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Foreword

The Indian Panorama '93 and its companion volume, this Indian Cinema book, are the sixteenth in the series to be presented at our international film festival. This section made its debut at Filmotsav '78 in Madras, although it assumed something akin to its present format only in 1979.

The purpose of the Panorama remains the selection of the best of new Indian cinema, both feature and non-feature, without consideration of language or region, for purposes of representing the country at international film festivals and in special Indian film programmes the world over. This selection is unveiled in January every year at our own international film festival and is accompanied by a publication which provides the synopses and artistic and technical details of all the Panorama films. It also brings together informative and critical articles that provide at least a cursory survey of emerging trends in the gigantic and amorphous entity that is the Indian cinema.

In the face of the sheer size and heterogeneity of the Indian film industry, no such book can ever hope to be comprehensive. What we can provide are glimpses of developments, assessments and perceptions, summaries and overviews, which should prove useful to the serious lover of cinema. With so little being published to document Indian cinema, this annual publication with its all-India perspective is a valuable exercise, despite the obvious limitations imposed by its format.

The Panorama selection this year has several aspects worthy of mention. Some of the feature and non-feature films have already won National Film Awards—the Golden and Silver Lotuses. Amongst the feature films, we have films in ten languages, although Hindi predominates this year with seven films. While many of the films are by established directors such as Gautam Ghose, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Girish Karnad, Jabbar Patel, Ketan Mehta, Bharathiraja, Dasari Narayana Rao and K. Viswanath, no less than six of them are the first feature films of their respective directors (*Haladhar*, *Hun Hunshi Hunshilal*, *Khonthang*, *Miss Beatty's Children*, *Mujhse Dosti Karoge?* and *Prahaar*).

Three of the films are by women directors (*Miss Beatty's Children*, *Mujhse Dosti Karoge?* and *Rudali*). And, as far as content goes, this selection is amongst the most eclectic in recent memory, ranging from

an adaptation of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (*Maya Memsaab*) to one of the most popular teen films of the year (*Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar*). Even a children's film (*Mujhse Dosti Karoge?*) finds a place in the selection.

Amongst the non-features, there are anthropological films, films on traditional arts and performance practices, films on social issues, a biographical film on the first actress of Indian cinema and even a diploma film made by a student of the Film and Television Institute of India. What is most heartening is that despite the video boom and the quantitative shift of documentary production on to the various video formats for obvious reasons—finance, technical flexibility and ease of dissemination—there are several dedicated documentarists doing excellent work on film.

All in all, there is a great deal of variety in form, style and content in this Panorama and I hope the films, as well as this book, will prove of interest to all who are interested in cinema in general and Indian cinema in particular.

Deepak Sandhu

Deepak Sandhu

Director

Directorate of Film Festivals

Signs of Change

Khalid Mohamed

Today one can look back with pride and scan the future with optimism. In the 80th year of Indian cinema—Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* was released in 1913—there is reason to be hopeful about the shape of films to come. Despite the recent skyburst of satellite channels and the cable phenomenon, there has been no let-up in the production of films or in the audience's appetite for big-screen entertainers.

Approximately 70 million people go to the movies in India every week. With a number of this size to consider, even minority and linguistic groups run into millions, and it is possible for films to remain rooted in their soil. If the Hindi films of Bombay are believed to be the great leveller, reaching the largest number of viewers in the sub-continent, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada films in southern India have their large and loyal viewership as well, and are making waves on the national as well as the international scene.

Indeed, the highest-paid actors no longer belong to Bombay cinema. The new superstars are from the south, with Chiranjeevi, Rajnikant and Vijaya Shanti demanding fees that are higher than those commanded by their counterparts elsewhere. Star names continue to fuel a film's box-office prospects.

It is estimated that, on an average, over 800 feature films are completed annually, giving India the status of the largest film-producing country in the world. The peak figure was touched in 1985 with 912 films. Telugu, Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam films take the lead, usually in that order. Kannada, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, Oriya, Assamese, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, Punjabi, Manipuri, Nepali and Konkani films account for the rest of the production output.

Theatrical outlets, in fact, do not match the demand for films. There are just 11,700 cinema houses, working out to an average of 7.5 seats per 1,000 viewers. Incidentally, India also boasts a yearly harvest of over 2,000 short films. Simultaneously, there has been mass production of featurettes, documentaries and news reports on the video format.

In any survey of the enormous body of work today, one significant

change becomes apparent. In the past, films usually reflected the truth of Indian lives without intending to; films manufactured as commercial entertainment were inescapably the products of contemporary psyches. However, there has been a considerable shift: many well-budgeted theatrical films have quite consciously come to grips with social phenomena and psychological states. Not that psychical substructure has disappeared from new films; but much that was once implied, or that seeped into films only because it couldn't be blocked out, now seems to be there by explicit design.

There is a new kind of intimacy in the mainstream as well as in the parallel cinema, counterpointed with a concern for social conditions. Quite often, there is some aspect of the 1990s Indian society or some experience of the film-maker that is being retold and correlated to a broader, universal context. No doubt such films are of widely varying quality, and prove yet again that to make a film with a personal touch is no guarantee of artistic success. Still, the promise in the new situation cannot be denied.

The reason for the winds of change is perhaps the new generation in the audience—their growing interest in cinema, their reliance on it as on no other art form, their rejection of the ludicrous elements in the



Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar

age-old formulas or a least their refusal to accept them as the totality of film, and their awareness of social issues. The fulcrum on which the change has turned, the essential component, is of course the drive of the film financier. He has seen where the money is—in the hands of the largest section of the ticket-buying public, in the age group of 14-25; and in his bewildered thrashings about, he has sometimes thrashed toward the personal film. As a result, a much-needed avenue has opened.

The No. 1 box-office earner of the last 12 months, Indra Kumar's *Beta* (Hindi), may have been packed with the mandatory ploys—romance, fisticuffs, sentimental overdrive and sex appeal. Yet, the eponymous character was portrayed as a young, mentally-imbalanced man with a mother fixation. A remake of a South Indian film, it did not present just another vacuous stereotype, the central protagonist's troubled psyche being a catalyst for the concatenation of dramatic events. Gratifyingly, too, the heroine was no submissive, dumb doll, coming off effectively instead as a woman of grit who challenges not only the dominating mother but also a village panchayat when she is accused of loose morals. True, the script and direction tended to go over the top, but the silver lining was that there was an effort at psychological probing as well as at establishing a social milieu. Similarly, there were glimmers of sensitivity in other successful Hindi films like *Deewana*, *Sadak*, *Jigar*, *Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman* and *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar* in which the angry young heroes had an edge of vulnerability. Not absolutely invincible, they received their share of scars and wounds and consequently came across as supermen with that crucial Achilles heel. A tense father-son relationship (*Thevar Magan*, Tamil) and a nubile girl's love for a man old enough to be her father (*Lamhe*, Hindi) were just two of the unorthodox themes attempted. Besides the interesting departures from the formulaic in terms of content, rapid strides were also made in terms of form. Technical excellence has become the rule rather than the exception.

On the non-formula front, Ketan Mehta's *Maya Memsaab* (Hindi), with its images such as reflections in the broken shards of a mirror, brought us close to the mind of a woman of passion. Sudhir Mishra's *Dharavi* (Hindi), while drawing on the conventions of an innocent-pitted-against-the-mafia thriller, blended fantasy with the harsh facts of life in a sprawling slum colony.

Several examples of films of substance and style can be cited. The Panorama section represents a good number of them, be it Mani Ratnam's superbly crafted love-in-the-time-of-terror tour de force



Padma Nadir Manjhi

Roja (Tamil), Goutam Ghose's evocative saga *Padma Nadir Manjhi* (Bengali), Buddhadev Dasgupta's *Tahader Katha* (Bengali), an elegiac study of a freedom fighter for whom the glory days are over, or Sanjiv Shah's feisty political allegory *Hun Hunshi Hunshilal* (Gujarati).

A sturdy and solid narrative force mark veteran K. Viswanath's *Swathi Kiranam*, Dasari Narayana Rao's *Surigadu* (Telugu), K.R. Mohanan's *Swaroopam*, Kamal's *Ulladakkam* (Malayalam), Sunder Krishna Urs' *Sangya Balya* (Kannada), and Oken Amakcham's *Khonthang* (Manipur).

From the repertoire of the '90s women directors, there is Kalpana Lajmi's touching *Rudali* (Hindi) and two auspicious debut features—Pamela Rooks' sensitive *Miss Beatty's Children* (English) and Gopi Desai's charming children's film *Mujhse Dosti Karoge?* (Hindi). Outside of the Panorama, the year has yielded significant works like Mani Kaul's *Idiot* (Hindi). Major directors like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Shaji, Girish Kasaravalli, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalani, Saeed Mirza and Mrinal Sen have either started on their new films or are in the process of finalising scripts, making us look forward to the harvest of '93.

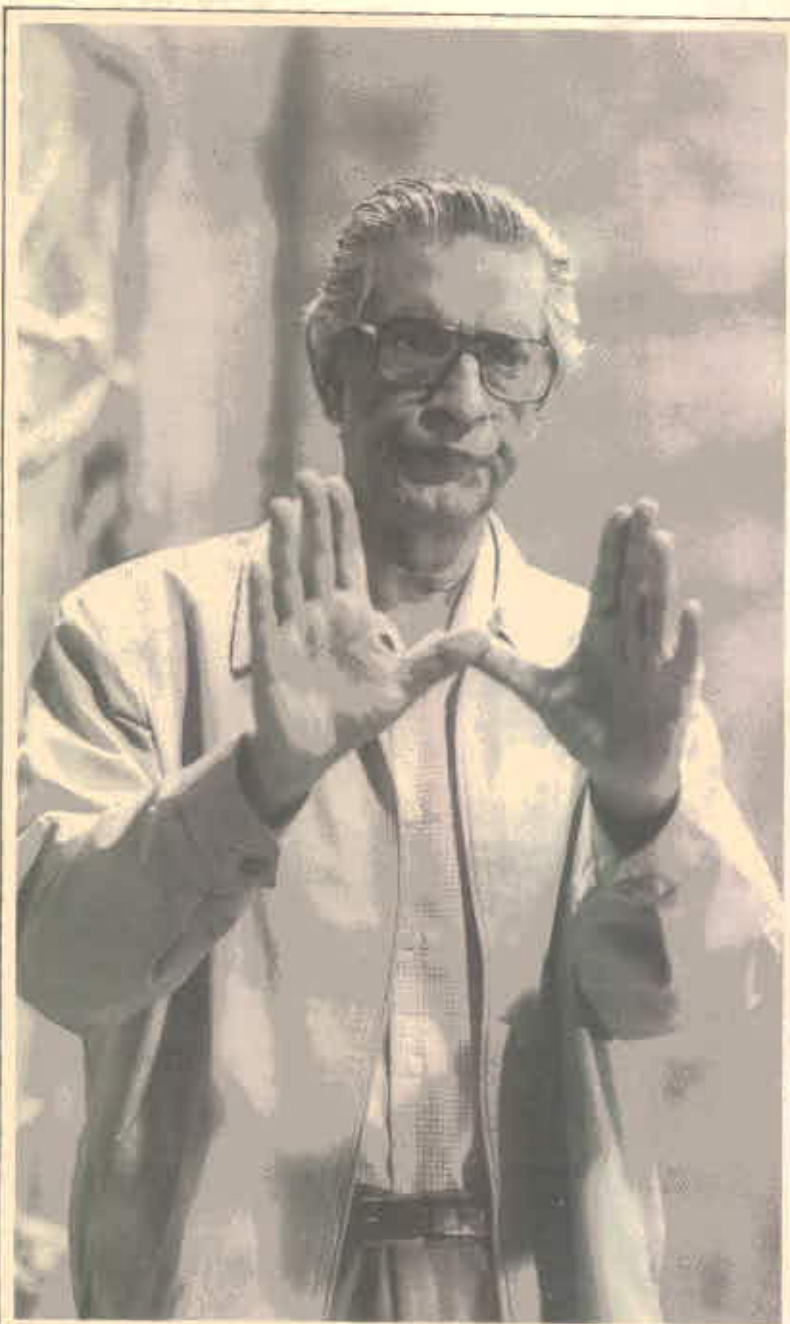
Obviously, the big-budget and the smaller-scale film can co-exist. Popular cinema continues to preside over the public imagination but the steady viewership for the off-beat and the unusual cannot be

denied. Cinema cannot be regarded as a David versus Goliath combat, although there has been an unfortunate tendency to encourage this false notion.

There is a need, instead, to acknowledge the fact that there is a new generation out there which craves a cinema of insights and ideas. By rejecting the archaic and musty, young viewers have at last nudged Indian film business off its upholstered seat. By its discrimination, the '90s audience has rejected films that have been patronising or pretentious. Thus, as we start on a new year, the overriding feeling is—yes, there is a choice of growth and of more films which are closer to our lives.



Silent films star Kamlabai Gokhale



Satyajit Ray
1921-1992

Satyajit Ray and the Bengali Cinema

Chidananda Das Gupta

The forties and early fifties in Bengal were dominated by the ideology of the IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association) and the Progressive Writers' and Artists' Association, two front organisations of the undivided Communist Party. The most important of the former's experiments was the staging in 1944 of Bijan Bhattacharya's *Nabanna* by Shambhu Mitra, which shook the traditional Bengali theatre and launched the amateur group theatre movement. The IPTA's Stalinist rigidity drove most of the artists out within a few years. The diaspora spread out in many directions, but the leftist ideology left an indelible mark on its erstwhile adherents. It is visible as late as in Khwaja Ahmed Abbas's *Saat Hindustani* and Mrinal Sen's *Mrigaya*, in the operatic dance drama groupings in important scenes, apart from the nature of their ideological thrust. Mrinal Sen took a long time to shake off his agit-prop mindset; it was not until *Ek Din Pratidin* that he began to show a concern for the individual over the community and its pre-ordained ideological destiny. Ritwik Ghatak was torn between the two and struggled to find a meeting point between them—but, in his last film, made a noble acknowledgement of failure.

Satyajit Ray never saddled himself with the baggage of bourgeois guilt. *Pather Panchali* bore some superficial resemblance to the *Nabanna* tradition, in so far as it pictured the poverty-ridden circumstances prevailing in rural Bengal. But the family whose fortunes he followed belonged to the privileged class of a previous era, the village Brahmin priest-poet, now fallen on evil times because of the shift of accent to western education and urbanisation to which his son is eventually drawn. Although *Pather Panchali* did to Bengali cinema what *Nabanna* had done to Bengali theatre a decade ago, the comparison cannot be pushed far. Ray was from the beginning a believer in the uniqueness of the individual and did not have to struggle with the pressures of socialist collectivity. From *Apu* to *Agantuk*, he saw the ethical development of the individual, the importance of good means to achieve good ends, as the key to social regeneration. This was most clearly defined in *Ghare-Baire*. His mentor was not Marx but Tagore. Throughout the period of Marxism-dominated ideological ambience and state power, he worked steadfastly in opposition to one of its basic, and to him most evil, tenets—that the end justifies the means. He repeatedly stressed

this in films like *Jana-Aranya* and *Shakha-Proshakha*, leaving one in no doubt about where his sympathies lay. Thus the heritage he upheld was one of the Bengal renaissance and the Brahmo movement beginning with Rammohun Roy and culminating in Rabindranath Tagore. The ideology that Ray internalised and expressed in his cinema is of this reformist movement, striving to reconcile religion with modern science and western democracy on the basis of an Upanishadic, rationalist monotheism.

In the thirties, the Bengali cinema did display some signs of reformist patriotism, but its main anchor was in traditionalism. Its social-reformist zeal was not based on a pervasive world view. As a result, its style never developed the independent view of cinema as an art



Ghare-Baire

free of the baggage of literature as Rabindranath Tagore had urged. Its links with world cinema were indeed limited by the violation imposed by British rule and by the problem of language in the talkies; but apart from these outward difficulties, there was no movement within it to break out of its self-imposed confines. Thus, neither in content nor in style did Ray's films owe anything at all to Bengali, indeed Indian, cinema traditions. That is why he was able to cut its Gordian knot with the one fell stroke of *Pather Panchali* and thereafter to follow his own thoroughly independent course. By

comparison, Ritwik Ghatak's first film *Nagarik* was steeped in the Bengali cinema's conventions and showed only feeble signs of an independent cinematic approach. It was only after the catalytic effect of *Pather Panchali* that he electrified progressive Bengali cinema with the individuality of *Ajaantrik*, although it showed no trace at all of any influence of *Pather Panchali*.

The prominent name before Ray's in the Bengali film scene was that of P.C. Barua, the maker of *Debdas*, that undying archetype of Indian cinema. Barua and New Theatres had an all-India impact with their double-version productions. In *Debdas*, Barua espoused the cause of marriage by personal choice as against family arrangement, and in *Mukti*, he voiced the right of divorce in a marriage that did not work. As such he may be dubbed progressive in his social outlook. Yet Ray had no affinity with him and derived nothing from him.

Ray said he had learnt the methods of narrative cinema from Hollywood. So had Bengali cinema before him, including Barua's. Yet there is no visible link between Ray's work and earlier Bengali cinema. This can be superficially ascribed to the Italian neo-realist element which had been virtually unknown to Bengali film makers. One can also add the catalytic effect of Jean Renoir's constant urgings that Indian cinema free itself from Hollywood and become itself by concentrating on Indian reality. Actually the Bengali cinema establishment rejected Renoir altogether and was contemptuous of the "documentary" realism of *Pather Panchali* during the long period of its search for funds. Indeed, underneath a show of respect for Ray's world stature, it continues to be so to this day.

By the time of *Jalsaghar*, Ray had gone well beyond neo-realism—rather like Visconti—and in a film like *Kanchenjunga* developed a lightness and grace of style quite unlike anyone else's. Although from time to time he turned to the lyrical-realistic mode, as in *Postmaster*, it is impossible to label his style as a derivative of any particular director or strand in world cinema. Although those who came in his wake were strongly influenced by his methods of work, they tried to strike out in their own directions. Mostly they learnt from him the way to put together a low-budget film of quality bearing the individual creative stamp of the film maker. They wrote their own scripts, planned their productions carefully, cut their shooting ratio to the bone, avoided strident make-up, oversaw the shooting and editing closely, simplified the music, used a generally slow rhythm and worked in the realistic mode.



Jalsaghar



Kanchenjunga

No one was able to capture the essence of Ray's inimitable rhythm or his perfection of structure. Whether it is Goutam Ghose or Buddhadeb Dasgupta or Aparna Sen, they followed their individual visions rather than Ray's footsteps, sometimes using elements of his style but not assaying it in full as musicians in a *gharana* would follow their *guru*. Ray's uniqueness thus remained absolute in relation to the traditional practitioners of Bengali cinema as much as to contemporaries of sympathetic persuasion.



Shakha-Proshakhu

Women Film Makers

Maithili Rao

"Women film makers" is a label that the handful of women who have made their directorial mark could well resent. Bristling at this tag would indeed be justified on their part if the term implied ghettoisation—even of the feminist kind—or any sort of special pleading to judge their work by a different yardstick. But the quality of the films this small band has produced, battling against odds great and small, rebuts any special concessions or critical indulgence.

However, there is a distinct and different sensibility at work in these films. It would be facile to look for obvious connecting links in the work of women of such different generations, temperaments, training and abilities as, for example, Vijaya Mehta, the doyenne of theatre and films, and newcomers like Bijoya Jena and Gopi Desai. Even so, within the corpus of their collective work one does find subliminal similarities—a sympathetic way of looking at vulnerability, an empathy for victims of society. It is this, more than themes and overt feminist concerns, that identifies the auteur as woman.

It was in the '80s that women film makers began to make their mark. To be exact, it was in 1979 that Sai Paranjpye made *Sparsh*—a successful marriage of the documentary approach to the problems of the visually handicapped and a tender love story of a withdrawn widow and a hyper-sensitive blind man—but the release was delayed. Paranjpye—spunky, impish and ebullient—is in a class of her own. Even when her films portray the small personal tragedies of people caught in the inexorable ebb and tide of sociological change, her satirical eye gleams with wicked humour. She and her characters never lose the ability to laugh at life's little ironies and come to terms with their own inadequacies. Paranjpye's last film *Disha* exemplifies this unique quality. The ongoing, almost irreversible process of migration—from impoverished villages to dehumanising city shanties—is a bleak story that can be made even more depressing in the telling. But Paranjpye finds moments of laughter as she observes the foibles of her entirely credible characters even while depicting the larger tragedy of their lives.

The gift of laughter, of an unerring eye for the innately absurd, is Sai Paranjpye's signature. Her second film, *Chashme Buddoor*, was a fiery parody of the "masala" Hindi film, where young lovers croon the practised phrases of the lyricist in the borrowed voices of



Sai Paranjpye

playback singers (themselves real-life superstars). This small film went on to be a modest box-office hit and made the mainstream moghuls sit up and take notice. Sai Paranjpye flirted with the idea of making a film with big stars but she is too individualistic to fit the formula-ridden world of commercial cinema. She has sanguinely gone her own way, making "entertainers" that obliterate the invisible but indelible line between mainstream and parallel cinema. Paranjpye is a multi-media personality, writing and directing for the stage, TV and screen.

Vijaya Mehta came to films with impressive credentials in the theatre, both as a sensitive actress and as an impeccable director seeking to combine classical Indian traditions with Brechtian innovations. Thorough research and a measured weightiness characterise her three films. Period recreations are her forte, and a certain textual heaviness hangs over her narratives, even as she tries to translate into cinematic idiom the stage plays or short stories that have been the starting point of her films. *Smriti Chitre*, a narrative that brings alive the memoirs of Laxmibai Tilak, fluidly combines historical perspective, personal history and social observation. The film brings out the remarkable spirit and inner growth of the protagonist (an orthodox Brahmin woman of the 19th century) from



Vijaya Mehta (left) on sets of *Pestonjee*

child bride to late in life when she embraces Christianity, following her scholarly husband. Vijaya Mehta plays the protagonist with great charm and conviction.

