
INDIAN CINEMA 1988



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DIRECTORATE OF FILM FESTIVALS
New Delhi



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FOREWORD

"Indian Cinema 1988" once again sets out to review the current state of the Indian Film Industry. These articles, written by well-known film critics and writers, present a picture of Indian Cinema during the year. This book is intended to complement the Indian Panorama Section presented at the 12th International Film Festival of India in January 1989.

What emerges from these articles is a picture of the Indian Film Industry in the throes of a crisis, inspite of the annual production figure hovering around 800 feature films. A recent decision taken by the Film Distributors Council (FDC), an apex body of the distributors is, perhaps, illuminating. In this connection, they noted that there was indiscipline in the production section and the quality of feature films had been deteriorating, year after year, thereby causing the distribution sector to lose crores and crores of rupees.

It was felt that the main reason for this was that the heroes and heroines were accepting too many assignments, which not only adversely affected the quality but also delayed the completion of pictures. In fact the FDC meeting announced a decision to boycott films of any hero and heroine, who had more than 12 films in hand at any one time. The article on "Hindi Films in 1988" in this book gives a very interesting table indicating the number of films in which some of the major stars are supposed to be working. This has since been refuted by producers and other sectors in the industry. Nonetheless, this is a relevant issue.

At the same time, this is not the only problem afflicting the industry. From time to time, protests have been voiced by the industry about a host of other difficulties such as high entertainment tax-rates in some States, excise and other duties on raw stock and equipment as well as on film prints, the video boom and to some extent the increasing popularity of the television medium.

On one hand, the industry appears to be moving towards the realisation that some level of self-discipline and professionalism needs to be brought in, if the films are to improve qualitatively. On the other hand, the other factors which influence the kind of films being produced are the facilities for financing exhibition and distribution available for films. Since film financing is not treated on par with other business activities, which can obtain funds from financial institutions, in order to attract investors, the film-maker has to guarantee returns by adhering to "sure-fire" formulas, which in simple terms means sex and violence. Perhaps, all these factors have indirectly affected the Indian Panorama section. This year there are 16 feature films and 10 shorts, as against a maximum selection of 21 features and shorts possible under the scheme. The selection has roused some protests and even controversy. To some analysts, this signals the weakening of the parallel or the art film movement. To others, it denotes that perhaps the two All-India Selection Panels set unrealistically high standards. Some others have even hinted at more obscure motives linked to regional or individual biases or other pressure groups. Even others have talked about prejudices in favour or against art film, or commercial films, etc.

The parameters for selection of films for the Indian Panorama are quite clearly

spelt out in the aims which are: "to select feature and non-feature films of cinematic, thematic and aesthetic excellence... for the promotion of film art through the screening of those films in festivals in India and abroad." It is in this context that any Panorama selection must be judged. The Indian Panorama is not a battle-ground of art films vs commercial films because all film-making is a commercial activity, in as much as financial investment is involved, which must be recouped by the investor. It is more a question of recognising and encouraging good cinema, which, without sacrificing entertainment values, can simultaneously maintain standards of professionalism and aesthetic excellence in all departments.

The move by the film industry as manifested in the proposed ban on film stars, limiting their contracts to not more than 12 films at a time is not necessarily the solution. It is perhaps a start. But a film is a combined team effort involving the talent and skills of the director, the script-writer, the cinematographer, the editor and a host of other technicians and creative artists. All these creative aspects also require the support of the infrastructure for distribution and exhibition of films. It is only a concerted effort which will restore to the Indian Cinema some of the lustre lost by neglecting values of quality and excellence.

Like in all creative art-forms, the popular form of entertainment films for the masses will continue to co-exist with films in which the thematic, artistic and aesthetic values are paramount. It is this category, which the Indian Panorama endeavours to recognise from year to year. It is this category, further, which should set the standards.

Films of the Indian Panorama Section have earned recognition and prestige both in India and abroad and along with the National Film Awards scheme of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has contributed immensely to the recognition and promotion of film as an art form in the country.



URMILA GUPTA
Director
Directorate of
Film Festivals

New Delhi
December 25, 1988.

CONTENTS

Indian Cinema : A Statistical Profile	Amit Khanna	5
Indian Cinema's Milestones	Compilation	15
The Hindi Film in 1988 : Sad and Intriguing	T.M. Ramachandran	18
The Avenging Angels : Icons of Death	Maithili Rao	24
Nandan : A House of Film Culture	Prabodh K. Maitra	30
Ninasam : A Unique Rural Film Society	Jashwant Jadhav	35
A Tribute to Raj Kapoor	Bunny Reuben	40
Films Division at 40 : A Fight for Survival	B.D. Garga	46
Films Division : Statistics		52
Bengali Films : More of		
Quantity, Less of Quality	Ajoy K. Dey	56
Kannada Films : Three		
Cheers for Blockbusters	A. Ram Babu	62
Marathi Films : The Situation		
is far from Happy	Purush Backar	68
50 Years of Malayalam Films	V.K. Cheriyan	
Tamil Films : Film Industry		71
is back on its Feet	C.V. Aravind	75
Telugu Films : In the grip		
of Distributors	G. Krishna Mohan Rao	79
मुख्यधारा का सिनेमा और आर्ट-फिल्म	ब्रजेश्वर मदान	82
इरदर्शन — सिनेमा का सहयोगी जगत् प्रतिबन्धी	मन्मथ श्रीवास्तव	84
Books on Indian Cinema :		
A Select Bibliography	Compilation	86
Film Journals (English)		88
Saluting to the Memory of...		89
Television in India at a Glance		91
The Social Cost of TV Ramayan	Chidananda Das Gupta	93
The Ramayan Phenomenon		94
Sagar's Saga of Ramayan	Neelima Mathur	98
Video : Bane of Indian Cinema	Amit Khanna	101

INDIAN PANORAMA 1988 Feature Films	103
1. Antaryali Yatra / Gautam Ghose/Bengali	105
2. Asthikal Pookunnu / P. Sreekumar/Malayalam	107
3. Kadaltheerathu / Rajeew Nath/Malayalam	108
4. Kolahal/ Bhabendra Nath Saikia/Assamese	110
5. Nayakan/ Mani Rathnam/ Tamil	112
6. 1921 /I.V. Sasi/Malayalam	115
7. Oru Minnaminuunginte Nurungu Vettom /Bharathan/Malayalam	117
8. Pestonjee /Vijaya Mehta/Hindi	119
9. Pushpaka Vimana /Singeetam Srinivasa Rao/Kannada	121
10. Raakh /Aditya Bhattacharya/Hindi	123
11. Salaam Bombay! / Mira Nair/Hindi	125
12. Swarna Kamalam /K.Viswanath/Telugu	127

13. <i>Tamas</i> /Govind Nihalani/Hindi	132
14. <i>Trishagni</i> /Nabendu Ghosh/Hindi	132
15. <i>Veedu</i> /Balu Mahendra/Tamil	134
16. <i>Vedham Puthithu</i> / Bharathi Rajaa/Tamil	136

INDIAN PANORAMA — Non-Feature Films	139
1. <i>Before My Eyes</i> /Mani Kaul	140
2. <i>Dispossession</i> /N.H. Prasad	141
3. <i>Dooram</i> /M.R. Rajan	142
4. <i>Forests of the Sea</i> /Purnima Dutta	142
5. <i>Kanakambaram</i> /Dev Benegal	143
6. <i>The Kingdom of God</i> /Ranabir Ray	144
7. <i>Ramakant Pandey</i> /Hemendra Kumar Bhatia	145
8. <i>Scroll Painters of Birbhum</i> /Raja Mitra	146
9. <i>Sahaja</i> /Aravindan	147
10. <i>Indian Theatre</i> /Jabbar Patel	148

Film Festivals : Promotion of Indian Cinema Abroad	<i>Sunit Tandon</i>	149
National Film Development Corporation : 1987-88		155
Contributors		157

INDIAN CINEMA: A STATISTICAL PROFILE

AMIT KHANNA

INTRODUCTION

1988 was the *platinum* jubilee year of Indian Cinema. It was on May 3, 1913 that the first Indian feature film, *Raja Harishchandra* was shown at Bombay's Coronation Theatre. The film was 3,700 feet long. However, the seeds of the Indian film industry go back to July 7, 1896, when the agents of Lumiere Brothers screened six short films at Watson's Hotel, Bombay. In 1899, Saxe Dada made the first two short films *The Wrestlers* and *The Man and the Monkey*. From then on, it has been a long march to the present position of being the world leader in cinema production.

However, the absence of any organised data on Indian Cinema has been a major drawback. Of course, people like the late B.V. Dharap, B. Jha, T.M. Ramachandran, Firoze Rangoonwala and Anandam Film Society and journals like *Screen* have done a commendable job in trying to collate whatever information that was available but still not much statistics are available.

In my own way, I have tried to piece together various bits of data, but I find a lot of blanks in my information. It is important that a systematic gathering of data on Indian Cinema is initiated, not only for statistical reasons, but for a historical perspective of this significant medium of mass communication. Some people may feel that certain facts and figures are arbitrarily selected. The only answer I have for them is: This is just the beginning of Herculean task, and all suggestions and corrections are welcome. It is important to note that for a country of the size and diversity of India, a sub-continent, any cultural phenomenon has got to be judged by special yardsticks. Hence, there are no deductions as such but what is being presented are various tabulations and figures.

Unfortunately, one could not lay hands on certain information about regional cinema. This *anomaly* may be apparent, but should not be misconstrued as a deliberate attempt to overlook the facts.

Also, some basic facts about India have been included to give the reader an idea about the socio-economic conditions in India. A section on video and TV has been incorporated as the future points towards the direction of video as well as TV, as far as cinema is concerned.

There are many milestones and landmarks in the Indian Motion Picture Industry, but one is not able to do justice to all and for that one can only apologise.

Today, it seems that the film industry is at the crossroads without knowing which way to turn. On the one hand, we have an ever-increasing number of films under production and on the other, there is talk of the film industry's imminent

collapse. This paradox is a typical of the show biz. In the Indian context it gets heightened on account of various factors including: 1. Lack of fiscal discipline; 2. Shortage of exhibition outlets; 3. A vicious "Star System"; 4. High incidence of multipoint taxation; and 5. Lack of foresight and planning. The rapid expansion of Doordarshan and the proliferation of video parlours (and, consequently, video piracy) have added to the ills of this ailing industry. For a country of 800 million people, where 40 per cent live below the poverty line, entertainment of any sort is still a luxury, but there still exists a vast middle-class market, which can be tapped successfully. On the other hand, it could be lost like the overseas market, as dwindling export figures point out.

As some of the *tables* show — the rate of growth of cinema theatres has been very low — in the vicinity of 4 per cent per annum on an average. Yet, the rate of production of films has gone up at almost twice that rate and, there is a dramatic shift in the last 40 years in the language-wise break up of films produced. Then, again, the distributors are more prolific in the South, than in other regions. In fact, a nexus between cinema and politics in South India is a consequence of the inroads which the medium has made into rural and semi-urban areas. This is contrary to the popular belief that cinema is an urban phenomenon in India.

Now, of course, the *mushrooming* of illicit video parlours all over the country is taking cinema to the vast hinterland. But, then, the social implications of this sudden cultural invasion may be quite damaging. Social values and life-styles, which are hyped up in any case and distorted beyond fantasy, may have a subverting impact on the simplistic rural viewer. Yet, one can see that cinema and its derivatives — TV, video, satellite transmission, *et al* — are going to play an important part in our day-to-day lives in the next decade before we meet the 21st Century. This all-pervasive presence of sounds and images will make it imperative for us to know more about the medium. Let us begin with bare facts.

STATISTICS AND ESTIMATES

TOTAL NUMBER OF FILMS PRODUCED IN 1986 & 1987

The Central Board for Film Certification had certified 840 films in 1986. And, 806 in the year 1987. The break up is as follows :

	1986	1987
Telugu	192	163
Hindi	159	150
Tamil	154	167
Malayalam	130	103
Kannada	59	88
Bengali	47	35
Bhojpuri	19	14
Oriya	17	9
Marathi	17	27
Gujarati	13	11
Assamese	11	8
Harayanvi	7	6
Punjabi	7	8
Bodo	2	0
Garhwali	1	3
Tulu	0	1
English	0	1
Brijbhasha	0	1
Rajasthani	0	4
Nepali	0	6
Manipuri	1	0
Urdu	1	0
Avadhi	1	0
Sindhi	1	0
Karbi	1	0
Kumaoni	0	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	840	806
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Source : Amit Khanna

FILMS PRODUCED IN INDIA FROM 1980 — 1987

YEAR	FILMS PRODUCED
1980	742
1981	737
1982	763
1983	741
1984	833
1985	912
1986	840
1987	806

Source : AK

ROUGH ESTIMATES : HINDI FILMS : 1987

Number of films launched	300
Number of films completed	150
Number of films released	100
Number of <i>Mega-hits</i>	5
Number of Hits (A)	5
Number of <i>Breakevens</i>	10
Loss-making Films	80
Capital Investment	Rs. 150 Crores
Annual Capital loss in	
Production sector :	Rs. 50 Crores
Number of films in production	200

Source : AK

EXPORTS : 1987

Total earnings from Export of films :	Amount
Number of Films exported :	Rs 718.42 lakhs
	413

Source : AK

REGIONWISE BREAK-UP OF INDIAN FEATURE FILM CERTIFICATION IN 1987

LANGUAGE BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS BANGALORE TRIVANDRUM HYDERABAD TOTAL									
Tamil	2	—	146	4	6	9	167		
Telugu	1	—	61	4	4	93	163		
Hindi	96	4	31	4	5	10	150		
Malayalam	—	—	13	5	85	—	103		
Kannada	—	—	—	87	1	—	88		
Bengali	—	35	—	—	—	—	35		
Marathi	27	—	—	—	—	—	27		
Bhojpuri	11	3	—	—	—	—	14		
Gujarati	11	9	—	—	—	—	11		
Oriya	—	—	—	—	—	—	9		
Punjabi	8	8	—	—	—	—	8		
Assamese	—	—	—	—	—	—	8		
Haryanvi	6	5	—	—	—	—	6		
Nepali	1	—	—	—	—	—	6		
Rajasthani	4	—	—	—	—	—	4		
Ganhwali	3	—	—	—	—	—	3		
Brijbhasha	1	—	—	—	—	—	1		
Kumaoni	1	—	—	—	—	—	1		
Tulu	—	—	—	1	—	—	1		
English	—	—	—	—	1	—	1		
TOTAL	172	64	251	105	102	112	806		
Source :AK									

STATEWISE LIST OF CINEMA HOUSES (1987)

STATE	PERMANENT	TEMPORARY	MILITARY	TOTAL
Andaman & Nicobar	3	—	—	3
Andhra Pradesh	1632	843	12	2487
Arunachal Pradesh	3	—	—	3
Assam	143	51	—	194
Bihar	284	54	—	338
Chandigarh	8	—	—	8
Dadra-Nagar Haveli	3	—	—	3
Gujarat	470	92	—	562
Haryana	103	13	—	116
Himachal Pradesh	24	2	—	26
Jammu & Kashmir	30	—	—	30
Karnataka	606	677	—	1283
Kerala	457	928	—	1385
Madhya Pradesh	425	101	—	526
Maharashtra	778	542	—	1320
Manipur	13	—	—	13
Meghalaya	10	—	—	10
Mizoram	2	—	—	2
Nagaland	6	—	—	6
Orissa	130	61	—	191
Pondichery	35	18	—	53
Punjab	181	10	—	191
Rajasthan	232	39	—	271
Sikkim	3	—	—	3
Tamil Nadu	1432	786	2	2220
Tripura	6	—	—	6
Uttar Pradesh	763	139	—	902
West Bengal	463	213	—	676
Delhi	77	—	—	77
Goa, Daman & Diu	32	—	—	32
56 APO (Military)	—	—	41	41
	8354	4569	55	12978

Source : AK.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE INDIAN FILM INDUSTRY : 1987

CAPITAL INVESTMENT (Estimated)
(Excluding Film Departments of Central and State Governments)

Establishment	Total Number	Investment in each Unit in Lakhs of Rupees (Average)	Total Investment in Lakhs of Rupees
Studios	75	1	75
Film Producing Units (Entertainment)	3500	20	70000
Film Producing Units (Documentary)	1000	2	2000
Distributors' Units	3000	15	45000
Permanent Cinemas	8354	15	125310
Touring Cinemas	4569	1.5	6853
Laboratories	40	100	4000
Recording Studios	70	50	3500
Exporters' Units	125	2	250
Importers' Units	75	20	1500
Cine Machinery etc., Manufacturers' Units	75	.75	56
Allied Arts, Crafts and Vocations	300	2.50	750
16mm Distribution Units (Feature Films)	150	20	300
Total			259694

N.B: Capital Investment in Production and Distribution Sectors based on aggregate Investment.

* Excludes MPEAA Members, NFDC, Sovexportfilm

Source : AK

TAX ON CINEMAS

(All figures estimated in Lakhs of Rupees)

	AMOUNT
Estimated box-office Gross collection :	10983
Estimated box-office Net collection :	58583
Estimated Entertainment Tax Collection :	51400
Estimated other Tax Collections	100

Source : AK

EMPLOYMENT

Establishment	Total No.	No. of Persons Employed	Total No. of persons employed
Studios	75	100	7500
Film Producing Units (Entertainment)	3000	15	45000
Film Producing Units (Documentary)	1000	5	5000
Freelance Technicians	—	—	8500
Distributors' Units	3000	15	—
Permanent Cinemas	8163	20	163260
Touring Cinemas	4511	15	67665
Laboratories	40	25	1000
Recording Studios	70	10	700
Exporters' Units	125	750	93750
Importers' Units	75	40	3000
Cine Machinery	75	50	3750
Manufacturers' Units, Allied Arts, Crafts and Vocations	300	—	6000
16mm Distribution Units (Feature Films)	2000	20	—
Films Divisions Film Certification Board-Hqs & Branches Directorate Hqs. and Branches of Film Festivals:		20	40000
National Film Archive, State Govt. Film and TV Institutes, State Govt. Film Development Corporations, Hindustan Photo Film Mfg. Unit:			Approx. 75000
		TOTAL	520125

- * These figures are only a rough approximation
 - * Excludes MPEAA Members, NFDC, Sovexportfilm
- Source : AK

GENERAL

	Amount
Annual Capital Investment in Film Production	Rs 30,000 Lakhs
Average cost of a film	Rs 75 Lakhs
Number of films produced	886
Number of Hindi films	150
Territorial price of a territory for a Hindi film	Rs 15 Lakhs (Average)
Number of film journals	575
Film Producing Centres	Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Coimbatore, Trivandrum, Mysore, Salem, Pune, Kolhapur, Gauhati, Cuttack, New Delhi, Lucknow and Hyderabad.
Total number of Theatres	12,978
Total Seating Capacity-Cinema	
Audience per week	91 million
Source : AK.	

INDIA — BASIC FACTS

CAPITAL :	New Delhi
AREA :	3287263 sq. km.
POPULATION (1986):	76100000
DENSITY OF POPULATION (1981) :	216 Per sq. km
LITERACY :	36.2%
MALE :	24.8%
FEMALE :	46.9%
FEMALE-MALE RATIO (per 1000 males) :	934 Females
RURAL POPULATION :	76.7%
URBAN POPULATION :	23.3%
BIRTH-RATE (per thousand) :	33.6%
DEATH-RATE (per thousand) :	11.9%
CHILD MORTALITY (per thousand births) :	114

AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY

(1981):

54

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION :

Foodgrains :

16.3 ounces per day

Cloth :

16.0 yards per year

Sugar :

12.0 kgs per year

NATIONAL INCOME :

Rs. 57014 crores

(1984-1985)

(1970-71 Price Level)

ANNUAL PER CAPITA INCOME :

(Average : 1985-86)

Rs. 29375

STATES :

26

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Chandigarh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

UNION TERRITORIES :

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Daman & diu, Lakshwadeep and Pondichery.

WORK FORCE BY OCCUPATION (1985)

Agriculture :

283 million

Commerce :

37 million

Industry, Mining &

Construction :

198 million

Transport and Communication :

17 million

(Including Government) :

23 million

No. of Unemployed Registered

with Employment Exchange :

27 million

INDIAN CINEMA'S MILESTONES

The agents of the Lumiere Brothers of France (Auguste and Louis) demonstrated their new invention on July 7, 1896, at Watson's Hotel, Esplanade Mansion (on Mahatma Gandhi Road, opposite the Prince of Wales Museum). It was barely six months after the *marvel of the century* took the Paris audiences by storm. The show consisted of six little films — *Entry of the Cinematographe, Arrival of a Train, The Sea Bath, A Demolition, Leaving the Factory, Ladies and Soldiers on Wheels*. Later, Calcutta was introduced to moving pictures towards the end of 1896 and Madras, the following year.

- 1899: First indigenously produced films
Harishchandra Sakaram Bhatwadekar's (Sawe Dada) *The Wrestlers* and *The Man and the Monkey*.
- 1913: First totally indigenous silent feature film
— Dada Saheb Phalke's (Father of Indian Cinema)
Raja Harishchandra released on May 3, 1913. 3,700 ft. long.
- 1917: India's first box-office hit
— *Lanka Dahan* made by Dadasaheb Phalke
- 1919: First feature film of the South
— *Keechaka Vadham* of South India made by R. Nataraja Mudaliar
- 1921: First social satire film with a contemporary background
— Dhiren Ganguly of Calcutta produced, *England Returned*
- 1924: First International Film (English)
— *Light of Asia*, Producer: Himansu Rai; Director: Franz Osten
- 1931: First Talkie,
— Ardeshir Irani's *Alam Ara* (Imperial Film Co) 10,500 ft. long, made at a cost of Rs. 40,000. Was released on March 4, 1931 at the Majestic Cinema in Bombay.
First Song:
— *De De Khuda Ke Naam Par Pyare*, was a highlight of the film *Alam Ara* (Sung by W.M. Khan). The year 1931 marked the beginning of the talkie era in South India. The first Talkie in Telugu and Tamil, *Bhaktha Prahlad* and *Kalidasa*, were released in the same year.
- 1933: Introduction of background music
— *Purani Bhakt*

- 1934: First Indian films shown abroad
 — East India Company's *Seeta* directed by Debaki Bose, Prabhat's *Amarjyoti* (1936) directed by V. Shantaram and Prabhat's *Sant Tukaram* (1937) directed by Damle and Fatehlal.
- First film with tracking shot:
 — *Amrit Manthan* directed by V. Shantaram
- 1935: Introduction of Playback Songs in Indian Films:
 — New Theatre's *Dhoop Chaon*
- 1937: First successful indigenous colour film
 — Ardeshir Irani's *Kisan Kanya*
- First technology break-through:
 — Ardeshir Irani's Color Process
- 1941: India's first feature film in English
 — Wadia Movietone's *The Court Dancer*, Released in USA.
- 1947: First Indian Film to win an award abroad
 — Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* in Hindi won the Grand Prix Award in the First International Film Festival, Cannes.
- 1952: First International Film Festival of India
 — Held at Bombay in early 1952
- 1953: The film that opened a new chapter in the annals of Indian Cinema:
 — Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, which created a sensation with its new style of lyrical realism. It got national and international recognition.
- Awards
- 1956: IX International Film Festival, Cannes: Prize for "Best Human Document"
 Edinburgh Film Festival: Diploma of Merit, Manila Film Festival: Golden Caribao Award.
- 1957: International Film Exhibition, San Francisco: First Prize
- 1958: International Film Festival, Vancouver: First Prize
 Second Stratford International Film Festival, Canada: First Prize
- 1959: Afro-Arts Theatre, New York: Cultural Award for the "Best Foreign Film" shown.
- 1955: First Colour Film: Ambalal Patel's *Pamposh*
- 1959: First Cinemascope Film
 — Guru Dutt's *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (B&W) lensed by V.K. Murthy
- 1960: Film Finance Corporation (FFC)
 — Government of India set up Film Finance Corporation Ltd to promote the production of good cinema. (Its successor is the National Film Development Corporation of today.)

- 1967 : First 70 mm film: *Around the World*: Produced and directed on Pachi)
- 1971 : — First technological lead in the world :
— Dr. Chandrakant Marathe's *Mirror Screen Arrangement* (MSA) installed in Poona (now Pune)
- 1975 : FFC was merged with the Indian Motion Picture Export Corporation (IMPEC) and is now known as National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).
— Biggest box-office grosser: *Sholay*: Directed by Ramesh Sippy
- 1978 : First Panavision film
— Krishna Shah's *Shalimar*
- 1980 : First Technovision Film
— Feroz Khan's *Qurbani*
- 1982 : First 35 mm film re-issued in 70 mm format
— V. Shantaram's *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baahe* (1955)
- 1984 : First 3-D Film
— Jojo's *My Dear Kuttichathan*, a Malayalam film.

