



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

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## INDECISIVENESS IN DECISION MAKING: A PERSPECTIVE STUDY OF MANAGING INDECISIVENESS – A CLASSICAL INDIAN CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

*Modern thinkers of decision making in global business have realized the arch-problems of indecisiveness for attaining competitive edge. They realized that the turbulent markets of today require agile decisions for the fragile times. Similarly if we analyze the emerging economies of India, Thailand, China, South Korea, Japan and Singapore we can well assess and read the decisions by the business leaders. However, certain management gurus argue that 'indecision theory' needs more attention than decision making, as anti-thesis is to thesis. Speed and Innovation enforced with a decision has become the essence of triad markets and market share of the indecisive market leaders have been attacked. Therefore, the study of indecisiveness has become a perspective for research concern. This research paper shall infuse a new learning model to understand the core of indecisiveness. It shall interpret and inculcate innovative methods in relation to the thought and philosophy of the classical romantic fiction and movies of India. Basically this research shall refer to a movie Devdas, in which Devdas-the protagonist embodies indecisiveness and is symbolic of the characteristic traits of executives in business. This shall introspect the indecisions of executives in the organizations and trace a new perspective to the theory of 'indecisiveness with innovative models'. This new thought shall blend the theory of indecisiveness and decision making; integrating allied issues, multi-disciplinary prospective and universal applications for combating recurrent business indecisions and problems.*

### KEYWORDS

Indecisiveness, Decisiveness, Global Business, Devdas Character, Movie, Fiction, Management Transformation.

### INTRODUCTION

**I**ndecisiveness in decision making is regarding negation of action and dragging of a process decision to conclusion. This is inevitable in management and organizations; due to the callousness of executives deployed. This state of mind, refrain the corporate actors to choose an alternative briskly from amongst the available alternative courses of actions, for accomplishment of the organizational goals. This process of inaction and apathy is called indecisiveness and is prevalent in all organizations. Managerial indecisiveness is synonymous to the whole process of inaction in management. Therefore indecisiveness is a hidden aspect of decision making which frequently pull back right decisions to be taken by the executives. Consequently indecisiveness in decision making has to be recognized and thwarted from the beginning.

The characteristic traits of indecisiveness identified in managers are also relating to all the people working in organizations. Metaphorically the hero-character of Devdas symbolizing indecisiveness; is found in the classical romantic novel of Sarat Chandra Chhotopadhyaya named 'Devdas'. This novel has been turned to movie scripts seven times in different languages in India. In fact, Devdas epitomized the quintessence of indecisiveness and is a role model. This novel in its vividness is symbolic to the plethora of indecisiveness which is usually found in the typical human psychology, Indian psychology and society at large. In its lateral thinking; it reflects the management style of CFOs and CAOs driving the corporate. It is a hyper-model of thought which counter the essential of decisiveness that relates to planning and examination of important managerial functions. Indecisiveness does not involve a series of decisions in the process of management; like that of



decision making. Indecision does not enquire the What? When? Who? Whom? Which? Where? How? of decision making. Other important functions like organizing and controlling of decision making are also lackadaisical in the acts of indecisiveness.

As a matter of fact, decision is an act of choice, but indecisiveness is an act of apathy and non-understanding of the situation. In decision science a manager forms a conclusion about a given situation and in indecision there is no conclusion. In indecision the course of behavior does not opt for an act. Indecision involves no alternatives or more than many alternatives, unlike decision making done from two or more alternatives. Decision making is an intellectual activity which calls for both judgment and imagination, indecision is dullard inaction.

#### **INDECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

Decision making is vital to all management activities and indecision plays havoc with all management activities. Indecision does not adopt any definite objective, do not prepare any plans of action, do not determine structured move, does not motivate personnel and lack innovations etc. Indecisiveness do not take decisions at the right time in the right place. Very often indecisiveness creeps in at junctures and create bizarre result for the organization. This unhealthy aspects of decision making process in the organization needs to be thoroughly investigated and curbed in order to let it forge ahead.