Mehta's subsequent films have been period studies of individuals with moral dilemmas caught in the process of social flux. *Rao Saheb* is a rather unsuccessful foray into O' Neillian dramatic territory, in which the ancestral house of the disturbed barrister becomes another character in the story. However, Mehta's exploration of the sexual undercurrents between the young widow and the older man is sensitive. *Pestonjee* is a narrative of the friendship between two strikingly dissimilar Parsi men. Mehta captures the essence of the Parsi community and its contrary impulses (orthodoxy versus insistent westernisation) in sharp moments of mordant humour. Mehta has been far more inspired in her brilliant TV adaptations of two outstanding contemporary Marathi plays—*Wada Chirebandi* and *Hamidabai ki Kothi*. The meshing of personal tragedy and the

inevitability of social change, the crumbling of an old way of life, come through with unsentimental melancholy.

Prema Karanth has made only one film so far, but her *Phaniyamma* is a seminal document of social history. The trauma of a child widow in a remote Karnataka village and the way her calm, osmotic observation of life mellows into compassion and wisdom may falter stylistically. But the truth of experience portrayed in *Phaniyamma*, and images like the young Phani's cascading hair being shorn by the barber, have become cinematic reference points.

Aparna Sen brought glamour and the cachet of being a Satyajit Ray discovery to her own impressive directorial debut. Weaned as an actress on good cinema and yet not disdainful of commercial films (both Bengali and the occasional Hindi), she made a bold departure with first film, *36 Chowringhee Lane*. The film, about a lonely spinster, an elderly Anglo-Indian teacher, was in English—a commercial risk in India. Aparna Sen created a magnificently stoic portrait of Violet Stoneham (brilliantly played by Jennifer Kendall) and, in a way, atoned for the collective guilt of the Bengali upper class—for its benign contempt for the ghettoised Anglo-Indian.

Aparna Sen has a sharp eye for the brashness and disarming candour of a particular species of urbane, self-seeking upper class Bengali youth. Samaresh in *36 Chowringhee Lane* and Rahul in *Parama* are born charmers with winning ways. Rahul is both a catalyst in



Aparna Sen on sets of *Sati*



Bijoya Jena

Parama's awakening and a seducer of the traditional wife and mother at the stage when she is about to dissolve into the anonymity of middle age. The affair—a guilt-free one, according to the director—of a middle-aged woman with a sophisticated younger man might have outraged traditional moralists. But her theme of a woman finding liberation and reclaiming the self through sexual freedom is an idea that is already passe in the west. Aparna Sen's retreat to the 19th century, and the exotic custom of a girl marrying a tree to escape the hell of being unwed, was stylistically correct but laboured in its *mise en scene*. The use of the tree as a fertility symbol, a benignly protective shelter and as the ultimate destroyer loaded the film with metaphors it simply couldn't carry. The feminist correctness was far more successful in *Parama* because Sen was on familiar territory—upper class Bengali society observed by the ironic (not iconoclastic) insider.

Kalpana Lajmi too made a politically correct and somewhat sterile *Ek Pal*, but good performances saved the film from predictability. Her new film *Rudali* is a visual stunner and a revelation. Lajmi brings an operatic style to the saga of a strong woman, a simple peasant who loses everything, including her ability to cry for loved ones. Finally, she becomes one of the most famous professional mourners in

Rajasthan. Eschewing the picture-postcard seductiveness of the landscape, Lajmi reveals a skill for dramatic spatial organisation.

Two accomplished actresses have preferred to turn director. Bijoya Jena's *Tara* is the tragedy of a village priest's daughter and her gradual disillusionment when she marries a glib stranger flaunting his wealth. The accumulated experiences of marriage to a self-seeking Tantrik, and the discovery that a morally upright social worker she had admired can be tempted to stray, force Tara to return home and proclaim that she is the goddess Kali. But it is Kali who is sacrificed, not propitiated with sacrifice as is the custom. Jena opts for an effectively low-key narrative, avoiding the melodramatic pitfalls inherent in the theme.

Gopi Desai has made an unusual children's film which is part distillation of an introspective documentary—the impact of her unit on the isolated Muslim nomads in the Rann of Kutch—and part fable, portraying the fantasy world of a young boy. Desai weaves in a subtext of the folk tales of the region which Habib Tanvir (the legendary theatre activist who plays the boy's grandfather) turns into songs. *Mujhse Dosti Karoge?* may not be as assured as one expects, but Desai, an alumna of the National School of Drama, shows promise of using her theatre experience for cinematic expression.

As a post-script, one must add that even commercial Hindi cinema is all agog, waiting for star-turned-producer-director Hema Malini's *Dil Ashna Hai*, a sanitised version of the blockbuster *Lace*. Here is a case of mainstream cinema following the success of parallel cinema. Perhaps producers and distributors will no longer be frightened away, and will overcome the automatic assumption that woman director means flag-waving feminist.

Questions of Survival

Pankaj Butalia

Since cinema is a product of industrial society, its continued existence requires, like any other product of industrial society, specific conditions for both its production and its consumption. Film producers from the mainstream commercial industry have always been aware of this, and for them the two activities often go hand in hand. Producers, distributors and theatre owners often have strong links with one another and are able to look after their respective interests. Which is why, if a commercial film fails, it is not for any want of trying.

Film makers who lie outside the mainstream have, however, treated the whole question of film circulation and distribution as something beneath the artistic endeavour, and have therefore completely ignored this aspect. They have tended to look upon the state as a natural ally, and have pinned all their hopes on different state agencies to subsidize the exhibition as well as the creation of their work.

The state, too, has been content to take on a role that helps it to bolster its image as a liberal patron of the arts. Exactly how liberal it has in fact been, and how much share of flesh it has extracted for playing this role, is another question altogether. Suffice it to say that, more than two decades after the setting up of bodies intended to help create an infrastructure to promote cinema, there are not many significant improvements in sight.

In fact if one looks at the infrastructure which exists for film making and exhibition in this country, it comes as a surprise that quality work is done at all. This is not intended as a reflection on individual competence, but to point out that institutional and infrastructural inadequacies persist, in spite of which work carries on—paradoxically on a scale greater than in other comparable places in the world.

For instance, looking at the hundreds of feature films that are made every year, along with a few documentaries (and numerous films masquerading as documentaries), one would think that there was a huge infrastructure providing and servicing film equipment. The astonishing reality is that there are only three or four technicians in India who service cameras, lenses etc. Most of them operate out of

their homes with one small room serving as a workshop, which handles everything from camera bodies to fabrication of components to calibration of lenses. Most technicians have no formal training but have learnt the trade on the job. Each of them is nevertheless inundated with work which keeps him busy round the clock. Yet the number of technicians has not increased over time, nor has there been any attempt to improve the quality of training.

Availability of camera and sound equipment for shooting is affected by this. Many producers in the mainstream industry have their own equipment. For the rest who have to rent facilities, these are in short supply, and very often there are technical problems with the equipment. Though this is not a general rule, it is certainly true as one moves down the hierarchy of film production, from the mainstream feature industry to the feature film outside the mainstream to the (rare) avant-garde and finally to the 16mm documentary and short film.

Film stock, magnetic recording tape, optical sound negative, white leaders etc. are perennially in short supply and it is only recently, following the recent phase of economic liberalization, that the requirement of a licence to obtain different kinds of film stock has been done away with.

Still, somehow films get made. The next move, to get them exhibited, is something that seems to exercise very little concern. Film makers outside the mainstream feature industry are quite content, by and large, with one telecast on Doordarshan and a few international sales. This more or less ensures that a low-budget film gets its money back. Theatrical release, even though difficult, is not pursued with the same determination as film makers show while pushing for finances for their film. The exception to this trend is to be found in Kerala and in Bengal, where films do get theatrical releases, but cumulatively this is not of great consequence. Most films are "canned" shortly after being made.

This is where institutions like the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) were supposed to step in. Among the NFDC's many briefs was one to help improve the quality of infrastructure for 16mm film making (the "lowest of the low" format in India). We are fast approaching the end of the 20th century and 16mm film projectors still have inadequate light intensity and poor optical cell reading facility. Another brief was to try and establish film viewing venues in metropolitan areas where all cinema houses are privately owned by commercial distributors.

In neither of these two areas has the NFDC really succeeded. While its contribution in terms of providing finance to deserving scripts for making films has been of some significance, it has made no headway in establishing venues for screening good films. No doubt real estate values in urban areas make the task a daunting one, but the truth of the matter is that the NFDC has never really made a sustained effort to achieve this goal. In this regard, too, it must be said, it has never really been pushed by film makers.

The result is that the few avenues that remain in the cities are fast disappearing as theatre owners give in to the pressures of escalating real estate prices. It would have been worthwhile if some intervention had been made by bodies like the NFDC to explore the possibility of converting the closing cinema houses into some kind of community cinemas. While it would not have been possible to buy them out, some action was—and still is—possible.

The cliché that cinema is dying is not yet a prophecy fulfilled. There seems no reason why those who profess to work in the medium should not make a concerted effort to ensure that the conditions in which they must exist are made more favourable.

To Direct a Gaze

Monica Narula

The politics of culture is intrinsically linked with the politics of representation—all the more so in a world dominated by the image. The image as index, code, metaphor, has therefore become a space tensely contested for influence. This sharp, increasingly self-conscious contest is between two kinds of processes: the hegemony of unified images, on the one hand, and cultural insulation, on the other. The first expounds upon and seeks to mould the world in its own image; the other withdraws into circumscribed, easily defined, allegedly indigenous parameters.

These enunciations are more evident in a purely visual medium like cinema, and most explicit in the obviously political arena of documentary cinema. The force-field of documentary cinema is such that the cinematic apparatus enters into an immediate relationship with material and non-material realities. Its arguments, counter-arguments and illustrations begin from specifics and are based in the world of real images.



Arun Khopkar's *Sanchari*

This is of course affected by the tradition of representation that the documentary film maker has chosen. The early (and in India most closely followed) style is the one pioneered by Grierson. Its implicit purpose, as he said himself, is "to command and cumulatively command the mind of a generation". Here, events captured by the camera are structured with the help of a filmic "voice" which directly guides the audience along an argument which it judges as valid.

The other prevalent style attended the revolution in light-weight and more sensitive sound and film technology: *cinema verite*. Though less obviously addressing or polemicizing—as seen in its formal elements, such as the "non-intervening" hand-held camera, the long take, the jump cut—it still functions finally within the same perspective—to direct a gaze. This is because the project of *verite*, the project of documentary cinema itself—to transform consciousness—has not diverged from the earlier classical style.

As Thomas Elsaesser has pointed out, the originator of the film "is an 'artist' in the conventional, bourgeois sense and a producer in the pre-capitalist sense", and is thus engaged mentally in an artisanal mode of production; but the inherent logistics of film making demand capital-intensive production. This is one of the contradictory spaces that film makers have to work in: they produce cultural commodities whose production and market is global, while they need to maintain individual identity and autonomy of expression.

The hegemony of markets and institutions may or may not manipulate the film maker into creating a universal, homogenous visual language which will be able to negotiate the unpredictability of audience reception. The outcome of that fight lies in the area of the film maker's execution: can he or she resist this coercion and maintain a self-directedness in aesthetic expression?

Image-making is necessarily affected by the source of funding and the temporal strictures the film maker has to work under. And, in India, sources of indigenous funding for documentary films are very limited. The Films Division, Doordarshan and some regional governments are the few state-patronage sources, which are naturally circumspect in the kind of films they choose to fund. The Films Division, as the "public sector" of film making, produces numerous illustrative films and newsreels which reach a captive cinema audience, as all cinema theatres have to screen a short before the main feature. Besides this, they have in the last two years produced films like *Lamp in the Niche* (Girish Karnad), *Amjad Ali Khan* (Gulzar), *Nargis* (Priya Dutt), where funding was provided to independent film makers. The only



Bala Kailasam's *Vaastu Marabu*

notable documentary to be funded by Doordarshan in the last few years has been Nilita Vachani's *Eyes of Stone*.

The other funding source which is newly opening up is foreign TV companies such as the BBC and the German ZDF. This new source has given an impetus to film makers who would otherwise have had to look, perhaps unsuccessfully, for independent channels. This is mainly because the almost non-existent infrastructure for screening documentary films makes for an even more speculative exercise than the funding of big-budget mainstream films. In spite of this, there is a sizeable number of film makers who have managed to make films independently—Anand Patwardhan, Reena Mohan, Bala Kailasam, Ruchir Joshi and M.R. Rajan, amongst others.

The process of film production brings to the surface the persistent, often invisible currents of tension which prevail in daily life, containing simultaneously within themselves the mundanity of habit and the intensity of a deliberate moment. The film maker is constantly relocating himself or herself in a matrix of flux by reorganizing and juxtaposing signs and their reality. The fact that it is becoming more possible to express this is obvious in that the last few years have seen a considerable increase in the number of films. What needs to be assessed is how far this has been successful.

Strangely, in spite of this leap, and the fact that film makers are

making their films from all over the country, it is not difficult to locate most of these productions within confined thematic directions. One of the easiest to situate is the "cultural" documentary. Music, dance, art, sculpture, have all become the new domain of the documentary film maker—*Graven Image* by Abhijit Chattopadhyay, *Figures of Thought* and *Sanchari* by Arun Khopkar, *Wounds—a Film on Somnath Hore* by Rahul Bose, *Mohor* by Gautam Ghose, etc. This would suggest that a seeming accessibility which can more easily tolerate a non-analytical, "poetic" handling, and requires more illustration than insight on rarefied "genius", can more easily be transformed into documentary film. However, *Vaastu Marabu* (Bala Kailasam) and *Bhavantarana* (Kumar Shahani) are films where experience is given form and reality, not imitated. Both provide new perspectives—the former with its lucidity, detail and matter-of-fact appreciation, the latter with its sensuousness and associative connections.

Soudhamini's *Pitru Chhaya*, a film on the vocalist M.D. Ramanathan, in spite of its acute sense of reverence towards the subject, is able to cinematically express and evoke the feel of the music and the ethos within which the music and its practitioners sustain themselves. Another quite different film which succeeds similarly and captures the existential and transitional spaces of the Baul singers is *Egaro Mile* by Ruchir Joshi.

Another trend is that of films attempting to document life on the



Dilip Ghosh's *Children of the Silver Screen*

margins of society: *Living on Junk* (Debal Basu), about rag-pickers, *The Blue Rose* (Asha Dutta) about spastic children, *Days and Nights in Sato's Land* (Nilotpal Mazumdar) on a dying feudal lifestyle, *Children of Mini Japan* (C. Bennurakar) on the widespread exploitation of child labour in Sivakasi, *Eyes of Stone* on the phenomenon of possession in a village in Rajasthan, *Portraits of a Dream Show* (Manjira Dutta) about circus workers. It is as if the film makers seek to document narratives, characters and situations to construct these marginal spaces as metaphors for the core of the social process. These stories, which the film maker considers central to today's social reality, are often told in a more archetypal fashion than they would warrant. While Vachani's film is one which is closest to *cinema verite*, most of the other work is fairly conventional in its formal approach.

Documentarists in India have also been active in highlighting social issues as a means of evolving an alternative film making practice. These films, highly committed in themselves, tend to ground their argument on strongly emotional responses to social questions, be they communalism (*Ram ke Nam* by Anand Patwardhan, *Kiska Dharm*, *Kiska Desh* by Media Storm), women's rights (*Something Like a War* by Deepa Dhanraj, *Char Diwari* by Gulab Kripalani, *Now I will Speak* by Sagari Chhabra), ecology (*Bhagirathi ki Pukar* by Anwar Jamal, *Follow that Rainbow* by Ranjan Palit and Vasudha Joshi, *Seeds of Plenty*, *Seeds of Sorrow* by Manjira Dutta, etc.).

The documentarist's camera has been equally observant of nature and wildlife. The remote, cold deserts of Ladakh (*Ladakh, a Forbidden Wilderness* by the Bedi brothers) and the virgin forests of Kerala (*Silent Valley* by Shekhar Dattari) are evoked in all their primal beauty with a fidelity to the demands of scientific observation. These films probe the link between the decimated "wild" and the "civilized".

A welcome sign is a willingness on the part of the documentary film movement to reflect on the heritage and reality of cinema in India: *Children of the Silver Screen* by Dilip Ghosh, *Portrait of an Actress* by Shiela Dutta, *Nargis* by Priya Dutt, *Satyajit Ray—Introspections* by K. Bikram Singh. Reena Mohan's *Kamlabai* brings to life the vibrancy of the first Indian film actress Kamlabai Deshmukh as she reminisces and reflects on her life and work. The strength of *Kamlabai* as a film lies in its ability to move away from a reverential tenor and to place its subject on accessible and human terms.

Despite such successes, few films are formally satisfying. This is



Debal Basu's *Living on Junk*

because the agenda of both prevalent styles of documentary film making is limited to depicting crisis, spectacle or oppression. A cinema attempting to go beyond needs to re-examine modes of representation. Film makers need to extricate themselves from the domination of the empirical and explore synoptic, analytical views, including the domain of the interior, subjective worlds.

What we are witnessing today are the early days of a new glance at the world. Independent documentary film making in India has as yet only a promise of potential. It hints at the unfolding of a meaningful reflection on our times; yet it remains vulnerable to a degeneration that springs from complacency at having captured the "real" in our gaze.

For the promise to unfold, it will become imperative for film makers to reflect upon and negotiate their relationships to complex processes, and the relationship between these and the act of film making requires a rigorous and critical approach. It becomes necessary for film makers to own up to the responsibility of contributing towards the creation of a space within society which is alive with critical dialogue and debate about films and about the world.

Problems in the study of Indian Commercial Cinema

Ravi Vasudevan

What is remarkable about the last ten years of writing on Indian cinema is the emergence of the commercial film as a serious subject for study. The pioneering work of Barnouw and Krishnaswamy in *Indian Film* (1963) was essentially a survey history of the industry; that there has been no further work in this field is disappointing. The exception to the rule is Theodore Baskaran's *The Message Bearers* (1981), which deals with the history of how performative media in Tamil Nadu communicated ideas about nationalism and Tamil politics. More commonly, critics have analysed the social and historical meanings of film narratives and, in a less pronounced way, the aesthetic and narrational peculiarities of the commercial film.

A number of works, from individual monographs to articles in journals such as the *India International Centre Quarterly*, the *Journal of Arts and Ideas*, *Deep Focus* (all from India), *Screen* and *Framework* (U.K.) and *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* (U.S.A.) have thrown up the following themes: cinema as a psychological index of a society undergoing the traumatic transition from tradition to modernity (Ashis Nandy, Chidananda Das Gupta); as an exploration of the psychic drives of the Indian family (Sudhir Kakar); as a factor in the formation of new social and religious practices (Veena Das on *Jai Santoshi Maa*); and as a representation of social differences and ideas about the nation (Sunita Chakraborty). In relation to the peculiarities of story telling in Indian cinema, Gaston Roberge, Lothar Lutze, Vijay Mishra and a host of others have addressed the significance of ancient aesthetic canons encoded in the *Natyasastra*, and the influence of epic forms of story-telling. Other important themes have been the phenomena of stars, the mythic and narrative roots of their screen personalities, and the social and historical functions they fulfill (Rosie Thomas, Vijay Mishra, M.S.S. Pandian); and questions of authorship and genre in the commercial cinema (Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai). A recent work like *Awara* (1992) by Gayatri Chatterjee combines a number of these enquiries in the study of a single film.

Of this body of work, I propose to isolate problems which crop up with a certain persistence in the use of the categories "tradition",

"modernity" and "family" to describe the world of the commercial film. I would argue that writers such as Nandy, Kakar and Das Gupta have accepted the overt framework which the commercial cinema offers its audience rather too much at face value. Nandy's seminal piece, 'The Hindi Film: Ideology and First Principles', rightly observed that the Hindi film handled the modern experience of industrializing societies by re-asserting the value of traditional institutions and identities. But the nature of "traditional" institutions such as the family, and their symbolic significance, need to be understood with greater complexity. Kakar's stance, that family traumas and illicit wishes are the well-spring of the Hindi film, overlooks the social dimensions of the narrative. For the family represents society as well, and brings the social domain into its framework. Further, the familial structure, apparent guarantor of "tradition", alters in the course of the narrative, presenting us with a



Dewar: Amitabh Bachchan, Shashi Kapoor, Nirupa Roy

different familial structure at the conclusion. In a recent film, *Beta* (Indra Kumar, 1992), the depiction of social corruption is incorporated into the family unit (a step-brother masquerades as a doctor) and the rhetoric of filial devotion to the mother is used by the daughter-in-law to subvert and contain a maternal authority complicit with a malign social order.

This remarkable integration of social and political narratives into

familial ones is hardly peculiar to the Indian cinema. Indeed, it is a phenomenon identified with the melodramatic mode of the nineteenth century European theatre. Central to its dramaturgy was the dismantling of the sacred as a viable focus of authority and meaning, and its progressive replacement by the personality. It is this shift—hesitant, fraught with nostalgia, ever desiring a return to the certainties of a hierarchical society and spiritual order—which springs the drama of the family, the psychic and social locus of the personality's travails. In India, this mode was appropriated in a highly idiosyncratic manner by the Parsi urban theatre of the late nineteenth century. A descendant of these historical developments, the Indian commercial film narrative addresses the spectator in this psychic fashion, soliciting his/her attention to the social domain through a primal drama.

It is important that we do not assume that the family is the decisive and regressive arena of the film narrative and of spectatorial outlook, as Chidananda Das Gupta would have it in *The Painted Face* (1991). Other levels, especially of urban reality, have been vividly conveyed right from the studio realism of the 1950s, as in the work of Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy. We must retain a sense of these various levels of the narrative world, within which I would argue that the family moorings of protagonists functions as a crucial anchorage, finally legitimating a coherent moral and social dimension. When such a mooring is absent, the spectator is presented with a social void, as in recent urban action films such as *Shiva* (Ram Gopal Varma, 1990) and *Angaar* (Shashilal Nair, 1992)

Das Gupta's assertion that the protagonist of the Bombay cinema is entirely focused on family traumas overlooks the way the films move between family scenarios and urban experience. Even more doubtful is the way he extends his analysis of the family-bound, mother-fixated protagonist into a characterisation of the spectator of the cinema as adolescent and "totalist". There is a significant echo here of a discourse on cinema prevalent in Calcutta in the 1950s, when critics promoting a realist art cinema in the wake of *Pather Panchali* tended to characterise popular taste as "infantile". The repetition of terms suggests that while greater attention is now devoted to the commercial cinema, elements of social condescension persist in current criticism.