Compiled by AMIT KHANNA

WORLD RECORDS

Maximum Appearances as leading Man :

Prem Nazir (over 600 films)

Maximum Playback songs :

Lata Mangeshkar (over 20,000 songs)

THE HINDI FILM IN 1988: SAD AND INTRIGUING

T.M. RAMACHANDRAN

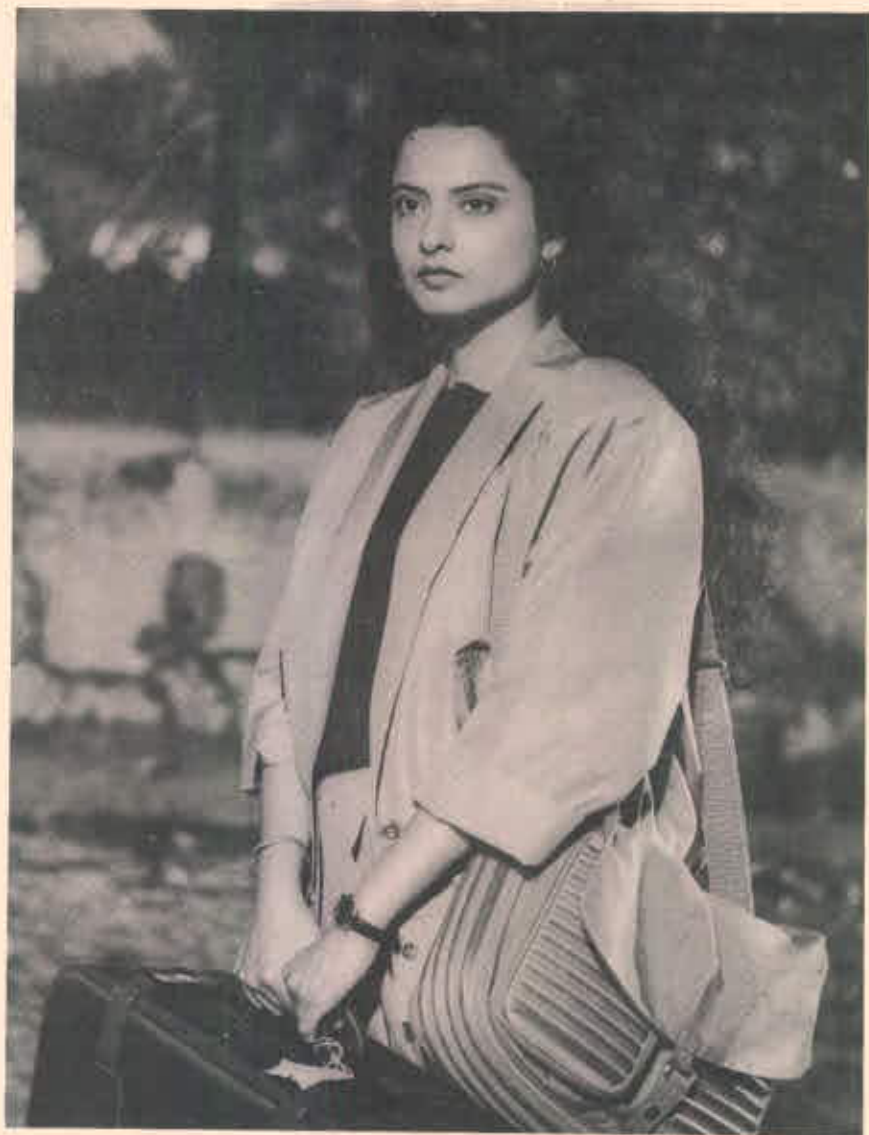
Catastrophic and paradoxical could, perhaps, be the apt words to describe the Hindi film scene today. On the one hand, several leading, veteran film-makers, who have been deeply involved in Hindi films over the past several years, are predicting nothing but doom for the industry, while on the other, more and more productions of Hindi films are going on merrily. While many seasoned film-makers are idle and turning, perhaps, to new pastures like video films for the TV screen, several new producers and directors have emerged to keep the industry alive. According to the leading producers and distributors in the industry, the newcomers in the field are, perhaps, smugglers, drug-peddlers and black-marketeers.

The financial chaos in the Hindi film industry has almost reached such catastrophic proportions that it would be impossible for the industry to recover and make any progress worthwhile. This is the view of many producers, who have been in the field for a long time. The prices of every commodity required for film-making, including the star prices, not to speak of the various taxes imposed by the government, have escalated to such an extent that no producer worth the name is willing to stake his reputation and resources to make new films.

An average Hindi film, which used to cost approximately Rs. 40 lakhs [40,00,000] some years ago, now costs nearly a crore of rupees [Rs 100,00,000] or even more. The return on the investment, which is never guaranteed on account of the speculative nature of the business, is so low or practically nil that any producer, who ventures into making Hindi films is certain to become bankrupt. That is why no good producer is ready to take the risk and come forward to make films.

Out of nearly 100 films released during the year (1988), over 80 films have flopped miserably. Except for one or two films, the rest of the films have barely recouped their cost. Out of the 415 Hindi films censored during the last three years, only 53 have found buyers for all the territories. About 200 films have been sold for some territories, while more than 150 films are rotting in the cans without any buyer for any territory. The overseas market too has virtually collapsed. About six years ago, the export figures of the Gulf were Rs. 5.36 crores, the UK Rs. 2.57 crores and the US Rs. 85 lakhs. Today, for the Gulf, they are Rs. 1.97 crores, UK Rs. 29 lakhs and to the US only Rs. 2 lakhs.

The larger economic picture is also grim. The producer raises his finance at usurious rates of interest and if he makes a small-budget film with less-known artistes, there is no scope of selling the film and recovering even one per cent of the cost of production. If he has to sell his film, he has to go in for the current favourite top stars by paying their astronomical fees and that necessarily involves



Mona Lisa in modern outfit; Relcha in Rakesh Roshan's *Khoon Bhari Maang*.

him into big-budget productions. This vicious circle almost strangulates the film-makers. The sheer business of co-ordinating the artistes, the music directors and all the other factors connected with film-making requires a superhuman effort.

The stars are a law unto themselves. Most of them simply dictate to the producers, who have no choice but to obey and comply with their wishes, however

unreasonable they may be. They are involved in so many films that they cannot devote enough time for any one film.

At the beginning of September 1988 the film schedules of the stars were as below:

Amitabh Bachchan	12 films	Amrita Singh	12 films
Dev Anand	3 films	Anita Raaj	26 films
Dharmendra	37 films	Dimple Kapadia	29 films
Dilip Kumar	3 films	Farah	15 films
Feroze Khan	2 films	Hema Malini	11 films
Govinda	51 films	Jaya Prada	21 films
Jeetendra	30 films	Kimi Katkar	37 films
Jackie Shroff	16 films	Madhuri Dixit	16 films
Manoj Kumar	4 films	Mandakini	29 films
Mithun Chakravarty	51 films	Meenakshi Seshadri	23 films
Raj Kumar	5 films	Neelam	15 films
Rajesh Khanna	9 films	Rekha	10 films
Rishi Kapoor	22 films	Sonam	26 films
Sunil Dutt	5 films	Sri Devi	14 films
Shatrughan Sinha	35 films		
Sanjay Dutt	38 films		
Sunny Deol	16 films		
Vinod Khanna	27 films		

Figures compiled by TMR and others.



A scene of domestic felicity from *Hatya* with Neelam, Govinda and "Baby" Sujitha. Produced and directed by Kirti Kumar.

A star arriving late on the sets can cause havoc with the cost of production. This has become today a routine matter in the Hindi film industry. To add to the travails of the film-maker is the omnipresent threat of failure at the box-office, the probability of which is high, very high. With the present conditions being what they are, one would suppose that anyone in his right mind would not venture into such a dicey endeavour. In spite of the business being such a gamble, more films continue to be made, making nonsense of the economic logic of supply and demand.

Rampant video piracy — there are said to be over 5,000 illegal video parlours in Bombay alone — and television viewing have contributed a great deal to the poor attendance at cinema houses, resulting in terrible losses in revenue. It is a matter of fact that the hypnotic power of the Cinema has, in the last decade, been taken over by video and television. This apart, the standard of films has deteriorated to such a low level that no decent family, looking for wholesome entertainment, is tempted to go to the cinemas. Mindless and mind-boggling violence has become the order of the day especially in Hindi films. Further, the conditions of the cinema houses are so abominable — bad projection, uncomfortable atmosphere — that the average filmgoer has no choice but to avoid the cinema house as plague.

The cinema-owners point out that the dismal attendance of the audience has resulted in their poor maintenance. Quite a few of them have sold away their properties and in their places, shopping complexes and hotels have been built up. While the industry is crying for more cinema houses, the paradox is that even the existing cinema houses are being converted into housing and shopping complexes.

In 1987, 150 Hindi films were certified for exhibition, one third of which was restricted for adult viewing. The successful films were *Pratighaat*, *Mr. India*, *Hukumat*, *Ang Hi Aag*, *Insaniyat Ke Dushman*, *Khudgarz*, *Marte Dam Tak* and *Sindoor*. Among the fairly successful films, mention should be made of *Mirch Masala*, *Dance Dance*, *Hawaalat* and *Kudrat Ka Kanoon*.

The best film of the year 1988 (according to the author) was of course Vijaya Mehta's *Pestonjee*. It is an exceptional film, which follows the rule of fine movie-making, with a story to tell and a comment to make — a perfect collaboration between writer and director, actors and camera. It is a civilized, utterly literate celebration of the human comedy in all its aspects. Based on a short story by B.K. Karanjia, the film, ably directed by Vijaya Mehta, vivifies not only the customs and eccentricities of the minority Parsi community, but also etches a portrait of true friendship. The director gets to the heart of the odd couple, played superbly by Naseeruddin Shah and Anupam Kher, and shows the tradition in which the Parsi community lives in Bombay. As a matter of fact, Naseeruddin Shah in the role of Pheroze Shah gives the most outstanding performance of his career. It is a film, which deserves a wide audience.

Another important film deserving praise is Gulzar's *Ijaazat*. To some extent, it could be even classified as a poem in celluloid. The *mis-en-scene* showing the accidental meeting of the estranged couple (Naseeruddin Shah and Rekha) in the waiting room of a small railway station and the nuances that follow are the highlights of the film. Another important film was of course Raj Babbar's *Andhaa Yudh*, all about terrorism and the evils behind it.

During the year (1988) under review, the quantity of films produced and certified is expected to be higher than that of the last year. By the middle of the year, as

many as 102 Hindi films were certified. Of the total films certified during the year, it is estimated that at least 100 films would see the light of day. The biggest hit of the year was Nasir Hussain's *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, a love story, which ends in tragedy. The phenomenal success of this film should serve as a shot in the arm for the Hindi film industry.

Of the other films, the fairly successful ones were *Shahenshah*, Amitabh's latest release, *Kaalchakra*, a story of a medico and a cop, *Kab Tak Chup Rahungi*, Warris (the last film of the late Smita Patil), *Hatya*, which could be described as the Hindi version of *Eye Witness*, *Vijay*, director Yash Chopra's latest about two business tycoons, *Khoon Bhari Mang*, a story of a woman's revenge and *Zakhmee Aarst*, which has a similar theme.

The trend of production, as indicated earlier, is more towards depicting violence on the screen. This has really become a predominant feature of most of the Hindi films. Gone are the good old days, when the audiences were treated to films, which projected entertainment with a social purpose. The argument of a majority of film-makers is that they are in the business to make a good living by catering to the tastes of the audience. Changing the tastes of the audiences to better cinema is indeed a formidable task. It is here that the Government should step in and do something about it.

A government that reaps a whooping revenue through the film industry is strangely indifferent to its problems. Ineffective legislative and inefficient administrative measures and an unreasonable taxation policy have pushed the industry to the precipice. Unless the downward plunge is stopped, the day is not far off when the industry will crash disastrously.



A tense scene with Sadashive Amarpuri and Ishrat Ali in the context of India and the world : Still from *Kaalchakra*

"BOMBED" HINDI FILMS GET REVIVED

Films that had bombed at the box-office within the last decade and consigned to cold storage have been re-christened, revived and granted a new lease of life.

Film distributors in India have always been the bottleneck in films reaching the public. They are also speculators, who determine the fate of many films, more so the art films. A few of the Delhi film distributors, concentrated in Bhagirath Place in North Delhi, wield considerable power over the theatres of Delhi and UP, the largest "territory".

One of the Delhi distributors has now resorted to the profitable gimmick of buying up flops of yester-years for a song, giving them sensational titles and publicising them with crudely designed and garishly coloured posters — but always tucking away the original title in small type in some odd corner. The film cans gathering dust are rescued and put into circulation. And the exhibitors lend a helping hand. The gullible pit-class of cinegoers fall for the ploy and throng the cinema-halls, where tickets are engineered to sell at a premium. And, it is bonanza for the distributor and exhibitors.

Here are the films, which had bombed and now, have been re-issued with the new titles within brackets: *Hum Panch* (Kalyug Ka Mahabharat), *Taqdeer Ka Baadshah* (Waqt Ka Sikander), *Saazish* (Watan Ke Jaanbaaz), *Mere Faisla* (Insaf Ka Khoon), *Preeti* (Khooni Ki Taluash), and *Yaari Dushmani* (Mar Gaye Marnewale).

1988: YEAR OF THE NYMPHETS

"And in Bombay's fast-paced, frenetic film industry, the new girls have made their presence felt. They haunt golden jubilee parties in low-cut *cholis*. They edge themselves into every photograph taken at a *muhurat*. They give interviews to the gossip magazines and talk frankly about sex and love. Their publicists send out 8"×10" glossies of them in the briefest of swimming costumes. And the producers have got the message: these are good-time girls, who will kiss their heroes and bare their bodies to the camera.

The film business has never seen anything like it before. Already, strong men have been known to reach for their bottles of *Johnny Walker*, (*Black Label*) and strangers have kissed each other. The way things are going, 1988 seems set to be the *Year of the Nymphets*."

From *India Today*

THE AVENGING ANGELS : ICONS OF DEATH

MAITHILI RAO

Commercial cinema has a way of subverting any new radical idea, to serve its box-office interests. Now, it seems to be the turn of Feminism to fuel a desperate industry, fast running out of ideas and success formulas. Perhaps, this is too harsh an indictment and film-makers have been sensitive to the growing articulation of Feminists. The 'seventies were the angry decade of the anti-hero, marginalised women in the mainstream cinema, without freeing them from moral stereotypes as *film noir* did in Hollywood. The return of women-centred themes, first a trickle and now a flood, reflects the cultural schizophrenia of our society, the way it perceives and defines the role of women.

Mother India and the virtuous *Sati Savitri* have been with us and will continue to be with us until a cataclysmic revolution galvanises our thinking. These two images bolster up not only a feudal patriarchy, threatened by the inevitable atomisation of a society, moving towards industrialisation. Women too, confused by new choices and the absence of ready-role models, find in the old images a safe womb of certitudes. Martyrdom, specially when sanctified by religious approbation, is indeed seductive.

So, even in 1988, *Ghar Ghar Ki Kahani* (The Tale of Every Home), where the beautiful, beatific wife, named Sita, suffers unjust rejection by the husband, but continues to worship his photograph, to be commended by a so-called modern, professional woman freezing in the emotional cold — is successful as *Zakhmee Aurat* (Wounded Woman) sends a gang of rape victims on a castrating spree!

The first film is seductive — though silly — and the second, unrepentantly sensational — and crude. Both speak about and through women. Even as this schizophrenia simmers along nicely to tease social scientists, there have been near-revolutionary changes from the early 'eighties. But these changes are couched in comfortably familiar Hindu iconographic terms, intermittently energised by judicious imitations of foreign models from time to time.

The sanction of religious iconography was always there, ready to be tapped at propitious moments. The obverse of *Mother India*, the protective, nurturing *Durga*, has been the awesome destructive power of *Kali*. This *Durga-Kali* duality is in itself deeply ambivalent, celebratory and fearful of female power and female sexuality. When this duality is translated into the simplistic, unambiguous terms of the Hindi cinemas, the scenario gets murky and the intentions mindlessly exploitative.

Like most new trends, the beginnings were sounded out by the unapologetic B Graders. To *Beabroo* (The Dishonoured) and *Bud Naseeb* (The Unfortunate) — classified as sexploitors — belongs the dubious honour of ushering in the female avenger.

In *Beabroo*, she is an investigative journalist, who turns into a female Jack the



The Bobby of yesterday is today's gun-toting upholder of law; Dimple Kapadia in *Zakhmee* Aunt.

Ripper, methodically killing off the pimps of Bombay, because her own sister was a victim of one. Mission accomplished — that is, within the finite limits set by the fantastic script — she jumps to her death, though there is a hero hovering in the background to honour her with his love.

Bud Naseeb pitted one intrepid girl against a killer, who systematically eliminates a fraternity of college friends for they might blow his cover of respectability. What is ominous is the way a bevy of girls are first titillatingly exposed



Sujata Mehta, the axe-wielding angel of death in *Pratigust*

and then punished for their sexuality. Oddly enough these crude and immensely successful films were the more respectable re-makes from South Indian hits, which are far more legalistic in their theses. *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye* (I want Justice) had an older women lawyer coming to the help of a middle-class girl, who is left pregnant by a rich boy friend, turning tail at the idea of marriage. The twist was in how the young girl claims the right to name the man as the father of her child, but refuses to marry the now shamefaced, reformed rake.

But the prevailing ethos of anti-heroes taking the law into their hands since the system cannot deliver justice, was not conducive to such court-room dramas. And, to middle-class defiance of convention. Around the same time, the saga of Phoolan Devi, the woman dacoit of Uttar Pradesh, whom the media built up as a combination of Mata Hari and glamorous gun-toter, wreaking vengeance on an unjust society, provided a readymade script for fly-by-night producers working on tight budgets.

Kahani Phoolan Ki (The Story of Phoolan) and *Putlibai* were dutifully made and had moderate success. The actresses were not big names and the style followed the pseudo-Western path, which the male dacoit film had appropriated. The Indian horse-opera or the Curry Western, as it came to be called, operated within the parameters of rebels with a cause — and the titillation was provided by the *mujra* — a more robust, yet poetic, indigenous version of the cabaret.

This new sub-genre operated within the same parameters and evolved its strictly observed conventions and wrote down its codes. Set in the hinterland of North India, with greedy landlords as santanic villains, the dispossessed or exploited victims operate within the same Thakur code of male honour, what applies to the oppressors. The amazing complexity of the caste heirarchy is simplified into the

good Thakur versus the bad, while the personal suffering of protagonists is amplified to include all the oppressed.

With female protagonists to the fore and played by the big star the avenger takes on the mantle of *Kali*. In a subversive way, this assertion of power and aggressive action by women is toned down to conform to mythology. The women working as independent entities, shorn of mythical trappings, would be more threatening to patriarchal values. Hence, we have the paradox of women being shorn of their femininity in order to play an active — and invariably tragic — role, and finally returning to feminine vulnerability after the denouement.

Three films illustrate the working out of this new formula. Rape of either the protagonist or someone close to her is the final *raison d'être* for forsaking passive femininity. *Sitapur Ki Gita* (Gita of Sitapur) a none-too-subtle play on Hema Malini's blockbuster *Sita Aur Gita*, in which she plays twins, (who are as different as can be) pits the heroine against a triumvirate of villains, who rape her almost immediately after she is married and kill her husband. Gita, who has been a chirpy village belle working as a servant to educate her darling younger brother, immediately picks up a gun and dons the new obligatory uniform — leather-jacket, tight trousers, boots freed from the decorous braids of virginity.

The older male, who becomes her mentor, is either the hither-to-absent father — as in *Sitapur Ki Gita* — or an adoptive father figure, as in *Khoon Baha Ganga Mein* (Blood flows into the Ganga). The protagonist has to battle two antagonists — the villainous Thakurs, masquerading under respectability and the police, usually a loved one sent to nab the outlaw.

In *Sitapur Ki Gita*, it is the younger brother, now a police inspector. In *Khoon Baha Ganga Mein*, it is the childhood sweetheart, whose father is the arch villain, having raped the heroine Ganga's (Amrita Singh's) mother and killed her father. Among all the many undistinguished films of this genre, *Khoon Baha Ganga Mein* is more sombre and nearer the psychological truth of a traumatised girl. The heroine switches over to a *dhoti* and speaks the same rural patois, unlike in other films, where a more standardised Hindi takes over for wider appeal.

The third film, starring current superstar Sridevi, is *Shermi*, which again faithfully adheres to the formula of a sprightly village girl joining her dacoit father, when her mother and young siblings are massacred and she herself escapes repeatedly from molestation. *Shermi* endows its heroine, Durga, with a social conscience, so that she also fights against perpetrators of dowry deaths. The tragedy of Durga is that she is forced to take up a gun, when earlier, she had passionately argued with her unjustly imprisoned father that the law would finally redress the wrong done to him.

The other phenomenon that has surfaced in *Pratighat* (Resistance) *Meri Shikar* (My Prey) and *Zakhmee Aurat* is that women don't turn into outlaws, but are finally driven to cataclysmic violence. The corrupt system symbolised by one great villain is too pervasive, too entrenched and it emasculates most men. This thesis finds its most elaborate exposition in *Pratighat*, re-made from a Telugu hit. Lakshmi (Sujata Mehta) is a college lecturer who, on coming to a small town, is appalled by the tyrant's rule that goes unquestioned by everyone, including her lawyer husband. For her act of defiance, — reporting to the police against the thug — she is disrobed in broad daylight under the shocked, but helpless gaze of the public, which includes her husband.

This notoriety makes Lakshmi the target of insult and her male students ask her to graphically explain an erotic passage in class. Lakshmi's answer, accompanied



Hema Malini in *Sitapur Ki Geeta* — a new avatar of Razia Sultana

by a song that hits the high notes aurally and visually, is to draw a nude woman nursing her child. The shamed students accept her as their unquestioned leader

and surrogate Mother-figure. Determined to fight the thug, who now seeks the legitimacy of an elected office, Lakshmi beheads him publicly with an axe, since the elections are rigged. Prior to this, she leaves her cowardly husband and also aborts her unborn child — not to assert her right over her body, but to be free to act in a masculine world.

In essence, she has to destroy her femininity — the Mother image, with which she had earlier identified — and wield the axe, mythologically the awesome weapon of Parasurama, who rid the world of the warrior class to avenge his mother's dishonour. Lakshmi's iconic stance recalls *Kali*, but the weapon is masculine. Though crudely made, *Pratighat* went on to become the biggest hit of 1987.

Zakhmee Aurat makes its Police Inspector heroine Kiran (Dimple Kapadia) the victim of sadistic gang-rape, after lovingly showing her in the male accoutrements of office — powerful bike, gun, and khaki uniform. She is hardly ever shown in a sari. When she is raped, the film uses the recurring image of her jeans hanging from the ceiling in a spirit of punishing her for daring to do man's job. It is her boy friend, who gives her the modern equivalent of the *Gitopadesh*. Kiran becomes the leader of a gang of castrators in the guise of a female Arjuna, battling with her enemies. The events after the rape are not only absurd and crude, but filled with enough obscenity titillation — in the guise of a song-and-dance number, ostensibly intended to humiliate a castrated rapist — to give the exploitative game away.

It is Dimple once again in the latest *Mera Shikar*, transformed from a chatty village girl driving a tonga into a one-woman armoured battalion, when a dreaded dacoit rapes her sister in public after she is married. The newly-weds die and Bijli takes a crash course in karate, boxing, fencing, riding from a city martial-arts expert. Even as the film begins, Bijli dreams of donning leather boots and trousers, jumping off cliffs to subdue a gang of thugs, who would kidnap a girl. *Mera Shikar* is pure camp and her do-or-die struggle is against a samurai-like antagonist, with a flowing top knot and slit eyes, who relishes the one-to-one challenge.

As if this deluge was not enough, more films are under production starring Dimple Kapadia, Hema Malini and Rekha, besides younger actresses — all bent upon a superficial masculinisation of the female protagonist. On the prevailing evidence, the heroine will also have to periodically resort to feminine guile in the form of *mujras* and be both a seductress and an avenger. It is not that our film industry is moving towards some sort of an androgynous ideal. There is enough indication of hostility towards an aggressive woman in the temporal world of power. Women Power is acceptable only when it is mythologised — and the Women is made a mere Icon, an Avenging Angel, a Dispenser of Death.

