain. Now the frantic search begins. By the fruition of a dedicated search, Bharathi meets Chandru and Manjunath, who had worked in that shop.

Chandru tells her how humane Shetty used to be and how he learned that trade tricks. Manjunath tells her he worked there until

the store was shut because of Shetty's health. Manjunath bought her to the old age home, where Shetty stayed from the day he was hospitalized. Bharathi found Shetty, who stopped talking, reacting to others, and was gazing at nothing.

Globalization and Liberalisation brought the countries nearer. It is a couple of decades since India also accepted these, resulting in a gradual lifestyle change. Malls and Marts elevated. New style and trend in business we adapted. Curious customers were gradually attracted to the Mall culture, which resulted in the weakening of retail shops, small shops, and box shops. Many others, like Govinda Shetty, was a victim of the Tsunami of this dangerous evolution.

On September 14, 2012, the Central Cabinet of India approved 51% Foreign Direct Investment in Multi-Brand Retail to pursue its Economic Reforms. Public Debate followed this Breaking News. The story of Bharat Stores was born as a natural reaction. Before this, in 1991, the Government had opened itself to the liberalization of the Indian Economy.

P Sheshadri. The director of the particular cinema is one of the eminent personalities of the Kannada film industry. He is the first-ever Kannada film director to win the Indian National Film Awards for eight consecutive films. He won national awards for eight films he directed. He was trained under director Nagabharana in the direction department and was also inspired by director Girish Kasaravalli.

He is well known for his cinema themes, where he takes up the social issues that reach the people easily. His first cinema 'Munnudi' created history by winning Aravindan Puraskaram and the national award for best film in social problems. 'Athithi' in the very next year also won the national award, which proved that the success of 'Munnudi' was not by luck. His next cinema, 'Beru,' centered on corruption, again won the national award. International awards for 'Thutturi' in 2005-06 as Best audience award at Dhaka International film festival and Earth vision award at Tokyo Global Environmental Film Festival. Later his movies ' Vimukthi', 'Bettada Jeeva,' 'Bharath Stores,' 'December-1' also won national awards.

**Methodology**

**Objectives**

- To understand the problems of FDI on small traders portrayed in the cinema.
- To find out the use of symbolism in the selected cinema.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study has been conducted in the framework of semiotic analysis and contextual analysis. The study used Semiotic analysis by Ferdinand de Saussure.

Semiotic analysis of Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure divides the sign into two components, the signifier (Sound-image) and the Signified (Concept) [3]. Using these components, he also discussed camera shots and camera angles as follows:

**Shots**

**Table 1: Analysis of Shots**

Signifies (shot)	Definition	Signified (meaning)
Closeup	Face only	Intimacy
Medium Shot	Most of the body	Personal relationship
Long Shot	Setting and characters	Context, Scope, Public distance
Full shot	Full body	Social Relationship

**Angle**

**Table 2: Analysis of angle**

Signifies (shot)	Definition	Signified (meaning)
Pan down	Camera downwards	Power, Authority
Pan up	Camera looks up	Smallness, Weakness
Dolly in	Camera moves in	Observation, Focus
Fade in	The image appears in Blank Screen	Beginning
Fade out	Screen goes blank	Ending

Cut	Switch from one image to another	Simultaneity, Excitement
Wipe	Image wiped off-screen	Imposed conclusion

Contextual analysis is a qualitative analysis of the film from the context culture, time, and place of the film's creation and also the social and political concerns of that period

**Research Design**

The study has adopted the Qualitative research method. In which content analysis has been used in the study. Qualitative research relies mainly on the analysis of visual data (Observation) and verbal data (words) that reflects everyday experience (Wimmer & Dominick, 2010)

**Data Collection**

Primary data for the present study were collected by a qualitative content analysis of selected cinema. The researcher has watched the selected film and applied the principles of qualitative content analysis. The chosen cinema was analyzed based on specific objectives. The secondary data was collected from research books, newspaper reports, articles, websites, and the director's interview. This paper tries to find out the problem of small traders portrayed in the movie.

**Data Interpretation**

**The Portrayal of Problems Faced by Small Traders**

Bharath Stores was released in 2012 as a natural reaction to the FDI policy approved in parliament in September 2012. As this cinema depicts the problems of 2012, we need to analyze the cinema in the context of those days. Those were the days when mall culture was beginning, and people were very new to it. People were slowly shifting from small retail stores to malls. Especially mall culture attracted youth and children quickly, which was a significant threat to the retail shops.

There are few illustrations in Bharath Stores that clearly show us the retail seller's life before and after the advent of mall culture. The film portrays that earlier, there were emotional attachments with retail sellers, and they were treated like family members. As time changes, when we turned into malls and marts, there were no emotions but only business.

**Scene 1:** There is a scene in the first half of the cinema where Govinda Shetty has a conversation with Byranna, who is the owner of a coconut farm. He asks for 200 coconuts immediately, and Byranna agrees to it. They also exchange the new biscuits in the market and the tender coconut, which shows their relationship beyond the business.

Later in the second half, Govinda Shetty comes to Byranna's farm to inquire about the reasons for stopping the business with him. In response to it, Byranna says he gave his farm for 5years lease to malls they have given one-year advance money in return which you could never afford. When Shetty leaves the farm, Byranna scolds his servant for not closing the gates properly, resulting in random people entering the farm.

From this scene, we note how the relationship between the two has changed as time passed. The Byranna, who used to respect Shetty the most, started talking ironically with him. He stopped the business relation with Bharath stores and joined hands with malls where he could not touch his yield, but he was happy and proud because he earned more money than ever before.