#### **TYPES OF INDECISIONS**

Different types of indecisions exist in organizations at various forms. Indecision making is programmed and non-programmed as well, it can be a major or minor indecision, it can be organizational and personal indecisions, individual and group indecisions, policy related and operations indecisions and long-term, departmental and non-economic indecisions. Organizations have 'written or unwritten policies' that simplify decision making in recurring situations. But decisions not taken on the spirits distorts the policy and complicate situations. Programmed decisions are made in accordance to 'rule or procedure'. Non-programmed indecisions deal with usual, unusual or exceptional problems. Special treatments of problems are handled by non-programmed decision and indecision delays the progress. This relates to situational problems like allocating an organization's resources. Like what to do about a falling production. Indecision becomes more in the senior and middle levels of the management. As one moves up, in the organizational hierarchy, the scope to make non-programmed decisions become more. As an example, some major and minor decisions on purchase of computer machine and peripherals are done to avoid time loss. But the strategic-decisions and routine decisions are of repetitive nature, which are taken at a higher level after a careful analysis and evaluation. This entails a large expenditure of funds; a 'slight mistake or indecision to execute' shall be a jolt for the enterprise. Organizational decisions can be delegated. Personal decisions relate to the manager as an 'individual' and are taken by a single individual in the context of routine decisions, where guidelines are already provided. Group decisions or indecisions are taken or not taken by a committee constituted for the purpose.

#### **INDECISIONS HAMPERS THE THEORIES OF DECISION MAKING**

Well known theories of decision-making like, Intuition theory or Traditional Theory, Classical Theory and Behavioral Theory essentially gets violated by the indecisiveness study. If we examine these theories we see that, certain indecisions destroy the essence of progress due to lack of decisions. If an executive does not decide a particular course of action in this context, he reflects the character of Devdas, a vacillating syndrome. It is contrary to classical theory. In Behavioral Theory decisions are made on the basis of the real situation and here indecision affects more caviling in to the character.

#### **INDECISIVENESS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

Indecisiveness in decision making processes is many. Indecision have various features and passes through distinct phases: like unable to defining problem, unable to analyze problem, unable to developing alternative solutions, unable to decide upon the best solution, unable to convert the decision into effective action and not able to implement and verify right decisions. This is an aspect which has haunted Devdas as a character; and similarly plenty of characters exist in the organizations and corporate. They are positioned in the organization securely and are not taking up any organization and enjoying the status as a pride, out of vanity and not for the purpose of it.