Das Gupta's understanding that a pre- or transitional industrial working class and lumpen audience believes what it sees, or treats myth as fact, is an inadequate formulation in terms of serious empirical analysis. His reference to the consistency of M.G.



Pyasa: Guru Dutt

Ramachandran's and N.T. Rama Rao's screen personality with the image they purveyed as politicians hardly testifies to the mass electorate's believing that the screen image is real. A much more sophisticated analysis of the way successful star politicians adapted popular narratives, images of the hero, and addressed themselves to particular sections of the audience is required before we can understand their ideological hold. M.S.S. Pandian's work on the MGR phenomenon, *The Image Trap* (1991), is of this order.

Sweeping formulations about the social implications of cinema tend to fall down because they do not rigorously pursue a narrative and formal analysis within a historical and socio-economic perspective. Das Gupta's assertion that a second generation or even older migrant family in the urban context still possess an essentially rural outlook is a particularly extravagant evasion of the realities of urban social experience.

A fuller engagement between film studies and the social sciences, with history (especially the history and sociology of urban leisure), and with trends in narrative analysis current in literary studies and

anthropology, is evidently a pressing requirement. But to establish a specific domain or "field" for film study, nothing is more important, perhaps, than the study of the formal dimension, that which alerts us to the specific features which the medium brings to the telling of a story. The work of Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Geeta Kapur and others writing in the *Journal of Arts and Ideas* has made a beginning in addressing these issues. The Bombay cinema is a hybrid form of narrative deploying an interplay of elements from different representational systems. The aural and visual codes of the Hollywood continuity cinema—a system whose conventions create the illusion of spatial and temporal continuity—mingle with aspects of the broader visual culture of Indian society, a culture which emphasises the more static, frontal and tableau modes of representation. In the cinema of the 1940s and 1950s, such an interplay was pronounced, generating tensions in the way the spectator's attention is alternately oriented to character awareness through Hollywood style point-of-view and a more encompassing, moral and social point of view rendered through the tableau.

Such complex articulations are still apparent in the cinema of the 1970s and 1980s, despite its greater orientation to scenes of spectacle. The action sequence is particularly suited to continuity editing and the alerting of the spectator to the rhythms of character movement and awareness, in a visceral sense. As a cautionary concluding note, let me stress that it is imperative that we look at the way formal devices articulate character before submitting to the overt rhetoric—of familial honour and traditional morality—that the Bombay cinema retails.



Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Mathi Lukal*

South Indian Cinema: Divergent Trends

S. Theodore Baskaran

It was a cold, crisp week in December 1989 in Nantes—perfect weather for movies. For seven days, delegates were treated to twelve films from South India, in the first ever overseas festival of South Indian films. Kannada and Malayalam films, including *Samskara* (Funeral Rites) and *Chomana Dudi* (Choma's Drum), both Kannada, and *Swayamvaram* (One's Own Choice, Malayalam) dominated the show. Aravindan's *Esthappan* was in the competitive section. This festival led to a wide European coverage of South Indians films.

Traditionally, South Indian cinema has not received the attention it deserves from film historians. What is often overlooked is that the cinema industry here has a history as old as Hindi cinema. Even during the silent era, more than 150 feature films had been produced in Madras and Bangalore. The film industry in South India, which began in Madras, has now spread to three more centres, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Trivandrum, and produces more films than the rest of India. Quite a few film makers from these cinemas, like Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Girish Kasaravalli, have built up an impressive international reputation.

In 1931, the first films in Tamil and Telugu, *Kalidasa* and *Bhaktha Prahalada* hit the screen. The first Kannada film was released in 1934 and the first Malayalam film in 1936. It was in Tamil Nadu that the licensing of semi-permanent cinema houses was first introduced, during the nineteen fifties. This uniquely Indian phenomenon of film exhibition, the touring cinema, facilitated by the rural electrification programme, took cinema into the rural interior. More than half of the cinema houses in the country are in the South—7,688 to be precise, of which 3,145 are touring cinemas. Tamil Nadu has 2,447 cinema houses, both permanent and touring; Andhra has 2,615, Karnataka 1,247 and Kerala 1,379. Compared to the rest of India, these figures are quite high. So, exposure to cinema is also higher in the four southern states. Each cinema house, on an average, caters to 22,737 persons in Tamilnadu, 25,375 in Andhra, 35,932 in Karnataka and 21,054 in Kerala (these figures are of 1992).

There are now 98 studios and 2,742 production units in South India and the figures for 1991-92 give an idea of the magnitude of their

production. A total of 617 films were censored in the South: Tamil 182, Telugu 172, Kannada 91, Malayalam 94, Hindi 77 and one English.

Of the four cinemas you have in the South, for the purpose of discussion you could club Telugu and Tamil together on one side and Kannada and Malayalam on the other. What distinguishes them chiefly is the prevailing film culture. While the four southern states continue to make films oriented generally to entertainment and box office prospects, what sets Karnataka and Kerala apart is the space that has been created for the sustained growth of serious cinema. One reason for this is the influx of graduates from the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune. The other factor is a meaningful engagement with literature, as distinct from mere commercial recycling of successful novels. In Malayalam cinema, Thakazhi's *Chemmeen* (1965) marked the beginning of such an interaction, while in Kannada cinema *Samskara* (1970), based on a novel by U.R. Anantha Murthy, was the starting point.

Adoor Gopalakrishnan, a graduate of FTII, drew critical notice with his *Swayamvaram* in 1972. From then on Malayalam films have continued to feature in international film festivals, the latest being Shaji's *Piravi* (The Birth). In the Museum of Moving Images in



Kamalahasan and Amala in *Pushpak*

London, the only film from South India that finds a place is Gopalakrishnan's *Elipathayam* (Rat Trap). While in Kerala it was the influence of FTII graduates that started the movement for good cinema, the leavening influence in Karnataka came from theatre personalities like Girish Karnad, through *Samskara*, and B.V. Karanth through *Chomana Dudi* (1975). The arrival of Girish Kasaravalli ensured that the Kannada New Wave was sustained. One of his recent works, *Tabarana Katha* (The Story of Tabara), has attracted critical acclaim.

One method by which film makers in Kerala have been able to beat the studio system is to go in for co-operative ventures. The very first Malayalam film *Balan* (1936) was the result of such an effort by the Malayali Association of Madras. John Abraham made his *Amma Ariyan* (Report to Mother, 1987) by collecting donations from his admirers and friends.

The film society movement has helped to create a film-literate audience in both Kerala and Karnataka. Malayalam magazines discuss films critically and feature articles on international masters. The film society movement in Kerala gave rise to a film co-operative, the first of its kind in the country. This venture, called Chitralekha, was formed society by Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Bhaskaran Nair in 1965, and *Swayamvaram* was its first production. In Karnataka, the Suchithra Film Society has its own theatre, the only one in the country to do so. During film festivals, this society opens its own forum for discussing cinema. In Heggodu, a village near Shimoga, classics by international masters like Kurasawa have been screened for rural audiences. Such initiatives have created a space for quality films, amidst commercial films.

Contrast this with Tamil and Telugu cinema, where even after 76 years of film making and so many thousands of films, the idea of cinema as an art form has not yet caught on and populism persists. The flickers of brilliance that seem to appear spasmodically, like the Telugu film *Daasi* (The Courtesan, 1990) by P. Narsing Rao or Tamil films like Dorai's *Pasi* (Hunger, 1978) or Balu Mahendra's *Veedu* (The House, 1989), do not make a difference, except to point out the possibility. Even though a large number of films are made in these two languages, few get included in the Indian Panorama and fewer still in international film festivals.

Most of the films from the four southern states continue to be an ensemble of songs, dances, choreographed violence, set against a melodramatic backdrop. Music and dance is used to compensate for



Song-dance maestro of South India: Ilayaraja

lack of visual competence. This predominance of the aural element is symbolized by the career of Ilayaraja, the most sought-after music director in the country, who has already worked in more than 600 films, mostly Tamil. Work in a film often begins ritualistically with a song-recording by Ilayaraja. Song-dance sequences now display strong influence of music videos and to that extent are further removed from filmic narration.

The advances in film technology, marked by the arrival in the Madras studios of a battery of lenses, compact lights, super-sensitive microphones and steady-com cameras, have not significantly improved the creative possibilities. Nor has the advent of film technologists from the Adyar Film Institute, Madras. Films remain star-oriented; in reviews in popular magazines, the characters in the films are referred to by the names of the actors who play those roles. The awareness of cinematic possibilities observed in memorable films like Ramnath's *Ezhai Padum Padu* (The Plight of the Poor, Tamil, 1950) is absent now. The increase in cable TV and home videos has reduced the urban audience; the film makers, aware of this, pitch their films to rural audiences and make them as aural as possible.

In both Tamil and Telugu cinemas, there have been film makers like K. Viswanath, K. Balachandar, Bharathiraja and Mani Ratnam, who have pushed the frontiers of cinema a bit, but have not broken the commercial barrier. The content is oriented to providing visual and aural variety entertainment, without any particular thrust or ideology. Spasmodically, there appears a film different in content, but set in the same format; K. Balachandara's *Vaname Ellai* (Sky is the Limit, 1991—nothing to do with Van Dyer's book of the same title) is a recent example.

It is interesting to observe that these two cinemas, where there is a lack of ideology and the films do not transcend the level of escapist entertainment, exhibit the phenomenon of transfer of charisma and star-politicians. Tamil Nadu has had five chief ministers in a row from the world of cinema—the first two script-writers, and the others film artistes. And in Andhra also, the star-politician phenomenon seems to have come to stay.

व्यावसायिक फिल्म निर्माण और दर्शकों की मांग

बच्चन श्रीवास्तव

जब कभी भी किसी फिल्म व्यवसायी से फिल्मों के निरंतर गिरते स्तर की शिकायत हुई है, उसने प्रायः एक ही उत्तर दिया है। उनका यही कहना होता है कि स्तर जैसा भी है उसके लिए वैसी ही फिल्में बनाते हैं जैसी दर्शक चाहते हैं। उनका अभिप्रायः यही होता है कि घटिया फिल्मों के लिए दोषी वे नहीं, दर्शक हैं।

परंतु क्या फिल्म बनाने वालों का यह दोषारोपण उचित है? क्या वास्तव में घटिया दर्जों की फिल्मों के लिए दर्शकों की रुचि उत्तरदायी है? फिल्म बनाने वालों का मुख्य लक्ष्य दर्शकों को मनोरंजन प्रदान करना है। ऐसी फिल्में बनाना है जिन्हें अधिक से अधिक दर्शक देखें।

जहां तक अर्थलाभ का प्रश्न है, इसे प्राप्त करना फिल्म बनाने वालों का व्यावसायिक अधिकार है। इसके लिए मनोरंजक फिल्म बननी ही चाहिए, क्योंकि टेलीविजन, वीडियो आदि के आगमन के बाद भी अभी तक सिनेमा ही मनोरंजन का सर्वाधिक लोकप्रिय माध्यम है।

यदि प्रदर्शित फिल्मों का सर्वेक्षण किया जाए तो ज्ञात होगा कि फिल्म बनाने वालों का यह दावा कि वे जनरुचि को दृष्टि में रखकर फिल्में बनाते हैं, एकदम गलत सिद्ध होता है, क्योंकि यदि उनका कथन सत्य होता तो अधिकांश फिल्में व्यावसायिक स्तर पर सफलता प्राप्त करतीं। परन्तु यथार्थ इसके एकदम विपरीत है।

सच्चाई यह है कि 'जनरुचि' को दृष्टि में रखकर बनाई गई अस्सी प्रतिशत फिल्में टिकट खिड़की पर विफल होती हैं। वे चलाने वालों के लिए घाटे का सौदा सिद्ध होती हैं। यह घाटा एक लम्बी अवधि से निरंतर बढ़ता जा रहा है।

पिछले दो वर्ष अर्थात् 1990 तथा 1991 की प्रदर्शित फिल्में इस कटु सत्य का प्रमाण हैं कि अधिकतर फिल्मों ने घाटा दिया है। 1990 में कुल मिलाकर 165 हिन्दी फिल्में प्रदर्शित हुईं। इनमें 127 विफल रहीं। केवल 24 प्रतिशत ने बनाने, चलाने और दिखाने वालों को लाभ प्रदान किया। सन् '91 में स्थिति और भी निराशाजनक रही। प्रदर्शित 161 फिल्मों में से 123 ने आर्थिक स्तर पर विफलता का मुंह देखा। विगत दस वर्ष में स्थिति निरंतर बिगड़ती गई, क्योंकि 1981 में प्रदर्शित 134 फिल्मों में 48 प्रतिशत ने लाभ अर्जित किया था। घाटे वाली फिल्मों की संख्या हर वर्ष के साथ बढ़ती ही गई है।

विफलता के ये तथ्य इस सत्य को सिद्ध करते हैं कि वास्तव में फिल्म बनाने वालों को जनरुचि की समझ नहीं और अपनी नासमझी का दोष वे दर्शकों पर थोपने का प्रयास करते हैं।

वास्तविकता तो यह है कि फिल्म बनाने वालों में मौलिकता का तो अभाव है ही, वे नकल करने की बुरी आदत के भी शिकार हैं। जहां किसी एक विषय पर फिल्म चली, वे उसी की नकल करना आरम्भ कर देते हैं।

सिनेमा का इतिहास इस सत्य का गवाह है कि दर्शकों ने नवीनता का सदा स्वागत किया है और नकल को उन्होंने हमेशा नकारा है। अधिकतर फिल्में इसीलिए विफल हो रही हैं कि वे नकल हैं। एक 'मैंने प्यार किया' का दर्शकों ने स्वागत किया है। लेकिन उसके बाद जो उस तरह के रोमांटिक चित्रों की बाढ़ आई है, उसमें वे सभी प्रयास निष्फल सिद्ध हो गए। 'साजन' चली परन्तु 'सपने साजन के' सफलता प्राप्त नहीं सकी। नया विषय होने के कारण दर्शकों को 'बेटा' प्रिय लगी। परन्तु 'जिगर' नहीं जम सकी।

भारतीय या यूँ कहिए कि हिन्दी सिनेमा के इतिहास के पन्नों को पलटिए। अतीत पर निगाह डालिए। एक सत्य आपके सम्मुख बार-बार आएगा। और वह यह कि जब जब कुछ नया लीक से अलग चित्रित किया गया है उसे दर्शकों ने सरहा है। सफल बनाया है।

स्वाधीनता से पूर्व का इतिहास लें। लोग कितने उत्साह से स्वागत करते थे 'प्रभात', 'न्यू थियेटर', 'मिनवा', 'बॉम्बे टाकीज' की फिल्मों का, क्योंकि उनमें नकल नहीं, विविधता होती थी।

दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध के दौरान बनी 'किस्मत' (1943) को लीजिए। उसमें नायक का एक नया स्वरूप था। वह चले आ रहे नायक से भिन्न था। वह देवता नहीं, इन्सान था। आदर्श पुरुष नहीं, जेबकतरा था। धन के अभाव में प्रेमिका को चोरी का हार देने वाला, परन्तु अपंग प्रेमिका के लिए बड़े से बड़ा त्याग करने को तत्पर। 'किस्मत' ने अपने समय में सफलता का विश्व-कीर्तिमान स्थापित किया था। अकेले कलकत्ता के रॉक्सी थियेटर में वह लगभग तीन वर्ष लगातार चली थी।



"शोले" में संजीव कुमार, धर्मेन्द्र और अमिताभ बच्चन

एस.एस. वासन की 'चंद्रलेखा' (1948), कमाल अमरोही की 'महल' (1949) और रमेश सहगल की 'शहीद' (1948) को लीजिए। 'चंद्रलेखा' जैसी भव्यता, 'महल' जैसी पुनर्जन्म की प्रतिष्ठा और 'शहीद' की देशभक्ति और बलिदान में एक नवीनता थी। इसीलिए वे टिकट खिड़की पर सफल रही। 'राम और श्याम' (1967) के जुड़वां भाई, 'सीता और गीता' (1972) की जुड़वां बहनों ने दर्शकों का मन जीता। 'हाथी मेरे साथी' (1971) में हाथियों का प्रयोग एक नई बात थी। 'मेरा गांव मेरा देश' (1971) थी तो डाकुओं की पृष्ठभूमि पर, इस पृष्ठभूमि पर बनी अन्य फिल्मों से भिन्न। इसीलिए वे व्यापक स्तर पर पसन्द की गई।

'बीस साल बाद' (1962) के सस्पेंस ने, 'बाँबी' (1973) के किशोर प्रेम ने, 'दीवार' (1973) के अभावग्रस्त नायक के आक्रोश ने, 'शोले' (1975) की हिंसा और कुशल चरित्र-चित्रण ने इन फिल्मों को लीक से अलग रखा था इसलिए इन्हें व्यावसायिक सफलता मिली।

और जब-जब फिल्म बनाने वालों ने नकल की है, कथानक को दोहराया है, प्रस्तुतीकरण की पुनरावृत्ति की है, विफलता ही हाथ लगी है। निराशा ही प्राप्त हुई है। उदाहरण है इसके 'बीस साल बाद' का सस्पेंस चला, लेकिन 'कोहरा' (1964) और 'पूनम की रात' (1965) फिट गयी। 'रामराज्य' (1943) चल गई, लेकिन 'राम प्रतिज्ञा' (1949) और 'राम विवाह' (1949), 'राम राज्य' (1967) का पुर्न निर्माण फिट गयी। बी.आर. चोपड़ा को 'अफसाना' (1951) में सफलता मिली। लेकिन जब उन्होंने उसे 'दास्तान' (1972) के नाम से पुनः बनाया तो मात खा गए। बासु चटर्जी की हल्की-फुल्की रोमांटिक फिल्म 'रजनीगंधा' (1974) और 'छोटी सी बात' (1975) में बात बनी, लेकिन जब वे उसी रंग को दोहराने लगे तो मात खा गए। ऐसा ही 'अनुभव' (1971) की बासु भट्टाचार्य के साथ हुआ। मकान और घर के, पति-पत्नी के संबंधों में वे ऐसे उलझे कि उससे बाहर आ ही नहीं पाए।

ये तो कुछ उदाहरण हैं जो बिना प्रयास सम्मुख आ गए। हमारे सिनेमा का इतिहास इस सत्य का साक्षी है कि जब-जब कोई फिल्म नई बात, नया रंग, नई शैली लेकर आई है, दर्शकों ने उसका स्वागत किया है। साथ ही जिन-जिन निर्माताओं ने मौलिकता के अभाव में पूर्व सफलता का अनुकरण किया है, नकल की है, उन्हें असफलता और निराशा ही मिली है।

देश में फिल्म निर्माण की संख्या बढ़ रही है, लेकिन साथ ही विफल फिल्मों की संख्या में भी वृद्धि हो रही है। विगत दस वर्षों में सफल फिल्मों का प्रतिशत 47 से घटकर 24 पर आ गया है। और निरंतर विफल फिल्मों की यह बढ़ती संख्या फिल्म व्यवसाय को हर वर्ष करोड़ों रुपये का घाटा पहुंचा रही है।

हमारे देश में प्रतिभा का अभाव नहीं है। अच्छे लेखक, कुशल निर्देशक, समझदार तकनीशियन और प्रतिभा संपन्न कलाकार हैं। यद्यपि अभी तक हमारे स्टूडियो में आधुनिकतम यंत्र-उपकरणों का अभाव है, इसके बावजूद भारतीय तकनीशियन अपनी सूझबूझ और उत्साह के फलस्वरूप ऐसा सुन्दर और निखर कार्य करते हैं कि विश्व की श्रेष्ठतम फिल्म कृतियों के सम्मुख उनकी रचनाएं सगौरव रखी जा सकती हैं।

कमी है विषयों के चयन में, नकल करने की मनोवृत्ति में फिल्म बनाने वालों के लिए यह



“खिलाड़ी” में अपराध जुल्का तथा असय कुमार

आवश्यक है कि वे भारतीय सिनेमा के इतिहास का विवेचन करें और यह समझें कि दर्शकों ने नवीनता को कभी नहीं नकारा। पिछले कुछ वर्ष की उन फिल्मों पर दृष्टि डालें जो व्यावसायिक स्तर पर अत्यधिक सफल रहीं। जिन्हें सामान्य दर्शक ने पसन्द किया और जिन्होंने बॉक्स ऑफिस पर सफलता प्राप्त की। ये फिल्में हैं ‘बेटा’, ‘फूल और कटि’, ‘साजन’, ‘दिल’, ‘मैंने प्यार किया’, ‘चांदनी’, ‘नगीना’, ‘कयामत से कयामत तक’। इन सबमें विविधता थी। इनके कथानक, घटनाक्रम, चरित्र-चित्रण में परस्पर अंतर था। किसी एक को दूसरे की नकल नहीं कहा जा सकता। साथ ही उनकी चित्रण शैली में दुरुहता नहीं थी। तभी तो सामान्य स्तर का दर्शक उनको देखकर रस ग्रहण कर सका।

वर्षों पूर्व एक भेंट में बातचीत करते हुए विश्वविख्यात फिल्मकर्मी सत्यजीत राय ने एक प्रश्न के उत्तर में कहा था—“अच्छी फिल्म का एक अनिवार्य गुण यह भी है कि फिल्म जो बात कहना चाहती है वह दर्शक समझ ले।” इतना ही नहीं, राय का मानना था कि यदि कोई फिल्म नहीं चलती, तो वह दोषपूर्ण है, क्योंकि वह अपनी बात दर्शक तक पहुंचाने में विफल रही है। इसके अर्थ यही हुए कि फिल्म का एक गुण उसका चलना भी है। यदि फिल्म नहीं चलती तो उससे केवल आर्थिक हानि नहीं होती। उससे जुड़े लोगों का कैरियर प्रभावित होता है। उनकी मांग घटती है। पारिश्रमिक घटता है।

