

Labour Migration and its Social Impact on post-Soviet Tajikistan: An Overview along Cinematic Lenses

Nandini Bhattacharya

The Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan, which witnessed intra-regional migration during the Soviet days, had succumbed to the demand of survival by accepting migration to Russia as wage labourers. The remittance to Tajikistan provides a sizable share of the state income and helps sustain the traditional family households in the rural set-ups. This process leads to endless difficulties and challenges to the migrants in unknown surroundings where their human rights, dignity, health and moral values are compromised. The family of Tajik labourers which are left behind, comprised of women, children and the elderly, undergo endless miseries, uncertainty and insecurity. Its visible fallouts are present in the lopsided gender balance in the family, children brought up with the mothers, and/or grand-parents causing enormous challenge of upbringing. Besides, the remittances, for which the entire challenges are pulled through, often prove to be too irregular and inadequate. Still, this phenomenon remains a fait accompli, a vicious circle which neither the state, nor the society could either succumb or fully reject. However, Tajik films had addressed this issue since 1991 and represented the trauma and tragedy of labour migration and highlighted the loss it entails in terms of human values. This paper sees the entire process through cinematic lenses and locates as to how Tajik film makers are trying to showcase a set of issues linked with this phenomenon. The paper tries to focus as to how the approaches of these film directors are changing along the decades and genres they belonged and represented. The paper would like to develop its arguments along the following films (but will not necessarily confine to these alone): a) *Frishte Kifti Rosht* – Jamshed Usmanov – (2002); b) *Ovara* – Gulandam Mohabbatova and Daler Rakhmatov - a film made with amateurish technological standard reaching huge success for its humane appeal (2005); c) *Taqvimi Intezorii* - Safarbek Soliyev – a film made with remarkable documentation about migration and taking up Russia and Russians as a part of migration process (2005); d) *Tangno* –Muhiddin Muzaffar – a film that critically analyses and understands the ever complex phenomenon from perspectives of each incumbents (2018); e) *Ant* – Rustam Orifi - a film made by a Tajik immigrant worker himself where he had captured the stories of immigrant labourers through the sharp allegories of ants through his experimental lenses (2013). This paper takes up a journey along these movies to find as to how and how far the real life challenge had been represented on the reel and the sharp and poignant questions raised through the narratives, visuals and allegories. In fact, the

films, taken from the very onset of the current century till the very recent times are to locate the continuity and change, if any, in the process of migration and its understanding, acceptance, rejection and denial in the indigenous Tajik society.

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