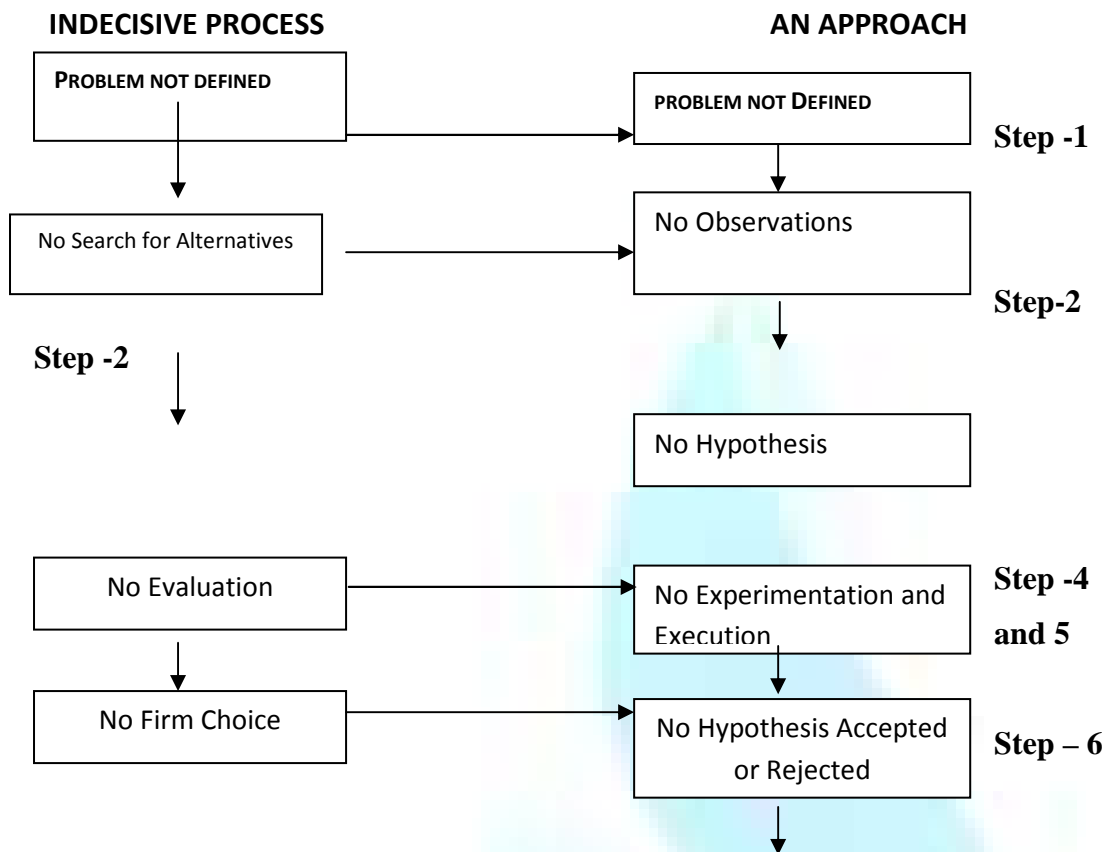
#### **SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO THE DECISION PROCESS AND INDECISION**

Scientific approach is a formalized reasoning process used for the decision making process and indecisive process is process less. Scientific approach consists of steps, which 'indecisiveness' do not abide by. Scientific approach consists of the following steps. They are problem for analysis is defined and condition for observation are determined, observations are made under different conditions to determine the behavior containing the problem, observations look for a hypothesis which describes the factors, best solution to the problem, To test the hypothesis, an experiment is designed, Experiment executed and measurements are obtained and recorded and the sixth step is the results of experiment that are analyzed and the hypothesis either accepted or rejected. These above six steps of the scientific method can always be applied to decision making, because the evaluation of alternatives is invariably done scientifically through experimentation.

The overall relationship of the scientific approach to the decision making process is shown in the grid below which on the contrary in case of indecisiveness. This relates to the antecedents which affect the decision making process.



## RELATIONSHIP OF APPROACH TO INDECISIVE PROCESS

**DEFINING PROBLEM**

In organizations management observes a series of personality clash and split personalities. They look for the real problem due to poor organizational structure, designed by a poor executive mind seated being in the helm of affair. The real problem could be due to poor engineering human resource or poor sales planning by indecisive people. Organizational problem could be due to lack of clear objectives and goal. Therefore the real problem of indecision in management and its solution have to be defined.

**DISEASE HAS TO BE UPROOTED: DISCERN THE ELEMENTS**

Usual method used by most managers is by employing 'no solution' to the inevitable problems and stay cool. Decisions and indecisions are based upon experiential analysis, rather than upon analysis alone. In order to arrive at the solution to the problem, a manager must try to find critical factors, element (s) in the situations and it has to be addressed. To find out these 'critical factors of analysis' on the problem, it is not always easy. Therefore normally, two subsidiary approaches are being used for the purpose. They are: 1) if nothing will change, what will happen? Other approach asks 2) what could have been done if it could have been left undone at the time of the first appearance of the problem. And how it could be has affected the present situation? Indecision creeps in from the inadequacy in the clarity of understanding the aspects and on the aspects of enforcement of the same.