इसलिए फिल्म व्यवसाय के विकास के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि फिल्में आर्थिक स्तर पर सफल हों। परंतु जो स्थिति आज है वह निराशाजनक है स्वयं फिल्म व्यवसाय के लिए और यह तब तक ऐसी ही रहेगी जब तक फिल्म निर्माता नकल करने की मनोवृत्ति से मुक्त नहीं होते। जब तक वे विविधता को, मौलिकता को, नएपन को नहीं अपनाते, व्यावसायिक सिनेमा को विफलता का दोष दर्शकों पर मढ़ने के बजाय, नकल करने की उस मनोवृत्ति को देना चाहिए जिससे अधिकांश फिल्म बनाने वाले ग्रसित हैं।

बदलता हुआ समाज और हिंदी फिल्में

प्रयाग शुक्ल

सन् 1960 से पहले व्यवसायिक फिल्मों और कला फिल्मों के बीच कोई स्पष्ट भेद न था। सच्चाई तो यह है कि अलग से कला फिल्म जैसी किसी चीज की चर्चा ही तब न होती थी। इसके वाजिब कारण थे। फिल्म को फिल्म की तरह ही देखा जाता था। ऐतिहासिक फिल्में, सामाजिक फिल्में, पारिवारिक फिल्में—ऐसे कई वर्गीकरण थे जरूर, पर मोटे तौर पर फिल्म जगत में अच्छी कहानी, अच्छे निर्देशन, अच्छे संगीत की ओर ही ज्यादा ध्यान दिया जाता था। ध्यान इस बात पर भी दिया जाता था कि फिल्मों को समाज में एक सहज स्वीकृति मिले, वे लोकप्रिय हों, देखीं जाएँ और कुछ पैसा भी कमाएँ। अभिनेता, अभिनेत्री भी अलग से पहचाने जरूर जाते थे पर वह 'सुपर स्टार' वाला जमाना न था। कभी-कभी कुछ फिल्में ऐसी जरूर बनती थीं, जिनमें काफी पैसा लगाया जाता था, भव्य सेट तैयार किया जाता था, उनका प्रचार भी किया जाता था पर ये फिल्में भी उस अर्थ में 'व्यावसायिक' नहीं होती थीं, जिस अर्थ में कि आज की फिल्मों को व्यावसायिक फिल्में कहा जाता है। बहरहाल, हम पुराना इतिहास ज्यादा नहीं दोहराएँगे और अब उस विषय पर आ जाएँगे जिसकी बात हम करना चाहते हैं।

हमारी चिंता का विषय यह है कि बम्बई की फिल्मों के माध्यम से यह जाँच करें कि समाज में जो



फिल्म 'किस्मत' के एक दृश्य में अशोक कुमार

मूल्य बनते-बिगड़ते हैं, वे इनमें अच्छी तरह आज भी प्रतिबिम्बित होते हैं या नहीं। हम पाएंगे कि समाज से जैसा सीधा सम्बन्ध हमारी पुरानी फिल्मों का था, वैसा सम्बन्ध मानो 1960 के बाद की फिल्मों का नहीं रह गया। शांतादाम से लेकर विमल राय, चेतन आनन्द, गुरुदत्त, राजकपूर जैसे फिल्मकारों की फिल्मों में यह संबंध बराबर दिखाई पड़ता था लेकिन 1960 के बाद हुआ यह कि व्यावसायिकता हिन्दी फिल्मों में कुछ ज्यादा ही हावी होनी लगी। 'तीसरी कसम' जैसी फिल्म को अपवाद मान लें तो बम्बई की दुनिया लगातार गीत-संगीत की अधिकता और चक्काचौध भरे सैटों से लेकर मारघाड़ और हिंसा की फिल्मों की ओर अग्रसर होने लगी थी। पात्रों की जीवन-शैली एक खास तरह से गढ़ी जाने लगी थी। यही कारण है कि पारिवारिक और मानवीय सम्बन्धों का जैसा चित्रण बम्बई की फिल्मों में पहले होता था वह बदलने लगा। पहले हिन्दी फिल्मों में सम्बन्धों की मर्यादा भी बताती थीं और उन साँचों का भी ख्याल रखती थीं, जिनमें कि सामाजिक-पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध ढले हुए होते थे। पर धीरे-धीरे वे मानो अपने ही साँचे और पैमाने बनाने लगीं और उन्हें समाज पर थोपने लगीं। ये चीजें बम्बई की फिल्मों ने कुछ विकृत करके भी समाज पर थोपीं। चूँकि फिल्म एक शक्तिशाली माध्यम है इसलिए इन साँचों और पैमानों का भी समाज पर कुछ तो असर होना ही था। और अब तो स्थिति यह है कि फिल्मों में होने वाले परिवर्तनों की जगह, उन पर अपने यहाँ होने वाले 'परिवर्तनों' को ज्यादा लाद रही हैं।

पर यह भी यह सच्चाई है कि बम्बई की फिल्मों ने चाहे कितने ही साँचे और पैमाने नए गढ़ डाले हों पर सामाजिक सम्बन्धों की, पारिवारिक सम्बन्धों की अनदेखी फिल्म जगत कभी नहीं कर सका। इसको एक रहस्य की बात मान सकते हैं। मसलन हिन्दी फिल्मों के शुरुआती दौर से लगाकर आज तक विवाह और प्रेम के मामले में फिल्मों का दृष्टिकोण बिलकुल बदल गया हो, ऐसा नहीं कहा जा सकता। प्रेम की परिणति विवाह में हो, यही ज्यादातर फिल्मों में आज भी दिखाती हैं। अच्छाई और बुराई के मामले में भी अभी उन्होंने खुलकर बुराई का पक्ष लेना नहीं शुरू किया और हर फिल्म में कुछ चरित्र या पात्र ऐसे जरूर रहते हैं जो अच्छाई के प्रतीक हों।

बम्बई की फिल्मों ने यह तो पहचाना कि संयुक्त परिवार टूट और बिखर गए हैं इसलिए अब वैसी फिल्म नहीं बनाई जा सकती, जिनमें कि पूरा कुटुंब हुआ करता था पर उन्होंने इसके साथ यह भी पहचाना कि परिवार का जो रूप या ढांचा अब मौजूद है उसकी अनदेखी भी नहीं की जा सकती। हाँ, उन्होंने धीरे-धीरे करना यह शुरू किया कि बस प्रेमी-प्रेमिका, उनके माता-पिता, और इक्का-दुक्का पात्रों को लेकर अपने को ढालने लगीं। नतीजा यह हुआ कि बहुत से संबंध सूत्र जो अभी भी समाज में बचे हुए हैं, उनको छोड़कर फिल्मों अपने काम चलाने लगीं।

यानी फिल्मों में समाज में आए परिवर्तनों को तो बराबर पहचानती रही हैं लेकिन पिछले वर्षों में उन्होंने किया यह है कि वे कई एक चीजें पहचानकर, उन्हें मान तो लेती हैं, अपने कथानक में उन्हें जगह भी देती हैं, लेकिन बहुत सी चीजों को विकृत कर देती हैं। दो-एक उदाहरण दूंगा। समाज में हिंसा और अपराध बढ़े हैं। यह सही है। समाज में लालच भी बढ़ा है और रातों-रात माला-माल हो जाने की इच्छाएँ भी बढ़ी हैं, यह भी ठीक है, पर ठीक उसी तरह और उसी अनुपात में नहीं, जिस तरह और जिस अनुपात में आज फिल्मों में प्रस्तुत कर रही हैं। पिछले दिनों एक पत्रिका ने यह विश्लेषण छपा था कि बम्बई की फिल्मों में माएँ ज्यादा युवा दिखने लगी हैं। यानी अगर समाज में यह परिवर्तन हुआ है कि पचास के आस-पास की औरत भी अपनी साज-संभाल कुछ ज्यादा अच्छी



“फिर सुबह होगी” में राजकपूर एवं नर्गिस दत्त

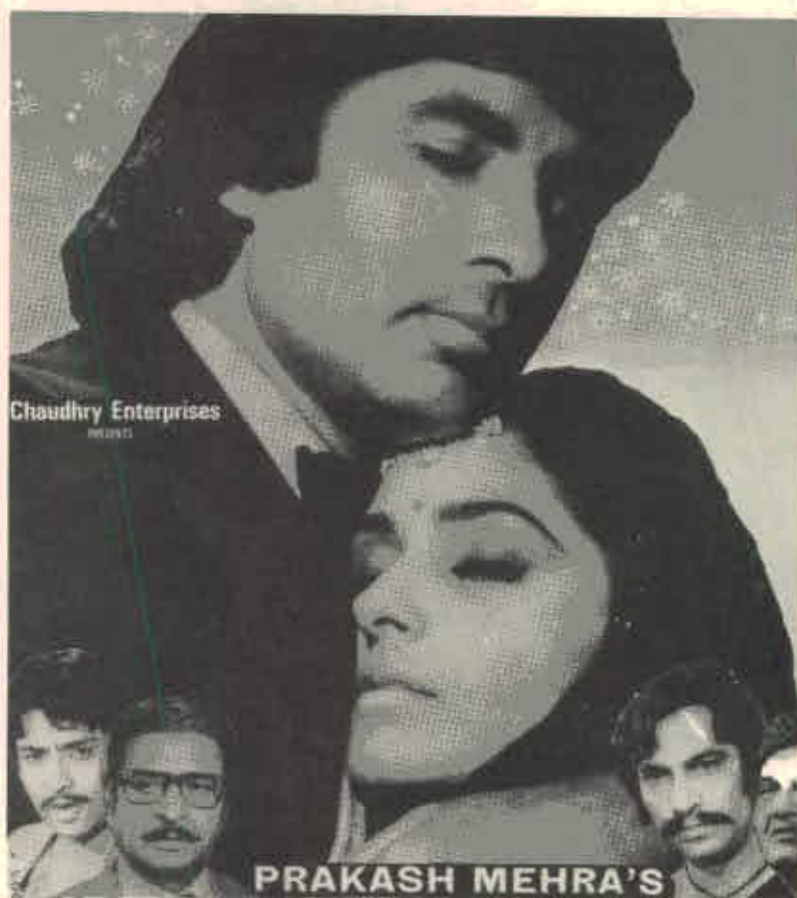
तरह करती हैं, और पहनने-ओढ़ने के मामले में पहले से ज्यादा सजग हुई हैं तो फिल्मों ने इसे ठीक ही पहचाना। पर इस ‘पहचान’ को कुछ मनमाना रूप भी दे दिया। और मां की भूमिका को केवल ‘सौंदर्य’ से जोड़ दिया। मानो उसका काम बस सुंदर दिखना भर हो। उदाहरण और भी दिए जा सकते हैं पर हम समझते हैं कि कुछ उदाहरण यह बताने के लिए पर्याप्त हैं कि बम्बई की फिल्मों में आज भी सामाजिक यथार्थ के निकट कुछ दूर तक चलती हैं, फिर दूसरी दिशा में मुड़ जाती हैं। इससे न तो व्यावसायिक फिल्मों को लाभ हुआ और न कला फिल्मों को। क्योंकि कला फिल्मों की धारा भी दर्शकों के अभाव में एक जगह जाकर सूखने लगी और व्यावसायिक सिनेमा और भी निरंकुश होता चला गया। क्या अच्छा होता कि हम आज भी फिल्म को फिल्म की तरह ही देख और जांच परख पाते, जैसा कि 1960 के पहले तक हम करते रहे थे। पर नित नए फार्मूले आजमाने के फेर में व्यावसायिक सिनेमा मानो न तो स्वयं दम लेता है और न दूसरों को धीरज के साथ बैठकर उसकी समीक्षा का अवसर देता है।

यह भी गौर करने वाली चीज है कि एक ओर तो फिल्में अपने को ‘खूबसूरत’ लगने वाले चेहरों पर टिकाती हैं और देह-सौंदर्य को एक खास तरह पेश करती हैं, दूसरी ओर वे खलनायकों से लेकर अन्य कई पात्रों को ‘कुरूपता’ की हद तक ले जाती हैं। मारघाड़ और हिंसा के दृश्य फिल्माने में नए-नए तरीके ईजाद करती हैं। हमारे एक मित्र ने हिंदी की ज्यादातर फिल्मों के बारे में एक बड़ी सटीक टिप्पणी की थी कि जब हिंसा और मारघाड़ की फिल्म खत्म होती है और हम अपने चारों तरफ निगाह डालते हैं तो यह सोचकर राहत महसूस होती है कि जीवन अभी इतना बुरा नहीं हो गया जैसा कि अमुक फिल्म ने दिखाया था।

बहरहाल, नित नए लिबास पेश करने वाली हमारी फिल्में असलियत को ठीक जाया नहीं पहनाती।

एक जमाने में हमारी फिल्में समाज-सुधार के काम से भी अपने को जोड़ती थीं, 'दहेज' से लेकर स्त्री-मुक्ति तक के सवाल सामने लाती थी। 'सुंदरता' के मानवीय रूप दूँदती थी—इस सिलसिले में विमल राय की 'सुजाता' जैसी फिल्म याद आती है। पर आज जब दहेज-हत्या और स्त्री-मुक्ति के सवाल ज्यादा ज्वलंत हैं, हमारी फिल्में इन सवालों की ओर से कुछ विमुख ही लगती हैं। पिछले डेढ़-दो दशक में स्त्री को केन्द्र में रखकर कई फिल्में बनीं जरूर और नायिका प्रधान फिल्मों का रूप भी सामने आया, पर इनमें भी मानो हमारी फिल्में सच्चाई की तह तक नहीं जातीं। उसे ऊपर से छूकर ही छोड़ देती हैं। फिल्मों का प्रमुख विषय अपराध-जगत हो गया है, जिसके इर्द-गिर्द प्रेम-कथा बुनी हुई रहती है।

फिर भी, समाज की एक छलनी तो अपना काम करती ही रहती है। वह चीजों को अपने ढंग से छानती है। जब हिंसा और मारघाड़ की फिल्मों की अति हो गई तो 'चाँदनी' और 'मैंने प्यार किया'



प्रकाश मेहरा की फिल्म "रागनी" का एक दृश्य

जैसी अपेक्षाकृत सुथरी हुई फिल्में सामने आई। और पिछले वर्ष ही रिलीज हुई 'मुस्कुराहट' जैसी फिल्म भी बनी है जो पिता-पुत्री संबंध की एक मानवीय कथा है।

समाज में पिछले वर्षों में हुए परिवर्तनों की कोई अच्छी विवेचना हम बम्बई की फिल्मों के माध्यम से भले न कर पाएँ, लेकिन इतना तो हम देख ही सकते हैं कि फिल्मों की दुनिया अभी भी हमारी सामाजिक दुनिया से एकदम उलट नहीं चल रही। वहाँ आज भी कोई बेकार युवक एक पात्र या नायक के रूप में दिख जाता है। आज भी वे गरीब रिश्तेदार किसी फिल्म में दिख जाते हैं जो मानो किसी भी कीमत पर अपनी गरिमा को छोड़ना नहीं चाहते हैं। वहाँ आज भी प्रेम करते हुए ऐसे लड़के और लड़कियाँ दिखाई पड़ते हैं जो केवल लालच वश प्रेम नहीं कर रहे होते। भले ही फिल्मों की दुनिया इन चीजों का एक भावुक व्यवसाय करना चाहती हो, पर माननीय चीजों से, न्याय पक्ष से उनका 'छुटकारा' नहीं है।

अफसोस की बात बस यही है कि समाज की बहुत सी चीजों को पहचान कर भी वह फिल्में विषयों को वैसी गम्भीरता और गहराई नहीं दे पा रही जो 'आलमआरा' से शुरू होकर शांताराम की कई फिल्मों और फिर विमल राय की 'बंदिनी' और 'सुजाता' आदि में दिखाई पड़ी थी और गुरुदत्त की 'प्यासा' और 'कागज के फूल' जैसी फिल्मों में जिसे एक ऊँचाई मिली थी। अफसोस की बात यह भी है कि आज फिल्म जगत में सुनील दत्त की 'यादें' जैसी 'असफल' फिल्म बनाने का भी कोई माहौल नहीं रह गया है। लेकिन हमारी फिल्मी दुनिया बहुत बड़ी है और मानो उसकी बहुत बड़ी होने के कारण एक सम्भावना यह है कि उसमें से आज भी कोई ऐसी चीज निकल सकती है जो फिर एक छोटी सी सार्थक शुरुआत हो, गुलजार, महेश भट्ट जैसे लोग आज भी फिल्मों की दुनिया में हैं, जिनकी फिल्में पूरा सामाजिक सच भले न प्रस्तुत करती हों पर जो सामाजिक सच के निकट तो अपने कथानक बुनती ही हैं। और व्यावसायिक और कला फिल्मों के भेद को थोड़ी देर के लिए भुला दें तो अरुण कौल की 'दीक्षा' जैसी फिल्म भी तो बम्बई से ही उपजी है।

सिनेमा और दूरदर्शन

डॉ. विजय अग्रवाल

सिनेमा की उम्र की तुलना में दूरदर्शन अभी काफी छोटा है। लेकिन पिछले दस वर्षों में इसने फैलकर जिस प्रकार करीब तीन चौथाई आबादी को अपनी गिरफ्त में ले लिया है, और उनके 'बड़े रूम' तक पहुंच गया है, उसे देखते हुए आम लोगों तथा मीडिया समीक्षकों को भी यह गम सताने लगा है कि दूरदर्शन धीरे-धीरे सिनेमा को निरस्त कर देगा। कुछ फिल्मों के बुरी तरह असफल होने तथा सिनेमाघरों को तोड़कर व्यावसायिक परिसर बनाए जाने की सच्ची खबरों से लोगों के इस निष्कर्ष को बल भी मिलता है। लेकिन क्या यही सत्य है?

इस तरह का भय वस्तुतः समस्या को सरलीकृत करके देखने का परिणाम अधिक है। इससे पूर्व रेडियो के कारण समाचारपत्रों की तथा सिनेमा के कारण रंगमंच के अस्तित्व का भी संकट देखा गया था। लेकिन अब तक ऐसा कुछ हुआ नहीं है। यहां तक कि यूरोपीय देशों में, जहां प्रचार माध्यमों की ये नवीन तकनीकें भारत से काफी पहले विकसित हो चुकी थीं, वहां भी ऐसा कुछ नहीं घटा। यह बात अवश्य है कि समाज को जब कोई नया माध्यम मिलता है तो क्रमशः वह उसे स्वीकार करता है। लेकिन उसका यह स्वीकार्य किसी अन्य माध्यम का अस्वीकार्य नहीं होता, बल्कि वह उस पुराने माध्यम के बगल में ही अपनी जगह बना लेता है। यह एक स्वयं सिद्ध सत्य है कि कोई भी



टेली फिल्म "तमस" में भीष्म राहनी एवं दीना पाठक

माध्यम दूसरे माध्यम की प्रतिमूर्ति नहीं होता है, इसलिये ज्यों-का-त्यों विकल्प नहीं बन सकता। इसलिए स्वाभाविक रूप से संचार एवं प्रचार माध्यम के ये रूप एक दूसरे के प्रतियोगी नहीं बल्कि परिपूरक बन जाते हैं। और यही आदर्श स्थिति भी है।

सिनेमा और दूरदर्शन में केवल पदों के आकार भर का भेद नहीं है, बल्कि दोनों माध्यम अपने-अपने साथ अपना-अपना एक संपूर्ण वातावरण लेकर चलते हैं, जो एक-दूसरे से भिन्न हैं, इसलिए पूर्णतः एक-दूसरे के प्रतिस्थापक नहीं समझे जाने चाहिए। चारित्रिक गुणों की भिन्नता के कारण ये एक-दूसरे को कट्टरता के साथ काटते नहीं हैं बल्कि रेल की पटरी की तरह समानान्तर चलते हैं।

दोनों में सबसे बड़ा अंतर यह है कि दूरदर्शन जहां एक निजी माध्यम है, वहीं सिनेमा एक सामूहिक माध्यम है। यह अंतर इतना महत्वपूर्ण अंतर है कि केवल इसी के कारण कुछ समय बाद दोनों के अस्तित्व की आपसी टकराहट समाप्त हो जाएगी।

'सामूहिक आवश्यकता' और 'सामूहिक मनोविज्ञान', 'निजी आवश्यकता' और 'निजी मनोविज्ञान' से काफी भिन्न होती है। यह भिन्नता भारत जैसे समाज में और भी अधिक होती है, जहां धर्म, नैतिकता, कानून और मर्यादा के अनेक दबाव व्यक्ति की चेतना में सक्रिय रहते हैं। स्वाभाविक है कि वर्जनायुक्त समाज अपनी कुंठाओं की जितनी अभिव्यक्ति निजी माध्यम में पा सकेगा, उतनी सामूहिक माध्यम में नहीं। यह सच है कि भारतीय दूरदर्शन अभी निजी कम पारिवारिक माध्यम अधिक है। लेकिन स्थितियां ऐसी ही रही हैं कि परिवार का प्रत्येक सदस्य अपने लिए अलग-अलग सैट की जरूरत महसूस करने लगा है। और अब वर्तमान में, जबकि स्टार टी.वी. और एम.टी.वी. अपने यहां के जीवन-मूल्यों के आधार पर कार्यक्रम परोस रहे हैं, तब तो यह माध्यम 'बेड रूम उपकरण' बनने के लिए कमोबेश बाध्य ही है। यहां तक कि देर रात की फिल्मों के प्रसारण के द्वारा भारतीय दूरदर्शन भी इसे झाड़ू रूम से हटाकर 'बेड रूम' में पहुंचाने में सहयोग दे रहा है। अंतरंग की कथाओं के लिए दूरदर्शन है, न कि सिनेमा।

जब व्यक्ति सिनेमा देखता है, तब वह एक बहुत बड़े प्रेक्षागृह का एक हिस्सा होता है। वह योजना बनाकर फिल्म देखने जाता है, और निश्चित होकर उसमें रमता है। इसलिए वह माध्यम उसे अपील भी अधिक करता है। जबकि दूरदर्शन का दर्शक रोजमर्रा के जीवन वाले समस्याओं से ग्रस्त अपने घर के एक कमरे का हिस्सा होता है। कभी चाय बनती है, कभी फोन की घंटी बज रही है, कभी कोई आ गया है, तो कभी बच्चा रो रहा है, जैसी स्वाभाविक घटनायें उसकी चेतना को कथा प्रवाह के साथ उतना तादात्म्य स्थापित करने नहीं देतीं। फलस्वरूप वह महसूस करता है कि उसके लिए सिनेमा देखने का अनुभव दूरदर्शन के अनुभव से काफी कुछ भिन्न है। धीरे-धीरे यह बात महसूस की जाने लगी है, और लोग दूरदर्शन की अपेक्षा सिनेमा घर में फिल्में देखना पसंद करने लगे हैं।

