

# Tragedy Queen of Indian Cinema

**Contd. From Page no.06** the film's music and lyrics were by Roshan and Sahir Ludhianvi and noted for songs such as "Sansaar Se Bhaage Phirte Ho" and "Mann Re Tu Kaahe". Ghazal directed by Ved-Madan, starring Meena Kumari and Sunil Dutt, was a Muslim social film about the right of the young generation to the marriage of their choice. It had music by Madan Mohan with lyrics by Sahir Ludhianvi, featuring notable filmi-ghazals such as "Rang Aur Noor Ki Baraat", performed by Mohammed Rafi and "Naghma O Sher Ki Saugaat" performed by Lata Mangeshkar. Main Bhi Ladki Hoon was directed by A. C. Tirulokchandar. The film stars Meena Kumari with newcomer Dharmendra.



Critical acclaim (1962) Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam (1962)

Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam was a film produced by Guru Dutt and directed by Abrar Alvi featured Meena Kumari as the iconic Chhoti Bahu. It is based on the Bengali novel "Shaheb Bibi Golam" by Bimal Mitra. The film stars Meena Kumari, Guru Dutt, Rehman, Waheeda Rehman and Nazir Hussain. The film's music is by Hemant Kumar and the lyrics were by Shakeel Badayuni. The film is also noted for its brilliant cinematography by V. K. Murthy and the famous songs "Na Jao Saiyaan Chhuda Ke Baiyan" and "Piya Aiso Jiya Mein" sung by Geeta Dutt.

Long career, but on the conditions that she should not remit anyone in her makeup room but her makeup artist and return home in her own car by 6:30 every evening. Meena

Kumari agreed to all terms, but with passing time she kept breaking them. Abrar Alvi, director of Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam, recounts how Kamal Amrohi would have his spy and right-hand man Baqar Ali present even in the makeup room while Meena's makeup was being done, and one evening, when working beyond schedule to complete a shot, he had to face his heroine dissolving in tears.

In 1963, Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam was selected as the Indian entry to the Berlin Film Festival and Meena Kumari was selected as a delegate. The then Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Satya Narayan Sinha, arranged for two tickets, one for Meena Kumari and one for her husband, but Kamal Amrohi refused to accompany his wife. The Berlin trip never materialized. During a premiere at Eros cinema, Sohrab Modi introduced Meena Kumari and Kamal Amrohi to the governor of Maharashtra. Sohrab Modi said "This is the renowned actress Meena Kumari, and this is her husband Kamal Amrohi". Whereupon before greetings were exchanged, Kamal Amrohi interjected: "No, I am Kamal Amrohi and this is my wife, the renowned actress Meena Kumari". Saying this, Kamal Amrohi left the auditorium. Meena Kumari saw the premiere alone.

Meena Kumari was a patient of chronic insomnia and was on sleeping pills for a long time since the days of the telephoning conversations with Kamal Amrohi. During 1963, Dr. Saeed Timurza, her physician, then prescribed a small peg of brandy as a sleeping pill alternative and this was officially how she came into contact with the habit that was to kill her. Somehow this prescribed peg of brandy turned into heavy drinking after her separation from her husband in 1964. After that, Meena Kumari's name was associated with Rahul, Gulzar, Dharmendra and Sawan Kumar Tak.

1965: Kaajal directed by Ram Maheshwari, stars Meena Kumari, Dharmendra, Raaj Kumar, Padmini, Helen, Mehmood and Mumtaz. The film was listed in the Top 20 films of 1965. Meena Kumari won her fourth and last Filmfare award for Kaajal. The film was originally based on the novel "Maadhavi" by Gulshan Nanda. Bheegi Raat, directed by Kalidas, with Meena Kumari, Ashok Kumar and Pradeep Kumar in lead roles was one of the biggest hits of the year with the famous song "Dil Jo Na Ke Saka" sung by Lata Mangeshkar and Mohd Rafi. The film Purnima, directed by Narendra Suri, featured Meena Kumari and Dharmendra in lead roles.