**INDECISIVENESS DOES NOT FIND OBJECTIVES**

Objectives are based on decisions. Objectives always point on the business, always focus on business performance and business results. They balance and harmonize long range missions, they look on to the business as a whole and orient through activities. They structure principles, policies and rules of conduct that have to be followed. It might be a principle never to hire an executive from outside without first considering all inside managers carefully etc. To spell out the rules is necessary as a right decision.

**ANALYZING THE PROBLEM IN INDECISIVENESS**

Analyzing the problem-indecisiveness means classifying it and finding the points. It is necessary to classify the problem- indecisiveness in order to know as to who should take decision, who should be consulted and who should be informed. Classification can show as to who has to do what; in order to convert the decision or indecision into effective action or inaction. These four basic principles of classification affect the science of decision or indecision making. They are futurity of the decision i.e. the span of time it commits the business for positive or negative course of action, impact of indecision or decision on other functions and areas of concern, qualitative consideration and uniqueness. This classification reveals that, a decision or indecision essentially contributes to the whole business. It not only solves immediate problems but also the local problem as a part of the whole.

Indecisiveness does not have self-questions, but in decision making it has a number of questions which a manager asks. They are: Specific information needed for specific decision, relevance and validity of the collected date to support the decision and other additional information. These three are mind boggling none mechanical jobs which require skillful and imaginative analysis. In order to make a sound decision, it is not necessary to have all, but it is necessary to know what information is lacking. Indecision does not judge the amount of risk it involves.

**INDECISION DOES NOT DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS**

Indecision does not develop several alternative solutions for every problem. It falls dangerously into an indecisive trap. Alternative solutions bring basic assumptions to the conscious level and force to examine and validity. Alternative solutions do not guarantee wisdom essentially. They prevent indecision and wrong decision, but alternatives vary with problems. In fact, the ability to develop alternatives is often as important as selecting correctly from the alternatives. Many other aspects related to the aspects also go unevaluated. Devdas needed support or the support was inadequate is a big question. In spite of precision, certain factors 'limit'; which huddle in the way of accomplish. Limiting factor in Devdas is emotion and sentiment of highest order and due to lack of reasoning.

**DECIDING ON THE BEST SOLUTION**

In choosing from among alternatives, the limiting factors can be recognized and solved. It is critical to attainment of desired goal, where the alternatives are selected. The four criteria which obstructs Devdas and identify him as an indecisive character, prevents him to choose for the best of solution among the



possible alternatives. These are risking alternative solutions against expected gains, economy of efforts-least effort, timing- gathering momentum is preferable and looking for optimal resources.

#### **EXPERIENCE, EXPERIMENTATION AND RESEARCH & ANALYSIS**

In selecting from among alternatives, a manager has three bases for decision making or indecisiveness. They are experience, experimentation and research & analysis.

##### **EXPERIENCE**

Reliance on past experience plays a great role in decision making. Attitude develops with experience and justifies as a teacher. Danger on absolute reliance is there. Experience should be carefully analyzed without following blindly; success and failure are distilled from it as a basis for 'decision analysis'.

##### **EXPERIMENTATION**

Another way to take decision under a given situation is experimentation. Obvious way to decide on alternatives is to try and see what happens. This experimentation is used in scientific method for an enquiry into the subject.

#### **RESEARCH & ANALYSIS**

It is a generally used and most effective technique selected from alternatives when major decisions are involved. Research and analysis is comparatively much cheaper than experimentation.

##### **COMPREHENDING IN TOTALITY**

This approach invites issues and problems to be solved by comprehending it in totality.

It involves search for relationship between the critical variables, constraints and premises that have a bearing on the goal sought. In a real sense, it is the pencil and paper or computer and print out approach to decision making. It believes in the idea of solution to the problem. The problem needs to be broken into its components, parts & pieces, various tangible and intangible factors. They are required to be studied threadbare.

##### **SIMPLE PROCESS ADOPTED FOR EVALUATION**

Once the close alternatives have been isolated, the next step is to evaluate them and select the one which will best contribute to the goal. This is the point of 'ultimate decision making'. As soon as we approach the problem for comparing alternative to achieving objective, both quantitative and qualitative factors are required to be taken into consideration. Quantitative factors are those which can be measured but qualitative factors are immeasurable factors, which are amply seen in Devdas characters. Even the best of quantitative plans are many a time destroyed by unforeseen forces.