फर्क केवल प्रभाव का नहीं बल्कि विषयवस्तु के चयन और उस चयन के स्तर का भी है। दूरदर्शन के दर्शक वर्ग की पहचान 'चिड़िया की आंख' की तरह नहीं की जा सकती। विषयवस्तु के निर्धारण और उसकी प्रस्तुति का दर्शकों के अधिक-से-अधिक वर्गों के साथ तालमेल बिठाने की कोशिश होती है। इस कोशिश में उसका केंद्रीय प्रभाव कमजोर पड़ने लगता है। जब कि फिल्म का



टेली फिल्म "सद्गति" में स्मिता पाटिल एवं ओम पुरी

दर्शक वर्ग निर्धारित होता है, और वह अपनी रुचि के अनुसार फिल्म देखने जाएगा। दूरदर्शन में अपनी रुचि काम नहीं करती, न ही उसका लक्ष्य वेध निश्चित होता है। अपनी दैनिक गति के कारण यह माध्यम कुछ समय बाद एकदम नीरस भी हो जाता है। फिल्में भी एकरस हो सकती हैं, लेकिन उसके पास बाह्य उपकरण इतने होते हैं कि वह एकरसता नीरसता में बदलने से बच जाती है।

भारत के संदर्भ में एक बात और कही जा सकती है कि यहां नाटक के दर्शक शिक्षित लोग हैं, दूरदर्शन के अर्द्धशिक्षित तथा सिनेमा के अशिक्षित। इस विभाजन को शाब्दिक रूप में नहीं लिया जाना चाहिए, बल्कि एक आनुपातिक रूप में लिया जाना चाहिए। ये तीनों माध्यम अपने दर्शकों की बड़ी संख्या की रुचि को तरफ़ाह देते हैं। सिनेमा का जो बड़ा दर्शक वर्ग है, उसके पास न तो बैठकर दूरदर्शन देखने का इत्मिनान है, और न ही देखने की सुविधा उपलब्ध है। आज भी सिनेमा हॉल उसकी प्रिय मनोरंजन-स्थली है। हालांकि रात्रि के 9 से 12 बजे वाले शो में दर्शक घटे हैं, और इसके लिए इस अवधि में दूरदर्शन के कार्यक्रमों के प्रसारण के साथ-साथ नगरों-महानगरों में बढ़ती हुई असामाजिक प्रवृत्तियां भी कम जिम्मेदार नहीं हैं।

यह कहना भी पूरी तरह सही नहीं होगा कि दूरदर्शन और सिनेमा के पारस्परिक हितों में कोई टकराव ही नहीं है। ऐसा है, लेकिन इसे टकराव न कहकर बल्कि यह कहना अधिक सही होगा कि उसने सिनेमा के सामने नई चुनौतियां प्रस्तुत की हैं, और सिनेमा को उन चुनौतियों का सामना करने के लिए स्वयं को बदलना होगा, ठीक उसी प्रकार जिस प्रकार सिनेमा द्वारा प्रस्तुत की गई चुनौतियों के मुकाबले के लिए रंगमंच ने अपनी साज-सज्जा तथा ध्वनि एवं प्रकाश व्यवस्था में अनेक परिवर्तन किये।

इस दृष्टि से एक महत्वपूर्ण बात यह लगती है कि सिनेमा को अपने लागत को नियंत्रित करना

होगा। अधिकांश फिल्मों की असफलता का सूत्र यह नहीं होता कि दर्शकों ने उसे देखा ही नहीं, बल्कि यह होता है कि उस फिल्म की लागत इतनी अधिक थी कि वह बसूल नहीं हो पाई।

दूसरी बात यह कि फिल्म तकनीकी के मामले में भी उसे ऐसी प्रणाली विकसित करनी होगी, जो बड़े पर्दे के लिए विशेष रूप से अनुकूल हो, तथा जिसकी प्रभावोत्पादकता छोटे पर्दे पर कम हो जाती हो। आज इस बात का अनुभव किया जा रहा है, और अपेक्षाकृत संवेदनशील दर्शक एक रुकावट के बाद अब सिनेमाघरों में जाने भी लगे हैं।

मनोरंजन एवं सूचना के नये विकल्पों की मौजूदगी में यह भी एक जरूरी-सी बात हो गई है कि सिनेमाघरों के आकार और प्रकारों में परिवर्तन हो। वर्तमान परिस्थितियों के संदर्भ में छोटे सिनेमाघरों की उपयोगिता आर्थिक लाभ की दृष्टि से अधिक होगी, तथा ऐसे हॉल शहर के बीचों-बीच कम स्थान पर भी बनाये जा सकेंगे, ताकि दर्शक आसानी से उन तक पहुंच सकें। रख-रखाव के कम खर्च का प्रभाव टिकट की कीमतों पर भी पड़ेगा। ऐसे सिनेमाघर स्वयं को कलात्मक और सांस्कृतिक दृष्टि से सुसज्जित करके भी दर्शकों को आकर्षित कर सकते हैं।

मध्य प्रदेश फिल्म विकास निगम द्वारा आयोजित एक गोष्ठी में फिल्मकार श्याम बेनेगल ने सिनेमा के भविष्य के प्रति आशावान होते हुए बिल्कुल सही कहा था कि "दूरदर्शन और वीडियो के बढ़ते प्रभाव के बावजूद भारतीय फिल्म उद्योग के अस्तित्व को कोई खतरा नहीं है" (जनसत्ता—30 जून, 1991)। मूलतः यह एक चुनौती है, और फिल्म जगत को इस चुनौती का सामना करना है।

National Film Archive of India

A Report

The National Film Archive of India (NFAI), established in 1964, is today recognised as the major film archive in the Asian region. At present it houses a collection of 12,570 films, 696 video cassettes, 1,822 disc records, 21,075 scripts, 20,253 books, 152 periodicals, 94,821 stills, 5,851 song booklets and 5,984 wall posters.

Amongst the important recent Indian film acquisitions are *Kaya Palat* (silent), *Kurukshetra* (Marathi/Hindi bilingual directed by Balasheb Yadav, 1933) and several notable works of contemporary film makers. The NFAI, realizing the importance of documentation to facilitate in-depth research on Indian film and cinema in general, is computerizing data on its film holdings.

In 1993 NFAI will fully commission its new centrally air-conditioned building complex. It will have three basement film vaults with a capacity to store 60,000 film reels in the controlled temperature and humidity conditions required for archival storage. This will constitute a giant step forward for NFAI's film conservation, preservation and restoration activities. Film cleaning machines and new CTM viewing tables have also been recently acquired to strengthen the film preservation and checking sections. The three regional offices at Bangalore, Calcutta and Thiruvananthapuram are backing up the work of the Pune headquarters, and a regional office in Madras is on the cards.

NFAI offers year-long research fellowships and commissions monographs and oral history projects on Indian film pioneers and eminent film personalities. The Archive has so far brought out 12 publications and several others are in the pipeline. To promote film culture NFAI has a distribution library which caters to more than 100 borrowers consisting of film societies, educational institutions and cultural and welfare organisations. It also conducts joint screening programmes at major centres such as Bombay, Calcutta, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Bhopal and Vijayawada. NFAI's three regional offices have modest but useful film and book libraries catering to film societies and other institutions in their respective regions. Next year a 330-seat auditorium in Pune will be inaugurated with daily screenings featuring seasons of Indian and foreign film classics and the best of current film making.



Fostering serious thinking on cinema is the focus of NFAI's annual five-week Film Appreciation Course in Pune, at which experts in film studies teach film history, film aesthetics and theory and allied subjects. NFAI also regularly collaborates in organising short-term film appreciation courses with other educational and cultural organisations in different parts of India.

NFAI is a full member of International Federation of Film Archives which facilitates acquisition of films under archival exchange programmes and sharing information and experience with other film archives in methods of preservation, restoration, cataloguing and documentation. With its sister archives NFAI will celebrate the centenary of cinema in a big way in 1995. The importance of film both as art and historical document will be highlighted perhaps as never before through commemorative publications, seminars and special screening programmes.

The Directorate of Film Festivals

A Report

IFFI '93, the 24th International Film Festival of India, marks another milestone in the efforts of the Directorate of Film Festivals to fulfill its objective of "promoting Indian films of aesthetic and technical excellence, both within India and abroad". While the National Film Awards and the Indian Panorama have remained standard-bearers in encouraging film makers to bring forward new and significant styles, the special festival programmes and exchanges with other countries organised by the Directorate have helped to promote Indian cinema overseas and to bring contemporary trends to our shores. In these endeavours the guidance of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been a consistent support.

International Film Festival of India 1992

Bangalore was the venue for the 23rd International Film Festival of India, organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals between 10 and 20 January 1992 with the active cooperation of the Karnataka State Government and the Indian film industry. Forty countries participated, and a total of 212 films were screened over 513 shows in 11 theatres, with separate shows for the press and delegates. In all, about 2,500 delegates attended the festival, including 20 foreign journalists.

Important film makers and personalities included Krzysztof Zanussi, Dennis O'Rourke, Robert Dornhelm, Anne Wheeler, Alexandra London, Anne-Marie Pisani, King Ampaw, Gian Maria Volonte, Peter Bacso, Peter Timer, Khosro Sinai and Prince Chatrichalerm Yukol.

Some of the highlights of the festival were the section on 'Forty Years of Cahiers du Cinema', a Retrospective of Francesco Rosi, and a Focus on recent Iranian cinema. A special retrospective of Kannada film classics was also organized. The inaugural film of IFFI '92 was *Urga*, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov, while its closing film was *The Road to Mecca*, directed by Peter Goldsmid and Athol Fugard—the first South African film to be screened in India following the lifting of the cultural boycott against South Africa.

The Indian Panorama at IFFI '92 had a selection of 21 feature films and 16 non-feature films. The Central Panel was chaired by Bimal

Dey, while the Non-Feature Panel was chaired by Buddhadeb Dasgupta.

National Film Festival

The National Film Awards juries commenced their screenings in March 1992. The Feature Film Jury chaired by Adoor Gopalakrishnan viewed about 114 films, while the Non-Feature Film Jury chaired by Buddhadeb Dasgupta viewed about 107 films. Kamleshwar chaired the jury that judged the Best Writing on Cinema.

The late Satyajit Ray's *Agantuk* (Bengali) bagged the Best Feature Film Award, while Gautam Bora's *Sons of Abotani: the Misings* was judged Best Non-Feature Film. The Malayalam book entitled *Atmanintayude Pookkal* (Flower of Self-Condensation) was selected as the Best Book on Cinema, while Gautam Kaul was adjudged Best Film Critic of 1991. The Dadasaheb Phalke Award was conferred on Bhalji Pendharkar.

The awards were given away by the President of India at a ceremony held in Siri Fort auditorium in the capital on 6 May. The function was followed by public screening of the award-winning films, which concluded on 17 May.

International Film Festivals and Awards

The year 1992 saw Indian participation in 55 international film festivals. Some of these were festivals focussing on Asian cinema, such as the Fukuoka International Film Festival in Japan, the Asian Pacific Films show in Seoul, the Pyongyang Film Festival, the Singapore International Film Festival and the Festival of South Asian Documentaries and Short Films in Sri Lanka.

The Directorate of Film Festivals sent Indian delegates to Cannes, Singapore, Locarno, Fukuoka and Haifa, and to the Ishikawa Asian Film Festival in Japan. The prestigious Akira Kurosawa Award was conferred upon the late Satyajit Ray at the 35th San Francisco International Film Festival. M.T. Vasudevan Nair's *Kadavu* won the Special Jury Award at the Singapore International Film Festival. Shabana Azmi received the Best Actress Award at the 3rd Pyongyang Film Festival for her role in Gulzar's *Libaas*, while Aparna Sen was given the Best Actress Award at the 11th Tashkent festival for her role in Mrinal Sen's *Mahaprithivi*. Kumar Sahani's *Bhavantarana* won the Documentary Film Prize at the Mannej Festival, while Subrata Mitra received the Eastman Kodak Award at the Hawaii Festival. The Joint Director of the Directorate of Film

Festivals, Malti Sahai, served on the Jury of the Singapore International Film Festival.

Some of the notable retrospectives abroad were tributes to Satyajit Ray organised in Brisbane, Hawaii, San Francisco, Sao Paulo and Japan. A retrospective of Shyam Benegal's films was organised at the Chicago festival, and of Raj Kapoor's films at the Tashkent Festival.

Cultural Exchanges

During the year 1992, Indian Film Weeks were organised in Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Japan, Turkey and Bahrain, at which five to seven Indian films were shown. A festival of Swedish films was organised in Bombay, New Delhi and Trivandrum where eight films were screened. The Holland Film Week was held in New Delhi and Trivandrum, in which a three-member Dutch delegation accompanied the films. French, Japanese, Turkish, Chinese and Hungarian Film Weeks have also been successfully organised in India during this year.

The SAARC Film Festival was one of the major events of the cultural exchange programme. It was held in October 1992 in six cities of India, and a six-member delegation from the SAARC countries accompanied the festival. Another important event was the workshop organised under the Indo-US exchange programme. Three documentary film makers from USA were invited, along with their films, to organise a workshop on screenplay writing and meet with film students at the Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi and the Film and Television Institute in Pune, and to interact with members of the film industry in Bombay.

The 4th European Community Film Festival was held in New Delhi from 10 to 20 March, 1992, and thereafter in Calcutta. Fourteen feature films and eight short films from ten countries were screened. Another special festival, held in the same month in New Delhi, Calcutta and Pune, was a Retrospective of films by the well-known Swedish director Jan Troell. Jan Troell himself came for the festival and interacted with the students and faculty of the FTII in Pune, along with Suzanne Baega of the Swedish Institute.

**INDIAN PANORAMA
FEATURE FILMS**

HALADHAR

(The Yeoman)

Assamese; colour; 107 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Sanjeev Hazorika
Story:	Apurba Sharma
Screenplay:	Sanjeev Hazorika, Bidyut Chakraborty, Azan Barua
Camera:	Azan Barua
Music:	Sher Choudhury
Editing:	A. Sreekar Prasad
Sound:	Jatin Sharma, Rajendran
Production:	Geeti Barua, Dwijen Hazorika
Cast:	Atul Pachani, Nayan Prasad, Indra Bania, Hiranya Deka, Radha
Enquiries:	Bidyut Chakravorty Prahar Chitram M.G. Road Guwahati 781 001



The tale is set in a village in Assam. It is the fallow season and the village is preparing for its annual Bhaona performance. Balaram, a farmer, has got two large pieces of wood from the forest to make ploughs, one of which he has promised to his brother-in-law. Maghi

Mahajan, the rich man of the village, appears and asks for one of the two logs. Balaram refuses.

Mahajan is angry and orders a poor peasant in his power, Someshwar, to steal the wood. Someshwar, completely dependent on Mahajan, cannot refuse and so one night he steals the half-made plough and delivers it to his master. Balaram suspects Mahajan and with his friend Dhoroka locates the missing plough hidden in the rich man's house. Although afraid of Mahajan, Balaram believes he will find justice.

The day of Bhaona dawns. Balaram, who is the drummer in the performance, plans to place the matter of the stolen plough before the audience at the conclusion of the Bhaona. However, he needs proof that the plough is still in its hiding place and sends Dhoroka off to make sure. His friend returns crestfallen to tell him that the plough has been moved elsewhere, and Balaram is compelled to abandon his plan.

The next day Balaram runs into Someshwar at the market, and the latter taunts him about his poor performance on the drum. Balaram explodes. He tells Someshwar that he has been made into a thief by Mahajan, and that one day he will be made a beggar as well. Someshwar is shamed by the truth of Balaram's words and restores the plough to its rightful owner.

Sanjeev Hazorika graduated in science from Guwahati University in 1980 and began his association with films in 1983. *Haladhar* is his debut film and has won the Indira Gandhi Award for the Best First Film of a Director in the 39th National Film Festival, 1992.



PADMA NADIR MANJHI

(Boatman of the River Padma)

Bengali; colour; 130 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Goutam Ghose
Story:	Manik Bandopadhyaya
Screenplay:	Goutam Ghose
Camera:	Goutam Ghose
Art Direction:	Asoke Bose
Music:	Alauddin Ali, Goutam Ghose
Editing:	Moloy Banerjee
Sound:	Sanjay Chatterjee, Anup Mukherjee
Production:	Ashirbad Chalchitra, Dhaka Habib Khan
Cast:	Ashad, Champa, Rupa, Utpal Dutta, Robi Ghosh
Enquiries:	Information and Cultural Affairs Department, Govt. of West Bengal Writers Building Calcutta 700 001



Based on a Bengali classic by Manik Bandopadhyaya, this film is a saga of lives battered by the forces of nature and fate. Set in the village of Ketupur on the banks of the mighty river Padma, the story revolves around Kuber, a fisherman, and his relationships with his wife and children, his sister-in-law Kapila, his relatives and neighbours. He leads a hardworking life and although he is poor there is always enough to eat and he is content.

Hossain Miyan, a wealthy trader, is an enigma to the villagers. He owns a large cargo boat and a remote island in the delta. He is populating the island, Moyna, with people from Ketupur, employing them to clear its dense forests for cultivation. This has become for him an obsession.

One day Kuber meets a settler from Moyna who has run away. He is famished and exhausted, and after he has recovered he tells the village his tale of the danger, hardship and desolation that Moyna holds. The villagers, alarmed, call for a confrontation with Hossain Miyan, who challenges anyone to refute his contention that he has never compelled anyone to go to Moyna. The settler is silent and refuses to meet Hossain Miyan's eye. The incident, however, adds to the mystery of the man and the island.

A great storm rises over the river, in which many boats are washed away and many huts damaged. Hossain Miyan loans the villagers materials, taking their thumb impressions on his receipts. Kuber, deprived of his livelihood, gratefully accepts the charge of Hossain Miyan's cargo boat. The two men arrive in Moyna after a long voyage. It is a wild and isolated place covered with thick jungle, and connected with the world only by Hossain Miyan's boat. Its small band of settlers are in awe of the rich trader, who presides over their disputes and metes out punishment. Hossain Miyan and Kuber return to Ketupur.

The experience of the journey affects Kuber profoundly. He becomes brooding and irritable. His feelings about his family and neighbours change. He becomes infatuated with his sister-in-law. He mortally offends his daughter's suitor by changing his mind after having accepted the latter's offer of marriage. In revenge, the suitor frames Kuber in a case of theft and sets the police after him. There is only one course open to Kuber: to run away to Moyna and begin life again. Kapila leaves with him.

Goutam Ghose, born in 1950, was brought up in Calcutta and graduated from Calcutta University. He began making documentaries in 1973 and with *Hungry Autumn* in 1974 won the Main Award in the Oberhausen Film Festival in 1978. *Land of Sand Dunes* won a National Award as Best Documentary Film, 1986. Of his feature films, *Maa Bhoomi* (1979), *Dakhal* (1982), *Paar* (1984) and *Antarjali Yatra* (1987) have won several national and international awards.



TAHADER KATHA

(Their Story)

Bengali; colour; 97 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Buddhadeb Dasgupta
Story:	Kamalkumar Mazumdar
Screenplay:	Buddhadeb Dasgupta
Camera:	Venu
Art Direction:	Nikhil Sengupta
Music:	Biswadeb Dasgupta
Editing:	Ujjal Nandy
Sound:	Durga Mitra
Production:	Jyoti Chatterjee, Anup Mukherjee
Cast:	National Film Development Corporation Mithun Chakraborty, Anasuya Majumdar, Dipankar De, Debosrhi Bhattacharya, Bidisha Chakraborty
Enquiries:	Ravi Malik General Manager, National Film Development Corporation Ltd. Discovery of India, Nehru Centre Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Bombay 400 018 Telephone: 4947856/7/8 Telex: 011-73489 NFDC IN Fax: 022-4949751

The film is set in the early fifties, about the time of the country's first general election. Sibnath has just been set free from prison after serving an 11-year term for his political activities in the freedom struggle. He is taken by his former comrade Bipin Gupta to meet his wife and two children who are living in a remote village in Bengal. His son Jyoti was born after Sibnath was sentenced, and the two meet for the first time.

Sibnath finds himself alienated from his family and from the world to which he has returned—both of which have nothing in common with the dream for which he fought. However, his erstwhile political colleagues want to enlist his help in the coming elections, in which



Bipin Gupta is going to be a candidate. They urge him to resume his profession as a school-teacher and to follow the directives of the party. But Sibnath thinks Bipin Gupta and the others are corrupting his dream, and rejects their overtures. The only person who seems to care for Sibnath is his young son, who comes to share in his father's dreams and believe in him. Jyoti knows his father is not mad, as the others believe, but the sanest person in the village. An itinerant magician, Abdullah Jaduwala, comes to the village. He hypnotizes members of the audience and makes them do bizarre things. Sibnath watches several of the performances.

Jyoti is awakened early one morning by the rattling of a chain. He sees his mother and sister about to fasten the chain around his father's ankles. He shouts a warning to his father, who wakes up and runs away. That day, Abdullah chooses Sibnath as his object of mockery. He hypnotizes him, makes him chew leaves like a goat and then spits into Sibnath's hand and orders him to lick it like a pig. But Sibnath breaks out of his trance and strangles the magician who is degrading him. He is led away in chains to an asylum.

Buddhadeb Dasgupta was born in 1944. He taught economics from 1968 to 1976 and then moved to film making. He made *Dooratwa* in 1978, *Neem Annapurna* in 1979, *Grihajudda* in 1981, *Sheet*, *Grishmer Smriti* in 1982, *Andhi Gali* in 1984, *Phera* in 1986, *Bagh Bahadur* in 1989 and *Tahader Katha* in 1992. His films have been screened at major film festivals in India and abroad and won several awards. He has also made several documentaries. He is a poet in Bengali and has five books of verse to his credit.