Before, when Byaranna had business with Bharath Stores, there was emotional attachment between the buyer and the seller. Now there are no emotions, but money was something that mattered to him.

**Scene 2:** Cook Damodar comes with a grocery list and asks for credit for one week. After a small conversation, Shetty agrees to give the items. When his worker asks him why did he do this, Shetty replies, now we are in a position to help, and when he grows, he will come to our store only, which will help us also.

Later in the movie, when Damodar meets Shetty, he says he has shifted to a new office and extended his business to a considerable level. He takes up food supplies to IT companies and marriage contracts and started a few canteens, he says. When Shetty asks why he stopped buying groceries from Bharath stores, Damodara replies, he will

need quintals for a week, and Shetty will not be capable of providing such a huge amount of materials to him. Later, Damodara offers Shetty a job for 15 thousand, which came as an unexpected talk from the cook.

In this scene, Cook Damodar never says that he brings ration from mall or marts, but we as an audience can conclude that he is also trapped by mall culture. He indirectly says that retails shops can never survive in the present situation, and Shetty should give it up in his old age.

**Scene 3:** Few Kirana shop owners gather at a place and discuss how this mall culture threatens their business. One among them who shifted his business to a finance company says that people go to the mart and supermarkets, no use of talking here only way out is to change the business.

He also gives an example by showing the full-page advertisement of marts and whether a retailer would provide this? Indeed, small retail shops cannot afford these full-page advertisements, but the reality is that to compete with the mall and marts, they must use these tactics, or else bigger fish (mall & marts) will swallow the small fish (retail shops).

This particular scene represents how these malls and marts control people's emotions with money. They fool the people with advertisements: the business tactics, as Govinda Shetty quotes in the meeting. People get hypnotized because of the colorful promotions and attractive offers. The retails sellers lose the race without knowing how to fake the business.

### Symbolizations Used in the Cinema



Picture 1: Worm eyeshot of Building



Picture 2: Wide angle shot of traffic



**Picture 3: Long shot of metro**

The above images show the development that took place in Bangalore in recent years. These are the shots that are seen from the eyes of Bharati, who came to India after nine years. She gets excited to see the changes in Bangalore that happened in these years.

Worm eye view of Building is shown to symbolize that IT sectors started dominating Bangalore and its people. The city's traffic is directed in the wide-angle shot to know the unsophisticated traffic, and Metro is captured in a long shot to symbolize the development on the whole.



**Picture 4: Bharath Stores before Mall Culture was introduced in India**



**Picture 5: Bharath stores after Mall Culture entered India**

These are the wide-angle shots that say how Bharath stores suffered because of the Mall culture. The director showed the after effect of mall culture in picture 5 with dim light and few left unsold items in Bharath Stores for long. Before in the movie (picture 4), he used bright lights, and the store was full of things. The following images give a better idea about the depiction of the effects on Bharath Stores.

In Picture 4, the store is filled, and all items look fresh. The light is also bright, which implies there is good business in Bharath stores. In Picture 5, we see all the old unsold products, and even the store is not packed like before, which symbolizes the business is near the ground and no customers are turning up to Bharath Stores. Dim light acts as a metaphor for sadness or bad.



Picture 6: Deepavali celebration



Picture 7: Bharath Stores during deepavali celebration

Picture 6 and picture 7 are the movie screenshots where the whole city celebrates Deepavali but no festival vibes in Bharath Stores. The entire street is colorful with many lights that indicate that they are happy and celebrating, but on the other hand, the Bharath store is infilled with darkness.

Darkness is because Shetty was unable to pay the current bill, and the electricity department has taken the fuse out. It also symbolizes the life of Kirana Shops, where there are no business and money turnovers. Everybody who is celebrating represents the mall culture. The people attracted to it,

where Bharath stores represent all the retail shops, box shops, and much more small business in India. The wide-angle shot of

picture 7 director managed to capture Govinda Shetty's situation and emotions in one frame.



**Picture 8: Shetty counting the money to pay the electricity bill**



**Picture 9: Shetty bringing out the holy money**

Picture 8 and picture 9 show the economic condition of Govinda Shetty at the end of the movie. He was the one you used to financially help everyone who came seeking his help without thinking twice. Because of the mall culture, his business went in low, because of which he did not have money to pay the current bill and his employee bill. The people he helped never came back when they have more profit in Malls and marts.

The candle in picture 8 represents the life of retail shops, which has come to an end. The lighting in picture 9 shows when there is darkness everywhere in his life. The only ray of hope is the holy money, which he has been

saving from the beginning of his business and never opened it for a purpose other than sacred rituals. He used that money to pay his employee's salaries.

### **Conclusion**

When we observe the movie, we find out how it portrayed mall culture's impact on India's retail shops. We also see how it emotionally affects a person whose only source of income is these shops. We witness the bonding these Kirana shops had with their customers, which we miss these days after the advent of mall culture. Now, wherever we go, we find only business. We can never go back to those days when there was a kind of human



attachment and love-filled service waiting for its customers during those days. In the movie, we see Govinda Shetty as the protagonist who helps everyone throughout the cinema. It started from giving all the necessary groceries for low cost when poor people come to his shop, giving credits to cook Damodar, and more importantly, the money he lent to Balki for his daughter marriage without the second thought Bharati comes to return. This film is near reality and tried to portray the economic and emotional problems faced by Kirana shops because of mall culture.

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