##### **CONVERTING THE DECISION IN TO EFFECTIVE ACTION**

Solution has to be made effective in the action front. To convert a solution into action requires the people to understand what change in behavior is expected of them and what change to expect in the behavior of others. It is better, if the people who have to observe the decision should participate in the work of developing alternatives. It is precisely because; all the decisions affect the work of other people. A decision cannot merely be designed to help the managers perform better, do his job more easily and or obtain greater satisfaction from it.

##### **IMPLEMENTING AND VERIFYING DECISION**

Implementing and verifying decision or indecision is significant. Effectiveness in decision making for achieving the desired goals depends on its implementation. Best of the decisions become futile if they are not effectively implemented. Follow up is essential to verify the proper implementation of the decision and to modify decisions. The following seven golden guidelines are need to be followed for effective decision making combating indecisiveness in any organization and situation. They are defining the goals, ensure that the decision will contribute to the goal, adopt a diagnostic approach to decision making, involving subordinate in the decision making process, ensuring successful implementation of the decision and evaluate the result.

#### **EPIC LOVE STORY OF 'DEVIDAS' STRONGLY DEFINES INDECISIVENESS AND LACK OF DECISION MAKING, THE ULTIMATE ESSENCE OF THE ART OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The study of Devdas in relation to the study of decision making, in relation to the classical romantic book of the great writer Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, depicts a saga of knowledge that is utterly close to the domain of business and business development. The typical theory of decision making propounded by the doyens of management study, finds a sensible reflection in the life and character of Devdas, the protagonist, in its anti-thetical approach.

Herein, the other significant characters, episodes, incidences and twists etc. in the book that also influences the decision making process; endowed in all the characters are elucidated with the character analysis of each of them. This book of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay spells on the insignificant looking realities of life, significantly portrayed through a family drama, and mirrors a contemporaneous ideal Indian society replete with management principles.

The importance of ethical decision making comes in to debating spree, when we study more on the greater family like the 'organization' and 'society' at large. Evidently an organization is believed to be the microcosm of the macrocosm called society, except for the nuances of culture that are bound to be inevitable. In order to discern and distinguish the issues and characters, this 'work of art' on Devdas interpreted shall fundamentally introduce and illustrate the characters below in its different sheds. Soft skills essential for interpersonal dialogues and relation building can also be realized through this scholastic research study, which finds expression in the characters and episodes.

#### **DECISION MAKING AND IN-DECISIVENESS IN 'DEVIDAS': A MANAGEMENT CONCEPT OF THE MODERN TIMES**

##### **PROLOGUE**

Experimentation on business decisions realized that the 'subject of indecisiveness' is growing in many minds, in a competitive atmosphere. Today different countries seriously realized the power of 'Decision Making' in business to be really important. To seek larger market place and heart share for business, 'study on in-decisiveness' has become all the more vital than 'decisiveness' and is of greater significance.

India is emerging very fast in business in the newly industrialized economy together with China, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Brazil. Indian business tycoons have been establishing themselves at market places striking a decision for accomplishment of goal, set up by the company big wigs. To advance the portfolios of business for linking global market, in-decisiveness is a curse and decision making is a boon, wrong or right. To encash the business trend, US business houses are taking decisions fiercely in the triad markets, to compete in the global village. Companies are climbing with new reality, with spennoative (Speed + Innovation) decisions and driving with the economies of scale. By virtue of swift decisions and non-in-decisiveness, business players are dislodging competitors.

Doing business in a global economy requires a lot of new learning, like how to find the right country and right place in which to start the business, a right decision just at the right time makes all the difference. They must learn what sort of people to hire, how to develop their thinking to sell decisions unflinchingly. Corporations being long since accustomed to do business, managers find it hard to look beyond their own territory for a decision of the company. Business across the country faces many problems in designing market strategy for abiding decisions. They are to focus on programs that can explain how to function effectively and efficiently in the environment.

