

Do Aur Do Pyaar is as monotonous as the marriage it talks about



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A prelude to the Hindi film *Do Aur Do Pyaar* is profound. Marriage is an institution, but who wants to stay in an institution? Aptly said about the union, which most of us may not believe is made in heaven. Yet, many couples go through it because they have either gotten used to the idea of living with him or her or are compelled to do so. The reasons can swing between money and children. What do couples then do? Find peace and joy outside your home, which is never a good idea, for it is like jumping from the frying pan to the fire!

In Shirsha Guha Thakurta's latest theatrical release, *Do Aur Do Pyaar*, Kavya Ganeshan (an excellent Vidya Balan) and Anirudh Banerjee (an unimpressive Pratik Gandhi) have been married for 12 years. They met in Ooty, and she eloped with him to Mumbai, but like so many marital relationships, theirs too floundered because it had lost its novelty, and boredom crept in.

And yes, humans, like most living creatures, are not monogamous, and husband-wife Kavya and Anirudh seek and find excitement in the arms of others. She, a dentist, wanders towards a camera-toting photographer, Vikram Sehgal (Sendhil Ramamurthy), who comes with the bonus of an American accent, effectively killing the way Hindi should sound. And Kavya's husband, who has inherited a business from his father, falls into the arms of a young lass, Nora (Ileana D'Cruz), a model (aspiring to be an actress), whose face stares down from giant billboards.

But bliss eludes all of them: Nora wants Anirudh all for herself and pesters him to get a divorce from

Kavya. And Vikram wants this as well. Get out of the marriage and come away with me to America. He dangles the carrot in front of Kavya, and this is very tempting for her.

But like so many couples in marriage, Kavya and Anirudh have become creatures of convenience and comfort, and for them to let go of their union seems like a gamble. Indeed, sociologists will tell you that extramarital adventure is never an answer to an unhappy marriage.

Do Aur Do Pyaar is one of a long line of movies that explores ties outside marriage. The two that still remain fresh in my mind's eye are the Sanjeev Kumar, Shashi Kapoor, Rekha and Jaya Bachchan starrer *Silsila* and *Marriage Story*, helmed by Noah Baumbach, with Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson struggling through a breaking marriage.

While the couple do not get together in the Hollywood film (with an excellent climax that conveys that they care for each other despite having separated), *Silsila* takes the high moral ground, with the four going back to their respective spouses. I have a quarrel with this. Somehow, Indian writers and directors develop cold feet when it comes to talking about extramarital affairs. They would never let a husband or wife end up in the arms of his or her lover. This is where *Marriage Story* scores. Indian movie makers need to be gutsy if they are to tackle something as thorny as extramarital relationships.

Besides this, Thakurta's effort appears half-hearted. The scripting is clumsy, the narrative style is as boring as the Kavya-Anirudh marriage, and the editing is sloppy. The film leaves a lot to be desired.

The writer is a senior film critic

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