NANDAN: A HOUSE OF FILM CULTURE

PRABODH K. MAITRA

A proper Art Film Theatre in the country had remained a mere talking point for over two decades, but it hardly became an objective for possible implementation. The film society enthusiast or the dreamer film-maker may have considered such an institution an essential item in his scheme of things, but neither the film industry nor the institution-building agencies of the government took the initiative to realise what should have been the first option in enlarging the exhibition opportunities. Art films were encouraged, but they were largely confined to the production and financing sector with little thought given to their exhibition outlets.

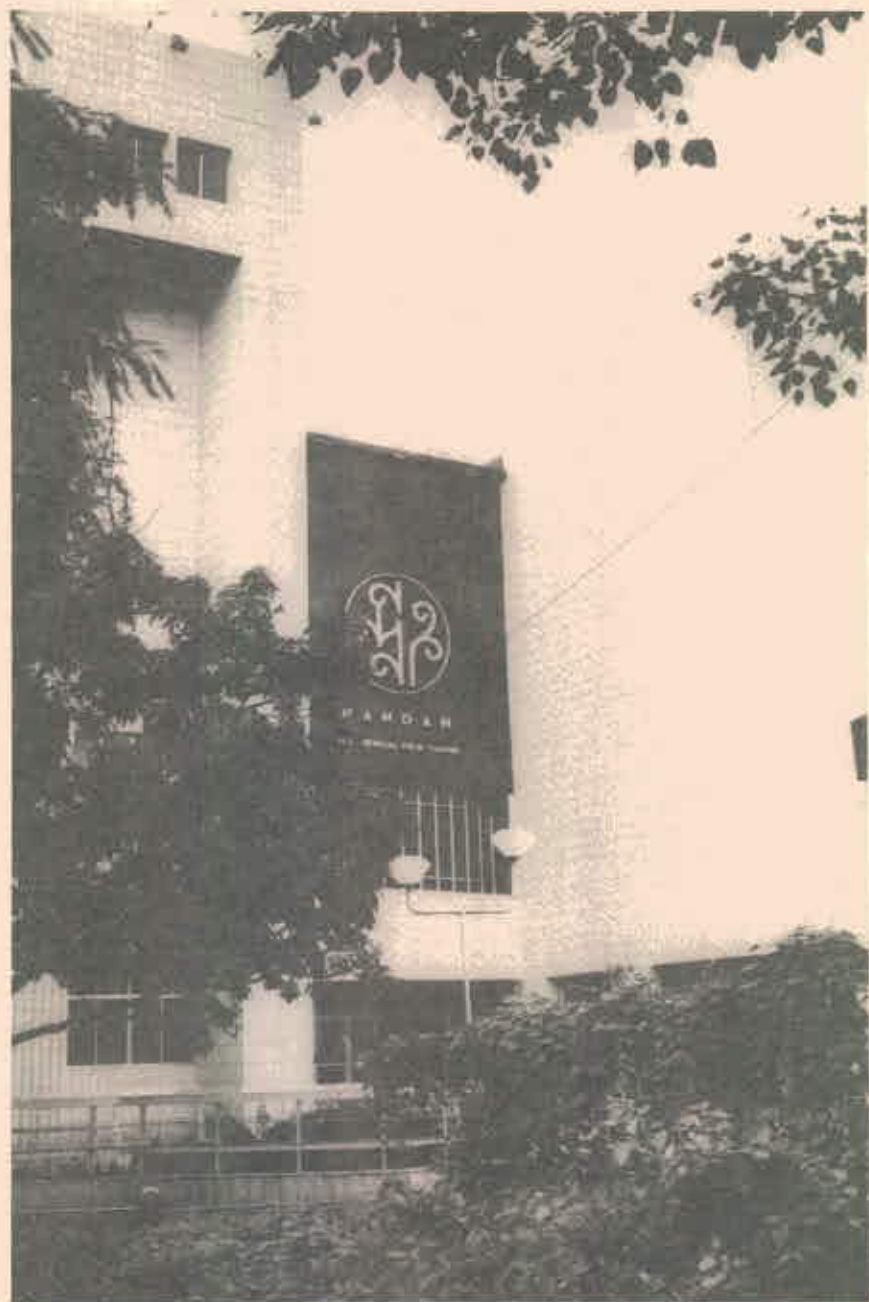
From the late 'seventies, the Government of West Bengal embarked on many ambitious schemes, not only to support the ailing film industry, but also to give fillip to the movement for promotion of better cinema. This ultimately was embodied in the unique institution called "Nandan: The West Bengal Film Centre", which was inaugurated in September, 1985.

This Art Cinema House is not merely for screening of films. The approach to Cinema here is comprehensive, as it concerns itself, in the words of Satyajit Ray, Chairman of the Centre, "with everything relating to cinema, except film production". Four auditoriums of varying sizes cater to film buffs. A library of books and periodicals and an archive-cum-film library are important components of the project. Facilities for studies have inspired film enthusiasts to go in for short-term courses, for which lecturers are drawn from all over the country.

A research project on the development of Bengali Cinema has been undertaken. A museum on the work of Satyajit Ray is under contemplation. All these facilities are sought to be provided under one roof, so that Nandan could properly function as a House of Film Culture.

Another aspect which facilitates the film-viewers and the organisations catering to them is that agencies like the National Film Development Corporation, National Film Archive of India, the Directorate of Film Festivals, Children's Film Society, Films Division, the State Film Development Corporations and private producers find it quite convenient to utilise the premises as a clearing house of their own productions and programmes.

In fact, every *Wednesday afternoon*, Nandan's Auditorium No. 2 is utilised by the National Film Archive to hold screenings in collaboration with Nandan to invited audiences. Every *fourth Friday of the month*, the Films Division and Nandan offer packages of short films to the intending viewers. The Directorate of Film Festivals collaborates for programmes under the Cultural Exchange Agreements. In recent times, major programmes featuring films from the USSR, Japan and



Nandan, the West Bengal Film Centre at Calcutta; Entrance to the only House of Film Culture in India.

France have been organised. Selections of NFDC's crop of films enable Nandan to have commercial releases of the best films from abroad; "Indian Panorama" films

and its own productions. Special programmes like presentation of New Theatres' films and other retrospectives are constantly held to present our heritage in cinema to avid film-goers. The film societies of Calcutta find it a convenient place to organise events for their members regularly.

One enlightened step taken by the Government of West Bengal is to exempt the films commercially released at Nandan from payment of Entertainment Tax. The rates of admission are between Rs. 3 and Rs. 6, to the plush 1000-seat main auditorium, which is something to be proud of.

Nandan is on the lookout for the contemporary trends and to record the impact of the crusading film-makers. On two evenings, some time back, the whole of Govind Nihalani's tele-film *Tamas* (five-and-half hours in duration) was screened to an enthusiastic audience with the whole film unit headed by the Director present in the auditorium. The impact was indeed electrifying. Again, independent, documentary film-makers from all over the country were invited with their films for screening, to meet and exchange views, to deliberate on their problems and to have a dialogue with the audience. Retrospectives of Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Alfred Hitchcock, Bimal Roy and others have drawn full houses. The film societies have also done their bit in similar endeavour and it was largely through their efforts and with the direct involvement of Nandan that retros of Pasolini, Antonioni, Bergman, Kurosawa, Eisenstein, etc., have been organised.

Films of yesteryears, particularly the Calcutta-based productions, have been systematically presented to give the paying audience, an idea of Bengal's film heritage. It has also encouraged producers of such films to make new prints for commercial release, first at Nandan, and later in the regular commercial show-houses. After more than two decades, Satyajit Ray's *Devi* was released along with his *Abhijan* as also Mrinal Sen's *Baishe Shrawan*, Tapan Sinha's *Khaniker Atithi*,



A relaxed Satyajit Ray (Chairman, Nandan) at the a preview theatre in Nandan. At extreme right looking at the camera is Prabodh K. Maitra, incharge of Nandan and author of the article alongside.

Debaki Bose's *Kahi* in the line for commercial run. Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander*, Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice*, Ray's *Ghare Baire*, were commercially screened to enlightened audiences. What takes the cake in rapturous response was, Vijay Mehta's *Pestonjee*, which ran for seven days. All shows were full. Shabana Azmi later told me that it seemed to her incredible that the language and the locale did not prove to be any obstacle. The best of regional cinema is constantly programmed. Even one regional language cinema, that of Malayalam, got the pride of place in the presentation of the major films of the last 50 years. Nandan's "Meet-the-Director" programme has so far featured, Ketan Mehta and Jahnna Barua, representatives of the two farthest corners of film-making in the country. (Gujarat and Assam).

Chidananda Das Gupta observed in an article in *The Telegraph* recently on the programming at Nandan as "an incorruptible concern for artistic quality and social purpose besides a keen awareness of creative events in the film world." Encouraging words indeed, from a veteran of the film society movement and a perceptive critic and observer.

Nandan has been able to attract film people and others who have donated books, old equipment, film-related materials, etc. for preservation. Some interesting specimens were put up for exhibition a number of times, depicting various phases of development of the art of film. Seminars on the situation obtaining in the film industry, aesthetics of film and censorship have been held in which experts of various fields have participated. Programmes to pay homage to Smita Patil, Uttam Kumar, Norman MacLaren, Marie Seton and Niranjan Pal have been held to pay respect to their memory and to create more interest in the departed. Even for the purpose of relief to flood and drought-affected people and for the struggling patriots of Nicaragua, "Charity" film shows have been arranged.

For more inter-action between film people, film-goers, artists, music and dance programmes are on the anvil. It is heartening that visitors from other parts of the country and abroad as well evince keen interest in the working of Nandan.

Nandan is guided in its functioning by an Advisory Board headed by Satyajit Ray with Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, Tarun Majumdar, Subrata Mitra, Soumitra Chatterjee, Buddhadev Das Gupta, and Gautam Ghose as members among others. The atmosphere at Nandan has been able to generate in the first three years for better film-viewing and propagation of Film Culture could prove salutary for other places like Kala Bhavan at Trivandrum and the newly built premises of the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) at Pune. This would, perhaps, herald a movement for a healthy cinema in the country.

The concept of a Film (*Chalachitra*) Akademi was given an uncerecerimonious burial, despite the enthusiasm for it, in appropriate quarters. If organisations like Nandan, Kala Bhavan, NFAI and Directorate of Film Festivals could work in close co-operation, harmony and with definite objective in view, a similar set-up like Nandan with a proper infrastructure seems possible.

Nandan is considered the State Government's flagship in the realm of cinema, but there are other aspects which merit mention. Over the past decade, several projects have been taken up to put the film industry back on its rails. What started as a stray involvement of the government in the early 'fifties to make possible the completion and release of *Father Panchali* has since blossomed into a comprehensive plan of action. Let me hasten to add that the problems of the Bengal film industry are far from over. No sooner a part of the problem is tackled than another area cries out for instant attention. The solution is also not fully within the competence of any State Government.

But a start had to be made somewhere. Soon after the present Government took over, a rapid assessment was made in the late 'seventies and the areas were identified. The first thrust had to be on production, as feature film production had declined alarmingly. With no investment from the private operators of the film industry in the production and exhibition sectors, the Government had to come in a big way. A liberal view was taken and both established and fresh talent were asked to make films for the Government. That was how besides Ray and Sen, the younger film-makers like Buddhadev Dasgupta, Gautam Ghosh, and Utpalendu Chakraborty could break fresh ground. Shyam Benegal and M.S. Sathyu also joined in with films based on the situation in Bengal, both rural and urban. Liberal grants-in-aid were arranged, not loans. Children's films were produced during the International Year of Children. Shorts on subjects other than the merely propagandist were made in good number. Two festivals were held in Calcutta in 1978 and 1980. On the occasion of the latter, the foundation stone of Nandan was laid by the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, and a sizeable number of young film-makers from other centres like Saeed Mirza, Nachiket Patwardhan, T. Nagabharana were invited with their films. A Festival of Films was organised all over the State with local participation. The atmosphere was agog with film activity which was given a shot in the arm through the active involvement of the State apparatus. The management of an old studio was taken over, a Film Workers' Welfare Fund was created for distressed technicians, and, to cap it all, a modern colour laboratory, which was a long-felt need, was set up in Calcutta to offer better facilities, as private investment was not forthcoming.

Even relatively less important areas had to be attended to, like grants to the film societies mostly for buying books, the acquisition of two films of Ritwik Ghatak and provision of funds for the memorial trust named after the late film-maker, grants for publication of books on cinema by young writers and even encouraging leading universities to set up film-study courses. In some cases, the health care of film personalities was provided for.

Despite such comprehensive efforts, problems still persist. There are imponderables and all the steps have not borne expected results. This is perhaps inevitable. Even when there is no lack of good intentions and positive palliatives are made available, the full remedy seems a bit elusive. The dialectics of life are such. If the art of the Film, a truly 20th Century art form is to meet the 21st Century, more attention and more effort, more funds and more talent must be devoted to it.

NINASAM: A UNIQUE RURAL FILM SOCIETY

JASHWANT JADHAV

In October, 1988, Ninasam Chitrasamaja, Heggodu, Karnataka, conducted its 10th annual ten-day Film Appreciation Course. During this decade-long period, about 650 film enthusiasts from all over the State have been trained here in the rudiments of film appreciation. This activity assumes larger significance, when viewed in the context of the paucity in our country of film-study activities and the fact that no other institution in India, apart from the Film & Television Institute or the National Film Archive of India, has conducted such courses so regularly over such a long period, and that too, outside Pune.

Ninasam Chitrasamaja, a wing of the cultural institution, Ninasam, was established in 1977. The parent body, Ninasam, an acronym for *Nilakanteshwara Nitya Seva Sangha* — itself had its beginnings way back in 1949, in a little village set amidst arecanut plantations, about 375 kms, from the State capital, Bangalore. It first began as a small group of amateur theatre activists trying to reach out beyond their rural confines and establish a meaningful dialogue with the outside world. Starting with productions of *Yakshagana*, the traditional dance drama, most popular in the region, Ninasam opened itself to the new modes of expression through theatre activities.

Influenced strongly by people like B.V. Karanth, who was forging a new theatre form in the 'seventies, Ninasam established a name for itself in amateur circles. A more serious commitment based on the conviction that theatre, was the most low cost and influential medium of mass communication, especially in a Third World country like India, led Ninasam to start its Theatre Institute in 1980.

Here, about 15 students are taken in on stipends every year and they engage themselves full-time in their diploma certificate course, which has a comprehensive syllabus, modelled closely on that of the National School of Drama, New Delhi, with topics of study such as the theatre, history of drama, criticism, both Eastern and Western, the theatre as an art form, as a medium of communication, traditional performing arts, etc..

About the same time, Ninasam had recognised the power and the uses of the modern medium of cinema. K.V. Subbanna, one of the founders, and now the guiding force of Ninasam, participated in the first ever film appreciation course held in India by Marie Seton at Pune in 1961. Marie Seton herself visited Heggodu in 1975. A growing realisation of the importance of the film medium, with all its economic, social and cultural ramifications, led Ninasam to organise for its rural audience a festival of about 25 international film classics like *Father Panchali*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Rashomon*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *La Strada* and *Gold*



The entrance to a world of drama, dance and cinema: The frontage of the Ninasam auditorium named after the Kannada polymath, Dr. Shivarama Karanth, who headed the Enquiry Committee for National Film Policy.

Rush in 1977. A very encouraging response to this culminated in the first 10-day film appreciation course in 1979, which since, has been a regular annual fixture on the Ninasam calendar.

This course, organised in collaboration with the Film & Television Institute and the National Film Archive of India, aims at acquainting participants with Film Culture and the basics of film appreciation, through screenings of various classics, lectures by renowned film personalities and group discussions. The participants are supplied with considerable printed and cyclostyled study-material. The topics covered are world film history, film technology, film as an art form and as a language, film in relation to other arts and disciplines, the economics of film, etc. The participants study in detail two text films, one, a short and the other, a full-length feature. There is also a film festival open to the public in the evenings, where the participants sit amongst the lay rural audience so that they can study their responses on and off the spot.

Ninasam's main concerns can be seen here too. The course is neither simply a series of screenings, nor a very ambitiously academic and erudite one. Its main objective is to initiate the participants, who are largely teachers, journalists, social workers, students, housewives and farmers, mostly from rural and semi-rural areas into the *parallel cinema movement*, so that they can continue as activists in their respective areas of work.

Such a movement also needs to be supplemented through other modes. In India, accessibility to world film classics is a daunting problem, compounded by the commercial set-up of the production-distribution-exhibition network. Another equally difficult problem is the lack of film literature, especially in regional languages. *Akshara Prakashana*, run by K.V. Subbanna, which publishes a large

number of works that form the essential Modernist movement in Kannada literature, took up the challenge. It had already also published in Kannada several books on theatre, including translations of Bharata's *Natyashastra* and Stanislavsky's *An Actor Prepares*. In 1974, it published the first ever serious film book in Kannada—*Chalanachitrade Mahanowke (The Giant Ship of Cinema)*, a translation of Eisenstein's script of *Battleship Potemkin* together with a historical and critical evaluation of Eisenstein's films. In the following years, Ninasam Chitrasamaja and Akshara Prakashan have together brought out a series of about 20 books on film, script-translations, treatises, compendiums, a technical Glossary of Cinema etc.

All these activities take place in the auditorium Ninasam built for its own use in 1972. Constructed at a very modest cost of Rs. 2 lakhs, with a seating capacity of 700-800, the auditorium is named after the Kannada polymath, Dr. Shivarama Karmath. This *Ranga Mandira* is exclusively meant for theatre and film activities, and is the only one of its kind in Karnataka, besides the *Ravindra Kalakshetra*, Bangalore, specially meant for these purposes. It has a stage area of 50 feet (L) x 36 feet (W) x 22 feet (H); a permanent cyclorama at the back, and also a very efficient acoustic system. Built on simple, elegant lines, it has a very functional structure in total consonance with its rural surroundings. At the same time, it has all the modern facilities for stage and film shows.

For many long years, since its inception, Ninasam had been working, basing all its projects firmly on the ideals of a truly decentralised democracy. It had brought world theatre and film classics to the rural audience around its place and elsewhere, through its workshops and festivals. It gave its activities a more vigorous and concrete shape with the *Janaspandana* project, undertaken in the period 1983-85. This project, for which the Ford Foundation, USA, provided



Rural audiences for Eisenstein, Kurosawa and Satyajit Ray: The typical rural audience at the Rangamandira Auditorium at Ninasam, mostly arcanut planters and their families. They are by now well acquainted with the film classics of the world.



Film Appreciation under tree-tops : (L to R) : Satish Bahadur, formerly Professor of Film Appreciation at the FTII, K.V. Subbanna under whom Ninasam has become a unique rural film society, Dr. Rambur, Girish Kasarvilli (the talented Kannada film-maker) and T.P. Ashok along with a young film-buff, during a break from film appreciation classes.

financial aid, aimed at disseminating theatre and film culture and creating a wide network over the whole state of Karnataka, whereby theatre and film enthusiasts would get access to the classics, and then start working on their own at setting up active cultural centres at their respective places.

The Janaspandana project has two units—one for theatre and the other for film. The theatre unit, led by the Delhi National School of Drama graduates, has conducted one-month long theatre workshops for local people, covering every district of Karnataka, and putting up a production at the end of every such workshop. The main emphasis has been on presenting theatre as a medium of communication.

At the same time, about ten teachers were specially trained at a 10-day workshop at Heggodu, the first such outside the Film & TV Institute, Pune, in the basics of teaching film appreciation to different age and social groups. They also prepared study material on specific films and general topics. To facilitate this project, Ninasam built up a library of 16mm prints of some classics and film literature. These teachers then conduct short-term film festivals and appreciation courses, with the help of local cultural and educational institutions, all over the State.

In this two-year period, Ninasam far exceeded its originally planned target of twenty courses in theatre and film, by conducting 37 theatre workshops, 76 film festivals and 29 short-term film courses. More than 1,00,000 people have attended the annual film festival shows at Heggodu, and about 83,000 have attended the screenings under Janaspandana, outside Heggodu. The Janaspandana activities continue even now, with aid from the local institutions themselves.

The Ford Foundation was so much impressed by the success of the project that it offered to continue its aid for another two years. But Ninasam, which believes it should only act as a catalyst, devised a different kind of a project this time, under which it acted as a coordinator between the Ford Foundation and six important cultural troupes all over the state, and helped the latter in purchasing essential theatre equipment, which now act as "Theatrical Equipment Banks", providing the basic technical facilities and expertise to other troupes in their respective regions.

The great amount of experience and goodwill gained through the Film and Theatre courses also compelled Ninasam to form in 1985, a theatre repertory troupe — *Tirugata*. Comprising of its Theatre Institute alumni, directed by NSD graduates, this project, now in its fourth successive year, takes four productions every year to several centres all over Karnataka, in an attempt to bring a rejuvenating and meaningful synthesis between the decaying professional theatre and the sporadic amateur theatre, by combining the best elements of both.

Totally self-sufficient, funded almost entirely on production collections, this project again has as its main objective of taking classics to the people, using the theatre mainly as a means of communication. Over these four years, it has presented Shakespeare and Brecht, Kalidasa and Bhasa, in a total of 420 shows, attended by about 3,00,000 people, itself in the process travelling a distance of about 21,000 kms, covering all the districts of Karnataka. That more than three-fourths of its audiences are from rural and semi-rural areas is a pointer to the significance of its achievement.

Among the visiting and guest lecturers at the Ninasam are B.V. Karanth, Prof. Rustom Bharucha, (who has written a doctoral thesis entitled *Ninasam: A Cultural Alternative*) Fritz Benewitz, Prasanna, Shivarama Karanth and Chandrashekhar Kambar. The film activities owe much to Marie Seton's indirect but important influence, and to the long and unstinting cooperation of P.K. Nair, Director of the National Film Archive of India, and most of all, to Prof. Satish Bahadur, Professor of Film Appreciation, FTII, (now retired), who has been the guiding force behind the film courses and projects.

Through all these activities can be discerned the growth pattern of Ninasam. Growing naturally, like an acorn into an oak, first limiting itself to what was practically possible and socially important for it, and then, on achieving it, and then defining its further bigger steps, Developing itself organically from the inside, it has always been conscious of local resources and needs and has modelled itself accordingly. It is continuing to help create a cultural atmosphere, where everyone, from the remotest rural corner, can have access to the greatest creative minds of the world. A confluence where literature, theatre and cinema meet, its achievements, especially in the dissemination of film culture, apart from its impressive statistics, can perhaps be best illustrated by an incident that took place during its Janaspandana project:

It was at Ullala, near Mangalore, where nearly 1,000 illiterate native fisherfolk until then fed only on popular cinema, had gathered among the coconut trees on the sandy beach to watch *Pathar Panchali* in the open air. They sat absolutely still and receptive all through, and as the film ended, they had tears welling up in their eyes.

A TRIBUTE TO RAJ KAPOOR

BUNNY REUBEN

Bestriding the world of cinema both in India and abroad, like a legendary colossus of Greek mythology, Raj Kapoor in the near half-century from the '40s to the '80s and acquired almost mythical dimensions.

His larger-than-life image both as a star-actor and as a star film-maker; his flamboyant life-style and work-style; his tantrums and his romantic escapades, which refuse to die even after decades, but which, on the contrary, have risen to the level of classic love-legends of our day and age; all these and more add up to the most incredible manifestation of star charisma that our country has ever witnessed.

It is the star charisma of a man, who in his very lifetime had become a legend.



The Master giving a master-touch to Divya Rana while shooting *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*



The water-dripping Nymph: Mandakini in Raj Kapoor's *Ram Teri Ganga Maail*.

Raj Kapoor first fell ill in 1985 and yet again in 1988 at the very zenith of recognition and honour at the hands of the President of India, R. Venkataruman, who came down into the auditorium, where a sick and incapacitated Raj Kapoor was seated, to confer the prestigious "Dada Sahab Phalke Award" on him. This itself was a unique honour.

In 1985 and again in 1988, Raj Kapoor's ill-health made national headlines and there was a tremendous mass upsurge of concern for his well-being.



The Creator and his crew: Raj Kapoor and his unit on location. At extreme right is Rajiv (Chimpu) Kapoor, who played the male lead in *Ram Teri Ganga Maati*.

Every one was worried, because in ways, both big and small, Raj Kapoor had through his films, touched the hearts, the souls and the lives of every Indian, young and old, over the past half century, and he had become an integral part of the national psyche.