In fact curriculum on decision making and in-decisiveness has been launched in specific, by world class B Schools. But India is yet to offer decision making specific academic modules for accelerating the pace of work, everywhere. As a matter of fact, this kind of curriculae on decision making and communication shall help many schools develop new decisions. It is a great regret amongst the administrators that, despite all round efforts in most of the education programs, in sufficient attention is being paid to the subject of decision making.

Incidentally we find that a substantial quantity of effort is being done to let 'decision making' enter in to management as an exclusive subject. But hardly it is boiled down to a realistic and pragmatic decision even in the B-schools. Thinkers say that 'indecision' as a subject needs more attention than 'decision', which in fact, needs more emphasis as an anti-thesis. We definitely need to view this subject seriously as a study. The impact of the local customs and business practices

on 'decision making and management' requires enormous exposure, more than other areas. Many business schools are keen on adding the courses, but just as a part of management.

#### DECISION MAKING SKILLS

CD-ROM has been developed on the methodological and theoretical aspects of decision making, integrating examples from a classical romantic fiction and movie. In many turning points the role of characteristic implications have been profoundly analysed in reference to decision making. This CD-ROM content makes the viewer a decision making brain who can dare to decide everywhere. Scope of emotional situations has been touched to make the viewer understand reality in decision making. This CD-ROM is designed to develop a skill to decision making, addressing issues as under:

1. Discovering new alternatives to substitute.
2. Decide and achieve the demand.
3. Concentrate on decision making in life and business.
4. How to reach decision in a best possible way.
5. Employ decision making accurately in practice.
6. To overcome problem, take immediate decision.

CD-ROM illustrates the points of decision making by virtue of the scenes clipped from 'Devdas' movie. Narrations through movie slides and descriptions cater adequate information to debate and discuss. It shall enhance a learning experience for all management students. Besides it shall help the students and professionals of IT, fashion, literature, film, culture, creative thinking, communication and other streams of learning.

#### FOCAL AREA

First CD-ROM is prepared based on the response received from students, who responded to survey on the content. Based on it certain features have been discerned.

- A new thought blending theory of decision making with a beautiful fiction with the movie of Devdas, engulfing allied issues have been incorporated.
  - Broad based family situations on indecisiveness have been dealt with the help of different characters.
  - Definite roles of different actors in Devdas in the indecision process have been experienced.
  - Highlights interesting ideas, stories and factual information relevant to decision making. Over 100 turning points have appeared throughout the CD-ROM describing the details on decision making.
  - Interesting paradigms and new thoughts, from the developed, developing and under developed nations have been illustrated with underlying concepts.
  - Discussions have been made on emotional intelligence and holistic communication.
  - Poor planning and strategy have been analyzed.
  - Creative ideas have been posed in the analogy of the CD-ROM. The students, scholars and researchers for their understanding on decision making for a life time, concepts and theories have been presented in between the movie. The text is liable to rouse anxiety when it comes with the exciting scenes of the movie.
  - Comprehensive connotation of the academic type on decision making has been imbibed to keep the text active in the movie, for the students and learners.
- Decision making is of interest to everyone. This CD-ROM shall help the government, corporation, companies, industries, groups, communities and individual citizens to learn easily and adopt decision making to advance. This CD-ROM has fundamental strength to managerial orientation, analytical approach, multi-disciplinary prospective, universal application and coverage on decision making. This CD-ROM presents a frame work for analyzing recurrent problems in decision making. The study is organized with a romantic thought. This CD-ROM essentially informs the managers the need to understand decision making to carry out administrative negotiations in the right time in the right place.

#### THEME HIGHLIGHTS

The study of the story narration of Devdas has been drawn and interpreted in relation to the study of decision making in Management learning. This is in line with the classical romantic book of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, which depicts a saga of knowledge, which is utterly close to the domain of business and business development. The typical thought and theory of decision making modules of the gurus of management, finds a close reflection in the life and character of Devdas, the protagonist, in each of his anti-thetical anecdotes.

