

# Tragedy Queen of Indian Cinema

**Contd.From Page no.05** Reluctantly, Meena Kumari agreed, but after shooting for five days, she instigated a disagreement with Mehboob Khan and



left the studios. On August 14, 1953, Meena Kumari drove to Bombay Talkies and worked in front of her husband's camera for the film *Daera*. Ali Bux somehow came to know this by some external sources and at night, on her return, he refused to open the door. Meena Kumari turned her car around and left for her husband's residence at Sion.

1952: *Baiju Bawra* Meena Kumari played the female lead in *Baiju Bawra*. A series of incidents ranging from Hindustan Lever securing rising star Meena Kumari as a model for their products to being featured on the calendar of a popular franchise took place after the success of *Baiju Bawra*.

1953: *Parineeta* – Directed by Bimal Roy, (starring Ashok Kumar and Meena Kumari as leads) won Meena Kumari the second Filmfare Best Actress Award. The film was based upon the 1914 Bengali novel by Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. This version of the film is considered to be the most faithful adaptation of the novella, particularly due to Meena Kumari's interpretation of the role of Lalita. After the success of *Parineeta*, Bimal Roy was very much keen to cast Meena Kumari in his next venture titled *Devdas* in the role of 'Paaro'. However, things with Kamal Amrohi never materialised and the audience lost the golden opportunity to see Meena Kumari essaying the iconic role of 'Paaro' in the film. *Do Bigha Zamin* – directed by Bimal Roy, won the International Prize at Cannes in 1954, the first Indian film to do so. This film also marks the maiden guest appearance of Meena Kumari in a career spanning 33 years. *Foot Path* – directed by Zia Sarhadi, was Meena's first film with Dilip Kumar. This movie was featured in Avijit Ghosh's book, *40 Retakes: Bollywood Classics You May Have Missed*. *Daera* – was written and directed by Kamal Amrohi, starring Meena Kumari, Nasir Khan and Nana Palsikar in lead roles. Other films included *Naulakha Haar* and *Dana Paani*.

1954: *Baadbaan*-directed by Phani Majumdar, had a star cast of MeenaVKumari, Dev Anand, Ashok Kumar and Usha Kiran. *Chandni Chowk* – directed by B. R. Chopra in 1954, a classic Muslim social drama film, was Chopra's second directorial venture and another success at the box office. *Ilzaam*- directed by R C Talwar and Rafiq Anwar, starring Meena Kumari and Kishore Kumar, also premiered.

1955: *In Azaad* – directed by Sriramulu Naidu S.M. It was the top grossing Hindi film that year. Hit songs from the movie include "Aplam Chaplam" sung by Lata Mangeshkar and Usha Mangeshkar, and "Na Bole Na Bole" sung by Lata Mangeshkar. *Adl-e-Jehangir* – was a Hindi language historical drama film directed by G.P. Sippy, and it became a commercial success at the box office. *Bandish* - directed by Satyen Bose starring Meena Kumari, Ashok Kumar, and Daisy Irani was a box office hit. *Ruksana* - was directed by R.C. Talwar and starred Meena Kumari and Kishore Kumar.

1956: *Ek Hi Raasta* – was a family-drama Indian Hindi film directed and produced by B. R. Chopra. It starred Meena Kumari with newcomer Sunil Dutt, Ashok Kumar and Daisy Irani. The film proved to be successful at the box office and was screened for more than 25 weeks, which was a "Jubilee Hit". *Bandhan* directed by Hemchandra Chunder, based on the popular Bengali novel *Mantra Shakti*, starred Meena Kumari and Pradeep Kumar as leads and was awarded with a Certificate of Merit in National Film Awards. *Mem Sahib* directed by R.C. Talwar, featured Meena Kumari for the first time with Shammi Kapoor. The modern avatar of Meena Kumari was well received by audiences and the film became a box office hit. *Naya Andaz* – directed by K. Amarnath, starring Meena Kumari and Kishore Kumar in lead roles, was a musical hit. *Halaku* a historical Hindi movie directed by D.D. Kashyap included Meena Kumari, Pran, Minoo Mumtaz, Raj Mehra and Helen. It was one of the box office hits and celebrated a silver jubilee. A famous incident involving Meena Kumari and Pran comes from the sets of *Halaku*. It was for the first time when both of them were

appearing in a film. When Meena Kumari came to know about Pran playing the titular role, she was not very much convinced by the choice of director. It was so, because during those days, Pran was more popular for portraying a suave villain which made Meena Kumari doubtful. But when she saw Pran on the first day of shooting, she was left awestruck and highly praised him for his acting skills and his huge transformation as the capricious tyrant Halaku.

1957: *Sharada* – directed by L.V. Prasad, was Meena Kumari's first venture with Raj Kapoor. A difficult role to essay, it was refused by all leading actresses of the day until Meena Kumari finally agreed. She won best actress at Bengal Film Journalists' Association Award for her work. The film gained great critical success. The film was the ninth highest grossing film at the Indian Box Office in 1957 and was noted as one of her best performances. *Miss Mary* a comedy film directed by L.V. Prasad, starred Meena Kumari and Gemini Ganesan. The film was one of the biggest hits of that year.