MISS BEATTY'S CHILDREN

English; colour; 112 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Pamela Rooks
Screenplay:	Pamela Rooks, James Killough
Camera:	Venu
Art Direction:	Vinod Guruji
Music:	Zakir Hussain
Editing:	Renu Saluja
Sound:	Stanton Davis, Hitendra Ghosh
Production:	National Film Development Corporation, Doordarshan, Rooks A.V.
Cast:	Jenny Seagrove, D.W. Moffet, Faith Brook, Protima Bedi, Barry John, Emma Sanderson
Enquiries:	Ravi Malik General Manager, National Film Development Corporation Ltd. Discovery of India, Nehru Centre Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Bombay 400 018 India Telephone: 4947856/7/8 Telex: 011-73489 NFDC IN Fax: 022-4949751

The year is 1936. Jane Beatty, an idealistic young English missionary, arrives in Tamil Nadu, having spent a few years as a school-teacher in Ceylon. She is excited at the prospect of working with Mabel Forster, a strong-willed woman who has made it her mission to save young girls from being sold as temple prostitutes (*devdasis*). Mabel buys the girls herself and raises them in the mission school. She has made an enemy of Kamla Devi, the head prostitute of the local temple.

Jane is put to work as soon as she arrives. She is helped by a doctor, Ellie, and Mabel's best friend Veena, both volunteers. At a festival for the local deity, Jane meets Kamla Devi, who warns her not to interfere in the affairs of the temple. Soon after, an emergency crops up in Mabel's absence: a little girl, half English, is about to be sold to the temple by her aunt. Jane tricks the woman into giving her the child and has to leave the town to escape the likelihood of an angry



mob burning down the mission. She goes to Ooty where she resumes her life as a teacher and starts a new one as a surrogate mother to Amba, the little girl.

In Ooty she meets an American doctor, Alan Chandler, working at the mission hospital. She adopts two more children. One Christmas she is denied admission to the local British club because her children are non-white. Furious, she severs ties with her own community and gradually becomes more Indian than British.

Another story begins to unfold. A local bandit, Nayakan, wants Jane to adopt his son to get him away from relatives who are holding him to ransom. Jane refuses his offer of money and tells him she will accept his son only if he gives himself up to the police. He asks her to let him think this over. Jane returns from a visit to Mabel to discover that Nayakan is in jail. She visits him and tells him she will try and rescue his son from his relatives. She fails. Nayakan promises to deliver the boy to her and escapes from jail. He is killed in an encounter with the police.

Late one night Jane is called in to assist Chandler in a delivery. In the cowshed where the baby is being born, she has to act as the midwife, following Chandler's verbal instructions (he, being a male is not allowed to be present). The experience is a powerful one and soon after they become lovers.

Meanwhile, World War II has broken out. Chandler leaves for Kohima to help with the British war effort and is killed in a Japanese attack. Meanwhile, Jane's "family" has grown and she realizes that though the War has changed everything, for her and for the British, and that they will have to leave India, she will stay on with her children no matter what.

Pamela Rooks was born in Calcutta in 1958. In 1978 she married film maker Conrad Rooks and travelled and worked with him on several film projects. In 1986 she joined an independent television company in New Delhi, where she produced documentaries and current affairs programmes for Indian television. A year later she was producing documentaries independently. She has published a book of poems, *Final Exposure*, and a novel, *Miss Beatty's Children*—which she has made into her first feature film.



HUN HUNSHI HUNSHILAL

(Love in the Time of Malaria)

Gujarati; colour; 140 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Sanjiv Shah
Story & Screenplay:	Paresh Naik
Camera:	Navroze Contractor
Art Direction:	Kaushik Ramnathan, Aziz Kachwala
Music:	Rajat Dholakia
Editing:	Bhavik Thakore, Sanjiv Shah
Sound:	Indrajit Neogi, A. Padmanabhan
Production:	Sanjiv Shah
Cast:	Dilip Joshi, Renuka Shahane, Mohan Gokhale, Arvind Vaidya, Manoj Joshi
Enquiries:	Sanjiv Shah Karankar Productions 10 Hasubhai Park Nr. Jodhpur Gam Ahmedabad 380 015



This parable tells the story of Hunshilal, a middle class youth who lives in the kingdom of Khojpuri, ruled by Raja Harshchandra. The symbol of the country is the tortoise. Khojpuri suffers from a plague of mosquitos. When Hunshilal grows up he becomes a scientist and

invents a drug for the eradication of mosquitos. It is made from onions, which are plentiful in Khojपुरi. The drug is successful and Hunshilal is given an award by the king.

Hunshilal becomes friends with a girl, Parveen, who works in the same laboratory. Through her he begins to see things from the point of view of the mosquitos. The king is killed accidentally when he peeps into the muzzle of a new gun and it goes off. He is replaced by a new king. There is a red diary which contains the secrets of the mosquitos. The king's men are very anxious to get hold of it and suspect Parveen of being its custodian. Hunshilal and Parveen are constantly shadowed by the king's men. One day Hunshilal discovers that Parveen has the diary in her possession. She explains the cause of the mosquitos to him and tries to win him over to their side.

Hunshilal starts questioning his assumption that mosquitos are bad. He tells his superior of a dream he had in which a mosquito was biting him. He is sent for security clearance to establish that he has not been infected. He is passed from one bureaucrat to another until he loses his temper and sets the place on fire. He goes back to Parveen, who urges him to come away with her to the land of the mosquitos. He realizes that she is one of them. One day he witnesses a demonstration in favour of mosquitos and, unable to contain himself, throws a stone at a policeman. He is arrested and disappears. It is assumed that he is dead, but he is in fact undergoing a brain operation to remove all traces of mosquito influence. Parveen waits in vain for Hunshilal to turn up so that they can make their escape together.

Sanjiv Shah trained at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. He assisted in editing Anand Patwardhan's *Bombay, Our City* between 1984-86. In 1985 he edited *Mirch Masala* by Ketan Mehta. *Hun Hunshi Hunshilal* has been produced, directed and co-edited by him.



CHELUVI

Hindi; colour; 102 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Girish Karnad
Story:	Based on a folk tale from Karnataka
Screenplay:	Girish Karnad
Camera:	Rajiv Menon
Art Direction:	Jayoo Nachiket, Sabu Cyril
Music:	Bhaskar Chandavarkar
Editing:	Suresh Urs
Sound:	S.P. Ramanathan
Production:	Girish Karnad
Cast:	Sonali Kulkarni, Gargi Yakkundi, Prashant Rao, Geetanjali Kirloskar, B. Jayashri
Enquiries:	Girish Karnad Sadir Media Pvt Ltd 14/33 Second Main Road Jayanagar Bangalore 560 082

An old woman lives near a forest with her two daughters. She is extremely poor and does menial jobs to survive. When the girls come of age the younger one, Cheluvu, tells her sister that she knows a spell by which she can turn herself into a flowering tree. They go deep into the forest and while Cheluvu enters into meditation her sister brings two pitchers of water, one of which she pours over Cheluvu. The miracle takes place and a blossom-laden tree appears where the girl was seated. Carefully, as Cheluvu had warned her not to break or tear any part of the tree, the sister plucks as many flowers as she can. She pours the second pitcher of water over the tree and Cheluvu regains her human form.

Kumar, the son of the wealthy village chieftain, is bewitched by the beauty and fragrance of the flowers. He follows the girls into the forest to discover their secret but fails. Obsessed with the flowers, he weds Cheluvu—but remains aloof from her. He sleeps in an armchair, and does not speak to her. When she asks him the reason for his coldness towards her, he tells her that he has to know the secret of the flowering tree. She resists at first, but relents and shares her secret with her husband. He plucks from her all the flowers he wants, and they spread them out and delight in them.



Kumar's inquisitive younger sister Shyama is intrigued by the flowers that keep emerging from his chamber. He will not tell her where they come from, but one day when he goes to visit his older sister Mala, Shyama persuades Cheluvi to accompany her to the forest. There she wheedles the secret out of her sister-in-law and makes her perform the miracle. She then calls all her friends to look at the tree and they climb all over it, breaking several branches. When Cheluvi tries to regain her form, she is a half-human stump. Only her face remains recognizable and beautiful. She is abandoned in the forest.

A passing woodcutter is astonished to hear the moans of the tree-stump. He takes it away in his cart and leaves it at the house of Kumar's sister Mala. Kumar, half-crazed with grief, comes to Mala's house as he is wandering the countryside searching for his wife. He cannot eat or rest, and he spurns the maidens his sister sends to comfort him. At last Mala's maid remembers the tree stump. She oils and bathes it and sends it to Kumar richly dressed, but he will not look at it.

As Kumar sorrowfully sings a song Cheluvi had taught him, he feels tear-drops fall on his arm. He looks up and recognizes his wife with joy, soon turned to horror. Cheluvi, able to speak again, instructs him to return to the spot where she had been disfigured, turn her back into a tree, retrieve the broken branches and bind them back before restoring her into a woman again. Kumar rushes back with her, but finds nothing there: the forest has been cleared by his father to build a mansion for his unhappy son.

Girish Karnad was born in 1938 in Matheran, Maharashtra. He graduated from Karnataka University with Mathematics and Statistics and went on to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. Thereafter, he worked with the Oxford University Press in India as an editor, was awarded a Homi Bhabha Fellowship and later served for two years as the Director of the Film and Television Institute of India. He has written several plays in Kannada which have been translated into other



languages and staged in India as well as abroad. In 1971 he won the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Playwriting. His first film, *Samskara*, for which he wrote the script and played the lead role, won the President's Gold Medal. Since then he has

directed several feature films and documentaries of which *Kamaka Purandara* won the Golden Lotus. He has also written scripts for other film makers and acted in their films. In 1974 he was awarded the Padma Shri and in 1992 the Padma Bhushan.

DHARAVI

(Quicksand)

Hindi; colour; 120 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Sudhir Mishra
Story & Screenplay:	Sudhir Mishra
Camera:	Rajesh Joshi
Art Direction:	Subhash Sinha Roy
Music:	Rajat Dholakia
Editing:	Renu Saluja
Sound:	Madhu Apsara, Hitendra Ghosh
Production:	National Film Development Corporation, Doordarshan
Cast:	Om Puri, Shabana Azmi, Raghuvir Yadav, Virendra Saxena, Pramod Bala
Enquiries:	Ravi Malik General Manager, National Film Development Corporation Ltd. Discovery of India, Nehru Centre Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Bombay 400 018 India Telephone: 4947856/7/8 Telex: 011-73489 NFDC IN Fax: 022-4949751

Rajkaran Yadav is an immigrant from a north Indian village who has come to Bombay with dreams of wealth. He lives with his wife Kumud in a one-room chawl in Dharavi, notorious as the largest slum in Asia. Kumud's brother is an activist who devotes himself to working for the slum people, trying to awaken and organize them politically. Because of this he comes to clash with the criminal underworld which rules Dharavi. He is held in tolerant contempt by Yadav, who feels his priorities are all wrong.

Yadav has been operating a taxi for some years now, and has finally paid off his bank loan. But to him this is only the first step. He wants much more. He has three partners, with whom he plans to raise money to invest in a small dyeing factory. Every evening they get together at a local dive where they discuss their plans, argue into the night and get drunk. Yadav then staggers home to his wife, filled with fantasies of a famous film star. To him the factory is the gateway to



wealth and the unattainable luxuries which lie beyond, symbolized by the beautiful actress.

Yadav's mother arrives in Dharavi from her village, after his father dies, with the intention of living the rest of her days with her son. This is the first time she has been to Bombay. One of Yadav's partners drops out of the scheme as he is unable to raise his share of the money. The pressure on Yadav grows as the factory is up for sale. He is extremely tense and his relationship with Kumud deteriorates. She finds comfort in the company of her former husband, who is now crippled and an invalid.

An acquaintance introduces Yadav to a local gangster who loans Yadav the money he needs to buy the factory. His partners run the factory, while he continues to ply his taxi. It is hard work and they realize that their expectations were unreal. Yadav becomes short-tempered and quarrels frequently with his partners—until one day they find their factory being demolished by the civic authorities. They watch helplessly as vats full of dye are overturned, and finally the entire structure collapses like a house of cards.

Meanwhile, Yadav's brother-in-law has been murdered by the same gang that had given Yadav his loan. He says and does nothing, and the rift between him and his wife grows. The gangster forces Yadav to participate in a gangland killing by driving the getaway car. He also

takes away the taxi. Yadav has lost everything. He is forced to return to running hired taxis as he had in the early days. Most of the money he earns goes towards repaying the gangster's loan. His wife leaves him for her previous husband.

One day while he is going to the gangster's headquarters to pay an instalment on his loan, the place is attacked by a rival gang. The gangster and his henchmen are slaughtered. Yadav's taxi which was standing in the front yard is smashed and set ablaze before his eyes. Yadav's mother returns sorrowfully to her village, the remnants of her hopes and dreams shattered.

Born in 1957, **Sudhir Mishra** took his master's degree in psychology. His involvement with theatre in Delhi culminated in his moving to Bombay in 1980 where he began working with films. In 1987 his film *Yeh Woh Manzilen to Nahin* won the President's Gold Medal for the Best First Film of a Director. In 1988, *Main Zinda Hoon* won the President's Medal for the Best Film on Social Issues. He directed a successful television serial *Kab Tak Pukaroon*, broadcast during 1990-91. *Dharavi* has won the President's Gold Medal for Best Hindi Film, Best Editing, and Best Music, 1992.



JO JEETA WOHI SIKANDAR

(One Who Wins Is Alexander)

Urdu; colour; 165 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Mansoor Husain Khan
Story & Screenplay:	Mansoor Husain Khan
Camera:	Najeeb Khan
Art Direction:	Nitish Roy, Shiboo
Music:	Jatin-Lalit
Editing:	Zafar Sultan, Dilip Kotalgi
Sound:	Manohar Bangera, Ashok Shukla
Production:	Nasir Husain Khan
Cast:	Aamir Khan, Ayesha Jhulka, Deepak Tijori, Pooja Bedi, Kulbhushan Kharbanda
Enquiries:	Nasir Husain Films Pvt Ltd No. 2, 241 Hill Road Bandra Bombay 400 050



Rajput, Xavier's, St Andrews, Lawrence and Queen's are elite colleges in Dehra Dun, whose students are leaders in sports and academics but think no end of themselves. In complete contrast to these exclusive institutions is Model College—a mediocre institution catering to local students. Their standard of sports has been abysmally low, except in the recent past.

The man responsible for the change is the coach, Ramlal. In his college days at Model, he was the first to win the Inter-College Marathon Bicycle Race—a feat never repeated since. Ramlal has two sons, Ratan and Sanju, both students at the Model College. Ratan is the apple of his father's eye, a bright student and an athlete to boot, the captain of the college sports team. Ramlal has been coaching Ratan rigorously for this year's competition, but Ratan loses narrowly to Shekhar Malhotra of Rajput and Model loses the championship again. Ramlal is upset but clings to the hope that Ratan will win the next year, which will be his last year in college.

Ramlal's second son, Sanju, is a disappointment to him—a slacker in both studies and sports. All he does is hang around with his classmates Ghanshu and Maqsood and get into mischief. Sanju fails his exam and is now in the same class as Anjali, who lives next door. She secretly loves him and goes to all sorts of risks to bail him out of trouble. To him she is just a good friend. Like all the Model boys, he is dazzled by the glamorous girls of Queen's.

A seductive new girl, Devika, joins Queen's. Sanju is very taken with her but he knows she will look down on him because he is a local boy, and not from a posh college. He happens one day to give her a lift in a borrowed car. He leads her on to believe that he is a student at Xavier's and very rich. Devika is floored by his glib talk and tells him that she likes him. This draws Sanju into direct enmity with the reigning bicycle champion Shekhar, who has a crush on Devika too.

The clashes between Sanju and Shekhar reach a point where Ratan has to intervene to save his brother from being thrashed by Shekhar's friends. Shekhar decides to teach Ratan a lesson. He and his gang attack Ratan when he is out alone for a training run on his bicycle. Ratan falls over a cliff and is seriously injured. Ramlal, Sanju and the townspeople are anxiety-stricken—the boy is a great favourite with all. He survives, but there is no chance of his participating in the race.

From this trauma emerges a new Sanju. For the time he becomes aware of the fever of his father's ambition, the depth of Anjali's love for him and the cherished dream of the townspeople of seeing a Model student beat the rich and arrogant Rajputs. Sanju begins his

training for the bicycle race. His dedication, perseverance and will prove unbeatable. In a fantastic performance against exceptional odds, he wins the race. For the first time in thirty years a Model boy has brought glory to the town in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

An engineer trained at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, **Mansoor Hussain Khan** went on to the United States to study computer engineering at Cornell University and MIT. He started a video production and post-production unit in Bombay, on his return to India, which had to a direct involvement with film making. His film *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* won seven Filmfare Awards. It won two National Awards for Best Director and Best Producer under the category of 'Best Film providing popular and wholesome entertainment'.



MAYA MEMSAAB

Hindi; colour; 130 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Ketan Mehta
Story:	Gustav Flaubert
Screenplay:	Ketan Mehta
Camera:	Anoop Jotwani
Art Direction:	Meera Lakhiya
Music:	Hridaynath Mangeshkar
Editing:	Renu Saluja
Sound:	Indrajit Neogi, Hitendra Ghosh
Production:	Ketan Mehta
Cast:	Deepa Sahi, Farookh Sheikh, Raj Babbar, Shah Rukh Khan
Enquiries:	Ketan Mehta 466 Laxmi Bhavan S.V.P. Road Opera House Bombay 400 004



Maya is a young, beautiful and enigmatic woman. She lives with her father in a decaying *haveli* (mansion), trapped in the isolation imposed by the feudal traditions of rural India. Her mind, however, roams free in a realm of dreams of romance and passion. One day her father dislocates his knee in a fall. The young doctor who comes to attend on him is the only pleasant variation in Maya's drab existence, and she falls in love with him. He is married but finds himself attracted to her and seeks her out often. Then his wife dies, and he marries Maya. The initial excitement of starting a new life, setting up a home and discovering togetherness give her a feeling of euphoria. But gradually the monotony of married life, the boredom and mediocrity of a small-town middle class existence, begin to oppress her. She is suffocated by reality and tormented by her fantasies.

She feeds her dreams on novels and films, desperately devouring the illusions they provide. She identifies with the themes and images on the screen, internalizes them and in her fantasies participates in them. They in turn become the fuel for her dreams and longings. Her search for fulfillment leads her simultaneously in two directions—outwardly towards extra-marital relationships and inwardly towards hyper-real fantasies of romance and passion. In her everyday existence she goes in for wild extravagance, hoping that possessing the symbols of luxury will provide her with some satisfaction, but they only lead her to duplicity, debt and despair. Even her extra-marital relationships—at first platonic, then passionate and finally pathetically possessive—soon make her realize that adultery can become as banal as marriage. But the more she is disillusioned by her real-life experiences, the more she indulges herself in fantasy. Finally, trapped by the mounting debts into which her extravagance has led her, and finding no way out, she chooses for herself an appropriately mysterious and magical escape.

An outstanding alumnus of the Film and Television Institute of India, **Ketan Mehta** scripted and directed the Gujarati feature film *Bhavni Bhavai* in 1979-80 which won the UNESCO Club Award as Best film on Human Rights. It also won National Awards for Best Art Direction and Best Film on National Integration. *Holi*



(1984-85) won a National Award for Best Cinematography. *Mirch Masala* (1985-86) won the Best Film Award at the Hawaii Film Festival and three National Awards for Best Hindi Film,

Best Editing and Best Supporting Actor. He has directed several short films and documentaries in addition to a popular television serial, *Mr Yogi*, broadcast in 1988.

MUJHSE DOSTI KAROGE?

(Will You Be Friends With Me?)

Hindi; colour; 100 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Gopi Desai
Story:	Gopi Desai
Screenplay:	Sandeep Pendse, Gopi Desai
Camera:	Ashok Mehta
Art Direction:	Vinod Guruji
Music:	Rajat Dholakia
Editing:	Renu Saluja
Sound:	Indrajit Neogi
Production:	National Centre of Films for Children and Young People
Cast:	Amit Phalke, Habib Tanveer, Irfan Khan, Aneeta Kanwar, Dipti Dave, Saleem Amrohi
Enquiries:	National Centre of Films for Children and Young People Films Division Complex 24 Deshmukh Marg Bombay 400 026 Telegraph: CHILDFILM BOMBAY Telephone: 3876136, 3862870, 3876120, Telex: 011-75463 FD IN Fax: 022-3875610

Gulu, a young boy, lives in a close-knit Muslim family in a village in the Rann of Kutch—a desert with a harsh and hostile climate. Life is a struggle and Gulu has to work hard, tending the family livestock. Gulu's fantasies and daydreams arise in stark contrast to the featureless, open desert. His colourful flights of imagination are often triggered off by things he sees—fighter aircraft swooping low over the desert, border patrols etc. At other times they are completely original, unfettered by experience. He gets into mischief regularly, and is spanked as regularly by his father. He is very fond of his grandfather who fuels his imagination by telling him stories, folk-tales and legends. He is also very close to his older sister, who gets married and leaves for her husband's village. Gulu's life is thus



an intertwining of banal reality and the products of his fertile young imagination.

Trained at the National School of Drama, New Delhi, with affiliated training at the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune, **Gopi Desai** has produced and directed several documentaries. She has acted in several feature films and television serials. This is her first directorial attempt at a feature film.



PRAHAAR

(The Final Attack)

Hindi; colour; 161 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Nana Patekar
Story:	Sujit Sen
Screenplay:	Sujit Sen, Nana Patekar
Camera:	Debu Deodhar
Art Direction:	Gautam Sen
Music:	Laxmikant Pyarelal
Editing:	Afaq Hussain
Sound:	Ashwin Balsawar, Hitendra Ghosh
Production:	Sudhakar Bokade
Cast:	Nana Patekar, Dimple Kapadia, Madhuri Dixit, Gautam Joglekar, Sai Deodhar
Enquiries:	Sudhakar Bokade Divya Films Combine 3/11 Seema Apartments 4 Bungalow Road Andheri (W) Bombay 400 056

Peter D'Souza opts for a career in the Army in the face of opposition from his family. He is a native of Bombay, where his father runs a bakery. He is on the verge of getting engaged to his girlfriend Shirley when he joins a commando training course under the guidance of Major Chauhan. He is about to return home on leave when he is ordered to proceed on a mission to rescue some schoolchildren who have been kidnapped by terrorists. During the operation, Peter loses a leg. He is awarded a medal for bravery by the government.