Moreover, the characters, episodes, incidences and turns in the film and the book are distinctively discerned in the decision making processes of management sciences. Indecisiveness and decisiveness is endowed through the characters symbiotically and are elucidated with the analysis of the portrayal of protagonist. The management study incorporated in to the story, spells on the realities of life in management circles. The teaching of indecisiveness is significantly embedded through a family drama which sensitizes the management thoughts and concepts from its core contents. Decision making and indecisiveness of Devdas comes in to forefront as a management thought, when we introspect Devdas beyond family. We discover that these incidences, events, issues and situations of Devdas are also applicable to 'organization' and 'society' at large, where characters ultimately animate the inanimate. Microcosm is the character and macrocosm is the organization, and management study is all about decision and indecision in the organization and administration.

#### DEVIDAS STORY AT A GLANCE



The film is all about two childhood friends, Devdas and Paro, who could not love and live without each other, because Devdas's father does not approve of Paro's and Devdas's marriage.

Paro in the mid of the night Devdas and put forth him the proposal for marriage but alas Devdas at this juncture was utterly indecisive and could not bring himself to say yes to Paro the lady whom he simply loved and adored. The mistake that Devdas committed at this point lead to a sequel of events that followed suit. As a result, heartbroken Paro gets married to a much older man and this separation leads Devdas to liquor and a not so convincing relationship with Chandramukhi, a stunning courtesan.

Time passes by, Chandramukhi renounces her world of glamour, dance and music and dreams to a life in which, only she and Devdas live. On the other hand, Paro takes on the role of wife and mother with sincerity and compassion, but Devdas always remained in her mind. But the day comes when Devdas's last moments are nearer and he goes to Paro's house, as he had promised her that he would meet her before his life ends, but the gates remain closed and the gates of heaven opened for Devdas.

In fact, assembling many other scenes of emotive excellence, like Sumitra being insulted by Kaushalya and Sumitra's subsequent outburst, Devdas' reaction to his father's death and his scene at the funeral, the portions following 'Dola Re' where Madhuri confronts Milind Gunaji and climax, all show the dramatic turns and twists in the storyline.

The poetic dialogues are heavily evident throughout the film, like the comparisons of scarred moon and the dialogues and lines that Devdas retorts very frequently, 'They tell me to leave the house..... Paro tells me to leave drinking..... One day he will tell me to leave the world...'. These all lend poetic justice to the beautiful story and the story carries certain subtlety which makes it immortal.

Climax where she runs through the haveli to catch one last glimpse of Devdas is mind blowing. Madhuri Dixit also impresses as Chandramukhi and she leaves a mark in the scenes and the scene where Devdas finally admits his love for Chandramukhi. Jackie Shroff impresses as Chunni Babu with a theatrical impact and that is the way the book can take in to the grand scale mounting.

Bhansali's Devdas is a visual masterpiece with a fresh treatment of a tragic love story.

#### STORY OF DEVDAS WITH ANECDOTES

A young, sensitive boy from a feudal Bengali family is sent to Oxford to acquire an education befitting to his class and status. Devdas is unhappy with the separation from his mother and playmate Parvati. When the grown-up anglicized Devdas returns to his rural context, he is unable to relate to his childhood sweetheart.

Parvati but has steadily loved Devdas through the years of his absence, separation and vehemently wishes to continue the childhood friendship; as a romantic relationship leading to marriage. And when Parvati's family proposed her marriage to Devdas, Devdas's family rejects the proposal outright. Refusal was on the grounds that, marriages within the neighborhood were discouraged, but importantly the refusal was because of the lower social status of the bride's family. Parvati's family was not as rich as Devdas's and is not from the same caste.