It is difficult when a person like Bunny Reuben speaks about Raj Kapoor to be objective or to deal only in dry-as-dust chronology. But for those, who want dates, I shall try to put in the few important ones.

The first most important date is December, 14, 1924, because that was the cold mid-winter day, when Prithviraj Kapoor's eldest son was born at Peshawar.

Raj's early years were spent following Prithviraj wherever he went, first to Calcutta, where Prithviraj became a star at New Theatres and later to Bombay, where he consolidated his stardom and started Prithvi Theatre.

Raj's early grounding was as a stage actor in Prithvi Theatre, where his brief appearance in the stage-play *Deewaar* impressed Sardar Chandulal Shah, Baburao Patel (Editor of *Filmindia*) and Master Vinayak.

Raj apprenticed himself as an assistant to Kidar Sharma and learned all he could of the art and craft of film-making. In 1947, he made his debut as a screen actor in Kidar Sharma's *Neel Kamal* opposite Madhubala.

In 1947, Raj starred opposite Madhubala in two more films — *Chitor Vijay* and *Dil Ki Rani*, both directed by Mohan Sinha, and in *Jail Yatra*, opposite Kamini Kaushal, which Gajanan Jagirdar had directed.

I first met Raj Kapoor in 1948, when I saw a film called *Aag*. And I was never the same again.

Its thinking. Its theme. What its maker was trying to say. And the burning intensity, with which he was saying it. The deep, passionate thrust of the love scenes. The total immersion of the players in their roles. Here was something I never dreamed Indian cinema could do. These were areas I never imagined anybody, but an introspective, an introverted, shy and inward-looking young man could dream about, let alone express with such naked intensity and passion on celluloid.

And Raj Kapoor was that man.

Aag swept the nation like wildfire and it wasn't long before I realised that I wasn't in the magnificent majority of one, when it came to this sort of response and reaction to *Aag*. Thousands upon thousands of young men and women all over India were reacting in exactly the same way as I had reacted to *Aag* and to its lean, intense-eyed maker, a young man, who seemed to move as though raw electricity blazed through his veins instead of that normal, mundane thing called *blood*, which courses through the veins of ordinary mortals like you and me.

Then came *Barsaat*. Raj Kapoor again swept the nation like wildfire. He had become the undisputed torch-bearer of romanticism and a young leader of the nation's youth. All those aspiring to a career in films, writers, poets, musicians, began to throng round him. It was in this period that his strongest and most lasting associations were formed, with playback-singer, Mukesh, with music directors, Shankar and Jaikishen, with cameraman, Radhu Karmakar, with recordist, Allauddin, with lyricists, Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri, and with scriptwriters K.A. Abbas and V.P. Sathe. And with Bunny Reuben too.

Raj Kapoor now acquired the script of *Awara*, which Abbas Saheb had first offered to Mehboob Khan, who was then looking for a suitable starring vehicle for Dilip Kumar. *Awara* was not only great box-office hit. It was a 'message' film in which Raj Kapoor had got his first taste of the heady philosophy of socialism from Pandit Nehru and Abbas Saheb.

Awara made history.

The film was a sensational success. It was the first film destined to make of Raj Kapoor an international figure. It was the first film which, coming at roughly the same time as Mehboob's *Aan*, opened the eyes of Indian producers to the really tremendous earnings from the overseas markets of which none of them were aware of until Raj's *Awara* and Mehboob's *Aan* threw the lid off this market.

And, most important, it was the first film in which emerged the image of the Tramp, that Chaplinesque figure, which Raj Kapoor went on to immortalise in his own *Shree 420* as well as in scores of other films made by other producers in which he was the star.

Truly Chaplin in form, content and treatment, Raj Kapoor's *Shree 420* remains his most delightful and also socially significant comedy to date. *Shree 420* was a tremendous box-office hit not only in India, but wherever released overseas. In Russia, it perpetuated the Nargis-Raj Kapoor legend.

In Tehran, where Raj attended the opening of the film before proceeding to Moscow to join the Indian Film Delegation there in 1959, the University of Iran conferred on Raj Kapoor an Honorary Degree, a Doctorate of Cinematography.

"I had never seen a University function before", chuckled Raj Kapoor, "You see, I'm a Matric-fail! So, when I donned all those black robes, it made me feel

like a Professor!"

In Egypt, in the Middle East as a whole, even in Israel and in the Western European countries, Raj Kapoor became the common man's idol. These two films and opened the market for Indian films in USSR in a big way, and by virtue of Raj Kapoor's personal popularity, many other films made by other producers were also sold to this market, merely by virtue of the fact that Raj Kapoor was the star!

From *Shree 420*, Raj Kapoor went straight into *Jagte Raho* one of my personal favourites from among the many Raj Kapoor creations. The subject, by Shombhu Mitra and Amit Maitra of Bengal fascinated Raj, who agreed to make the film in two versions, Bengali and Hindi. It was also later dubbed in Tamil.

Jagte Raho won for Raj Kapoor and for India, the first Grand Prix at the major International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia in 1957.

After *Jagte Raho* and *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* Raj Kapoor graduated from his "message" phase to his "Big Showmanship" phase. *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* also had Gandhian overtones and despite the *masala*, the music and the sex-appeal, the film conveyed allegorically an important message of love and brotherhood.

Sangam, released in 1965, was Raj Kapoor's first colour film. It also had "Big Showmanship", big stars and was so long, it had to be screened with two intervals. Yet *Sangam* is one of India's all-time box-office hits. It is a masterpiece of Raj Kapoor's showmanship.

Mera Naam Joker, Raj Kapoor's most ambitious film, was really three films in one. It was frankly autobiographical and told the story of the eternal clown, who makes the world laugh, while he weeps silently within himself. Six years in the making, this monumental movie was a very big disaster at the box-office.

Joker marks the end of an important phase in Raj Kapoor's career. It was his last film as an actor-director. All the films he was to make after *Joker*, his big hits like *Bobby*, *Prem Rog* and *Ram Teri Ganga Mauli*, were films which presented Raj Kapoor as a film-maker only.

The intensity of the man...that is my most lasting impression of Raj Kapoor, right from my earliest meeting with him. The intensity and his uncanny knack of being able to reach right inside the person in front of him and draw out the best from within that person and harness it to his work. I have seen Raj, time and again, cast this magic spell on all those, who came close to him so that they, particularly the creative people, could never be free of him again. I know, because I myself was one of them.

When you come as close to any man as I did to Raj-and indeed, I went on to become his chronicler from the '50s onwards, you inevitably come to learn all that there is to know about the man and you also come to know closely those closest to him.

Like Raj's wife, Krishnajeet, for instance. Even though Raj Kapoor attended my wedding with Krishna accompanied not his by own *Krishna*, but by that wonderful person named Nargis, his favourite co-star of that time, it was inevitable that over the years I should come to know Krishnajeet more closely.

Every man is as good or as bad as the kind of wife he has. It should take not an article, but a whole book, to record the kind of wife Krishnajeet has been. Suffice it to say here that, in those days at least, it was full-time job being Raj Kapoor's wife. It was full-time job coping with his children and his love-life, simultaneously.

Luckily, his children were not as turbulent, as unruly or as tempestuous as his love-life. Because of this, and with Papajee and Jhajjee standing solidly with her, Krishnajee could cope with the near-demented period of agony, which Raj Kapoor went through when a very close association came to an end with that of Nargis.

Krishnajee survived not only that. She survived the others, which followed too, and in the process their marriage got strengthened. Not every man is fortunate enough to have a wife like Krishnajee. But then, not every woman is fortunate enough to have Raj Kapoor for a husband.

Without making an excuse for him, it still needs to be said that for a creative artiste, it is essential to lead the kind of life Raj Kapoor had led. The kind of emotional involvements he had have lent depth and dimension to his work and enriched it over the years. A man of gargantuan appetites, Raj Kapoor was always as greedy for life, love and passionate involvements as he was for the finest Scotch and Cognac, the finest French perfumes, the finest women, the finest food and drink, in short, for both body and soul.

From *Aag* to *Ram Teri Ganga Mailli* is a very long time and it needs more than the confines of this article to talk about Raj Kapoor.

So many little episodes with that lovely, wonderful man Jaikishen, with Mukhesh, and with Shailendra, who died on Raj Kapoor's birthday on December 14; so many outdoor shootings, so many trips to far-flung places, like the NEFA border to entertain the *jawans* after the Chinese aggression of the early '60s; North, South, East and West, with Raj. So many other people lesser known, like the late K.V.S. Raman and Om Prakash Mehra and the famous M.R. Achrekar, who were also so close to Raj Kapoor, also the men in the background like Vishwa Mehra and Khanna Saab, who solidly stood for him and with him; and above all, Raj Kapoor's "eyes and ears", cinematographer Radhu Karmakar and recordist Allaaddin, who have given him the best years of their lives and to his films with Hollywoodian gloss and finish. To talk about them all would need a huge volume.

The view backwards for me is great. It is elevating and inspiring. I see the man as he was first — slim and lean and intense-eyed, moving as though raw electricity blazed through his veins. Because that is how he really was, even to the last days of his life, that is how I shall always think of Raj Kapoor and that is how I shall always remember Raj Kapoor.

FILMS DIVISION AT 40: A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

B.D. GARGA

At 40, the Films Division is like a woman, who having lost her charms faces an uncertain future. Its rival, Doordarshan is younger, even if somewhat gauche and garish, but vastly more influential in places, high and low. Its reach is greater and instantaneous. It can cover vast distances, penetrate remote regions and transmit the same message at the exact moment to millions at the mere push of a button. What is more, both the politician and the businessman have discovered in it a convenient ally for its unrivalled potential to make friends and influence people. Clearly, the old Dame of Pedder Road, (now renamed Gopaljee Deshmukh Marg) has to fight for her survival.

It takes FD anything from a month to six weeks to get on to their theatrical network a film of the Prime Minister's foreign or domestic tour (most of it shot in colour, but released in muddy black-and-white) what the DD does the same evening in the cosy comfort of one's living room. Nor can it match the resourcefulness of TV technology, where film reportage is concerned.

A case in point is the blow-by-blow account of the surrender of terrorists from inside the Golden Temple during Operation Black Thunder. Then again, in the investigative genre, the documentary-based programmes, *Kasauti* and *Focus* remain unrivalled. Ramesh Sharma, its producer, follows the factual-realist tradition of classical documentary as developed by Grierson. With subjects ranging from prostitution to mental asylums, drug addiction to dacoits, he confronts us with the stark reality of Indian life. His search to reach at the heart of the matter is relentless. His style is direct, the approach compassionate and the result disturb-

From B.D. Garga's *Amrita Sher-Gil*, the pioneer of modern painting in India. (Films Division)



From FD's Production *Abid*
(about the painter Abid
Surti); Pramod Pati



ing and thought-provoking. That is what a documentary is all about.

Contrast these with FD's recent productions, which are a rag-tag affair, lacking boldness in content and technique. What then is the rationale for FD's existence, if DD can do everything much better? Let's take a look at its past, where lies much of its glory. Perhaps, also, the clue for its decline and fall.

Films Division, set up 40 years ago, in 1948, in independent India, is truly a war baby, conceived by an extraordinary Englishman, Desmond Young, who had relinquished his post as the Editor of the *Pioneer* to join the Government of India as Chief Press Adviser. It was the beginning of the Second World War and war propaganda was of paramount importance, especially if recruitment of soldiers was to be extended beyond the so-called *martial classes*.

After the production of films came the question of their distribution and exhibition. In his memoirs, Desmond Young writes, "The GOIs characteristic inclination was to *order* that the films be shown in all cinemas. That would have resulted in their being shown upside down or after the performance or not at all. We had to persuade exhibitors that they were being offered a valuable concession and a box-office draw for nothing." This is an astute observation, as relevant now as then.

Although, towards the close of the Second World War, the showing of 2000 feet of *approved* film was made compulsory under the Defence of India Rules, I firmly believe, that if in independent India we had not followed the compulsory exhibition fiat, we would have, perhaps, made much better and more meaningful documentaries. The protectionism that the Government provided the Films Division resulted in immature and innane films being churned out with the regularity of sausages.



From *Marvel of Memory*
(Films Division) : N.K. Issar

The better part of the first decade of the Films Division was dominated by Mohan Bhavnani, its first Chief Producer. Known for his drive and doggedness, he measured up to the job. M.V. Krishnaswamy, who had worked with FD for several years, remarked of him, "Bhavnani's problem was to justify the utility of the organisation and the money spent on it, both to the public and the Government. This was the reason for the intensely practical and utilitarian approach adopted by him in moulding the organisation. He was not unduly tormented by the thoughts of the art of documentary or a Documentary Movement." Here, I think, Krishnaswamy has touched the heart of the matter and the shape FD was to take in the years to come. In other words, from its very beginning FD was bereft of an ideology or the role the Documentary was to play in the life of a new nation.

What distinguished British documentary and made it that country's finest contribution to world cinema was its strong ideological base. For John Grierson, the Documentary was a tool of "exploration of intellectual and artistic ideas", which he carefully defined as "the creative interpretation of actuality."

From FD's own production
Akbar; Shanti Verma and
Jehangir S. Bhowmgar



"This is no naive window-on-the-world conception of documentary realism as mere record," says Andrew Higson (*All our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*). "On the contrary, it is an acknowledgement that it is aesthetic principles which determine the particular combination of sound and images that make up a film, and which produce one desired view of the social world, rather than another."

It follows then that social purpose, propaganda and aesthetics are not mutually exclusive. Until well into the 'sixties, scores of films dealing with industry, agriculture, health, family planning, literacy, community welfare, ancient heritage, rural crafts, etc. were produced without thought or inspiration. Routinely done, they failed to touch or inspire anyone. To think that we were still living in the ideological twilight of the Nehru era.

A great communicator himself, Nehru must have sensed all this with some dismay. A year before his death, he wrote;

"It is no good my complaining, because it is our fault if we cannot put across to our people the magnitude of the work that is being done in India at present...it is not enough to give just a glimpse of something being done. It should be a longer and more educative picture and it should be taken in mobile vans to remote villages."

Years later, when Dr. John Grierson visited India he was to echo similar thoughts. In India, films, he urged, must serve as a positive catalyst of the social revolution of the country. He advised film-makers to make films *with* the people and not *about* the people. Grierson was critical of some of the films he was shown. "I am afraid the Films Division is falling prey to some of the cheap film festivals of the Western affluent countries. I am definitely not in favour of getting prizes for having caught the sickness of some of the frustrated countries of the West." He felt that in the Indian context it was more important that a film had any social significance or was capable of implementing social change than the winning of accolades at festivals.

Which brings me to the much talked about period of Jean Bhowmargy, whom a Films Division publication described, "What is good, artistic, progressive, experimental in the products of the Films Division was inspired by Jehangir Bhowmargy." He had started his career as a researcher during the war with the IFI (the war-time Information Films of India) and later went to Paris to join the UNESCO. His services were loaned to the Films Division between 1954-56 and again between 1965-67. Bhowmargy's long experience in international communication made him ideal for the job. Describing the role of FD, he said, "to investigate and express every field of India's endeavour, to record and examine successes and failure, fearlessly and without bias" in order to "keep the people of India alert, vigilant, democratic and united by reporting the many-faceted truths of the Indian community." Bhowmargy was soon to discover to his dismay that his charter, however, laudable, did not work with the Indian bureaucracy.

A creative artist himself, he turned his frustration to making films on subjects, which enthused him most. One of which was *Khajuraho* on the magnificent medieval temples built by the Chandela kings between 10th and 11th centuries. It was directed by Mohan Wadhvani, but Bhowmargy's taste had shaped it. Another film which Bhowmargy made in collaboration with Shanti Verma was *Radha and Krishna*, remarkable for its emotional interest and poetic feeling. But one swallow — or even two — do not make a summer.

Bhowmargy's second tenure as Chief Adviser was more eventful. Indira Gandhi

had then taken over as the new Prime Minister. Earlier, she had been Minister of Information and Broadcasting for a short while and her interest in films and the film society movement was well known. India had just fought a war with Pakistan, but a more harrowing period followed with widespread drought and famine in the country.

The use of light-weight cameras and synchronous sound-recorders, which had revolutionised documentary film-making in Europe and America, had arrived in India. Film-makers within and without the Films Division found a new tool of communication. So far, films had been narrated and manipulated. Now it became possible to plunge straight into the thick of action as it were and come *face to face* with the people.

The result was highly interesting, probing and provocative films like *Report on Drought, India '67, Face to Face, I am 30* and *Explorer*. These films were marked by a degree of sincerity and truthfulness rarely seen before. Films Division served as a meeting point for many of us independent film-makers. The creative excitement of that period will never return. It manifested itself in the works of S. Sukhdev, Pramod Pati, S.N.S. Sastry, K.S. Chari, Clem Baptista, Santi Chowdhury — all dead but not forgotten — Fali Billimoria and many others. FD presents a vastly different picture today.

Surely, at 40, the Films Division is expected to have acquired a certain maturity of thought and objectivity of outlook. But has it? Recently, it produced a film called *Desh ki Vani* on the important issue of national language. The film tried to establish with much vehemence and whatever evidence it could summon that Hindi is the only suitable national language. In its support, it marshalled material from diverse sources, from Amir Khusrau to the Mughals, from Guru Nanak to Shivaji. Speeches of Raja Rammohun Roy, Tilak, Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Subramania Bharati (whose name is wrongly mentioned throughout as *Subramaniam Bharati*) were gone through with a fine toothcomb to glean evidence in support of Hindi. When it ran short of it, the name of Gandhi was always there to be invoked. The film is so obsessed with Hindi that at the end it becomes counter-productive.

A film is not meant to *end* discussion but to *initiate* it. Let me also invoke Gandhiji. In 1925, when he was invited to attend the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Sitapur, in UP, where highly Sanskritised Hindi was being spoken, Gandhiji said:

"Highly Sanskritised Hindi is as avoidable as highly Persianised Urdu. Both these speeches are not intelligible to the masses. I have accepted Hindustani as a common medium, because it is understood by over 20 crores of the people of India." Perhaps, C. Rajagopalachari should have had the last word, "If we could continue to use and profit from the railways, telegraphs and other products of British Rule in India, we do not see any sense in any merely sentimental revolt against the use of English."

I am not trying to build a case against Hindi, but all this should have gone into the body of the film so that it would appear unbiased, open and objective.

What the Films Division really needs is total restructuring (*perestroika!*) and rethinking of its role and function. It would mean weeding out lot of dead wood. That is the only way to re-energize and re-vitalise it. It could be a good beginning on its 40th anniversary.

JAMES BEVERIDGE'S TRIBUTE TO FD

JAMES A. BEVERIDGE (formerly of the National Film Board of Canada; one-time professor of Films, New York State University; producer of *Burmah-Shell Films* in India—as well as other films on his own; for some time Adviser, Films Division) has said:

"If one had the hardihood and could screen the entire output of Films Division since 1948, one would incidentally be a witness to a historical account of the whole evolution of contemporary India since independence. All the projects, plans, developments, events, crises, upsets, good advice, national campaigns, urgings and scoldings and songs of praise and delight in India's formidable heritage — all are reflected in the films and newsreels, week by week. India's story is there on film." And, Beveridge has added, "The Films Division must have provided the largest and most consistent programme of public information films, over 20 years, of any country in history, excepting the USSR."

DR JOHN GRIERSON'S ADVICE TO FD

In a message to the Films Division on the occasion of its 20th anniversary, Dr. JOHN GRIERSON (doyen of the Documentary Film Movement; founder of the National Film Board of Canada; friend, philosopher and guide of documentary film-makers) observed:

I send my good wishes for its anniversary to the Films Division of the Government of India. Many of us think of it as having one of the complex tasks in the world today. But it has great achievements in the traditional past, great problems in the present, great possibilities in the future of India to inspire it. One thought I like to emphasise on these anniversary occasions; *Do not think too much of yesterday. The only good film is the one you are going to make tomorrow!*"

FILMS DIVISION : NUMBER OF FILMS PRODUCED

Year	Documentaries		Newsreels			Number of languages in which films were produced released
	Black & White	Colour	National	Compilations & Special	Total	
1948-49	—	—	25	3	28	5
1949-50	32	1	52	12	97	5
1950-51	36	—	52	12	100	5
1951-52	37	—	51	12	100	5
1952-53	33	—	52	13	98	5
1953-54	39	3	52	12	106	5
1954-55	40	3	52	12	107	5
1955-56	58	11	53	17	139	5
1956-57	56	8	52	16	132	5
1957-58	58	10	52	15	136	5
1958-59	83	14	53	16	165	13
1959-60	72	27	52	14	165	13
1960-61	77	23	52	12	165	13
1961-62	80	16	52	12	160	13
1962-63	101	11	62	12	176	13
1963-64	96	6	60	12	166	13
1964-65	84	13	53	8	167	13
1965-66	84	10	57	6	160	13
1966-67	74	12	55	6	145	14
1967-68	73	12	62	—	142	14
1968-69	79	15	59	—	149	14
1969-70	64	23	72	—	158	14
1970-71	61	21	52	—	190	15
1971-72	90	23	55	—	228	15
1972-73	89	31	69	7	237	15
1973-74	104	30	59	7	242	15
1974-75	98	37	52	17	255	15
1975-76	92	37	52	8	239	15
1976-77	92	67	52	6	255	15
1977-78	56	72	53	2	233	15
1978-79	70	59	56	3	213	15
1979-80	55	88	52	4	244	15
1980-81	59	64	52	6	231	15
1981-82	65	51	52	18	233	15
1982-83	46	113	50	19	269	15
1983-84	51	92	42	14	228	15
1984-85	39	72	19	2	132	—
1985-86	10	93	22	—	125	15
1986-87	7	103	28	—	138	15

6643

FD has also made regional newsreels — and newsreels in colour.

