

## ADIUE MY FRIEND PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE BASU CHATTERJEE



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? HAIN AUR BHI DUNIYA MEIN SUKHANWAR BAHUT ACHCHE

KEHTE HAIN KI BASU DA KA THAA ANDAZ-E- BAYAN AUR ?

A GIANT Film maker Basu Chatterjee (Fondly called Basu Da) is no more .Besides being a big loss to the Film world , is also a personal loss to me. He was labelled as Champion of the Middle Class Cinema, Maestro of Middle Path and one of the pioneers of New Wave or Parallel Cinema. One wondered Why Champion of the Middle Class Cinema since his films were seen and appreciated by all classes?. Answer is, that most of his successful films depicted the typical common man, middle class characters ,deeply rooted in the ethos, their struggle for survival, shot actually in the city scape or village band wherever the characters belonged , no artificial sets.?Khatta Meetha? ,?Rajnigandha? ?Baton Baton Mein? ? Chit Chor? are the shining examples of such creations. He had his own unique knack of blending humour even in ordinary situations. In a span of 42 years of his film career, he made 40 feature films( 35 Hindi, 5 Bengali).While almost all the films were scripted and directed by him, a few he produced too and also wrote the dialogues . In first 13 years of his career he reached to the Zenith having made 23 movies, most of which were classics and commercially successful too. Next 30 years of his career he could not make any mark in movie making but did popular and high TRP rated TV serials like ?Rajni?, ?Bheem Bhawani?, ?Kakaji Kahin? .Perhaps he was the only director whose six films were released in one year (1979)

Basu Da had the penchant for introducing new talents . In his very first film ?Sara Aakash? he introduced actor Rakesh Pandey followed by the Hindi film debut of actor Amol Palekar in his film ?Rajnigandha? .This film also had introduced other two new talents in Vidya Sinha and Dinesh Thakur .Zarina Wahab was picked to star in ?Chit Chor? opposite Amol Palekar which won her laurels . Bindiya Goswami and Devendra Khandelwal were introduced in ?Khatta Meetha?

Basu Da, like others in Bollywood. although did not like star system, but he was happy to direct top heroes of the time . Rajesh Khanna In ?Chakravyuha?, Dharmendra in ?Dillagi?, Amitabh Bachchan in ?Manzil?, Dev Anand in ?Man Pasand?, Jeetendra in ?Priyatama?,Anil Kapoor in ?Chameli Ki Shadi?.are examples. Unfortunately all these star studded films could not make money or earn mass acclaim (Except ?Chameli ki Shadi).This perhaps made him to go in hibernation . But the lull from big screen brought him to small screen where he made most popular serials as mentioned above.

Basu Da?s films can broadly be divided spanning in 3 categories:

Classics : Rajnigandha, Jeena Yahan, Sara Akash, Ek Ruka Huwa Faisla, Swami, Kamla Ki Maut

Heart warming, natural family/life drama : Khatta Meetha ,Baton Baton Mein, Choti Si Baat, Chit Chor and Rajni TV serial

Comedy : Lakhon Ki Baat , Shaukeen ,Gudgudee, Chameli ki Shadi.TV Serials :Kakaji Kahin and Bheem Bhawani.

With such a high profile film maker, no wonder he had bagged Seven Film Fare Awards ,one National Award and one Lifetime Achievement Award. He was darling of Critics and Film Societies /Clubs.

### My good luck to briefly enjoy and learn from him:

I think it was in 2008 MAMI Mumbai Film Fest , when for the first time I happened to meet him in person. I was sitting in an auditorium, .Saw a bulky savvy man trying to find a seat. I recognized him ,got up from my seat and then escorted him to another row where we could get two seats together. That was my first chance encounter with Basu Da . I introduced myself as his fan and a journalist. .Luckily our chemistry gelled. I asked him if he will be coming daily to the fest. He said no, but day after he would come to see a Polish film . As if I know more about the World Cinema, I asked ?Is it about the film of Roman Polanski , Krzysztof Kieslowski or Munk? He said ?No, the film is of Andrzes Wajda. Have you seen his films ? I said no .There Basu Da punched me like a teacher ?Kaise film Journalist ho Bhai, Wajda ki films nahi dekhi ? ?He further added ?Polish Masters Polanski and Kieslowski are passe? . Now you must see all Polish films of Wajda and Zanussi. I told him Sir, give me an opportunity to wait for you outside auditorium and allow me to be of service to you and pleasure of your company. Basu Da just smiled.

Thereafter, almost each year till 2012 we used to meet whether in MAMI Fest or International Film Festival of India (IFFI) Goa. He used to guide me about the choice of films to see. I found Basu Da a jolly good fellow with a typical canny sense of humour. He used to tell me anecdotes of filmi people. An interesting thing was about Smt. Jaya Chakravarty (Mother of Hema Malini) In Iffl, whether at film screenings or parties , we used to be together .To look after his comfort, drinks or eats during parties was my pleasure, after party to escort him to his hotel . He was caring enough to tell the driver to drop me at my hotel. Thus I call him my friend , philosopher and guide . When I wrote my book ?Golden Sojourn In Bollywood Wonderland --Vol.I? he had graciously agreed to write a foreword .The photograph printed with his foreword is the same I have put in this tribute/homage.

**I will immensely miss you Basu Da! May God give you Eternal Peace for ever .**

----- Mohan Siroya

### Written by:

Mohan Siroya

### Category:

Homages

## COMMENTS

Great write up as always, sir!

When I saw the news on TV, I also remembered him and told my wife that he had written the FORWARD for your book, which I had re-formatted.

MAK

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