1966: Phool Aur Patthar, directed by O. P. Ralhan, starred Meena Kumari and Dharmendra in lead roles. This movie went on to become a golden jubilee hit, catapulting Dharmendra to stardom and was the highest-grossing movie for the year 1966. Meena Kumari's performance in the film ensured her a nomination in the Best Actress category in the Filmfare awards for that year. The film Pinjre Ke Panchhi was directed by Salil Choudhury, with Meena Kumari, Balraj Sahni and Mehmood in main roles.

1967: Majhli Didi was directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee and stars Meena Kumari along with Dharmendra. The film was India's entry to the 41st Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film. The film Bahu Begum was directed by M. Sadiq, starring Meena Kumari, Pradeep Kumar and Ashok Kumar. The film has music by Roshan and lyrics by Sahir Ludhianvi and is known for the songs "Hum Intezaar Kareng Tera Qayamat Tak", sung by Mohammad Rafi and Asha Bhonsle and "Duniya Kare Sawal To Hum" by Lata Mangeshkar. Noorjehan, directed by Mohammed Sadiq, was a historical film starring Meena Kumari and Pradeep Kumar, with Helen and Johnny Walker in minor roles. It dramatised the epic love story of Empress Nur Jehan and her husband, the Mughal Emperor Jehangir. The film Chandan Ka Palna was directed by Ismail Memon, starring Meena Kumari and Dharmendra. After the Eclipse, a 37 minutes color documentary directed by S. Sukhdev and shot in the suburbs of Varanasi featured Meena Kumari's voice along with the voice of actor Shashi Kapoor.

1968: Baharon Ki Manzil a Suspense Thriller, directed by Yakub Hassan Rizvi, stars Meena Kumari, Dharmendra, Rehman and Farida Jalal. The film was one of the major hits of the year. The film Abhilasha was directed by Amit Bose. The cast includes Meena Kumari, Sanjay Khan and Nanda.

In 1968, she was diagnosed with cirrhosis of liver. The medical advice was that Meena Kumari needed more advanced and permanent cure. She received treatments in London and Switzerland in June 1968. From the months of June

to August, Meena Kumari was in the hands of Dr. Sheila Sherlock. Upon recovery, Meena Kumari returned to India in September 1968 and on the fifth day after her arrival, Meena Kumari, contrary to doctors' instructions. After their marriage, Kamal Amrohi allowed Meena Kumari to continue her act resumed work. Suffering from cirrhosis of the liver, although Meena Kumari temporarily recovered but was now much weak and thin. She eventually shifted her focus on more 'acting oriented' or character roles. Out of her last six releases namely Jawab, Saat Phere, Mere Apne, Dushman, Pakeezah & Gomti Ke Kinare, she only had a lead role in Pakeezah. In Mere Apne and Gomti Ke Kinare, although she didn't play a typical heroine role, but her character was actually the central character of the story. Director Sawan Kumar Tak said "Not only did she not drink, she would not let me drink either. she did not touch a drop after London". After returning from London, Meena Kumari for the first time, purchased her own home, which was on the eleventh floor of a building called "Landmark", situated at Carter Road, Bandra.

1970: Jawab was directed by Ramanna, starring Meena Kumari, Jeetendra, Leena Chandavarkar and Ashok Kumar. Saat Phere was directed by Sudhir Sen, with Meena Kumari, Pradeep Kumar and Mukri in pivotal roles.

1971: Mere Apne written and directed by Gulzar, was his first directorial venture. The film stars Meena Kumari, Vinod Khanna and Shatrughan Sinha in lead roles along with Deven Verma, Paintal, Asit Sen, Asrani, Danny Denzongpa, Keshto Mukherjee, A. K. Hangal, Dinesh Thakur, Mehmood and Yogeeta Bali.

1972: Dushman, directed by Dulal Guha, stars Meena Kumari, Rehman and Rajesh Khanna with Mumtaz in lead roles. The film became a "super-hit" at the box office. Gomti Ke Kinare directed by Saawan Kumar Tak, in his directorial debut, stars Meena Kumari, Sanjay Khan and Mumtaz. Gomti Ke Kinare released on 22 November 1972, after Meena Kumari's demise and was touted as a tribute to the legendary actress.