FILMS DIVISION: AWARDS WON BY THE FILMS DIVISION

Year	International Awards		Indian Awards				Total
	Major Awards Prizes, shields, trophies,	Diplomas and Certificates	National Awards		Other Indian Awards		
			Medals &	Certificates	Trophies &	Certificates	
1949	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
1950	—	13	—	—	—	—	13
1951	1	6	—	—	—	—	7
1952	—	7	—	—	—	—	7
1953	1	6	1	2	—	—	10
1954	—	8	1	2	—	—	11
1955	1	4	1	1	—	—	7
1956	4	27	1	1	—	—	33
1957	4	10	1	1	—	—	16
1958	2	12	2	1	—	—	17
1959	4	15	1	2	—	—	22
1960	3	21	3	2	—	—	29
1961	1	21	3	1	3	—	29
1962	1	26	2	2	—	—	31
1963	2	22	2	2	—	—	28
1964	4	24	1	1	—	—	30
1965	3	24	—	2	14	14	43
1966	3	24	2	—	—	—	29
1967	3	38	5	—	2	—	48
1968	6	30	4	—	1	—	41
1969	7	34	4	—	1	—	46
1970	5	32	—	—	2	—	39
1971	8	33	6	1	—	—	48
1972	8	33	3	1	2	—	45
1973	3	23	3	—	1	1	30
1974	14	15	6	—	1	1	38
1975	7	48	5	1	1	1	62
1976	8	30	7	1	—	—	46
1977	4	30	4	1	1	—	46
1978	5	46	3	—	—	—	39
1979	7	35	4	—	—	—	54
1980	8	42	6	—	1	—	46
1981	6	27	7	—	—	—	56
1982	8	9	5	—	—	—	41
1983	5	31	5	—	2	—	22
1984	5	13	7	—	—	—	41
1985	10	18	2	3	—	—	27
1986	5	28	8	—	1	—	30
1987	4	5	8	—	—	3	44
							31

1227

Source : FD

FILMS DIVISION : NUMBER OF PRINTS SUPPLIED

Year	Theatrical	Free Supply	Sales	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1949-50	5408	—	—	5408
1950-51	5408	—	—	5408
1951-52	6968	—	—	6968
1952-53	6978	—	—	6978
1953-54	6968	—	—	6968
1955-56	6968	—	4768	11736
1956-57	6968	10936	8117	26021
1957-58	7904	9133	6360	24397
1958-59	8854	8919	6380	24153
1959-60	8751	6982	10554	26287
1960-61	9246	8481	20423	38330
1961-62	10298	11380	5673	27351
1962-63	10521	18711	7848	37080
1963-64	10088	20761	7079	37928
1964-65	10868	18422	10329	39619
1965-66	10148	11861	6004	28103
1966-67	15347	11909	8944	36200
1967-68	13537	12043	5105	30685
1968-69	13363	14469	5981	33813
1969-70	15479	21286	7594	44359
1970-71	15899	14869	8187	38955
1971-72	22391	21934	8096	52421
1972-73	26567	16101	16742	59410
1973-74	26088	20229	8045	54362
1974-75	24422	17743	7321	49486
1975-76	23422	7985	7980	39387
1976-77	25893	13284	10523	49700
1977-78	32414	22224	6497	61135
1978-79	33488	13446	7316	54250
1979-80	31475	9801	9603	50889
1980-81	33400	11523	12680	57603
1981-82	34343	12070	16893	63306
1982-83	35651	12910	11740	60501
1983-84	35716	12736	17160	57740
1984-85	36974	7213	13579	57766
1985-86	36992	5114	15738	57843
1986-87	49290	2363	22427	73080
	44102	719	20040	64861

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FILMS DIVISION : EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE

Year	Expenditure	Revenue
1949-50	28,78,906	9,11,738
1950-51	32,37,042	23,14,962
1951-52	33,54,084	27,04,778
1952-53	37,76,770	34,29,666
1953-54	38,90,350	34,75,634
1954-55	47,39,300	35,68,923
1955-56	67,87,249	36,34,788
1956-57	73,60,544	39,83,081
1957-58	71,00,759	45,92,295
1958-59	74,60,290	45,05,907
1959-60	79,60,324	56,84,341
1960-61	96,57,355	55,06,519
1961-62	1,07,50,547	67,93,966
1962-63	1,05,41,917	74,72,482
1963-64	1,03,32,495	83,45,313
1964-65	1,08,28,518	94,98,011
1965-66	1,00,55,019	91,49,896
1966-67	1,38,17,268	95,12,430
1967-68	1,52,58,023	1,05,06,563
1968-69	1,55,43,893	1,18,94,389
1969-70	1,64,10,895	1,24,84,707
1970-71	1,84,26,933	1,40,00,155
1971-72	2,08,52,142	1,63,79,407
1972-73	2,40,94,907	1,76,03,655
1973-74	2,38,59,885	1,87,92,110
1974-75	2,94,88,911	1,97,10,512
1975-76	3,43,84,248	2,45,19,858
1976-77	4,04,22,000	2,59,75,705
1977-78	3,39,79,606	2,94,40,451
1978-79	3,41,98,659	3,37,66,687
1980-81	3,68,46,846	3,50,11,684
1981-82	4,85,43,995	4,49,70,885
1982-83	5,50,20,412	5,07,73,086
1983-84	6,74,00,947	5,95,65,191
1984-85	6,93,50,439	6,03,04,128
1985-86	8,87,95,641	6,47,56,244
1986-87	10,04,02,343	7,05,27,941
	12,77,09,287	6,84,52,000

Source : F.D.

BENGALI FILMS

MORE OF QUANTITY : LESS OF QUALITY

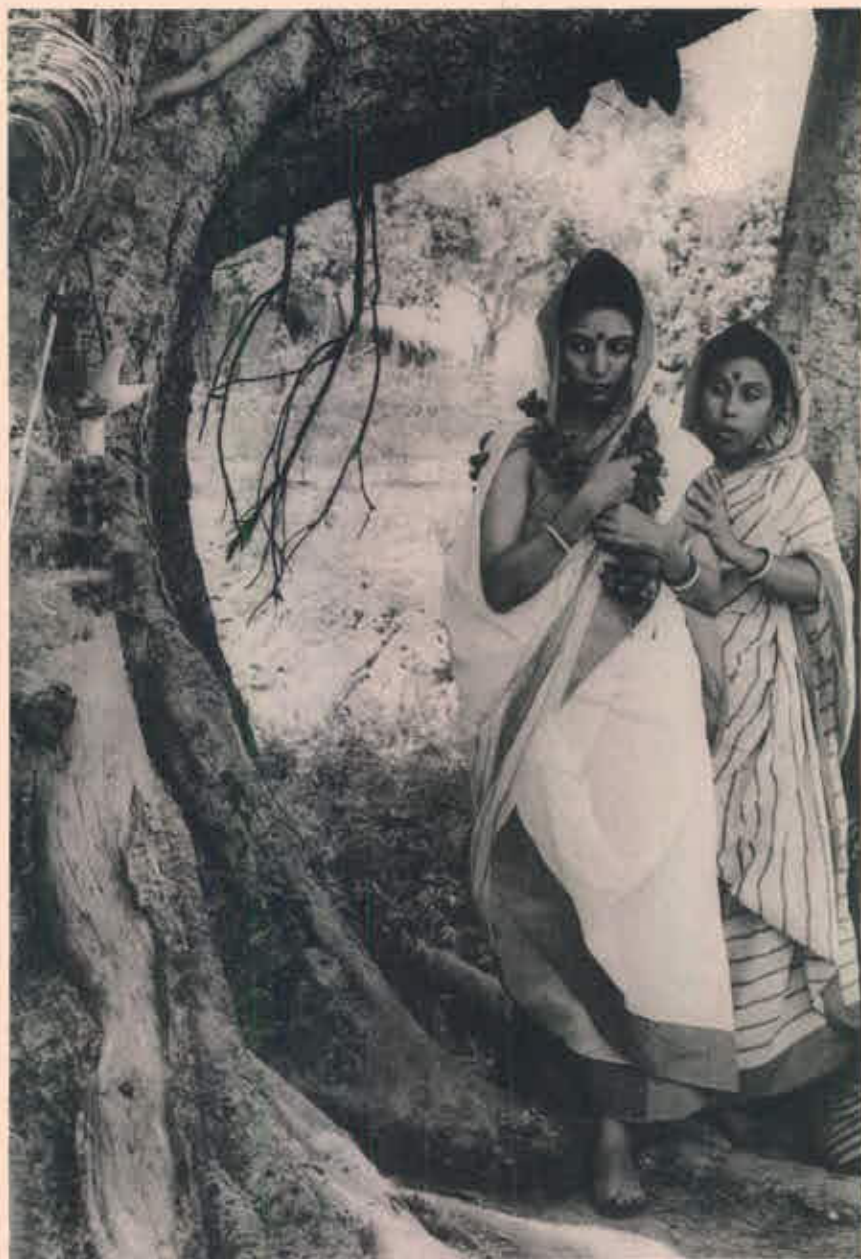
AJOY K. DEY

The year 1988 until now (October) has been the most unproductive as far as the Bengali Cinema is concerned. It is one of the bleakest years in the recent past. Gautam Ghose's *Antaryali Yatra* (both in Bengali and Hindi) is the only redeeming feature in the otherwise gloomy situation prevailing. Not that the industry is stagnating. On the contrary, studios at Tollygunge are working overtime to complete their schedules. The recording theatre of the NFDC at Behala is booked for the next two years. The Rupayan Laboratory, the West Bengal State Government enterprise, is working in full swing and its recording theatre will start functioning shortly. The situation may aptly be described as "poverty in the land of plenty."

Poverty is in the *quality* of films. The ills of the Bengali cinema and the Bengali



Marriage is a marriage even if the bridegroom is dying, a form of *Sati*. A working still of Gautam Ghosh directing Sampa Ghosh and Pramod Ganguly in *Antaryali Yatra*, the film that won for him accolades and laurels (Photo : Ranjan Ghosh).



The Bride and the Bridegroom—a Tree: A still from Aparna Das Gupta's under-production film *Sati*, about a rare Bengali Brahmin custom of unmarried girls being hustled into marriages with selected trees of the village. Shabana Azmi is being led to the tryst with her destiny (Photo: Nemai Ghosh).

film industry have been ascribed to many factors or trends, like the fragmented market following the partition of the country four decades ago, the stranglehold of

the monopoly over the market, which is made worse by speculation, the distributor-exhibitors' control over the film-making process, the shelving of the State Government's scheme of financing feature films during the last three years and so on.

While these factors are undoubtedly responsible for the decline of the Bengali Cinema, there is no denying the fact that Bengal is in the grip of a serious cultural vacuum and the sooner the malaise is recognised, the better for all. Decadence is evident in every sphere of culture — theatre, literature, music, etc. Perhaps, one can trace its roots in the slow economic and industrial development of the State and hence a Bengali's slower response towards finding a resolution of the conflict between modernity and tradition. Responses, as there have been, are at best, tentative, uncertain and ambiguous.

The malaise is reflected in the dearth of new talents. Four years ago, the West Bengal Government gave assignments for the production of 23 shorts and documentaries, each 20 minutes long, to as many new talents. The idea was to promote this genre of films and, thereby, bring about an improvement in the documentary scene of the State. Perhaps, a hope was implicit in the venture that then, after gaining experience, they can easily shift to feature film-making. The total amount involved was about Rs. 27 lakhs. The Government has received 14 films uptil now, out of which only two or three were found to be competent. Nine are yet to be completed, although more than three years have elapsed. After all, every art scene becomes interesting and exciting with the emergence of new talents. We always look back to the trio of stalwarts, Satyajit-Ritwik-Mrinal or the quartet, Buddhadev Das Gupta-Gautam Ghose-Utpalendu Chakraborty-Aparna Sen. It is interesting to note that a long gap intervened between the emergence of these two groups, and perhaps, this time it will be a longer wait. Better late than never!

"Where is the New Cinema? Does it exist?" shouts Mrinal Sen, the stormy petrel of Bengali cinema, with his usual rage and cynicism. In fact, not a single good film was made during the last one year. Gautam Ghose's *Antaryali Yatra* was made in 1987 but censored in January, 1988.

Ghose and his contemporaries, Buddhadev, Aparna, and Utpalendu have all gone for the small screen. Aparna Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane* and *Paroma*, Gautam Ghose's *Puar*, Buddhadev Das Gupta's *Phera* were all produced in the private sector and all the films, except *Phera*, were distributed by the same sector and earned, good money at the box-office, raising a hope that the new generation of film-makers have earned the confidence of the commercial sector and that they will have no difficulty in getting financiers and distributors for their films.

That the hope was to be belied in such a short time was beyond imagination. *Phera* has not yet been released. Buddhadev Das Gupta had to redeem the situation with a premiere through the TV. Gautam Ghose's *Antaryali Yatra* has been taken over not by a local distributor, but by one in Bombay. On the production side, the only financiers of good films are the governmental agencies like NFDC, Doordarshan and Films Division. The State Government's unwise decision to discontinue financing of feature films has worsened the situation.

All this brings to the fore the question of audience. Despite the strongest and oldest Film Society Movement in the country being in West Bengal and the good work done by *Nandan*, the art-theatre complex owned by the State Government during the last three years, how far have we succeeded in changing the popular taste for cinema or to wean away a section from the majority audience is for anybody to see. Perhaps, the issue deserves serious attention of all concerned, for the

public taste for culture is, after all, a by-product of the social, economic and political situations, educational system and cultural policies of a country. When a powerful media industry continues to degrade the cultural standards in the name of public taste, government intervention becomes necessary and a cultural policy — in the present case, a Film Policy — is essential.

The staple diet of popular Bengali film consists of sentiment and melodrama with the family as an institution at the very core. The inner conflict of a *self* is beyond the purview of a Bengali commercial cinema; and the genres like comedy, musical, etc. are out of fashion. No wonder, in such a situation, *Gurudakshina* and *Choto Bon*, both over-sentimentalised and melodramatic (and directed by Anjan Choudhury) are the *hits* of the year. *Gurudakshina*, based on a story about a young singer paying his respect to his *guru* after going through a lot of tribulations, has broken all records of the past, though a well-known critic has labelled it "as melodramatic and improbable as ever".

The Bengali film with the Hindi formula of sex and violence has never been accepted by Bengali audiences. No surprise, therefore, Victor Banerjee's *Agoon* just managed to break even. The greatest disappointment came from Tarun Majumdar, who is known to be one of the competent and popular film directors. In his *Parashmoni*, he was after "the utmost point of compromise" between the Hindi commercial style and pseudo-realism of the light variety of Bengali films.

The Bengali audience of popular films lives in two make-believe worlds — one of domestic virtue and the other of sex and violence. One soothes his disturbed conscience; the other relieves him of boredom and monotony. Thus, continues the stranglehold of the commercial films. Either way, he finds an escape from the reality, which is unpleasant and challenging.



Ramayana according to Ray: Sutyajit directing a group of youngsters for a short sequence from *Ramayana* that occurs in the filmic tribute to his much-talented father, Sukumar Ray. This documentary was sponsored by the West Bengal Government. (Photo: Nemat Ghosh).



Ebullient Mrinal Sen as a "shy" director with a rehearsing Aparna Das Gupta : On the sets of *Ek Din Achanak*, an NFDC-Doordarshan co-production (Photo : Nemai Ghosh).

The depressing situation can also be seen in the field of acting. The best of stars from Anil Chatterjee and Soumitra Chatterjee to Aparna Sen and Madhabi Chakraborty are now rarely seen in any popular film. They too have aged. New talents worth mentioning are yet to appear. Meanwhile, the producers are bringing in Juhi Chawla, Farha and Deepika to play lead roles in Bengali films. Between 35 and 40 films are being produced in a year. Till September this year, 31 films were released, of which two were super-hits and five semi-hits.

The hopeful signals, however, come from the two stalwarts of Bengali cinema, Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen. Ray made a documentary on his illustrious father, Sukumar Ray. Currently he is busy making meticulous preparations for his next feature film which is expected to go to the studio floor on December 1, 1988. The story is loosely based on the well-known play, *Enemy of the People* of Henrik Ibsen. Mrinal Sen, after his Hamletian dilemma of "TV or no TV", has opted for the big screen and has just completed the shooting of his new Hindi film, *Ek din Achanak*, based on a story by Ramapada Chowdhury. In this film, Mrinal Sen once again re-examines the problems of the Bengali middle class in the larger social context. Both are NFDC productions.

Mrinal Sen is also engaged in making a documentary on Calcutta, which is part of a serial on six cities of the world, sponsored by the Dutch TV.

Last year, Aparna Sen started her new feature film, *Sati*, also financed by NFDC. But the project had to be suspended due to some inherent difficulties. It is now heartening to know that the project has been revived and shooting will start sometime this year. *Sati* is the story of a dumb woman, supersitiously married to

a tree but impregnated by a man. When the man refuses to marry her, she goes back to the tree only to be killed in a thunderstorm. Meanwhile, Aparna has completed a TV film, *Picnic* with Shabana Azmi, Sreia Mazumdar and Farooq Shaikh and each of them faces an aspect of human relationship and comes to terms with it. Incidentally, for Shabana Azmi, this will be her first appearance in a tele-film.

Gautam Ghose is waiting with his fingers crossed for the release of his film, *Antaryali Jatra*, an exceedingly beautiful work on some aspects of *Sati*, if one takes Shatrughan Sinha's histrionics in one's stride. Gautam's next venture is a tele-film on a family, which goes to a winter resort and the family members discover themselves in the new atmosphere and situation. After completing two documentaries on Indian sculpture and the *Patuas* of Bankura, Buddhadeb Das Gupta is now getting ready for his TV film, *Bagh* (The Tiger Man).

Early this year, Utpalendu Chakraborty made *Bikalpa* for Calcutta Doordarshan—a story of a father in search of an alternative suitor for his daughter, who lost her lover—her private tutor, who died due to intransigence of her father. The film earned him popular acclaim. Utpalendu has started a TV serial of three parts on the position of women in our society.

This year, Sandip Ray presented on Doordarshan a serial under the banner "*Satyajit Ray Presents*". He has currently made a film in video to pay his tribute to Kishore Kumar, a shorter version of which is likely to be presented on TV. Nabyendu Chatterjee of *Chopper* is now busy completing his latest film, *Parashuramer Kathar*, "a bold effort based on a very unconventional story."

Raja Mitra, a new talent, whose *Ekti Jiban* was in the "Indian Panorama" at Trivandrum Filmotsav last year which helped the entry of his film in the Cannes and Mannheim Film Festivals this year, is now working on a Films Division featurette, *Behula*, on the confrontation between science and superstition in our life. Mriganika Sekhar Ray, whose short, *Two Cultures*, was also at the Filmotsav, is launching his new feature film, *Sonar Paira* (Golden Dove) based on a story by Avijit Sengupta.

May be the Bengali film reveals its resilience and asserts itself in 1989.

IBSEN INSPIRES SATYAJIT RAY

The New Year, 1989, will see Satyajit Ray's 26th feature film, *Ganashatru*, based on Henrik Ibsen's vintage play *An Enemy of the People*. This is some thing one can look forward with eagerness, since for five years we have had no new film from Ray. An NFDC production, this film in colour is being shot by Barun Raha. It features Ray's favourite Soumitra Chatterjee in the lead role, with Dhritiman Chatterjee, Ruma Guha Thakurtha, Mamta Shankar, Vishwa Guha Thakurtha, Dipankar Dey, Subhendu Chatterjee, Manoj Mitra, Rajaram Yagnik and Satya Banerjee in supporting roles. Dulal Dutta, as usual, will be the editor. The music will be scored by Ray himself, as in the past.

THREE CHEERS FOR BLOCKBUSTERS

A. RAM BABU

Blockbusters have at last arrived and hit the Kannada film scene with a bang. This platinum jubilee year of Indian Cinema (1988) will go down in the annals of Kannada film history as the year that witnessed the launch of many prestigious productions, the likes of which were never heard of before in this tiny industry.

Of late, a sea-change has come over the ethos of seasoned producers in Karnataka, the State that has been for years struggling to find a place in the sun. It never rains, but pours in Karnataka. If this year's monsoon deluge broke a dry spell that had lasted many years and ravaged parts of the State, the ominous emergence of blockbusters is threatening to sound the death-knell of small-budget ventures. The prevailing credo seems to be that nothing succeeds like excess.

The audiences, hitherto fed on non-Kannada glossies, are now discovering the pleasures of showbiz in their own language. Like never before, the movie merchants are scrambling for bigger and bigger slices of the cake. In the face of the stiff competition posed by the expansion of television and video, the only way out for those in the celluloid showbiz seems to be to devise and peddle spectacles that cannot otherwise be savoured on the small screen.

Slowly, but surely, the Kannada film industry is getting assertive. Until not so long ago, it nursed a pathological grievance that it had to grow in the shadow of giant industries of Telugu and Tamil films not to speak of the debilitating influence exerted on it by the Hindi film industry.

But for the Karnataka Government's restrictions on dubbing films from other languages into Kannada and its dual policy in show tax and entertainment tax concessions, Telugu, Tamil and Hindi extravaganzas would have swallowed up the Kannada industry. Any assessment of the progress of the Kannada film industry has to be made keeping in mind the climate in which it grew. The Kannada producers are beginning to realise and be convinced that the mesmeric appeal of non-Kannada movies is largely due to their production values and technical polish. At present, they seem hell-bent on shedding their inferiority complex and jump on to the bandwagon like their counterparts in other affluent language cinema industries.

In their new-found enthusiasm of having discovered the sure-fire formula for commercial success, they care two hoots for storylines and give three cheers for blockbusters, which display a marked tendency for exhibiting gloss. So long as the movies are visually stylish or garishly appealing, it seems to matter very little to the



Gautami and Ambarish with *Leela* between them. From the Kannada Film *Elosuthina Kote*.

producers and the directors if their efforts are thematically empty or replete with absurdities of plot.

This sudden craze for extravaganzas can be attributed to the unprecedented box-office success of *Prema Loka*, a glossy musical, which served perfectly as an ideal launching pad for actor-director Ravichandran, whose name instantly became synonymous with extravaganzas. Post-*Premaloka* days have really proved heady

for the young star and people are now looking up to him as the high-priest of glamour. Many producers have started having second thoughts about their investment patterns, choice of cast and subjects for their films.

Prem Loka remained a landmark of sorts. If Pattabhirama Reddy's *Samskara* heralded the glorious era of the art cinema in Karnataka in the early 'seventies, Ravichandran's film opened up a glamorous chapter of big-budget extravaganzas in the late 'eighties. The film was produced by his indulgent father, Veeraswamy, who initially thought that his son had gone bonkers to sink so much money (over Rs. 75 lakhs) in one film, while with that amount at least five ordinary Kannada films could have been made. But after tasting the success of his son's gamble, he says fondly that he has surrendered to his son and that he is "content with serving him as his Production Manager."

Prema Loka has a simple story of love that is disapproved by parents, who ultimately come round. It is an inspired Kannada adaptation of the English film *Grease 2*. With it Ravichandran turned a director. Before that, he appeared in eminently forgettable roles in films produced by his father and others. To any serious film-goer *Prema Loka* per se is no great shakes, but its novelty of treatment, elegant picturisation of catchy lyrics captured the imagination of entertainment-seekers to such an extent that Ravichandran bulldozed his way into the hearts of the younger generation. His later films *Ranadheem* and *Anjada Gandu* (not produced by him) were also made lavishly and became money-spinners.

In his insatiable zeal to rise on the national horizon, Ravichandran launched his multi-crore opus, *Shanthi Kranthi*, a film in 70 mm to be made simultaneously in four languages — Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. In all of them he is the hero. Who else? To make this ambitious venture, he has requested the Government of Karnataka to allocate him 50 acres of land to erect sets for the climax of the film, which involves blasting a town. His deal with the Government is that he will turn the area into a "Film City", thus fulfilling his responsibility of contributing to the development of infrastructural facilities in Bangalore.

Ravichandran has changed the face of the Kannada cinema in yet another way and the repercussion of this has been markedly felt during the year 1988. His inclusion of Juhi Chawla in *Prema Loka* and Kushboo in *Ranadheera* paid off richly, although the role of these two imported beauties from Bombay was nothing beyond ornamental.

A curious fact about the 51 films released up to November (third week) is that a majority of them had non-Kannada speaking heroines. If the heroine in an average Kannada film today is not a Telugu, Tamilian or Malayali, she is invariably from Bombay. Notable among the Bombay imports are Kimi Katkar, Poonam Dhillon, Moon Moon Sen, Dipika Chiklia (Sita of the TV serial, *Ramayana*) and Poonam Chitnis, apart from the two mentioned earlier.

Others lost no time in catching up with the new tricks of the trade. S.V. Rajendrasingh Babu, who is relatively better equipped with a grasp on the medium to exploit its commercial possibilities, has launched his ambitious 70 mm bilingual extravaganza: *Bannada Gejje* in Kannada and *Prema Yudham* in Telugu. Even as the movie is still in progress, Babu started yet another 70 mm venture in the third week of November, *Muthina Hara*, which is set against the backdrop of turbulent years of war. It tells the story of a patriotic jawan caught up in a series of personal tragedies.

Another 70 mm film being shot on a massive scale (foreign locales) is *Sharavetada Saradara*, directed by K.V. Jayaram, whose task above everything else



Ravi Chandran and Poonam Dhillon in a tender moment. From the *Yudha Kanda* of *Mahabharata*, a Kannada film.

seems to be to establish the star image of a new actor, Kumar Bangarappa, son of Bangarappa, one of the most influential Congress-I leaders in the State.

Among the Cinemascope ventures that were either launched or released during the year are *Tayigobba Karna* (starring Ambarish and Sumalatha), *Poli Huduga* (Ravichandran and Karishma), *Sambavami Yuge Yuge* (Murali and Sundharani) and *Ranaranga* (Shivraj Kumar and Sudharani).

Superstar Raj Kumar's first son, Shivraj Kumar, who was introduced as the hero in *Anand*, directed by Singeetham Srinivasa Rao, has established himself sufficiently well to be his father's successor as mass hero after his first three films, *Anand*, *Rathasphumi* and *Manamechida Hudigi* became money-spinners with silver jubilee runs at the theatres.

In his next film, *Shivamechida Kannappa*, which has a folklore theme, Shivraj Kumar shared acting honours with his father, who symbolically shed his traditional hero-image, by appearing in a character role. The idea is to make way for his sons, who are being groomed to step into his shoes. His second son, Raghavendra Rajkumar, made his screen debut this year with *Chiranjeevi Sundhakar*, which did not click at the box-office. The industry grapevine has it that Raj Kumar is planning a series of ambitious films to consolidate the fan following of his sons.

Now, about a handful of films during the year that deserve special mention for their very own reasons:

The delightful experimental dialogue-less film *Pushpaka Vimanam* — this year's Panorama entry — directed by Singeetham Srinivasa Rao has won the National Award. It is a film that combines aesthetic merit with mass appeal. It enjoyed a fairly good run in Bangalore, although it proved to be damp squib, when it was released in other parts of the country. This film, incidentally, was shown at the Moscow Film Festival.