1958: *For Sahara* directed by Lekhraj Bhakri, Meena Kumari received a Filmfare Best Actress nomination. *Yahudi* directed by Bimal Roy starred Meena Kumari, Dilip Kumar, Sohrab Modi, Nazir Hussain and Nigar Sultana. It was based on the play *Yahudi Ki Ladki* by Agha Hashar Kashmiri, a classic in Parsi Urdu theatre, about persecution of Jews in the Roman Empire. The film was a box office hit with the famous song "Yeh Mera Diwanapan Hai" sung by Mukesh. *Farishta* - starred Ashok Kumar and Meena Kumari as lead protagonist. The film was rated as above average. *Savera* – was directed by Satyen Bose, with Meena Kumari and Ashok Kumar in lead roles.

1959: *Chirag Kahan Roshni Kahan* – directed and produced by Devendra Goel, stars Meena Kumari with newcomer Rajendra Kumar and Honey Irani. The film was a huge hit in the box office and Meena Kumari received a Filmfare nomination for Best Actress for her performance. *Char Dil Char Rahen* was directed by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, with star cast Meena Kumari, Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Kumkum and Nimmi. The film received warm reviews from critics. *Shararat* – was a 1959 romantic drama film written and directed by Harnam Singh Rawail, starring Meena Kumari, Kishore Kumar, Raaj Kumar and Kumkum in lead roles, with the memorable song "Hum Matwaley Naujawan" sung by Kishore Kumar.

1960: *Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai* was a Hindi romantic drama written and directed by Kishore Sahu. The film starred Meena Kumari, Raaj Kumar and Nadira as leads. The film tells the story of a surgeon who is obligated to marry the daughter of a family friend, while he is in love with a colleague nurse, played by Meena Kumari. It is one of the noted acting performances of lead actress Meena Kumari's career. The film's music is by Shankar Jaikishan, and features a hit song, the Hawaiian-themed "Ajeeb Dastan Hai Yeh" sung by Lata Mangeshkar. At the 1961 Filmfare Awards it created an upset by beating the popular musical epic *Mughal-e-Azam* of Naushad for the Best Music Director category. *Bahaana* – directed by Kumar, had a star cast inclusive of Meena Kumari, Sajjan, Anwar, Kumar, Pramila, Azurie and Sheela Vaz. *Kohinoor* directed by S. U. Sunny featured Meena Kumari, Dilip Kumar, Leela Chitnis and Kumkum. A film of lighter tone, it lacked the intense characterisations of earlier films of both Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari, who are otherwise known as the Tragedy King and Tragedy Queen respectively.

1961: *Bhabhi Ki Chudiyen* was a family drama directed by Sadashiv J. Row Kavi with Meena Kumari and Balraj Sahni in the lead roles. It is one of the noted acting performances by Meena Kumari. The film was one of the highest-grossing films of the year at the Indian box office with the famous song "Jyoti Kalash Chhalke" by Lata Mangeshkar. *Zindagi Aur Khwab* directed S. Bannerjee, starring Meena Kumari and Rajendra Kumar, was a hit at the Indian box office. *Pyaar Ka Saagar* was directed by Devendra Goel with Meena Kumari and Rajendra Kumar.

In *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* Meena Kumari played the character of Chhoti Bahu. For *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, in order to support a drooping heavy look which is associated with immoderate consumption of liquor, she used to apply concentrated Eau de Cologne under her nose. The irritation caused by such action helped her in achieving the perfect look for the role of an alcoholic.

The film won four Filmfare Awards, including the Best Actress award. This movie was nominated for the Golden Bear at the 13th Berlin International Film Festival, where Meena Kumari was selected as a delegate. *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* was chosen as India's official entry to the Oscars.

1962: *Aarti* directed by Phani Majumdar, stars Meena Kumari in the title role of Aarti, with Ashok Kumar, Pradeep Kumar and Shashikala appearing in pivotal roles. Meena Kumari won a Best Actress award for this film from the Bengal Film Journalists' Association. *Main Chup Rahungi* directed by A. Bhimsingh with Meena Kumari and Sunil Dutt in lead roles was one of the biggest hits of the year and Meena Kumari received a Filmfare nomination for Best Actress for her performance.

1963: *Dil Ek Mandir*, directed by C. V. Sridhar, stars Meena Kumari, Rajendra Kumar, Raaj Kumar and Mehmood. The film's music is by Shankar Jaikishan. The film was a big hit in the box office and so was the film's music with the famous songs "Ruk Jaa Raat" and "Hum Tere Pyar Mein Sara Alam", sung by Lata Mangeshkar. *Akeli Mat Jaiyo* directed by Nandlal Jaswantlal, was a romantic comedy with Meena Kumari and Rajendra Kumar in leads. *Kinare Kinare* was directed by Chetan Anand with Meena Kumari, Dev Anand and Chetan Anand. 1964: *Sanjh Aur Savera* – was a romantic drama film directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee, starring Meena Kumari, Guru Dutt and Mehmood. This marked the final film appearance of Guru Dutt, who died later in the year of the film's release. *Benazir* - was a Muslim social film directed by S. Khalil, starring Meena Kumari, Ashok Kumar, Shashi Kapoor and Tanuja. *Chitralekha* directed by Kidar Sharma, starring Meena Kumari, Ashok Kumar and Pradeep Kumar, was based on the 1934 Hindi novel by the same name by Bhagwati Charan Verma, about Bijgupta serving under the Maurya Empire, and king Chandragupta Maurya (340 BCE–298 BCE) and his love for courtesan Chitralekha. **Contd.On Page no.07**