Being revengeful due to the rejection, Parvati's family proceeds to arrange for her marriage elsewhere. Parvati risking the accusation of immorality; visits Devdas at his home in the dead of the night. Devdas being amazed and terrified reprimands Parvati for the scandal this issue might cause. Parvati reveals that, since she is on the verge of losing all that she believed valuable in her life, desperation has driven to surrender herself to him. Devdas protests about his family's honor and duty to his parents. But finally it is Devdas himself who is unable to 'take' Parvati that night and is also unsuccessful in persuading his family. Being unable to face Parvati thereafter, Devdas escapes to Calcutta. From Calcutta he writes: 'It has never crossed my mind that I desire you'.

This is a narcissistic object-choice, which is implicit in the statement. Of course Parvati reads this as a superfluous rejection, but had no choice but to agree to the groom selected by her parents. Again, when Devdas tries to apologize for the betrayal, Parvati accuses him of being arrogant and narcissistic. She affirmatively claims that her parents have made a wise decision in arranging her marriage with an older man, one who is not fickle like Devdas. Being angry at Parvati's accusations, Devdas hits her on her face with an object, leaving a mark on her forehead, which he claims would always remind her of him. After a tender reconciliation the lovers depart. Parvati leaves for her husband's home and meanwhile in a sequence, Devdas enters the house of a beautiful courtesan and prostitute, Chandramukhi.

Parvati takes up her responsibilities in the vast feudal estate as the benevolent mistress, crossing class lines and Devdas in pain degenerate with a purposeless life in the city. Eventually, Parvati wins the love of her step children, who are as old as her and the respect of her husband, with whom her relationship remains in celibacy and amicable. The husband apologizes for his initial lustful designs on Parvati, who is young enough to be his daughter, and withdraws to a retired life by abdicating the running of his estate to her.

Devdas being grateful for the company of a devoted woman like Parvati, he initially despises Chandramukhi for her sexual promiscuity and refuses to sleep with her. Subsequently, Chandramukhi falls in love with Devdas precisely because she appreciates his chastity as an ideal. Chandramukhi gives up her profession as a prostitute, thinking that by reforming herself she may become acceptable to Devdas. Later on when she being altruistic again, took up the prostitution, in a spirit of love and admiration for Devdas; for the sake of money, to take care of his failing health; Devdas became grateful to Chandramukhi for saving his life. But still in love with Parvati lingering and burning in the heart, Devdas loathe himself for his inability to defy social stigmas and conventions at that point of time when he could have won 'Paro'.

Despite the marked difference in the social standings, Chandramukhi and Parvati function as mirror images of each other. In every version of the film and spirit of the book of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, the physical resemblances between the actresses playing the roles of the two women in Devdas's life are unmistakable and unparallel.

Meanwhile, Devdas's father dies, his mother retires from life as a widow, his brother tries to swindle Devdas's share of family inheritance. Dejected and lost Devdas becomes an alcoholic. Hearing about Devdas's painful situation Parvati visits Devdas for the second time and offers herself once more. Devdas refuses her again; when Parvati dares to run away with him, knowing that Parvati would not be able to relinquish her social responsibilities as a married woman. Devdas's daringness equated his psychological limitations, along with Parvati's social limitations. Both agrees to respect the other's limitations, at least for the time being.

When Devdas promises to visit Parvati at least once before his death, there is a tacit understanding between the lovers that they have merely distanced and deferred but not ultimately abandoned the possibility of their union. This deferral functions is the 'motor of the narrative'.

When the dying Devdas finally arrives at Parvati's doorsteps, ready to claim her, there is a classic role reversal; it is Parvati's turn to accept Devdas's submission. Without respect to her social position as a mistress of a powerful feudal estate and her familiar responsibilities as a wife and mother, Parvati rushes to accept Devdas. Her family, which has hitherto been unaware of her secret love for Devdas, could not permit such an infraction and literally locks her within the gates of the family estate, thereby preventing the lovers' reunion and forever closing Parvati to a life of chaste respectability. Meanwhile, in an equally melodramatic scene the chaste Devdas dies at Parvati's doorstep lamenting to see Paro.

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