Suprabatha starring Vishnuvardhan and Suhasini is a clean film that enjoyed considerable appreciation among discerning audiences. It is now heading for hitting a century. It tells the love story between a man, who suffers from an inferiority complex because of speech defectiveness and a girl, a victim of traumatic experience of deception in a love affair.

Avale Nanna Hendthi, directed by two virtual non-entities, Prabhakar and Umesh, featuring the maverick hero, Kashinath, proved to be a super hit having a run for 25 weeks. The film, made on a very modest budget, tackles the dowry theme in a status-quoist style, but in a cinematic language easily related to by lower and middle class audiences. Spurred on by their success, the young director-duo has launched another film *Avale Nanna Ganda*, which promises to be a clone of its original in treatment and with the same cast.

One film that stood out from the rest particularly because of its boldness of theme was *Kedina Benki*, a screen adaptation of N.D. Souza's popular novel of the same name. The debonair actor turned director, Suresh Heblikar, got a shot in the arm, when this film won the National Award as the Best Kannada film. The film, he claims, is a cinematic representation of the Freudian concept of Oedipus Complex and other sexual abnormalities. But contrary to his claim of having made a "sex education film", one cannot but say it suffers from simplistic and pedestrian treatment of a problem that needs a much more serious approach.

Veteran director K.S.L. Swame (Ravee), who is the present Honorary Secretary of the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, came up this year with a sentimental family drama, *Mithaleya Seetheyaru*, which he claims to be his "cleanest and most socially purposeful film so far." It deals with a story of three middle-class sisters, who are exploited by their indolent and irresponsible father. Ravee is apparently cut up, when his film was not selected for the Indian Panorama section at 12th IFFI. However, he has a novel idea up his sleeve to produce "better films" under a co-operative venture, involving like-minded film personalities. Noted stage personality Nagabharana, who entered movies as a director of New Wave films with *Grahana* offered a middle-of-the-road clean film *Asphota* this year. For all its intelligent script, tackling the issue of unscrupulous politicians exploiting youth power for their selfish ends, it met with lukewarm reception.

Cinematographer B.C. Gowrishankar, who has several State awards to his credit came up this year with his second directorial effort (after the controversial *Kendada Male*) called *Elusutthina Kote*, which he claims is an inspiration of Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*. Despite its best intentions, the film loses control of its sense of priorities and ends up being just another well-photographed potboiler.

Even a brief overview of the tendencies in the Kannada filmdom cannot be complete without knowing something about what the harbingers of the New Cinema are doing at present in a milieu suffused with unprecedented commercialism. A quick look at them:

Pattabhirama Reddy of *Samskara* fame has for all practical purposes given up filmmaking. He is now leading a retired peaceful life with his son, Konark Reddy, pursuing his musical interests by teaching Western instrumental music to young aspirants and his daughter, Nandana Reddy busying herself with her trade union and child welfare activities.

M.S. Sathyu, the maker of *Garam Hawa* and *Barn*, among others, has taken to directing TV serials for national network. He has made a splendid Kannada serial based on stories of Jnan Peeth award-winner, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar. His latest

venture is a TV serial for the national network based on the Malayalam masterpiece (*Kayar*) of Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. The English translation and the film's script were prepared by a veteran Bangalore-based journalist, Babu Bhaskar. The story encompasses six generations beginning from the early 19th century and ending in 1970. Sathyu has just started shooting the serial that has epic dimensions. The story begins from the time of first efforts at the classification of land and properties initiated by the Maharaja of Travancore and traces the gradual change in the socio-political structure of the princely State through the life of the people in a village.

Girish Karnad, who was recently given the responsibility to head the Sangeet Natak Akademi as its Chairman is relatively inactive, when it comes to directing films. A year ago he completed a Films Division documentary on ancient Carnatic musician-saint Purandaradasa. After that, he was in the USA on a Fulbright fellowship to give lectures in various universities. He has acted recently in the tele-serial, *Jugalbandhi*.

B.V. Karanth (of *Chomana Dudi* fame) has been appointed by the State Government to head the Natak Karnatak, a theatre repertory in the making. His wife Prema Karanth has not made any film after *Phaniyamma* was released in 1983.

Girish Kasaravalli's last year's national award-winning *Tabarana Kathe* got released finally in the commercial circuit one long year after its completion and as expected fared poorly in the cinemas. He is doing a TV serial for Bangalore Doordarshan.

N. Lakshminarayan, who takes credit for being the earliest film-maker to have inspired a 'feel' for the *avant garde* cinema with films like *Naandi* and *Mukthi*, is now doing short films for Films Division and the State Government.

The never-say-die novelist turned film director, Baragooru Ramachandrappa, who made offbeat movies such as *Ondu Oorina Kathe Benki* and *Soorva* (in 1988), is now attempting a novel experiment of a dialogue-less musical, a sort of homily against untouchability and casteism.

G.V. Iyer named the first winner of the Puttanna Kanagal State Award (1988) with a cash-prize of Rs.2 lakhs has completed his latest venture *Wall Poster*, which he claims takes a sympathetic look at small-time functionaries of the tinsel world.

Nagabharana, who is disappointed by the poor response to his *Ashpota* has embarked on a run-of-the-mill potboiler, thus coming to terms with the demands made on him by the industry.

The latest film by FTII graduate, Umesh Kulkarni, *Utthara Boopa*, after running into censor problems is now ready for release, but unfortunately there are no takers for it.

In short, it can be said that the year 1988 has been quite a significant year for Kannada film, which is well-poised for widening its market potential. The shortfall in production by about 20 percent over last year's output can be attributed to the six-week long film *bundh* observed in September last, when production activities had come to a standstill.

THE SITUATION IS DISTURBING

PURUSH BAKAR

Ask any Marathi film-goer his opinion about the present-day Marathi films. Either he will poo-h-poo or he will see straight into your eyes and say that they are very bad. If he happens to be old enough and had seen earlier Marathi films produced by Prabhat, Mangal Chitra, Master Vinayak, Raja Paranjpe, Raja Thakur, Datta Dharmadhikari and others, he will talk nostalgically about them and finally, with a sad note, decry the present trend of Marathi film production as not having true *Marathiness* about it. He is absolutely right. Present-day Marathi films are not really *Marathi*. They do not present Marathi culture, traditions or customs. They are crude copies of old and present Hindi hits. There was a time, when stories of hit Marathi films were purchased avidly to be re-made in Hindi. Now the situation has been reversed. Old Hindi hits are made into Marathi films.

There is no dearth of good stories in Marathi. Marathi literature and theatre show progressive trends, while Marathi films lag behind. One of the reasons for the down-fall of Marathi Cinema is due to the State Government's policy of giving grants to the tune of Rs. 8 lakhs per picture on the basis of entertainment tax collected. The main idea behind this, according to the Government of Maharashtra is to promote production of better Marathi films, both thematically and technically, but the scheme is being misutilised to churn out sub-standard productions in every respect, just to get the benefit of the government grant. That is why there is a spurt in the production of meaningless films.

In the year 1987, 27 Marathi films were censored. Out of these, 8 films were released only this year. A few were released last year, but quite a few are yet to see the light of day. *Gammat Jammatt* and *De Danadan* were released last year (1987) and were successful in completing silver jubilees. Dada Kondke's *Muka Ghya Muka* was released in 1987 and was expected to run for a silver jubilee, like his earlier eight films, but it flopped miserably and so Dada Kondke was not anywhere in the picture during 1988.

During the first nine months of 1988, nearly about 20 Marathi films were released in Maharashtra, a few in Bombay and Pune, but others were released in places like Sangli and Kolhapur, since theatres were not available in Pune and Bombay. Sangli and Kolhapur are coming up as two major centres for release of Marathi films. Out of 20 films released in 1988, *Khatyal Sasoo Nathal Soon*, *Chal Re Lakshya Mumbaia* and *Changu Mangu* did fairly good business, while the others did average to below-average business. *Changu Mangu* is a carbon copy of the old Hindi film *Do Phool* (Two Flowers) whereas *Chal Re Lakshya Mumbaia* is a clear lift from a famous American film. Both are comedies. At present, there is a trend of comedies in Marathi. Once the picture of a particular style and trend becomes a hit, then everyone

follows the same pattern till it is rejected by the filmgoers. Dada Kondke started this trend of comedies, with *double entendres* — one straight forward and the other smutty. This is now followed by others. Aping the box-office hits is the present creed of Marathi producers.

Production of Marathi films in the year 1988 will probably exceed the 27 that were produced last year. Dr. V. Shantaram, the veteran, has recently produced a Marathi film called *Ashi Hi Banwa Banvi*, under Dr. V. Shantaram Productions' "Youth Wing". It is directed by Sachin and have four heroes and four heroines. It is a slapstick kind of comedy, with good production values in the context of Marathi Cinema. It is a tale of four youths in search of accommodation. Since bachelors are looked down upon by landlords the bachelors have to pretend as married persons. So, two of them change to female costumes and behave as if married to the other two. There is nothing new in this theme. Shantaram's grandson, Sushant Ray, is one of the four heroes along with Sachin, Ashok Saraf and Lakshmikanth Berde. Shantaram is a legendary name in Indian Cinema and the great film-maker has always regarded cinema as something more than entertainment. It is sad that he has produced a purposeless, boisterous comedy, when the filmgoer's expectation from him is always something different.

Another comedy film, *Muzach Maza* produced by Kishore Miskin was also released at the same time that *Ashi Hi Banwa Banvi* was released. This also has Lakshmikanth Berde in it. This film too is also below average in every respect. It has already flopped at the box-office. Very shortly, two more films are due for release. They are *Gholat Ghol* and *Rangat Sangat*. Ad-film producer turned feature film director, Girish Ghanekar, has directed *Rangat Sangat*. Girish Ghanekar has three films to his credit — all of them award-winners! (They are *Gosht Dhamal Nanyachi*, *Hech Muz Mahur* and *Prem Karunya Khullam Khulla*.) He is also directing another film called *Rajane Wajawalla* Baja for producer Manohar Randive. This is also slated for an early release.

Productionwise and releasewise, the year 1988 will supercede 1987, but contentwise, the state of Marathi films is at a standstill. As pointed out earlier, the



Dada Kondke, the well-known prankster of the Marathi Cinema dancing away in *Muk Ghye Mukhe*



Still from *Rangat Gangotri*, a Marathi feature film directed by Gtrish Ghanekar and produced by Uday Laud.

production spurt in Marathi films is mainly to cash in on the benefit of grant from the Maharashtra Government. It is high time that the State Government reconsiders the scheme in such a way that Marathi films can achieve high standards of production, both thematically and technically. It is sad to note that, inspite of about 30 films being produced every year, not a single film gets selected for the "Indian Panorama" or gets recommended to participate in film festivals. There is an acute shortage of dedicated film producers.

During the last few years, the economics of film production have considerably changed. It has become very difficult for a new film-maker to venture out to make a purposeful film especially in the regional languages. The Government of Mahanstra has the Maharashtra Film, State & Cultural Development Corporation, which runs the Film City on a commercial basis. Through this Corporation, the Government can help new talent for the production of good Marathi films, which can enter competitive festivals. The Maharashtra Government should be more critical while announcing the State Film Awards. This is an important factor as it would encourage better Marathi cinema. If the films are not worthy and up to the mark, the Government should withhold the awards.

While going through the released Marathi films during the first nine months of 1988 and the films that are to be released during the remaining months of the year, it can be said that the situation of the Marathi films is not happy and the future is gloomy, unless some drastic steps are taken to improve the situation.

50 YEARS OF MALAYALAM CINEMA

V.K. CHERIAN

Fifty years is a good period for any medium to find its place in a cultural context. Malayalam Cinema, undoubtedly, has been deeply rooted in the Kerala milieu and has become part of its pride, during the last half century. Like in literature, the Malayalis have come to take the creative avenues opened up by the cinema, in all its seriousness. Whether it is down-to-earth commercial films or serious creative work, the Malayali is forced to gauge it through the aesthetic sense, which his cultural heritage has given him.

In fact, this explains the various trends in Malayalam films, which is characterising the Malayalam Cinema in its 50th year. Today, there are two clear-cut trends in the film scene of Kerala. One, which swears by the profit margin at any cost and the other, which struggles to get national and international attention through its creative and aesthetic excellence. Fortunately for Malayalam Cinema and also for the Indian Cinema, both the trends are almost equally strong. Outside Kerala too, Malayalam films are known for its "sexiness" as well as creative merits, reflecting both the two strong trends of film-making.

It is interesting to know how this clear-cut division has come about. The "sex wave" in the North Indian Cinemas was pioneered by the Malayalam films. The initial trend was that of a commercially unsuccessfully Malayalam film getting sold to some one for a paltry sum for distribution outside Kerala territory. The distributor/exhibitor then interpolates the films with what the 'masses' are starved of and sells it in the theatres of a not so familiar milieu. This, of course, proved to be very successful and leading to a rash of all such Malayalam films, which even the Keralites did not have the "luck" to appreciate. All these happened in the late 'seventies side by side, with the onslaught or the formula-ridden trash films.

On the other hand, the strong Film Society Movement, combined with the equally strong literary traditions and socio-political awareness threw up large number of youngsters into the field of film-making. When Adoor Gopalkrishnan and G. Aravindan started their career in films, they were dealing with an audience whose basic aesthetic experience was that centuries' old sanskritised literature.

But today the same film-makers are being appreciated by an audience, which gets to see the best of world films through their film societies. So much so, both Adoor and Aravindan, the two names, which are synonymous with the best films of Kerala, do not have any problems with the box-office returns of their films. Aravindan's *Chidambaram* had fetched the distributor as much as Rs. 20 lakhs as profit within six months of its release in Kerala.

Even if one leaves aside the totally-committed creative film-makers like Adoor and Aravindan, the large number of middle-runners like Bharatan, Satyan Anthicad, Priyadarshan and Balachandra Menon, who are basically a mix of the Film Institute graduates and film society products vie with each other to get into the category called the "Indian Panorama" section of the International Film Festival of India. In Kerala, if anybody in the film-making scene has to be

taken seriously, he or she has to be a "Panorama" film-maker or a winner of the State or National awards. Entry into the Panorama, ensures the return of the investment through national television's "Idiot-box", makes the film and film-maker a household name and raises the film-maker to the category of creative artist. Some even go to the extent of calling these films as made out of the "Panorama" formula.

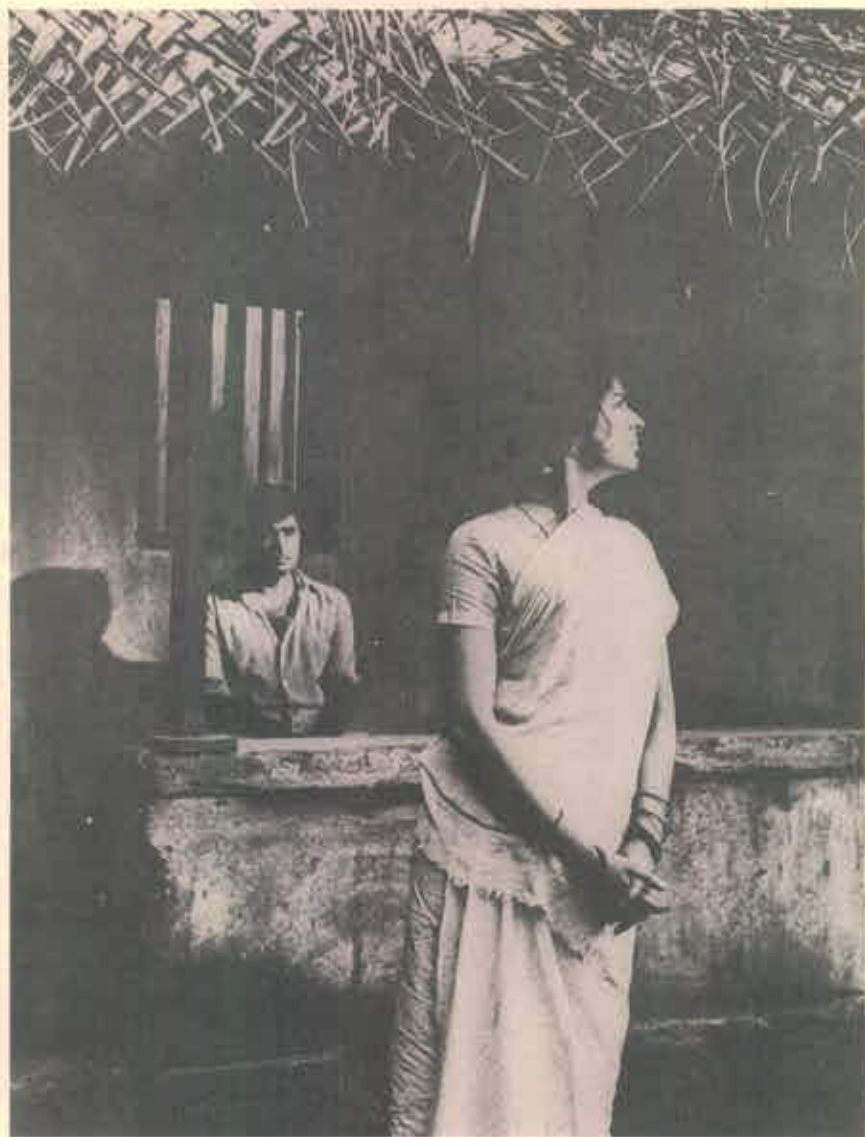
If one looks at the creative film-making scene of Kerala, this seems to be the dominant trend today.

In fact, for the last many years, the Malayalam Cinema had shocked the IFFI audiences with its overwhelming presence in the "Panorama" section. So much so, this year the non-inclusion of two films by two serious film-makers into the "Panorama" section has created a serious controversy.

The strong literary base of the films has more or less declined though film-makers continue to make films based on short stories rather than on novels of eminent writers. This year itself two films, *Rugminini* by K.P. Kumaran, based on Kamala Das's short story and *Kadaltheerathu* by Rajeev Nath based on O.V. Vijayan's story, have been completed and noted for their aesthetic merits. The predominant elements seems to be those of filmy situations and historic aspects. There were two films which got noted nationally this year in this category—*Orethooval Pakshikal* (Birds of the Same Feather) by Raveendran and 1921 by I.V. Sasi. While Raveendran's film is a marxist interpretation of the early trade union movement in the plantations of Malabar, Sasi has based his film on the great "Mappila (Moplah) Rebellion", the first great independence struggle of Kerala.



A still from the pioneering Malayalam film *Neechi Koyil*. Ramu Kariat and P. Bhaskaran jointly directed this film. Bhaskaran also acted one of the three main roles in the film.



A still from Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Swayamvaram*, a Malayalam film that earned some of the highest awards and started off Gopalakrishnan's creative career. Seen in the picture is Samda.

No doubt, whatever be the aesthetic experience, the Keralites awoke to the obituaries written by the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce last year, finding themselves amidst frequent strikes in the theatres and processions of film stars and producers, who feared that the economics of Malayalam film industry lay shattered due to various policies of the State Government and the differences in the tastes of the audiences. It is true that production of films have

been reduced to half of that of the previous year. The *rush* of producers, mostly the *Gulf returnees* seems to be over with the crisis in the Middle East employment market. The reduction in production has affected the economy of the theatre-owners. The Film Chamber has a right to write its own obituaries, but certainly not that of the Malayalam film industry.

Any serious student of film of Kerala and throughout the country knows that with its most modern studio facilities, the Kerala State Film Development Corporation offers any film-maker easy avenues to make a film in Kerala with the other facilities offered by the KSFD Corporation. Many have made use of KSFD and shot films in 16 mm and then blown them upto 35 mm, with unbelievable small budgets. So, the crisis remains that of the industry and not of the medium of Cinema as such.

With the advent of tele-films, the average good film-makers are a happy lot today. They can survive the rigorous economics of the good films through the tele-films without compromises and formulae. Aravindan is shooting his next tele-film. Adoor Gopalakrishnan and K.G. George are preparing for their tele-films. Many others are busy ensuring their daily bread through innumerable avenues opened up by television—Doordarshan.

Any mention of the 50 years of Malayalam Films cannot be complete without the mention of the contribution of late John Abraham. His Odessa Films and Film Society (named by way of homage to Eisenstein) remain as a fitting tribute to the memory of a complete film-maker. John lived with films and for films and though he made only few films, revealed to the world an entirely original creative world of film-making and aesthetic experience. One may analyse and ridicule because of his personal drawbacks, but nobody can ignore his ubiquitous presence during the last 15 years of the last half century of Malayalam Cinema.

The Malayalam Cinema, time and again, has been commented for its thematic excellence. Various social issues are being dealt with even in the worst of films. This tradition has been initiated by the early involvement of writers and leftist theatre personalities like Thoppil Bhasi of the Kerala People Arts Club. They brought in subjects like Harijan emancipation, problems of illiteracy, politics, question of land distribution and trade union movement into the Malayalam films, which nobody could later reject. Even now, the worst of productions base themselves on some theme of social relevance and move onto exploiting it for other purposes. Even a routine film-maker ventures into political subjects, just to be controversial. Films are made out of recent political events to exploit the curiosity of the audiences, who have been involved or heard and seen the actual events.

But in the centre of this confused situation are creative artists like Adoor and Aravindan, whose films have become *happenings* in the Indian film scene. Though no name has come out as prominently as these two there are a few like K.R. Mohan (*Purushartham*), K.R. Pavitharan (*Uppu*), and Raveendran (*Orethooval Pakshikal*) who have the makings of equally eminent creative potentialities and achievements.

Of course, the Film Society Movement buffs and the graduates of the Pune Film Institute like Venu and Sunny Jospheh, Rajeev Vijaya Raghavan are yet to venture into their own productions, though Aravindan's cameraman, Shaji is also doing it. The future seems to be bright at least for the "alternative" Malayalam Cinema though the Film Chamber people are busy writing obituaries and moaning.

FILM INDUSTRY BACK ON ITS FEET

C.V. ARAVIND

The Tamil film industry is back on its feet again, after a harrowing time at the hands of the video pirates, whose machinations upset the apple-cart of many ardent film-makers. With the government machinery proving grossly ineffective in tackling the menace, a pall of gloom had descended over the industry, with collections dropping considerably and with a number of video libraries offering pirated cassettes for a song. One film concern, AVM, using an ingenious ploy managed to trace the theatre from where the cassette of one of their popular films had been pirated and brought the offenders to book. This direct action had a salutary effect.

As things stand now, a number of film-makers sell the video rights straightaway, while some others shrewdly wait till the film has had its run at the theatres. An uneasy truce now prevails, though it is too early to say that the video menace has been checked *in toto*. The industry to a man has now woken up to the fact that the shoddy treatment meted out to it for the past so many years has resulted in a big erosion in profits with the government taking a big slice of the cake by way of entertainment tax.

Parallels have been drawn with the neighbouring States like Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, where the government aid to the film industry has been considerable and in keeping with the revenue netted by it and accruing to the government. A memorandum presented to the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. P.C. Alexander has not yielded any fruit, with the Governor deferring the issue on the premise that an elected government could deal with it, and now the stalwarts have chalked up a plan of agitation, including the closing down of cinema theatres for a week all over the State.

This apart, the Tamil film industry seems to be doing well and 1988 has been quite a good year. If one were to judge the progress of the industry by the number of *muhurats* that are held, one can safely presume that golden days are ahead, video menace and governmental apathy notwithstanding. The real fact, however, is that a number of films do not proceed beyond the *muhurat*. Some of them are dropped half-way, and some of them after completion are left in the cans for want of buyers. Finances continue to be tight and interest levied by financiers are usurious. Big budget extravaganzas come once in a blue moon and most film-makers are content with making small films and earning good profit out of them. More often than not, these films are crisp, human dramas with a lot of sentiment thrown in and inevitably these films manage a good initial draw.

Films like *Penmani Ayle Kanmani*, *Oruvar Vazhum Alayam*, *Kathanayagan*, *Patti Sollai Thattathe*, *Manasukkul Mathapu*, *En Bommakutti Ammavukku*, *Veedu*, *Illam*, etc. belong to this genre. Fazil's *En Bommakutti Ammavukku*, a



With religious hallmark on forehead and a token of love in his hands ; Siva Kumar and Amala in the Tamil feature film *Illam* (Photo : Filmnews Anandan)

re-make of his successful Malayalam film *Ente Mammattikutiyammakku* had a phenomenal run at the box-office and tugged at the heartstrings of audiences, which found his theme a refreshing change from the usual melodramatic formula.