Forced to quit the Army because of his handicap, Peter returns to Bombay where he starts running the family business. He and Shirley fix a wedding date and invite Major Chauhan to attend. A day before the wedding, Peter is beaten up and murdered by thugs because he has refused to pay the protection money they are trying to extort from him. Major Chauhan finds himself attending Peter's funeral instead of his wedding. Shocked and outraged, Chauhan takes a room in the house of Kiran, a widow with an adopted son, and sets out to track down the killers. He approaches the local police station,



the neighbours, the press. But at every turn he encounters either cynicism, fear or indifference. In one of his skirmishes with the thugs, the crowd takes their side out of fear and throws stones at Chauhan.

The thugs are determined to put an end to his interference and attack him at night with deadly weapons. However, the Major brings his commando training to play and makes short work of them. He gives himself up to the police and is brought to trial. The court finds him mentally unbalanced on the grounds that he has taken the law into his own hands, and he is ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment.

Nana Gajanan Patekar has had a distinguished acting career in theatre and cinema. He has acted in both Marathi and Hindi films. He won Best Actor awards for two Marathi films, *Raaghumaina* and *Gad Jejuri Jejuri*, and the National Award and Filmfare Award as Best Supporting Actor for his role in the Hindi film *Parinda*. His first directorial venture, *Prahaar* has won him the Best Director's Award of the Madhya Pradesh Vikas Nigam. He also plays the role of the main character in this film.



RUDALI

(The Mourner)

Hindi; colour; 140 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Kalpana Lajmi
Story:	Mahasweta Devi
Screenplay:	Gulzar
Camera:	Santosh Sivan, Dharam Gulati
Art Direction:	Sameer Chanda
Music:	Dr Bhupen Hazarika
Editing:	Bhanudar Divkar
Sound:	Ashwin Balsawar, Hitendra Ghosh
Production:	National Film Development Corporation, Doordarshan
Cast:	Dimple Kapadia, Rakhee Gulzar, Raj Babbar, Amjad Khan, Raghuvir Yadav
Enquiries:	Ravi Malik General Manager, National Film Development Corporation Ltd. Discovery of India, Nehru Centre Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Bombay 400 018 India Telephone: 4947856/7/8 Telex: 011-73489 NFDC IN Fax: 022-4949751

Sanicheri, a Harijan woman, lives alone in her house in a village of Rajasthan. She used to work as a maid-servant in the *haveli* (mansion) of the local landowner, Ram Avtar Singh. His brother Gopal Singh gifted her house to her as a reward for her rendition of a song at a gathering in the *haveli*.

As a child she had been abandoned by her mother who had run away with an itinerant troupe of performers. When she grew into a young woman, she married a man who turned out to be a drunken ne'er-do-well, and had a son by him called Budhua.

Sanicheri is regarded as a singularly cold and unfeeling woman because she is unable to weep. She cannot remember ever having shed tears. As a child she did not weep for her mother, and she



remains dry-eyed when her husband dies. She is furious when the errant Budhua turns up one day with a bride, a common prostitute. She allows the girl to stay only because she wants the grandchild the prostitute is carrying. However, the girl cannot tolerate Sanicheri's contemptuous treatment of her. She has her pregnancy terminated and reverts to her profession.

Ram Avtar Singh is gravely ill. He is anxious that no one will mourn him properly after he is gone and sends for a *rudali*, a professional mourner. Bhikni arrives and stays with Sanicheri while she is waiting for the landlord to die. The two women become close. Sanicheri unburdens her soul to Bhikni—something she has never done with anyone. The professional mourner is amazed at Sanicheri's inability to shed tears, but declares that she will make her a *rudali* yet.

Before Bhikni can tell Sanicheri very much about herself, she is called away to a dying friend's bedside. She promises to return soon. A couple of days later Sanicheri learns that Bhikni is dead. She also learns that the *rudali* was her long-lost mother. A messenger arrives looking for Bhikni: Ram Avtar Singh has finally died. In a daze Sanicheri goes to the *haveli*. She stands there paralyzed until the weight of her loss smites her. She collapses, wailing in a paroxysm of grief and pain. She becomes a *rudali*.

Born in 1954, **Kalpana Lajmi** came to work in films via her interest in theatre. After working as an assistant director for twelve years with Shyam Benegal, she set up a partnership in 1977 with the Assamese poet, singer and composer Bhupen Hazarika. Her first feature film, *Ek Pal*, was selected for the 1987 Panorama and won the National Award for the Best Sound. She has also written, produced and directed a 13-part serial called *Lohit Kinare* for television.



SANGYA BALYA

Kannada; colour; 141 minutes; 1992

Direction:	B. Sundar Krishna Urs
Story & Screenplay:	F.D. Sali
Camera:	N.G. Rao
Art Direction:	Subhash Kadkol
Music:	Vijaya Bashkar
Editing:	Suresh Urs
Sound:	Araw Madan Suresh, Kannan
Production:	F.D. Sali
Cast:	Ramakrishna, Vijaya Kashi, Bharathi Patil, Umashri, N. Basavaraj (Gudgere)
Enquiries:	F.D. Sali Shri Yelukoti Film Corporation Vidya Nagar Hubli 21 Karnataka



The story is based on a Karnataka folk tale. Sangya and Balya are two close friends. Sangya is the wealthy one. At a village fair they come across a beautiful woman and Sangya falls in love with her. Her name is Gangi and she is the wife of a rich trader in the village. Sangya decides that he must have Gangi. He asks Balya to advise him and Balya discusses the pros and cons of the matter before he agrees to help him. They also enlist the help of Parava. They hatch a plot to get Sangya and Gangi together. The two are now in love with each other. Meanwhile, Gangi's husband gets wind of the affair and decides to finish off Sangya. To do this he uses Balya. Fate plays the same card, and Sangya is the victim.

48-year-old **B. Sunder Krishna Urs** has acted in as many as 175 films in Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. He worked as a story and screenplay writer in the state award-winning film *Ruthugana*. He has directed the Telugu feature film *Sangma Sakshi* and *Chakra* in Kannada—a study of a village during pre-Independence days.



SWAROOPAM

(Begetter)

Malayalam; colour; 97 minutes; 1992

Direction:	K.R. Mohanan
Story & Screenplay:	K.R. Mohanan
Camera:	Madhu Ambat
Art Direction:	K.R. Mohanan
Music:	L. Vaidyanathan
Editing:	Venu
Sound:	T. Krishnanunni
Production:	P.T.K. Mohammed
Cast:	Sreenivasan, Thilakan, Sreeraman, Abu Circar, Sandhya Rajendran
Enquiries:	Mohan Mohammed Films Prayapuri Buildings Amala Nagar P.O. Trissur 680 553

A hard-working farmer, Sekharan, lives with his wife and their two young children in central Kerala. They live frugally but cheerfully, taking the cares and worries of their life in their stride.

One day a stranger enters their lives—an old man who introduces himself as a distant relative. He traces for Sekharan his family history, and the humble farmer is filled with elation at the discovery of his proud lineage. This new-found knowledge of his forefathers becomes an obsession with Sekharan.

The old man tells him of one of his ancestors, Muthappan by name, who is the guardian spirit of the family and the fountainhead of its glory. He advises Sekharan to consecrate a family shrine to Muthappan and to seek his protection. He takes the farmer on a trip to meet some of his relatives, and encountering the prosperity and well-being of these distant family members makes Sekharan ashamed of his own status. The old man points out that it is Muthappan who has bestowed the blessings of wealth on this family.

On his return Sekharan is a changed man, withdrawn and alienated from his wife and children. He builds a shrine to Muthappan and spends most of his time sitting before it in a trance. His wife has to manage the affairs of the household single-handedly.

The neighbours watch with curiosity and amusement. An elderly neighbour warns him about the course he has taken: the shrine can bring doom upon him if he neglects it, he says. His father-in-law appears to warn him of the consequences of neglecting his family. One night Sekharan surprises his wife by making an amorous advance to her. He then tells her that his approach is inspired not by lust but by a directive from Muthappan to beget a son. She turns away from him in disgust.

Meanwhile, he is acquiring a reputation as a man with supernatural powers, and his help is being sought by people to perform black magic rituals. The view is that his first ritual will be very potent. Sekharan shuts himself up for days within the shrine. In the early hours of one morning, when wandering minstrels arrive at the house to invoke the goddess of plenty, his wife looks inside the shrine and finds him dead. She sets about her life with a new determination.

Born in 1948, **K.R. Mohanan** graduated in zoology before joining the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, where he studied Film Direction. His first feature films *Ashwatthama* (1978) and *Purushartham* (1988) won the Kerala State Award for the Best Malayalam Film. The latter won the National Award for the Best Malayalam Film as well. He has scripted and directed more than 25 documentaries for various government departments of Kerala. He is currently working in the Kerala State Film Development Corporation.



ULLADAKKAM

(Contents Within)

Malayalam; colour; 130 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Kamal
Story:	Cherian Kalpakavadi
Screenplay:	P. Balachandran
Camera:	Saloo George
Art Direction:	Roy P. Thomas
Music:	Ouseppachan
Editing:	K. Rajagopal
Sound:	V.S. Moorthy, Lakshmi Narayanan
Production:	Suresh Balaji
Cast:	Mohanlal, Murali, M.G. Soman, Amala, Sobhana
Enquiries:	Suresh Balaji Sitara Combines 58 Pantheon Road Egmore Madras 600 008

Having studied abroad, Sunny has returned to India and joined a psychiatric hospital. His work is good and he is appreciated by one and all. He is in love with a colleague, Annie, and the two plan to get married.

One day his friend Roy telephones him to consult Sunny about his sister Reshma who is unwell. Reshma is deeply disturbed and Sunny advises Roy to move her to the hospital. Reshma is completely withdrawn, but with Sunny's patient handling she comes over a period of time to trust him and he pieces together her story. Reshma had been in love with Arun who played the drums in a band. The band was involved in drug smuggling as a sideline. Arun wanted to leave and with Reshma's support and encouragement did so. However, the other members of the band were afraid that he knew too much. One evening when the lovers were on the beach Arun's ex-colleagues appeared and, after a struggle, murdered him and flung his body into the sea. The trauma has unhinged the girl and she has recurring nightmares of the scene at the beach.

Sunny gently helps Reshma back to normalcy. In the process she



transfers her passion for Arun to him, and becomes jealous and possessive. Once she realizes that Sunny loves Annie, however, she seems to get over it and leaves the asylum seemingly cured.

Sunny and Annie throw an engagement party to which they invite Reshma. There is a live band. As the drummer plays a long solo, Reshma breaks into a cold sweat. She runs out of the room and into another corner of the house where she cowers, gibbering. The party carries on. Annie enters the room where Reshma has hidden herself and is surprised and concerned. She goes to her but Reshma does not recognize her and reacts manically, hitting her on the head with a heavy vase. The blow kills Annie.

Reshma is put away. Sunny becomes a recluse. Several years later Reshma meets him again, just before leaving the city for good.

Born in 1957, Kamal entered the film world after graduation. He worked under some of the stalwarts of Malayalam cinema and has made more than 16 films. *Ulladakkam* won the Best Director 1991 award from the Kerala State Government.



KHONTHANG

Meiteilon (Manipuri); colour; 105 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Oken Amakcham
Story:	R.K. Banna
Screenplay:	N. Rajen Meitei
Camera:	L. Surajakanta
Art Direction:	Th. Promananda Meitei
Music:	Thoungamsa
Editing:	Subrata Lahiri
Sound:	Deepak Roy, Sanjay
Production:	Thouyangba Thoungamba
Cast:	Rishikanta, Devala, Rajen, Boris, Gunabati
Enquiries:	Thouyangba Thoungamba P.K. Films (Manipur) Kongba Shoudongpung Imphal 795 001



A blind boy, Robi, his sister Nandini and their older brother Iboyaima are looked after by Ibohal, the eldest sibling, and his wife. As Ibohal is the sole breadwinner of the family, he has a hard time making ends meet on the meagre salary he gets as a primary school teacher. Nandini has to forgo her studies so that she can contribute to the family income. She spends most of her time doing household chores and looking after her blind brother. At night she toils over needlework which can be sold for much-needed money.

The whole family has placed its hopes in Iboyaima who is studying engineering outside Manipur. Even Nandini's necklace, which was given to her by her late mother and which she treasures with her life, is not spared. The pawn-broker, who has a marriageable daughter, helps willingly, hoping that he will get Iboyaima for a son-in-law.

Iboyaima completes his studies. The family is overjoyed at the prospect of his homecoming. At last their burden will be lightened, and Robi can be sent to hospital for treatment. Their hopes are cruelly shattered when Iboyaima comes home with a girl from a rich family. He marries her and moves in with her family. He is indifferent to the fate of his brothers and sister and sees them rarely.

Meanwhile, Nandini contracts leukemia and rapidly weakens and dies. Iboyaima arrives belatedly with a gift—a Kashmiri shawl he had promised her long ago. It now serves as her shroud. Robi grieves silently over the grave of the sister who was a mother and a guide to him as well. Boris, the young son of Ibohal, comes up to him and leads him away.

Oken Amakcham was born in 1959 in Imphal, Manipur. His training in classical vocal music and his ability as an actor have led him not only to direct, but also to compose music and play the lead roles all his theatre productions—and in his film *Khonthang*.



EK HOTA VIDUSHAK

(Once There Was a Clown)

Marathi; colour; 160 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Dr Jabbar Patel
Story:	Dr Jabbar Patel
Screenplay:	P.L. Deshpande
Camera:	Harish Joshi
Art Direction:	Sudhir Sase
Music:	Anand Modak
Editing:	Anil Vishwas
Sound:	Ravindra Sathe, N.K. Singh
Production:	National Film Development Corporation
Cast:	Laxmikant Berde, Neelu Phule, Madhu Kambikar, Varsha Usgaonkar, Mohan Agashe, Dilip Prabhawalkar
Enquiries:	Ravi Malik General Manager, National Film Development Corporation Ltd. Discovery of India, Nehru Centre Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Bombay 400 018 India Telephone: 4947856/7/8 Telex: 011-73489 NFDC IN Fax: 022-4949751

Aburao is the illegitimate son of a *tamasha* dancer, Manjula. He does not know who his father is, but he is witness to his mother leaving the *tamasha* troupe to live as the concubine of a village landlord—much to the chagrin of her sister Kausalya, who owns the troupe. The landlord, Himmatrao, is a bit of a sadist and humiliates Aburao often. Then he dies, and Manjula returns to the stage.

Manjula's guru, a *songadya* (clown), takes Aburao under his wing. He becomes a backstage hand, doing odd jobs. His talent as a clown soon becomes apparent as he is a superb mimic and can sing with ease. He also has a satirical humour which is a great hit with audiences. As Aburao grows into his teens, his wit and originality win him several friends—among them Gunwant Bhosale, the son of a



rich landlord. He also has his first love affair—with Subhadra, a dancer.

Aburao is discovered by a well known actress, Maneka, who takes him under her wing. She is in love with an actor, Ravi Kiran, but trying to break off her relationship with him. She marries Aburao. He makes his mark as a comedian in the cinema. Gunwant Rao, an important politician now, maintains his friendship with Aburao. The marriage begins to disintegrate when Aburao realizes that Maneka married him on a whim and is still seeing Ravi Kiran.

One day the old *songadya*, his mother's guru, turns up with a sullen little girl. The old man tells him that Subhadra has died, leaving this girl—an illegitimate child, like Aburao himself. The revelation shakes him. His life changes completely. He puts her into an expensive boarding school and visits her regularly. He entertains her schoolmates, who roar with laughter at his antics, but his daughter remains unsmiling. He becomes obsessed with the thought of making her laugh.

Gunwantrao, by now the Chief Minister of the state, is confronted in a bye-election by a powerful opposition leader. He needs Aburao's ability as a crowd-puller. As luck would have it, Aburao suffers a heart attack and is in the intensive care unit. But Gunwantrao bribes

the doctor in charge and has Aburao medicated so that he is able to come to the public meeting. The crowd cheers wildly, but Aburao is in a drugged trance, aware only of his daughter sitting in the front row of the auditorium. He begins to tell her a simple fairy tale. Suddenly the girl comes alive and is all attention; for once he is not being crafty or cynical, not mimicking anyone. He is himself, telling her a simple tale of pure joy.

This is not what the audience expected. It expresses its disappointment with shoes and other missives hurled on stage. The Chief Minister beats a hasty retreat. But Aburao's daughter is enraptured; she hugs him, laughing, "That was some story, father!"...

Fifty-year-old **Dr Jabbar Patel** practises medicine in a remote town in Maharashtra when he is not making films. Each of his Marathi feature films has won the President's Silver Medal: *Saamna* (1974), *Jait re Jait* (1978), *Simhasan* (1979), and *Umbartha* (1981). He has also directed several documentaries.



ROJA

(Rose)

Tamil; colour; 137 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Mani Ratnam
Story & Screenplay:	Mani Ratnam
Camera:	Santhosh Sivan
Art Direction:	Thotta Tharani
Music:	A.R. Raghuman
Editing:	Suresh Urs
Sound:	V.S. Moorthy, Lakshmi Narayanan
Production:	Rajam Balachander, Pushpa Kandaswamy
Cast:	Aravind Swamy, Madhubala, Pankaj Kapoor, Janakaraj, Nazaar
Enquiries:	V. Natarajan, Executive Director Kavithalayaa Productions Pvt Ltd 17 A Karpagambal Nagar Madras 800 004

Rishi is a computer scientist who specializes in cryptology. He has a great love for his country, and an admiration for its country folk. This prompts him to seek an arranged marriage with a village girl, Roja. Soon after the wedding he is given an assignment in Kashmir by the army, and he flies there with Roja. On the way to a temple, Rishi is abducted by a group of unidentified assailants. A desperate Roja rushes to the police station but finds no help. The next day a photograph is printed in the newspapers showing Rishi being held by a group of masked militants. They demand the release of their leader, Wasim Khan, in exchange for Rishi. Roja is told by the police that the case has been transferred to the army.

Roja meets the officer in charge of the case, Colonel Roy, and begs him to rescue Rishi. She meets Wasim Khan in prison and pleads with him to instruct his men to release her husband. She runs from pillar to post, begging and pleading for Rishi's safe return. All this while Rishi has been telling his captors in no uncertain terms that he will not accept his freedom in exchange for the release of a hardcore killer. He argues that guns can never provide a solution to the problem, and tries to persuade the militants to accept that Kashmir is an integral part of India. He tries to escape but is caught and severely beaten.



Meanwhile, with the colonel's assistance Roja meets a minister and asks him to help. As a result of her efforts, the government agrees to exchange Rishi for Wasim Khan. The militant is brought to the accepted rendezvous, but there is no Rishi. He has escaped, risking his life to avoid the exchange. He is chased long and hard. In a wordy encounter with Liaquat, Wasim's lieutenant, Rishi wins him over and is allowed to leave. Rishi and Roja are reunited.

Mani Ratnam is a Commerce graduate from Madras University and an MBA from the Bajaj Institute of Management, Bombay. He has made 11 films in the past ten years, and won numerous awards. His first directorial venture, *Pallavi Anu Pallavi*, released in 1983, won him the Karnataka State Award for Best Screenplay. *Mouna Ragam* in Tamil won him the National Award in 1986 as Best Regional Film. Two of his films, *Nayagan* (1987) and *Anjali* (1990) were selected by the Film Federation of India as Indian entries for the Oscar.



SURIGADU

Telugu; colour; 135 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Dasari Narayana Rao
Story:	Dasari Narayana Rao, Sriraj
Screenplay:	Dasari Narayana Rao
Camera:	K.S. Prakash
Art Direction:	L. Chalam
Music:	Vasurao
Editing:	K.A. Marthand
Sound:	Vasant, Ravi
Production:	D. Rama Naidu
Cast:	Dasari Narayana Rao, Suresh, Gollapudi Maruti Rao, Yamuna, Sujata, D. Rama Naidu
Enquiries:	D. Rama Naidu, Director M/S Suresh Productions Pvt Ltd 8-2-293/82/IIII/6 Jubilee Hills Hyderabad 500034 Fax: 248787



Suri is a watchman at a city club. His son Satyanarayana is studying engineering in another city. He is ashamed of his father's lowly status and pretends to be the son of a businessman. He falls in love with a classmate, Asha, who is the daughter of a real-estate dealer.

One day Suri comes to see his son, and introduces himself to Satyanarayana's landlord. His son is upset, and instructs his father not to let anyone know that he is a humble watchman. Satyanarayana goes to elaborate lengths to deceive Asha about his parentage. When he qualifies as an engineer and takes a job, he doesn't let his employers know about his father's profession. When Suri gets to know of this, he throws his son out.

Satyanarayana marries Asha. With the help of his father-in-law he takes away some land belonging to Suri, and sells it after developing it.

Satyanarayana and Asha have a son. One day Suri takes his grandson away. The child is retrieved with the help of the police. Suri then files a case against Satyanarayana to compel him to bear the expenses of his mother's medical treatment. Suri wins the case, and takes his wife abroad for her treatment.

Dr Dasari Narayana Rao has directed more than 110 films, produced 19 of his own and acted in 35 films made by others. He has won several state awards for his work.