In 1954, during the shooting of Azaad (1955 film), Meena Kumari and Kamal Amrohi were in South India, and here Kamal Amrohi began outlining the plot of his next film with his wife and decided to call it Pakeezah. Meena Kumari was determined to complete the film and, well aware of the limited time left for her to live, went out of her way to complete it at the earliest. Despite her rapidly deteriorating health, she gave the finishing touches to her performance.

Pakeezah had a grand premiere on 3 February 1972, at Maratha Mandir theatre, in central Mumbai, and the prints being carried on a decked-up palanquin. Meena Kumari sat next to Kamal Amrohi during the premiere. When Mohammed Zahur Khayyam complimented Meena Kumari with "Shahkar ban gaya" (it's priceless), she cried. After watching the whole film, Meena Kumari told a friend that she was convinced that her husband was the finest film-maker in India. The film finally released the following day, 4 February 1972. Pakeezah enjoyed a successful run of 33 weeks and even celebrated its silver jubilee. She posthumously received her twelfth and last Filmfare nomination for Pakeezah. Bengal Film Journalists' Association Awards bestowed the Special award to Meena Kumari for Pakeezah in 1973. Three weeks after the release of Pakeezah, Meena Kumari was seriously ill. On 28 March 1972, she was admitted to St Elizabeth's Nursing Home.

Meena Kumari died at age 38 at on Good Friday, 31 March 1972 due to liver cirrhosis. As per husband Kamal Amrohi's wish, she was buried at Rahematabad Qabristan, located at Narialwadi, Mazgaon, Mumbai. Meena Kumari requested the following prose for her tombstone: "She ended life with a broken fiddle, with a broken song, with a broken heart, but not a single regret." Kamal Amrohi died February 11, 1993 in Mumbai, and as per his wish was buried next to Meena Kumari's grave.

Meena Kumari was a talented Urdu poetess under the pseudonym Naaz. Historian critic Philip Bounds and researcher Daisy Hasan write regarding Meena Kumari's poetry: "Poetry was the medium through which Meena Kumari distanced herself from her public image and criticized the industry that had brought her to public attention in the first place. In that sense, her poems tell us as much about Bollywood as they do about herself." I write, I recite – an album consisting of Meena Kumari's poems under the label of LP Vinyl Record was released in 1971, for which Mohammed Zahur Khayyam gave music. The poetry in the album (nazms) has been written, recited and sung by the poet herself. The album was re-released on 19 September 2006.

Tanha Chand (Lonely Moon), a collection of Meena Kumari's poems, was compiled by Gulzar and published after her death in 1972. Meena Kumari was also a playback singer. She sung as a child artist for films like Bahen till 1945.

As a heroine, she rendered her voice to songs from these films-THREE Songs from Duniya Ek Sarai (1946) FIVE Songs from Piya Ghar Aaja (1947) SIX Songs from Bichchade Balam (1948). ONE Song from Pinjre Ke Panchhi (1966) ONE song from Pakeezah (1972). However, this song was not used in the film and was later released in the album Pakeezah-Rang Barang (1977). In 1953, soon after the success of Baiju Bawra, Meena Kumari appeared in Dream House, an advertisement by Dunlopillo UK along with Ashok Kumar. Meena Kumari was a regular face to be featured on various film magazines and beauty soaps throughout her career. The makers of film Jahan Ara (1964) had approached Meena Kumari to play the role of Jahan Ara Begum. It was the time when Meena Kumari was doing films which were commercially successful and critically acclaimed. Meena Kumari passed on this role to her friend, actress Mala Sinha. This film not only helmed her appreciation from critics but also resulted in a nomination in the Best Actress Category at the 12th Filmfare Awards.

Due to the contrast between her stardom and troubled private life, Meena Kumari is closely linked to broader discussions about modern phenomena such as mass media, fame, and consumer culture. Every year, on Meena Kumari's birthday, numerous articles are printed and television programmes aired to commemorate her, and modern magazines continue to publish stories on her personal life and career. **Swapnil Sansar With Agency.Photo's From [pinterest.com](#)**