Balu Mahendra's *Veedu* made in 1987 and released this year had a poor run at the box-office. This simple, film, which netted the "Best Actress" award for its heroine Archana and also won the Regional Award as the "Best Tamil Film", was based on a very relevant theme, with Balu sparing no efforts to make it as authentic as possible. The film mirrors life as it is and etches the struggle of a young, employed, orphan girl, who seeks to construct a house. Quips Balu, "I decided to make this film in Tamil, mainly because not many good purposeful films have been made in that language. *Veedu* has not been made with an eye on the box-office and whether it clicks or fails, the satisfaction of having made a good film will remain. As in all my films, in *Veedu* too, my camera is a dispassionate observer, observing how events in a person's life changes her personality wholly."

IV. Sasi, a big gun in Malayalam cinema, made the small budget film, *Illam*, and despite superlative performances by the lead stars, Shivakumar and Amala, and a good theme, the film failed to register with the masses.

At the other end of the spectrum are a few big-budget films, which have done exceedingly well: *En Thangai Kalyani*, *Agni Nakshathiram* Guru Shishyan, *Soora Samharam*, *Poonthotta Kavakaran*, *Nallavan*, etc.

T. Rajender's *En Thangai Kalyani* is on among the biggest hits and this bearded film-maker has become a unique phenomenon in that he is actor, producer, director, music director, cinematographer, lyricist, story, screenplay and



Garlands Galore : Radhika and Vijayakant in the Tamil feature film on the watchman of the garden, *Ponmathota Kavalkaran* (Photo : Filmnews)

dialogue-writer all rolled into one. All his films have captivated audiences especially the womenfolk and women have been the nuclei of his films. Rajender's films always have grandiose sets and his dialogues are full of alliterative prose, which keeps the front-benchers happy.

Mani Rathnam's *Agni Nakshathiram* has completed silver jubilee and this film is a total departure for the man, who made the much-acclaimed *Nayakan*. In *Agni Nakshathiram*, the director has extracted vintage performances from his cast, which included Prabhu, Karthik, Amala and Nirosha (a new find and sister of the brilliant actress, Radhika). In this film and in many others Ilayaraja's music score has been the *piece de resistance*. Music for the masses, magnetic and mesmeric, has been the hallmark of this composer, whose output has been prodigious. His name on the marquee is enough to sell a film, though on occasions he has disappointed.

Students of the local Film Institute are to the fore now and their ventures boast a high degree of technical expertise, which alone ensures box-office success. Significant films include *Oomai Vizhigal*, *Uzhavan Magan*, *Urimai Geetham* and *Senthom Poove*. The last mentioned film has been superbly shot on exotic locations and has a nail-biting climax, the like of which has not been seen in any regional film so far. This unit headed by Abhaavanan has gone from strength to strength and will certainly be around for a long time to come. Bhagyaraj, a household name in Tamil cinema, has made *Ithu Namma Aalu*, a film that fights casteism, but where his mentor Bharathiraja was refined in *Vedam Puthithu*, the protege has been coarse in *Ithu Namma Aalu*.

The star-system which had gone out of vogue after the exit of MGR is back now. While super-stars Rajani Kant and Kamal Haasan continue to command the highest remuneration, a number of lesser lights have stormed the fort. The contenders for the top spot today are actors like Vijayakant, Sathyaraj, Prabhu

and Karthik. These youngsters have come up by sheer dedication and perseverance. Sivaji Ganesan's son, Prabhu, who has stepped out of his father's shadow, has improved considerably and has a number of projects on hand, right now.

Among the heroines, Radhika continues to hold the top position with a number of releases including *Poonthotta Kavalkaran*, *Nallavan*, etc. From a naive newcomer to a polished performer, this actress has made a dent in Hindi cinema too and her *Kudrat Ka Kanoon* a re-make of the Tamil hit *Needhikku Dhandanai* fared exceedingly well. Talented actress Radha has been sidelined and has very few assignments. Upcoming actresses include Gowthami, Charanya, Nishanthi, Pallavi, Rupini and Khushboo, the last three having come down from Bombay. Radhika's sister, Nirosha too is fast becoming an established star, having worked with Kamal Haasan in *Soora Samharam* and having played the romantic lead in *Senthoora Poove*.

Comedy films are back in vogue and funster heroes like Pandiarajan are in great demand. Films like *Kathanayakan* and *Patti Sollai Thattathe* have been big box-office draws. The age-less comedienne of Tamil Cinema, Manorma, continues to enthral audiences in film after film.

As compared to the previous year, there has been no progress on the aesthetic front and barring very few films, the rest have all been half-baked, formula-films, violent and melodramatic at times, far-fetched and unbelievable in others. Scores of films are being made at breakneck speed, but very few of them will cater to the discerning viewer.

Significant among the films on the floors are *Rajathi Raj*, *Apporva Sagotharungal*, *Puthiya Vannam*, *Thai Naadu*, *Moongil Kottai*, etc. With elections round the corner, the industry waits with bated breath for a package from the new government, after it assumes office. If the industry, which now presents an united front, can extract concessions, then the future certainly augurs well in 1989.

IN THE GRIP OF DISTRIBUTORS

G KRISHNA MOHAN RAO

The fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh is an ex-filmstar is an indication of the effect that films and film personalities have on the masses in Andhra Pradesh. N.T. Rama Rao, who over a career spanning four decades, has portrayed the role of Lord Krishna 17 times, Rama 6 times, Vishnu 4 times, Ravana 3 times and in one film he has played the double role of Rama and Ravana (*Shri Rama Pattabhishekam*).

The decades during which Rama Rao has succeeded in establishing himself as the mega-star of Telugu Cinema has also seen the phenomenal growth of Telugu film industry. The output of Telugu films has increased gradually over the years. But in the recent past there has been a sharp increase with 192 films produced in 1986 and 167 in 1987. On an average, two or three films are being released in a week. But the question arises as to whether this quantitative increase has also resulted in a qualitative improvement in the films being produced.

A host of out-and-out commercial films has been released during the current year (1988). Barring a few films like *Kallu* (Eyes) *Swarna Kamalam*, *Badi* and few others, these films have absolutely no aesthetic value and not surprisingly, most of them have bombed at the box-office. The dominant feature of these films is a very thin storyline and total absence of social message. A few loud songs, a couple of fight sequences and vulgar dances have come to form a major component of such films.

The Telugu film industry has over the years come to depend over much on two or three film stars, who have dominated the Telugu Film industry to such an extent that young talent could not make its presence felt. This in a way personifies the shift that the Indian film industry as a whole has undergone from being banner oriented to star-oriented. The domination of such star has led to degeneration of Telugu films in a sense that more and more scripts came to be written to suit the whims and fancies of the film stars. The film stars have exploited the situation and converted their film fans through the medium of fan clubs, into their vote banks. This has also resulted in films being used to settle personal and political rivalries.

Another unhealthy trend is that attempts are being made by veterans like N.T. Rama Rao, A. Nageshwar Rao and Krishna and also some producers to project their sons as heroes, whose only qualification seems to be that they are the sons of star fathers.

However, there is silver lining, and the success of low-budget films like *Kallu*, *Swarna Kamalam* and *Badi* this year has proved that off-beat films can also go well



Kallu is a film about six blind persons. When one of them gets his sight restored he sees so much evil, he wants to become blind again.

with the masses. *Kallu*, which is a maiden venture of cinematographer, M.V. Raghu, is a beautifully made film about the plight of the blind, and is the most acclaimed Telugu film of the year though the point it makes is not at all laudatory. Another film-maker, who makes films with social content, is B. Narsing Rao, whose two earlier films *Maas Bhoomi* (directed by Gautam Ghose) and *Rangula Kala* earned critical acclaim. He has now made an experimental film, *The City*, in which he has projected Hyderabad with all its beauty and ugliness.

To this list can be added the name of M. Ranga Rao, who has made his presence felt in the Telugu film industry with his *avant garde* films like *Viplava Shankam*, *Erra Mallelu*, *Yuvatharam* *Kadhilindhi* etc. A member of Praja Natya Mandali, a wing of IPTA, Ranga Rao has rebelled against the conventional cinema, to which he once ironically belonged and carved a niche for himself in the Telugu Cinema.

One person who has understood the medium well and has made films, which have gone well with the masses and also won critical acclaim, is K. Vishwanath. Some of his films like *Shankarabaranam* and *Swathi Muthyam*, have been successful at the box-office, and also been entered in the film festivals. His latest film *Swarna Kamalam* is the only Telugu film, which has been included in this festival.

A disgusting feature is that Telugu films are now totally in the grip of distributors and financiers, who dictate terms as to the type of films needed. The distributor has become an expert in film marketing by acquiring knowledge of the tastes of the audience in different areas, the appropriate time for release of films and the publicity strategy.

The elements became part of the professional service rendered by the distributor. This inevitably led to the distributor becoming the expert in assessing the market

trends, and thus acquiring a say in the type of films to be produced. The weaknesses of the production system further helped the distributor to worm his way into the business of film production as a financier. The distributor has thus become the main source of finance since he makes the major investment in film production, he naturally tries to cover his risk by attempting to ensure that the film meets his assessment of the box-office requirements.

A peculiar feature of the Telugu film industry is that till recently most of the Telugu films though not all were being made in Madras. Even now, many films continue to be made in Madras, inspite of the fact that Hyderabad has no less than five studios. In 1987, out of 167 Telugu films, 61 were made in Madras. The reason for this can be attributed to the fact that in addition to having better editing and dubbing facilities, Madras is considered a centre for South Indian language films, with most artistes and technicians based in Madras. The cost of film production in AP is very high as practically all artists and technicians have to be brought over from Madras.

The "Slab System" introduced by the State Government for the collection of entertainment tax has adversely affected producers, specially those of low-budget films. Under the new system, a percentage of the house collection has to be paid as tax whether or not the theatre gets filled up. In such cases, by the time the good report of particular film spreads and theatres start filling up, the tax paid could exceed the returns.

The films being shown on TV on Saturdays and Sundays coupled with many TV serials on other days has resulted in a definite fall in cinema attendance. The film industry as a whole is thus undergoing a critical phase. Viewed in this light it will be interesting to see what effect the concessions and facilities offered by N.T. Rama Rao will have on the Telugu Cinema.

ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNMENT'S FILM PROGRAMME

The newly set up Andhra Pradesh State Film Development Corporation is planning to establish a Film and TV Institute for imparting training in all aspects of film production.

The Institute will be housed in the APSFDC complex now being constructed in Hyderabad. The complex will include a recording and dubbing theatre, shooting floors for production of documentaries and TV films, editing rooms and film archives.

The Corporation is also planning to develop sites for outdoor shooting in and around Nagarjunasagar and Visakhapatnam.

The Corporation, at present provides a single-point facility for obtaining permits for location shooting, so that producers need not have to go to different government departments.

मुख्यधारा का सिनेमा और आर्ट फिल्म

अजेश्वर मदान

मुख्यधारा के सिनेमा के बारे में आज भी प्रचुड़-फिल्म दर्शक के लिए सबसे बड़ा सवाल यह है कि यह सिनेमा इतिहास के बाहर अराजकता और बर्बरता की दुनिया में क्यों जाता गया ? आज हमारे यहाँ जो फिल्में बन रही हैं, उन्हें हम इतिहास में क्या सिनेमा के इतिहास में किसी परंपरा के क्रमिक विकास के रूप में नहीं देख सकते, यह कहना भी गलत होगा कि सिनेमा को इतिहास से बाहर उस अस्तित्व के संकट में धकेला है जो उसके सामने टी.वी. और वीडियो ने खड़ा किया है, टी.वी. और वीडियो के तर्क देने वाले यह भूल जाते हैं कि फिल्मों की यह हालत हमारे यहाँ नेहरू युग के बाद हो गयी थी, 'जंगली' जैसी फिल्मों के साथ फिल्मों में जंगल का राज हो गया था, मृणाल सेन जंगल के राज के खिलाफ ही आर्ट फिल्मों का 'मैनिफेस्टो' लेकर आये थे, सिनेमा को पतन की गत से निकालने के लिए अच्छी फिल्मों को तृण देने के लिए एफ.एफ.सी. और नयी प्रतिभाओं के प्रशिक्षण के लिए पुणे में फिल्म एवं दूरदर्शन संस्थान की स्थापना हुई.

आत बहुत साफ है कि टी.वी. और वीडियो ने वेशक फिल्मों के अस्तित्व के लिए एक संकट पैदा किया है, लेकिन उसे पतन की गत में टी.वी. और वीडियो ने नहीं धकेला.

भूल मुझे पर वापस आये तो मुख्यधारा में आज जो चेहरा नजर आ रहा है, वह 'तेजाब' से झुलसा हुआ है, 'तेजाब' यहाँ प्रतीकात्मक अर्थ में है कि उस चेहरे को पहचानना मुश्किल है, फिल्मों ने अच्छे और बुरे आदमी की पहचान ही मिटा दी है, नायक और खलनायक में कोई फर्क नहीं रह गया, इस चेहरे की लोकप्रियता और दर्शकों पर बढ़ते प्रभाव का अनुमान हमसे लगाया जा सकता है कि सिनेमा के संदर्भ में यह चेहरा राष्ट्रीय पत्रिकाओं के आवरण पर भी जगह पाने लगा है.

हालांकि सिनेमा को लेकर इस किस्म की आवरण कथाओं में दर्शकों पर बुरे आदमी के बढ़ते प्रभाव का 'समाजशास्त्रीय अध्ययन' कम ही मिलता है और बुरे आदमी की लोकप्रियता की सूचना अधिक.

सवाल यह है कि इन चेहरों की लोकप्रियता के कारण जानना भी आवश्यक है, 'शोले' के गम्बर सिंह से लेकर 'मिस्टर इंडिया' के 'मोगीबो' तक की लोकप्रियता को इसलिए भी अनदेखा नहीं किया जा सकता कि जब दर्शक इन चेहरों को पसंद करते हैं तो जाहिर है कि दर्शकों के साथ उनका संवाद है, यही नहीं, इन चेहरों का इस्तेमाल विज्ञापन फिल्मों में उपभोक्ता माल और पत्रिकाओं के कवर तक बेचने के लिए हो सकता है.

फिल्मों के इतिहास में जाये तो बुरे आदमी का यह 'ट्रेंड' रमेश सिप्पी की फिल्म 'शोले' से हुआ था, गम्बर के साथ खलनायक का एक ऐसा चेहरा फिल्मों में आया जिसने खलनायकी की परंपरा ही बदल दी, प्राण सरीखे उन खलनायकों की परंपरा समाप्त हो गयी जहाँ खलनायक कैरीकेचर नहीं होता था, जिस देश में गंगा बहती है में राका के 'बिंब' को आसानी से उपभोक्ता माल बेचने के लिए इस्तेमाल नहीं किया जा सकता, अभिनय की दृष्टि से भी वह चरित्र मौलिक था और प्राण ने उसे ऐसा मैनरिज्म दिया था जिसमें गले पर हाथ फेरने वाले लंबाव से उसका फोसी का डर बाहर आता था, प्राण ही नहीं, के.एन. सिंह के अभिनय में कुछ खास अंदाजों को हर फिल्म में दोहराने के बावजूद मौलिक अभिनय होता था, 'बरसात' में राजकपूर ने के.एन. सिंह से कहा था कि बाहर से आपका चरित्र आदमी का है, लंदर से मालू का, के.एन. सिंह ने उस चरित्र को साकार करने के लिए दार्शनिक पड़ा था, उस दृश्य में जहाँ वह पहली बार निम्मी की देखता है, पहले उसके गिर्द चक्कर लगाता है, उसे सुंधता है और फिर कंधे पर उठा लेता है, 'आवारा' में उन्होंने राजकपूर से एक दृश्य में मांग की थी कि इस बच्चे पर मेरी छाया पड़नी चाहिए, क्योंकि यह मेरी छाया में पलेगा और अपराधी बनेगा, तब खलनायक के लिए अभिनय ऐसी यात्रा थी जहाँ कलाकार का भीतर बाहर आता है, 'शोले' के गम्बर के साथ विलेन का जो रूप आया उसमें चरित्र की 'बौद्ध' बाहर नहीं आती, वह रूप चरित्र को, 'कैरीकेचर' और फिल्मों को विज्ञापन फिल्मों की 'मिमोटिक कला' तक रिड्यूस करने वाला था.

यह कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि 'कैरीकेचर' को चरित्र में बदलाने से 'गोमर' कम होता है, अगर गम्बर या 'मोगीबो' में फोसी का डर दिखाया जायेगा तो वे फिर 'राबिनहुड' नहीं रहेंगे, मुख्यधारा के सिनेमा ने 'राबिन हुड' जैसी वंतकथाओं के चरित्रों की सारी ताकत बुरे आदमी को दे दी और अमिताभ बच्चन की 'जबो' के साथ नायक भी प्रतिनायक बन गया, 'दीवार' ने उस नायक को अपराध जगत की पृष्ठभूमि दे दी, मनोवैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से इन चरित्रों की सफलता और

लोकप्रियता का कारण पूंजीवाद की तरफ बढ़ते किसी देश में यह भी हो सकता है कि ऐसे चरित्र दर्शकों के 'अपराध बोध' को कम करते हैं। लेकिन इस बात को भी इन चरित्रों की लोकप्रियता और दर्शकों पर बढ़ते प्रभाव का कारण मान लेना सरलीकरण में जाना होगा, बेशक 'चरित्र' उस खास वर्ग को नैतिक समर्पण देते हों, जो लूट की संस्कृति में यकीन रखते हैं।

फिर भी विचारणीय प्रश्न यह है कि आखिर अपराधी भी 'अपराधी' से कैसे आइडेंटिफाई कर सकता है, दोस्त्यावस्की के उपन्यास 'क्राइम एंड पनिशमेंट' का नायक हत्या करने के बाद 'हत्या' के चिह्न पर ही भड़कता है, वह इस विषय पर बातचीत से बचना चाहता है, क्योंकि इससे उसका 'गिल्ट' बढ़ता है, हालांकि उसके अपराधी होने के कारण समाज में मौजूद हैं, वे अपराधी को समाज और समाज को अपराधी के बारे में सोचने का मौका देते हैं, समाज की विसंगतियों के बावजूद ऐसे 'मूर्ख' हैं जो उसे अपराध-बोध से मुक्त नहीं होने देते, क्या आज बुरे आदमी की सफलता का कारण मूर्खों का गायब होना है, पूंजीवादी प्रभाव में जीवन की कड़ों का कीमतों में बदलना है?

यह अध्ययन का विषय हो सकता है कि क्या फिल्मों के निर्माण के पीछे वह 'वर्ग' शक्तिशाली नहीं है, जिसके लिए जीवन का सबसे बड़ा मूल्य पैसा हो और वह वर्ग माफिया, पुलिस और राजनीति को सटमाट वली फिल्मों से अपनी सत्ता दर्शकों पर स्थापित करना चाहता है, वह अपने पैसे से मुख्यचारा के सिनेमा में कला के सब मानदंड धीरे-धीरे समाप्त करता जा रहा है, दरअसल सिनेमा के पर्व के पीछे जो चेहरे हैं, पहचानना जरूरी है, क्योंकि व्यवस्था कोई भी हो, सामंती, पूंजीवादी या समाजवादी, कला का काम उसके छद्म और विकृतियां सामने लाना ही नहीं होता, कला के कुछ मूल्य होते हैं, मुख्यचारा के सिनेमा में यह होता है कि वहां मूल्य नहीं, छद्म और विकृतियां सिनेमा को बाधुप विस्तार दे रही हैं, 1988 की हिट फिल्म 'तेजाब' ही इसका उदाहरण है कि फिल्म के हर पात्र को हिंसा की सिचुएशन से पद पर परिचित करवाया जाता है, फिल्म की कथावस्तु को बाधुप विस्तार देने के लिए 'हिंसा' का ही ज्यादा इस्तेमाल है।

'तेजाब' के बारे में एक दिलचस्प बात यह है कि इस फिल्म में आइडेन्टाईन की विश्वप्रसिद्ध फिल्म 'बैलश्लिप पौतेमकिन' का आइडेंटिफिकेशन का बच्चागुड़ी लुटकर चला बिच बैक की सीटियों पर फिल्माया गया है, एक निदेशी फिल्मकार ने यह दुर्घटना आइडेन्टाईन की परंपरा को सम्मान देने के लिए रेलवे स्टेशन की सीटियों पर फिल्माया था, लेकिन 'तेजाब' में यह दुर्घटना सम्मान या सिनेमा के संदर्भ में नहीं लिया जा सकता, क्योंकि यह फिल्म फिल्मों के इतिहास की किसी परंपरा से नहीं जुड़ी, सम्मान देने वाली बात भी केवल मेहता की 'मिर्च मसाला' में, जिन्होंने फिल्म के लिए 'रूप' तीसरे और चौथे दर्जा के प्रतिभाशाली सिनेमा से लिये थे, फिल्म में संपादन भी आइडेन्टाईन की परंपरा की याद दिलाता था, 'मिर्च मसाला' में गेट वैसे ही टूटता है जैसे 'गेट अकलूकर' में फुल, लेकिन 'मिर्च मसाला' जलजल चारा की फिल्म थी, वहां उसके विश्लेषण का मौका नहीं, मुख्यचारा में गम्बर, मोगेचो और डाक्टर डेग (कामी) के चित्र लोकप्रिय रूपों का वहां चित्र किया है, उनमें उस द्वैतात्मक प्रक्रिया की गुंजाइश नहीं वहां हम राधा का द्वंद्व जिस देश में गंगा बहती है' में 'फांसी के डर के रूप में देखते हैं, क्या ये फिल्मों एक तरह से आदमी को कानून के भय से मुक्त करके कहीं माफिया की सत्ता ही उस पर स्थापित नहीं करती, दर्शकों की राय इन फिल्मों ने कितनी प्रष्ट की है, इसका अनुमान इससे लगाया जा सकता है कि 'दयावान' में दर्शक विनोद खन्ना को उन सिचुएशंस में स्वीकार नहीं कर पाते वहां वह बूढ़ा है और परिस्थितियों के सामने बेबस है।

यह सिनेमा दर्शकों को फांसी की खुराक दे रहा है, अपराध और अपराधियों को फांसी से ग्लौराइज कर रहा है, क्योंकि चरित्र के निकट जाने से ग्लौर टूटता है, 'शहशाह' का दिन में कायर और स्रष्ट इस्पेक्टर रातो का शहशाह बनकर अपराधियों की आर्तकिल करता है, एक तरह से वह 'जंजीर' के इस्पेक्टर का ही रूप है जो कानून की रक्षा के लिए कानून तोड़ता है।

वहां तक फिल्मों में औरतों का सवाल है, अगर हीरो टार्जन बनेगा तो हीरोइन को उसके लिए जेल का चरित्र अमिनीत ही करना पड़ेगा, इन फिल्मों के चलते हमारे यहां जो औरत कभी फिल्मों में बया की मूर्ति होती थी, आज 'तेजाब' जैसी फिल्मों में दयापात्र की पात्र बनकर रह गयी है, 'दयावान' में भी हीरोइन का यही रूप है, यहां भी अच्छी बुरी औरत का फर्क मिट रहा है, अब 'भस्ती रुचि' के लिए ऐसे काम भी हीरोइन करती है, जिनके लिए कभी 'वितरक' फिल्मों में होलन के डांस की मांग करते थे, पुरुष के लिए हिंसा की विकृतियां हैं और नायिका के लिए सेक्स की 'विकृत सिचुएशंस'।

1988 की ही एक सफल फिल्म 'जख्मी औरत' औरतों द्वारा बलात्कारियों से बला लेने की कहानी है, लेकिन फिल्म में उन दृश्यों को ज्यादा विस्तार दिया गया है जिनसे 'मेल इंगो' संतुष्ट हो, रीप दृश्य हीरोइन की खंड वगैरह को फंसे पर लटकते हुए दिखाया गया है।

दोस्त्यावस्की के 'क्राइम एंड पनिशमेंट' का ऊपर चित्र किया था, उस उपन्यास में क्रिश्चियन बैल्यूज थी, हमारे

यहां फिल्मों में 'धार्मिक रूप' वैल्यूज के लिए नहीं, चमत्कारों को दिखाने के लिए लिये जाते हैं और उद्देश्य 'धार्मिक कहानी' या 'कठमुल्लोपन' का बढ़ावा देना होता है,