SWATHI KIRANAM

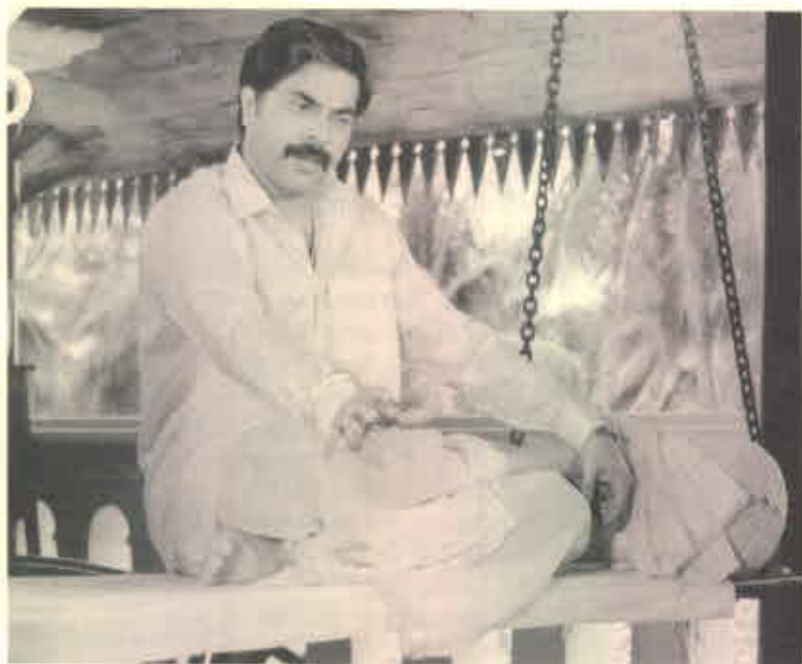
Telugu; colour; 145 minutes; 1992

Direction:	K. Viswanath
Story & Screenplay:	K. Viswanath
Camera:	Kastoori
Art Direction:	Arun Godgwankar
Music:	K.V. Mahadevan
Editing:	G.G. Krishna Rao
Sound:	Karunan, Swaminathan
Production:	Dr R.V. Rao
Cast:	Mammooty, Radhika, Manjunath, Jayanthi, Dhamavarapu Subrahmanyam
Enquiries:	Dr R.V. Rao Swathi Productions C-107 Pasha Court Somajiguda Hyderabad 500 048

Anantharama Sharma is a celebrated musician. He is happily married to Sharada, a musician in her own right. They are comfortably off, and the only discord in their life is the absence of children.

Gangadhar is a musical prodigy. Like most children of his age he can sometimes be mischievous and unmanageable, but his charm generally gets him out of scrapes. His parents are keen to develop his musical gift by putting him under the tutelage of Anantharama Sharma. Their attempt fails: instead of being docile and respectful to the great teacher, the boy plays a musical prank on him, rendering a Vedic hymn in a distorted form. Sharma is furious, and Gangadhar is berated by the elders of his family and community, who have set great store by him. The prospect of getting Gangadhar a scholarship to a college of music is now ruined, because Sharma is on the selection panel which is to award the scholarship. However, the boy is helped financially by Sharada, who has sensed his great potential.

Gangadhar's opportunity to prove himself soon presents itself. He performs in public and is hailed as a genius. Sharma is forced to take cognizance of him. He accepts the boy as his pupil and Gangadhar comes to live in his guru's house. Sharma cleverly manipulates his new protegee into fine-tuning some *kirtanams* (hymns set to music)



which the maestro had been commissioned to do by the august academy, the Bharatiya Peetham.

While Sharma is deeply appreciative of the rare gift he recognizes in Gangadhar, he is as deeply jealous of his pupil. Meanwhile, an emotional bond has developed between the childless Sharada and the boy, which further goads Sharma's insecurity. One day his suppressed rage and jealousy explode. Gangadhar is shocked and shaken. He decides to do away with himself. Gangadhar's suicide shatters Anantarama Sharma and Sharada. The boy's sacrifice fills the man with remorse and changes him profoundly.

K. Viswanath is a science graduate from Andhra University. He began his career in films as a sound engineer in Vauhini Studios (now Vijaya Studios) in Madras and went on to make twelve Telugu and four Hindi films. His film debut, *Atma Gowravam*, won the Andhra Pradesh State Award for that year. Since then his films have won many National and State Awards and have been screened at several international festivals. In 1992 he was awarded the Padma Shri.



**INDIAN PANORAMA
NON-FEATURE FILMS**

GOTHRASMRITHI

English; colour; 42 minutes, 30 seconds; 1992

Direction:	M.A. Rahman
Story & Screenplay:	M.A. Rahman
Camera:	Karthikeyan
Art Direction:	Sudish
Editing:	P. Raman Nair
Sound:	Krishna Kumar
Production:	Zahira Rahman
Enquiries:	Zahira Rahman
	CARVA
	Moolavil House
	Uduma P.O.
	Kerala 671 319



This is a documentation of the traditional enactment of the Thaiyyam rituals amongst the Thaiyya community of North Malabar in Kerala. It also offers an anthropological and political interpretation of these rituals. The Thaiyya are a community which in ancient times migrated from the hills to the lowlands, making the transition from a

hunting and food-gathering existence to the margins of agriculture. From being toddy-tappers they are now marginal farmers and government employees. The earlier repression of this community is illustrated by the restrictions imposed on them by the dominant community: Thaiyya men were not allowed to wear their dhotis below the knee, and the women forbidden to cover their breasts. There is also the tragic story of the Thaiyya woman who was punished for daring to recite the Ramayana. Their situation is very different today, and the spectacular Thaiyyam performance is for them a means of celebrating the memory of their earlier culture and collective history.

M.A. Rahman has a master's degree in English and Malayalam and is well known as a writer and photographer. His maiden film, *Basheer, the Man*, about the famous Malayalam writer Vaikom Mohammed Basheer, won State, National and the Critics' Awards for the best biographical documentary. This is his second film.



KALARIPPAYAT

(Martial Arts of Kerala)

English; colour; 35 minutes; 1992

Direction:	P. Ashok Kumar
Story & Screenplay:	P. Ashok Kumar
Camera:	Sunny Joseph
Music:	Mohan Sitara
Editing:	K.R. Bose
Sound:	Krishnan Unni
Production:	Ashok Kumar
Enquiries:	Ashok Kumar Ashok Productions Komala Mandiram Arukalickal West Adoor 691 523 Kerala

A comprehensive study of the martial arts of Kerala, the film shows a number of exponents and students performing exercises which cover the entire process, from basic to advanced stages, involving training in the use of traditional weapons. It also explores the legendary origin of the art, the difference between schools of Kalarippayat in the northern and southern parts of Kerala, and the influence the art has had on classical dance forms such as Kathakali and Velakali.

P. Ashok Kumar was born in 1956 and studied at Kerala University. He has been working in film direction for the past twelve years.



MEITEI PUNG

English; colour; 30 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Aribam Syam Sharma
Story & Screenplay:	Aribam Syam Sharma
Camera:	Girish Pandhiar
Music:	Aribam Syam Sharma
Editing:	Ujjal Nandy
Sound:	A. Santimo Sharma
Production:	Aribam Syam Sharma
Enquiries:	Aribam Syam Sharma Thangmei Band Imphal 795 001 Telephone: 224 002



The Meitei Pung is the barrel-shaped drum which finds a place of honour in almost every aspect of cultural life in Manipur. The Pung found its present form in the hands of Maharaj Bhaigyachandra, the founder of the great Manipuri Ras. This percussion instrument supports the different phases of the Sankirtana with a rich repertoire

of rhythmic compositions—Sanchar, Tintal, Ghat, Mel, Tanchap, Menkup etc.

Born in 1939 in Manipur, **Aribam Syam Sharma** took a master's degree in Indian philosophy from Visvabharati University, Santiniketan. An initial involvement in theatre and music led to films, and he has been directing films since 1974. The feature film *Imagi Ningthem* (My Son, My Precious) was screened at the 1982 Filmotsav, held in Calcutta. It has also been screened at the New Directors/New Films in New York and was awarded the Grand Prix at the Festival of Three Continents in Nantes. His film *Ishanou* (The Chosen One), 1990, has been a Selection Officielle, Cannes 1991, in the section 'Un Certain Regard'. He is now a prominent film maker,



spearheading the film movement in the north-eastern state of Manipur.

NEWS MAGAZINE 219

(The Story of Ten Villages)

English; colour; 20 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Yash Choudhary
Camera:	Maresh Kamble
Editing:	Prabhakar Shinde
Sound:	F.A. Waris, R. Radha Krishnan
Production:	R. Krishna Mohan, Films Division
Enquiries:	Public Relations Officer Films Division 24 Peddar Road Bombay 400 026 Telephone: 3861461 Telex: 1175463 FD IN



A silent economic revolution has been taking place in ten villages in the most backward area of Bankura in West Bengal. The people of these villages, most tribal and backward classes, have turned their lives from poverty to self-sufficiency through cooperative ventures without any governmental or institutional assistance.

The inspiration for this revolution has come from a Gandhian, Shishir Sanyal of the Gandhi Vichar Parishad. Sanyal speaks of Gandhiji's belief that there is no reason why villages should not prosper both agriculturally and in technology relating to agriculture. Sanyal's approach covered three basic aspects of the village economy: irrigation, weaving and agriculture.

Yash Choudhary, born in 1941, acquired a diploma in Film Direction from the Film and Television Institute of India. He joined the Films Division in 1967 as director and has scripted or directed more than 66 documentary films, of which ten have received several major international and national awards.



THE LAST DROP

English; colour; 3 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Shaila Paralkar
Story & Screenplay:	Shaila Paralkar
Camera:	M.S. Patwari
Music:	K. Narayanan
Editing:	Harish Sutar
Sound:	S. Cloudhury
Production:	P.B. Pendharkar, Films Division
Enquiries:	Public Relations Officer Films Division 24 Peddar Road Bombay 400 026 Telephone: 3861461 Telex: 1175463 FD IN



A cartoon animation film which brings home the message that if man goes on consuming petroleum resources the way he is doing now, he will soon squeeze the earth dry of oil.

Born in 1940, **Shaila Mohan Paralkar** acquired a diploma in applied arts in 1960. She has been working in the Cartoon Film Unit of the Films Division in Bombay for the last 29 years. Her cartoon film *The Thinker?*, completed in 1981, won a national award.



BABA BABY

(Father-Child)

Hindi; black and white; 32 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Sudarshan Juyal
Story & Screenplay:	Sudarshan Juyal
Camera:	Attar S. Saini
Editing:	Kieu An
Sound:	Aqeel Khan
Production:	Director, FTII, Pune
Cast:	Amol Gupte, Baby Raunak, Batul, Vishwajit, Narendra Sacchar, Arvind Pande & others
Enquiries:	John Shankaramangalam Dean (Film Wing) Film & Television Institute of India, Pune Cable: FILMINSTITUTE Telex: 145-7603 FTII IN



A one-time safe-breaker lives in contented domesticity with his wife and six-month-old baby. While his wife is away visiting her mother, he is accosted by three of his erstwhile colleagues who try to enlist his help in committing a burglary. At first he refuses as he has to look after the baby. When his colleagues persist, he agrees—on condition that the baby is allowed to come along and is also entitled to a share of the loot.

While working at the safe, the burglars have to take turns at feeding and pacifying the baby. The safe is a tough one to break and in the end they have to use explosives to crack it open. While they are hurriedly removing its contents, police sirens are heard and the burglars flee, abandoning the safe-breaker and his baby. He tries to walk away from the scene unobserved, but is spotted by the police vehicle and recognized by the inspector. The presence of the baby is what convinces the authorities that the safe-breaker is not involved in the operation, and he is let off.

Sudarshan P. Juyal has a master's degree in history from Kumaon University in Nainital. He graduated from the National School of Drama, New Delhi, in 1986 and completed the course in Film Direction from the Film and Television Institute of India in 1991. This is his diploma film.



MITHAK BHANG

(Disappearing Poem)

Hindi; colour; 30 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Sudhanshu Mishra
Story & Screenplay:	Sudhanshu Mishra
Camera:	K.U. Mohanan
Editing:	Dilip Panda
Sound:	Manoj Sikka, A.M. Padmanabhan
Production:	Sudhanshu Mishra
Enquiries:	Sudhanshu Mishra Productions 7-B Satyam, Apna Ghar Swami Samanth Nagar Andheri (West) Bombay 400 058



The Agarias are a group of tribal iron smelters living in the forests of central India, on the margins of the Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh. The everyday life of the tribe is permeated by ritual, by music and dance—including the processes of extracting the ore, smelting it and fashioning it into utilitarian objects. The film shows how this ethnic group is gradually sinking into poverty and social

disintegration because of the growing economic irrelevance of their age-old craft.

Sudhanshu Mishra studied Film Direction at the Film and Television Institute of India, finishing in 1985. His documentary *Nishan* won a Special Jury Prize at the National Awards in 1986, and was selected for the Indian Panorama section of the international festival, Bombay Filmot-sav, 1986. He has made a number of documentaries and a 26-part television serial, *Kab Tak Pukaroon*. He is currently working on a feature film and a short film about Goa.



KAMLABAI

Marathi and Hindi; colour; 46 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Reena Mohan
Camera:	Ranjan Palit
Editing:	Reena Mohan, Smriti Nevatia
Sound:	Suresh Rajamani
Production:	Reena Mohan
Enquiries:	Reena Mohan Daguerrotype 250 RPS Flats Sheikh Sarai Phase I New Delhi 110 017



Ninety-two-year-old Kamlabai Gokhale was one of the earliest Marathi stage and screen actresses. Interviews with her form the cornerstone of this film, which also uses photographic stills, dramatic re-enactment and period music to evoke the turn of the century.

The evocation is not simply nostalgic but a strong testimony of the history of Indian cinema and stage as reflected in the experience of a

woman's struggle against the social currents of her time. Moments of candour and flashes of acerbic wit mark Kamlabai's interaction with the camera crew; even while on camera, she takes a keen interest in the process of making the film.

Reena Mohan graduated from the Film and Television Institute of India in 1982 with a specialization in editing. Since then she has been working in New Delhi and Bombay as a free-lance film editor. *Kamlabai* is her first directorial venture.



CHAKORI

(Cycle)

Marathi; colour; 30 minutes; 1992

Direction:	Sumitra Bhawe, Sunil Sukthankar
Story & Screenplay:	Sumitra Bhawe
Camera:	Mazhar Qamruddin
Music:	Anand Modak
Editing:	Sumitra Bhawe, Sunil Sukthankar
Sound:	A. Padmanabhan
Production:	Sumitra Bhawe
Cast	Renuka Daftardar, Amrita Subhash, Chaitanya Daftardar
Enquiries:	Sumitra Bhawe 441/3 Somwar Peth Pune 611 011 Telephone: 26236



This is the true story of a 17-year-old girl who breaks the cycle of her hopeless existence by learning to be independent. Seeta, abandoned by her husband, lives with her parents and leads a meaningless existence. One day, while carrying a load of firewood through the

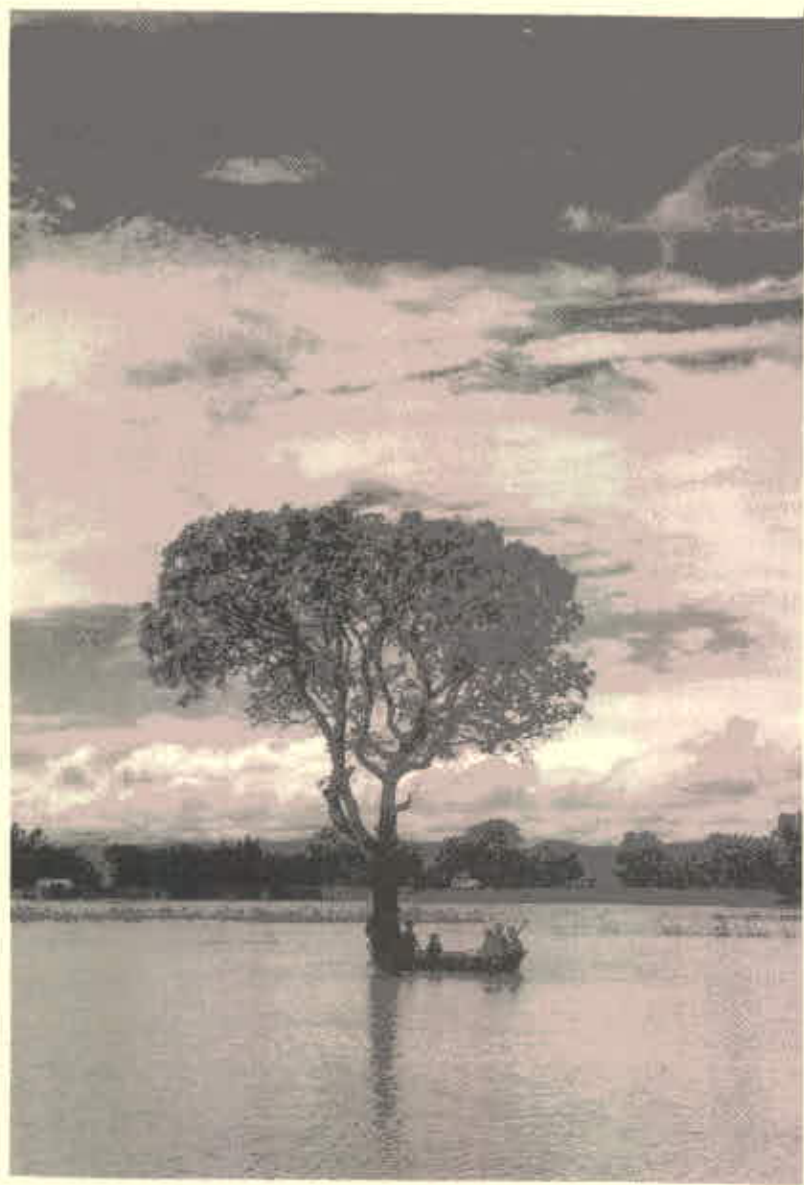
fields, she overhears a woman social worker telling the village headman that she is looking for a girl who could ride a bicycle and be trained as a Balwadi teacher, travelling to remote villages.

Seeta bribes her younger brother to teach her in secret how to ride a bicycle. One day the social worker's car breaks down in the village and Seeta gets an opportunity to show off her newly acquired skill. She rides off proudly to get help for the social worker. The villagers are astounded by the sight of a woman on a bicycle—unheard-of in their world. But Seeta is unruffled by their consternation. She is on her way to a life of dignity and meaning.

Born in 1943, **Sumitra Bhave** is a highly qualified sociologist experienced in working with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and educational institutions. She has written articles and books and made several audiovisuals and films. Her film *Bai*, which she scripted and directed, won a National Award as the Best Social Welfare/Family Welfare film of 1985. *Pani*, which she scripted, produced and directed, won a National Award as the Best



Educational/ Motivational film of 1987. The co-director of all her films, **Sunil Sukthankar**, was born in 1966, and studied Film Direction at the Film and Television Institute of India.



SONS OF ABOTANI: THE MISINGS

Mising; colour: 35 minutes: 1992

Directions:	Gautam Bora
Story & Screenplay:	Gautam Bora, Dilip Doley
Camera:	Vivek Banerjee/Gautam Bora
Music:	Sher Choudhury
Editor:	Sreekar Prasad
Sound:	Gautam Bora/Anil Talukdar, C. Anand
Production:	Dilip Doley
Enquiries:	Gautam Bora Vanguard Vision 1 Dr B. Baruah Road Guwahati 781 001

The film portrays the life of the Misings, a large tribe of Assam who live on the banks of the river Brahmaputra. They call themselves the sons of Abotani and have a rich oral history of songs, chants, tales and legends. Once a prosperous and self-sufficient people, they are now reduced to penury. Floods, earthquakes, and the overpowering of their way of life by urban growth have come to threaten their survival as a community.

Born in 1954, **Gautam Bora** holds a degree in film and television direction from Konrad Wolf Institute, Germany and is a Founder Member of the Assam Cine Art Society. He worked as an associate director on *Pratham Ragini* and as an assistant director on *Agnisnan*, both winners of the Rajat Kamal. His first independent feature film was *Woso-bipo*, which won the Swarna Kamal in the Debut Film category and was entered in international film festivals.



KNOCK-OUT

Tamil; black and white, partly colour; 19 minutes; 1992

Direction:	B. Lenin
Story & Screenplay:	B. Lenin
Camera:	B. Kannan
Art Direction:	S. Kamalasekaran
Editing:	B. Lenin/V.T. Vijayan
Sound:	R. Ravi, Dharanipathi
Production:	B. Lenin
Cast:	Sivaji, Satyendran, Gunasekaran
Enquiries:	B. Lenin Buddha Pictures A.V.M. Kumaran Editing Complex Madras 26



Sanjeevi was a famous boxing champion who had won scores of medals and trophies in his prime. Now, down and out, he leads an impoverished existence on the streets of his city, forgotten and uncared-for. He dies thus and is buried without honour or ritual.

Years later, the government posthumously recognizes him as an outstanding sportsman and builds a memorial in his honour a few metres away from his unmarked grave.

B. Lenin, born in 1947, is an experienced film editor and director. He has worked on films in three languages—Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. He has been associated with the Institute of Film Technology in Madras as a member of the selection panel for film editing.



Indian Panorama Selection Panels

Feature Films

ALL INDIA Panel (8-16 October 1992)

Dr Subbarami Reddy - *Chairman*
M.K. Binodini Devi
Biplab Chatterjee
Sushma Shiromani
Padma Bhushan B. Saroja
P.K. Mishra
Basu Chatterjee
Nabyendu Chatterjee
Mukta V. Srinivasan

WESTERN Panel (20-30 September 1992)

Basu Chatterjee - *Chairman*
Ramesh Talwar
Ajit
Ramdas Phutane
K.N.T. Sastry
Shyamal Ghoshal
Sreekumaran Thampi

SOUTHERN Panel (20-30 September 1992)

Mukta V. Srinivasan - *Chairman*
J.P. Kaushik
A.C. Trilokchander
Dr Prabhakar Reddy
Nirad Mohapatra
Biplab Roy Chowdhury
Archana

EASTERN Panel (20-30 September 1992)

Nabyendu Chatterjee - *Chairman*

Supriya Devi

Tapas Sen

Pradeep Kumar

Narayan Chakraborty

V.N. Mayekar

Devdas

Non-Feature Films

ALL INDIA Panel (24-30 September 1992)

K. Bikram Singh - *Chairman*

Mohi-ud-din Mirza

K.K. Garg

Siddharth Kak

Amerjeet

