



## Noor Khan

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### **Novelty Cinema RIP (Insh'Allah)**

Novelty Cinema, Cinema Road, 1988

This is the view from my brother Arif's shop.  
I spent so many hours watching this view.  
This article caught my eye in the Frontier Post 4/27/2009...

The downfall of cinema culture in Peshawar F.P. Report PESHAWAR:

Cinemas in any society play a vital and important part in providing entertainment at less cost and that is easy to reach. But in Peshawar, the curtains has fallen to the cinema culture due to a number of reasons. These include changing of cinema houses into departmental stores, plaza's and other buildings, increasing militancy and law and order situation in the provincial metropolis, popularity of cable in almost every house, easy access of movies through CDs, reveals a survey done by The Frontier Post. The number of cinegoers have dropped almost 50 percent and similarly the quality of the films produced by Pakistan in any of its language have been on constant decline from the past two decades. There was a time when the city had almost 14 cinema houses but now it has only 10 in number. The owners of the four other cinema houses have razed the buildings to construct commercial plazas. The few of cinema theatres which are showing films are deprived of visitors due to a number of reasons which mainly include security concerns, lack of support from the government, poor quality of Pakistani films, poor quality of cinema houses and unfavourable environment, have prevented people to come out to enjoy movies on the 70 mm screen. Palwasha Cinema, Novelty Cinema, Metro Cinema and Falak Sair Cinema, all are now part of history. The remaining cinemas houses are Sabrina Cinema, Arshad Cinema (Khyber Bazaar), Tasweer Mehal and Picture House (Cinema Road), Naz Cinema (Hospital Road), Firdaus Cinema (GT Road), Capital Cinema (Saddar), Shama Cinema (Pajjagi Road) and PAF Cinema (Cantonment Area). The facilities provided in these cinema houses are not even near to the standards. The buildings are ramshackle and need proper renovation work, the seating arrangement is poor and the movies shown in them are even worse. Even the PAF Cinema which is said to be the first ever cinema in Peshawar, now shows Pashto films only. Due to which no families go to this cinema which was famous as the families of the Pakistan Air Force officers once used to visit it. People opt to stay at homes and watch an English or Indian movie in their homes on DVD players instead of watching a Pakistani film in cinema. Haji Muhammad, a shopkeeper in Saddar told this scribe that he use to visit cinema houses in different parts of the city in order to entertain himself from some quality movies. "Now it has been more than two decades that I have visited the cinema houses," he said. Abbas Manzoor, an employee of a UN agency said that he used to visit PAF cinema along with his father as it had a very healthy

environment and families could easily be accommodated in the gallery of the cinema. "Who could now go to the cinema houses with the pashto films being aired there," he said. Khan Muhammad, a resident of Gul Bahar area said that he has seen the old Pashto films on CDs and DVDs and there is no comparison between the old and the new movies. "The old movies were far better than what are made today. There was original Pashto culture been shown in those movies and what is being shown today is not our culture as they are too much vulgar and full of violence," Khan said. The cinemas in Peshawar are a part of our history. The PAF Cinema was built after World War I while the Falak Sair Cinema (demolished in 2007) was built in 1934. Though, the downfall of the cinema culture in Peshawar is not a one man responsibility, but there has been no attention given by the government in this regard. Government has to take every one related to this field on board so that steps can be taken to cure the illness of this field. Once Pashto films were famous for their love stories and songs have now been associated with vulgarness and action. Iqbal, a senior citizen of Peshawar who has seen the changing that have occurred in Peshawar over the years with his own eyes while talking to this scribe said that there was a time when even women used to visit the cinema houses. "Most of the cinemas in Pakistan were constructed pre-partition. We used to visit the cinema houses and the quality of the films was much better than what has been produced today," he said.

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