अंत में यह कहा जा सकता है कि फिल्मों में आज 'इमेज' का इस्तेमाल उपभोक्तावाद को बढ़ावा देने के लिए होता है, फिल्मों को इंडास्ट्रियल प्रक्रिया से काटकर ऐसा रूप दे दिया गया है जहां हिंसा को भी 'उपभोक्ता माल' में बदल दिया जाता है, मुख्यधारा की फिल्मों में 'कला' न रहकर एक माल है और उनके रूप में उपभोक्ता माल के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए ही काम करते हैं, समीक्षकों को ऐसी स्थिति में 'क्यामत से क्यामत तक' जैसी फिल्मों की सिर्फ इसलिए प्रशंसा करनी पड़ती है कि उसमें हिंसा को पिछली सीट पर रखा गया है, बदला और हिंसा दुन्नों से ज्यादा संवाद में है, कहानी को विस्तार प्रेम के दुन्नों को आगे रखकर दिया गया है,

दूरदर्शन—सिनेमा का सहयोगी अथवा प्रतिद्वन्दी

—बच्चन श्रीवास्तव

अन्य पड़ोसी देशों की तुलना में भारत में टेलीविजन काफी देर से आया। रंगीन प्रसारण आरम्भ हुए तो अभी एक दशक भी नहीं हुआ है। देर से आने और उससे भी अधिक देर से रंगीन होने के कारण भारतीय दूरदर्शन के विकास में जो अवरोध रहा उसे सरकार की नई दूरदर्शी नीति ने सुधारा तथा विगत कुछ वर्षों में इसे नई दिशा, नई लोकप्रियता तथा नई प्रतिष्ठा प्रदान की।

आरम्भ में दूरदर्शन और सिनेमा का संबंध बस इतना था कि सप्ताह में एक फीवर फिल्म और एक बार फिल्मों गीतों का साप्ताहिक कार्यक्रम। कहीं 'चित्रहार' शीर्षक से तो कहीं 'छाया गीत' के नाम से प्रसारित होता था। इनके अतिरिक्त कभी कभी फिल्म अभिनेत्री तबस्सुम का कार्यक्रम 'फूल खिले हैं गुलशन गुलशन' प्रसारित होता था। इस कार्यक्रम में वह किसी फिल्म-व्यक्तित्व से बातचीत कर लिया करती थीं।

आरम्भ में दूरदर्शन के विकास में मुख्य बाधा धनाभाव की थी। श्वेत-श्याम के स्थान पर रंगीन कार्यक्रमों के प्रसारण में, नए-नए केन्द्र स्थापित करने में जितनी राशि अपेक्षित थी उसे सरलता से जुटावाना कठिन था। दूरदर्शन पर अपना स्वीकृत न करने की नीति पूर्वी के अभाव का मुख्य कारण थी। बाद में जब नीति निर्धारकों ने व्यवहारित को स्वीकार करते हुए पहले 'स्पार्टस' (लघु विशालपन) और बाद में प्रायोजित कार्यक्रमों को स्वीकार करना आरम्भ किया तो स्थिति सुधरी इससे दूरदर्शन को विकास के लिए जितनी धनराशि अपेक्षित थी वह उपलब्ध होने लगी। उसी का जनसाधारण को यह लाभ हुआ कि टेलीविजन सेट के प्रयोग पर जो लाइसेंस फीस देनी पड़ती थी उससे उसे मुक्ति मिल गई।

दूरदर्शन की सप्ताहिक लोकप्रियता प्रदान की उस पर प्रसारित प्रथम सोप ओपरा 'हमलोग' ने। पी. कुमार वासुदेव के इस धारावाहिक से तो वास्तव में दूरदर्शन के इतिहास में एक क्रान्ति आ गई।

यू तो 'हमलोग' से पहले ही दूरदर्शन ने धारावाहिक प्रसारण में कुछ प्रयोग किए। 'लालू सिंह टेक्सी ड्राइवर' जैसा बहुत सीरियस दिखा था। फिर के.पी. सक्सेना लिखित 'बीबी नातियों वाली' और चिरंजीव रचित 'दादी मां जागी' जैसे धारावाहिक नाटकों ने दर्शकों को आकर्षित किया। पर दूरदर्शन का अपना दर्शक वर्ग 'हमलोग' से बनना शुरू हुआ। और फिर 'यह जो है बिंदी' 'खानदान' 'पेड़ों गेस्ट' और 'बुनियाद' जैसे धारावाहिक और कालान्तर में 'रामायण' और 'महाभारत' ने करोड़ों दर्शकों को अपने में समेट लिया।

दूरदर्शन की इस बढ़ती लोकप्रियता को देख फिल्म व्यवसाय से संबंध लोगों ने यह कहना शुरू किया कि यह हमारे फिल्म उद्योग के लिए एक खतरा बनता जा रहा है। सिनेमा घरों की दर्शक संख्या गिरती जा रही है तथा अधिकांश फिल्मों आर्थिक दृष्टि से विफलता मुग्त रही हैं।

पर क्या भारत में वास्तव में टेलीविजन सिनेमा का प्रतिद्वन्दी बन गया है? क्या हमारे देश में दूरदर्शन की लोकप्रियता के कारण सिनेमा घरों के द्वार बन्द हो रहे हैं? क्या फिल्म संस्कृति दूरदर्शन-संस्कृति के हाथों हार रही है?

यदि स्थिति का गंभीरता से विश्लेषण करें तो हम अनुभव करेंगे कि वास्तविकता यह नहीं है। यह ठीक है कि देश

के विकास में, जन चेतना जागरण करने में स्वस्थ मनोरंजन प्रदान करने में भारतीय दूरदर्शन महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका प्रदान कर रहा है, पर उससे सिनेमा पर कोई विशेष प्रभाव नहीं पड़ रहा है।

सिनेमा घरों में फिल्में विफल हो रही है यह एक कटु सत्य है, परन्तु इसके लिए स्वयं फिल्म बनाने वाले उत्तरदायी हैं। एक सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार 50 से 60 प्रतिशत फिल्में घाटे का सौदा साबित होती हैं। 25 प्रतिशत खींचतान कर अपने व्यय की पूर्ति कर पाती हैं। 15 प्रतिशत कुछ-काम अर्जित करती हैं। सात आठ को व्यावसायिक सफलता मिलती है। ऐसी तो बस दो या तीन फिल्में ही आती हैं जो जुबली मनाती हैं जैसे कभी "जंजीर", "दीवार", "शोले", ने प्राप्त की थी अथवा हाल ही में "क्यामत से क्यामत तक" अथवा "तेजाब" को मिली है। भारतीय सिनेमा की यह दुर्दशा अब नहीं हुई है। यह स्थिति तो वहाँ से है।

यथार्थ तो यह है कि इधर कुछ अरसे से दूरदर्शन की सिनेमा संबंधी नीति में आए परिवर्तन ने दूरदर्शन को सिनेमा का सहयोगी बना दिया है। इस नई नीति से उस कलात्मक सिनेमा को विशेष रूप से लाभ हो रहा है जो लोक से हटकर बनाया जा रहा है। क्योंकि यदि दूरदर्शन न होता तो ऐसी कितनी ही कलात्मक फिल्में 'हो डिब्बो' ही में बन्द रहतीं और कभी भी सामान्य दर्शकों तक नहीं पहुँच पातीं।

उदाहरण के लिए 'गमन', या सराहनीय कृति 'मिर्चमसाला' यदि दूरदर्शन पर प्रसारित न होती तो कितने लोग ये जो इन्हें देख ही न पाते। वे सिनेमा घरों में चलीं तो केवल गिनती के कुछ नगरों में और वहाँ भी केवल गिने चुने दिनों के लिए। प्रकाश झा का 'बामुल' जिसने सर्वश्रेष्ठ कथा-चित्र का राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार स्वर्ण कमल जीता था, 'मैसी साहब' जिसमें नायक की भूमिका करके रघुवीर यादव ने अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय फिल्म समारोह में सर्वश्रेष्ठ अभिनेता का पुरस्कार प्राप्त किया था, करोड़ों लोग केवल दूरदर्शन के कारण ही देख पाएँ। केतन मेहता की 'होली', गोविन्द निहालानी की 'पार्टी', श्याम बेनेगल की 'त्रिकाल' और प्रकाश झा की 'परिश्रान्ति' फिल्मप्रेमी कभी देख ही नहीं पाते। क्योंकि इस तरह की कलात्मक फिल्मों के खरीदार फिल्म जगत में हैं ही नहीं उन्हें प्रदर्शन का अवसर मिलता भी तो किसी देसी-विदेशी फिल्म समारोह में। वास्तव में दूरदर्शन के कारण ही ये फिल्में सामान्य दर्शकों तक पहुँच गई हैं।

कलात्मक फिल्मों के प्रसारण की जो नई परम्परा गत वर्ष आरम्भ पौड़ी की उन फिल्मों को देखने का सुअवसर मिला रहा है जिन्होंने अपने समय में इतिहास रचा था। दूरदर्शन के इसी कार्यक्रम के फलस्वरूप दर्शक 'रतन' 'रामशास्त्री', 'तानसेन', 'जन्मभूमि', 'आग' और 'आधारा' को देख पाएँ। अन्यथा ये फिल्में अब सिनेमा घर में तो बलाते नहीं।

केवल राष्ट्रीय ही की फिल्मों को दूरदर्शन प्रसारित नहीं करता। सप्ताह में कम से कम एक प्रादेशिक भाषा में बनी उल्लेखनीय फिल्म भी प्रसारित की जाती है। इन फिल्मों का कथानक पहले संक्षेप में हिन्दी में बता दिया जाता है और सामान्यतः ऐसे ही प्रिन्ट दिखाए जाते हैं जो अंग्रेजी में सब-टाइटल होते हैं। इस कार्यक्रम में आमतौर पर वे ही फिल्में प्रसारित होती हैं जो पुरस्कृत हुई हैं या जिन्हें फिल्म समारोहों में प्रदर्शित होने का सुअवसर मिला है।

दूरदर्शन अपने दर्शकों को केवल भारतीय फिल्में ही नहीं दिखा रहा है, सप्ताह में कम से कम एक विदेशी फिल्म भी प्रसारित करता है। अमेरिकन, रूस, ब्रिटेन, हंगरी, चेकोस्लोवाकिया जैसे कितने ही देशों की फिल्में भारतीय दूरदर्शन पर प्रसारित होती रही हैं।

सिनेमा घरों के लिए बनी फिल्मों को अपनाने के साथ-साथ दूरदर्शन ने टेली-फिल्म की एक नई श्रेणी के भी द्वार खोल दिए हैं। महेश मट्ट के निर्देशन में बनी 'जन्म' तथा 'जीवन संस्था', तपन सिन्हा की 'अदमी और औरत' तथा सत्यजित राय की 'सद्गति' दूरदर्शन के छोटे पदे के लिए बनाई गई टेली-फिल्में थीं। इनमें से 'सद्गति' वैसी टेली फिल्म दूरदर्शन ने स्वयं निर्मित कराई है।

इधर दूरदर्शन राष्ट्रीय फिल्म विकास निगम के सहयोग से भी फिल्में बनवा रहा है। मीरा नायर की 'सलाम बाँम्बे' का निर्माण इसी योजना के अंतर्गत हुआ है। आबकला प्रसिद्ध निर्देशक भृगुलाल सेन इसी तरह की योजना के अंतर्गत एक फिल्म 'एक दिन जवानक' नाम से बना रहे हैं।

सिनेमा के क्षेत्र में भारतीय दूरदर्शन की ये गतिविधियाँ इस सत्य की गवाही दे रही हैं कि दूरदर्शन सिनेमा का प्रतिद्वन्दी नहीं, वस्तुतः छोटा परा बड़े परा का मित्र है, सहयोगी है। और लोक से हटी उन फिल्मों को सामान्य दर्शकों तक पहुँचाने का उत्तरदायित्व निभा रहा है जिन्हें स्वयं सिनेमा प्रदर्शित करने का साहस नहीं जुटा पाता। स्वस्थ सिनेमा को जो सरकल छोटा परा दे रहा है उतना तो बड़ा परा भी नहीं दे पाता। फिर मला दूरदर्शन को सिनेमा का प्रतिद्वन्दी मानने की भूल क्यों की जाए ?

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2. **DEEP FOCUS**, edited by George Kutty A.L. from Bangalore.

SALUTING TO THE MEMORY OF.....

GAJANAN JAGIRDAR

Gajanan Jagirdar, the well-known and respected Marathi film producer and director and one-time actor in Hindi and Marathi films passed away in Bombay on August 13, 1988 after a heart attack at the age of 81. For over half a century, he was involved with the film industry in many capacities. He entered the films as an actor and his most memorable role was as a 75-year-old Muslim in Shantaram's celebrated *Padosi* and Jagirdar was just 25 years old then. He had acted in over 300 Hindi and Marathi films.

Jagirdar's early films made a great impact. His directorial venture *Chamon Ki Dasi*, scripted by P.K. Atre was a "horrific" film about a bride and the proverbial mother-in-law. Under the Prabhat banner, he directed and acted in *Ramshastri*, based on the life of an unflinching Maratha judge, which has come to be hailed as a classic. Jagirdar's *Jail Yatra* and *Behram Khan* were very popular. The erstwhile Film Finance Corporation, now NFDC, sponsored his *Donhi Ghurcha Pahunna*.

Jagirdar was the first Principal of the then Film Institute of India (now FTII) in 1961. And he brought great dignity to that office.

Towards the end of his life, he made a Marathi tele-serial on the life of Madhavarao Peshwa, based on a novel of Ranjit Desai—an authentic recreation of Maratha glory on celluloid.

KANTILAL RATHOD

Kantilal Rathod, one of the earliest "New Wave" film-makers whose Gujarati film, *Kanku*, won plaudits here and abroad and an innovator in animation films, passed away on September 28, 1988 at Bombay at the age of 63.

A Gujarati from Raipur, Rathod was trained to be a painter at Calcutta and Chicago. It was at Chicago that he discovered Cinema to be his medium for expression. A film based on a child's paintings which he made there, was taken over by Encyclopaedia Britannia for world distribution. Yet, this film, *Cloven Horizon* raised some doubts in India as to whether it could be classified as a Documentary. This led to a re-definition of what is a Documentary, by way of guideline to the jury for national awards.

Rathod set up the animation unit for Hunnar Films and made a wide variety of animation films, cartoons, puppet films, cut-out films, etc. Some of his own animation films that won acclaim and awards were: *Adventures of a Sugar Doll* and *Business is People*. With a loan from the Film Finance Corporation, he produced and directed *Kanku* based on Pannalal Patel about a bold peasant widow, who falls for the wily moneylender just once and conceives, but who is married off to a bumpkin by the panchayat. This was a memorable, filmatically speaking. His next film *Purnima* with Shabbana Azmi in the lead is about a young couple in a big city, Ahmedabad. And, the city's landmarks are well exploited in the film. His next film

was *Ram Nagari* based on a real-life barber's autobiography, written by a Marathi Dalit writer. Amol Palekar played the lead role.

Rathod's last film was *Waterless in Gujarat* which he made for the INTACH tele-serial, *Virasat* devoted to environment and ecology. It was a big pity he died before the film was telecast.

RAJBANS KHANNA

The film industry being what it is with its topsy-turvy sense of values did not do enough justice to Rajbans Khanna during his lifetime and he did not care. A serious film-maker, who had a perfect understanding of the film medium, its language, its grammar and its potentialities, he made a variety of films, which will stand on their own for all time.

Rajbans Khanna's *The Story of Buddha* (produced by Bimal Roy) was a fitting celluloid tribute to the Buddha, a commemorative film made on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the attainment of *parinirvana* by Sakhyamuni. Tracing the footsteps of the Buddha in North India and utilising the sculptures of Buddhist centres and paintings, Rajbans Khanna made a memorable feature-length documentary. His films on Kashmir were of a different genre. He used the medium of the film to plead India's case against Pakistan regarding Kashmir — as a lawyer would with his arguments in a court. Khanna was an activist, who had joined the Nationalist Conference Volunteers and commanded the militia to save Kashmir from the marauders. He was passionately involved in the subject. *The Great Betrayal* was another film on India and China belonging to this genre.

Khanna also made a feature film on the *Komagata Maru* episode in our struggle for independence, when Sikh nationalists in USA chartered a ship of that name to return to India and faced British bullets.

Rajbans Khanna's swan-song was the 16-part tele-serial, *Amir Khusro*, featuring M.K. Raina in the lead role. It was not a mere film biography of the 13th century poet and mystic as well as popularizer of "Hindavi" (Hindi). It was a film about national integration, fusion of Hindu and Islamic cultures and celluloid proof of India's secularism. Like Kantilal Rathod, Khanna also died before his serial was telecast.

TELEVISION IN INDIA AT A GLANCE

1. Number of TV Transmitters: Total: 265 (High Power Transmitters: 51; Low Power Transmitters: 191; Very Low Power Transmitters: 23)

2. Coverage: Total population: 72.2% (Rural : 67.0%, Urban 88.0%, Areawise 49.4%)

3. Number of TV Sets: Estimated TV Sets 132 lakhs. (Source: Ogilvy, Benson and Mather/OBM). Estimated TV sets produced during 1987: 41 lakhs (Black-and-White: 31 Lakhs. Colour 11 lakhs (Source: Department of Electronics)

4. TV Programme Production Centres of Doordarshan (DD) and Relay Centres (within brackets) are in *Delhi* (Mussoorie) 2. *Bombay* (Pune and Panaji) 3. *Calcutta* (Asansol, Murshidabad and Kurseon) 4. *Madras* (Kodaikanal) 5. Jalandhar (Amritsar and Chandigarh) 6. Lucknow (Kanpur) 7. Trivandrum (Cochin) 8. Bangalore 9. Srinagar 10. Guwahati 11. Ahmedabad 12. Jaipur 13. Hyderabad 14. Cuttack 15. Gorakhpur 16. Nagpur 17. Rajkot 18. Ranchi

5. The Stations indicated by italics in the previous item also telecast School and Higher Education TV programmes, some both in the forenoons and afternoon, some only in the forenoons and some in the afternoons. All TV transmitters carry these programmes ranging from 20 to 45 minutes. Some morning programmes are repeated in the afternoons. Mostly they are in English, but some programmes are in Hindi as well.

6. As on January 1987, the Statewise figures of TV sets were (*in LAKHS*): Maharashtra/Goa: 2989, Uttar Pradesh: 1617, Delhi 1141, West Bengal 1220, Tamil Nadu/Pondicherry: 916, Gujarat: 905, Madhya Pradesh: 823, Karnataka: 667, Andhra Pradesh: 654, Haryana/Himachal Pradesh/Jammu & Kashmir/Chandigarh: 547, Rajasthan: 507, Bihar: 505, Punjab: 349, Kerala: 208, Assam/North-Eastern States: 116 and Orissa: 92. Total: 13256 (Lakhs)

7. The percentage of colour TV sets varies from State to State. In Kerala it is the highest-60%. The lowest-17%, is in Haryana/HP/J&K/Chandigarh. And in the other States/Union Territories it ranges from 18% to 33%. The average works out at 27%. (Source OBM)

8. Between December 1987 and June 1988, Community TV sets functioning in the various States/UTs were as follows: Tamil Nadu: 8042, Maharashtra: 6919, Gujarat: 4503, Uttar Pradesh: 4064, Rajasthan: 1799, Delhi: 1074, Bihar: 993, Andhra Pradesh: 930, Orissa: 694, Srinagar: 581, Punjab: 514 Madhya Pradesh: 412, and Calcutta: 581: Total : 30834

9. Number of TV Licenses as on December 31, each year rose from 41 in 1962 and 93 in 1964 to 649 in 1965. In 1966, the figure was 4170 and in 1969 it jumped to 12,303, then doubled to 24,833 in 1970 and soared to 84,114 in 1972 and again almost doubled up to 1,63,446 in 1973. In 1978, the figure was 8,99,123 and in 1981 it was almost double at 16,72,568. The phenomenal rise during the past few years is as follows :

1982 : 20,95,537

1983 : 27,83,370

1984 : 36,32,328

1985 : OBM Estimate 67,50,000

1986: MARG Estimate 1,10,00,000

1987: OBM Estimate 1,32,46,000

(The yearly licence fee has been abolished since March, 1985)

10. Doordarshan staff as on September 30, 1988 amounted to 13160. The breakdown is as follows: Group A 662; Group B (Gazetted): 1200; Group B (Non Gazetted): 1312; Group C 6766; Group D 2442; Staff artists: 778

11. Doordarshan's Revenue (Commercial Service) - Gross:

1978-79 Rs. 4,97,26,582 1983-84 Rs. 19,78,99,238

1979-80 Rs. 6,16,43,840 1984-85 Rs. 31,43,45,326

1980-81 Rs. 8,07,50,300 1985-86 Rs. 60,20,25,200

1981-82 Rs. 11,26,93,933 1986-87 Rs. 98,31,17,154

1982-83 Rs. 15,88,74,060 1987-88 Rs. 136,00,00,000

12. The Technical standards of Doordarshan are:

TV System: CCIR-B/G

Colour Standard PAL

Number of lines per picture frame 625

Recording format

a. 1"-B Format (BCN)

b. 3/4"-U-Matic (High Band & Standard Band)

c. 1/2"-Betacam (Format being introduced)

13. The newly constructed Pitampura Television Tower is 235 meter RCC-cum-Steel Tower. It is the first of its kind in India to mount the antenna system for TV Channels I and II and All India Radio FB Band antenna. The coverage range for Channel I will now be increased from 68 kms. to 90 kms. (covering a population of 158 Lakhs) and for Channel II from 35 kms. to 85 kms. (140 lakhs).

The TV Tower has an observation gallery at a height of 158.5 mts. and will accommodate about 200 persons at a time. At the height of 155 mts. an air-conditioned revolving restaurant has been provided, completing a circle in an hour and accommodating 96 persons. The tower has two high-speed lifts that will travel at 2.5 mts. per second

14. To provide television service in remote places and hilly areas *unmanned* very low Power transmitters energised by *solar power* are being installed.

Source: "Television India: October, 1988", a research publication of Audience Research Unit of Doordarshan (As on October 1988)

15. According to a private research study the following is the break-up of the Doordarshan programmes:

a. Development and socially relevant programmes: 35%

b. Entertainment and *film-based* programmes: 30%

c. News and public affairs programmes: 15%

d. Educational programmes: 10%

e. Sports programmes: 10%

THE SOCIAL COST OF TV RAMAYAN

CHIDANANDA DAS GUPTA

On the cover of a recent issue of the Bengali magazine, *Sananda*, there appeared a colour photograph of an elderly woman with rouged wrinkles and painted finger-nails, draped in a borderless chiffon sari and flanked by two short-haired girls in jeans and fashionable tops, offering *pūja* to a cow in celebration of the cult of *Santoshi Maa*. It is here that latter-day mythological success of the film *Jai Santoshi Maa* is totally different from the mythologicals of the past. *Jai Santoshi Maa* scored an enormous success not only with the common man but with the sophisticated, "westernized" Hindu middle class, now vibrating to waves of fundamentalist Hindu resurgence.

The older mythological films, which held sway in the pre-Independence period and continued for some time thereafter, were remarkable for their naivety. That is why they formed a conduit for the induction of new audiences to the cinema and still do to some extent. As the cinema reaches new rural and traditional audiences, it is to the mythologicals that the converts have been first drawn. The fact that the films are about gods and goddesses frees them from the aura of sinful modernity that the cinema often represents to traditional groups and their suspicion of the morals of men and women, especially women, who act as though they are wives or beloveds of men actually unrelated to them. The mythological did not (and with the striking exception of *Jai Santoshi Maa* still does not form the favourite medium of the middle classes in the thirties and forties. For them, there were the progressive, modernist films of New Theatres, Bombay Talkies, Shantaram's *Duniya Na Mane* or Master Vinayak's *Brahmachari* (the last with its extraordinary burlesque of traditionalist religiosity). The demand for freedom from the shackles of tradition merged with freedom from foreign rule to form the motive force of the social films of the period and determined the middle class response to them.

The techniques used in *Jai Santoshi Maa* or Sagar's *TV Ramayan* are much the same as in the old mythologicals of Vijay Bhat and his kindred spirits but have lost their innocence. They are now employed with a cunning awareness of their utility in designing an appeal to the present "lost" generation, unable to write a letter in their own language not to speak of reading the epics in original. The miracles so easily concocted on the TV screen have an odd, instant appeal not only to the illiterate masses but to the sophisticated public so alienated from its own culture that it is desperate enough to surrender all rationality in order to find some cultural spiritual *terra firma* under their feet.

When these miracles are described in a text or enacted on the stage, their appeal is to the imagination, which is forced to conjure up a mental picture. In this way, a larger-than-life spiritual image is generated instead of the bizarre physicality of the absurd. When what is obviously a child's bow-and-arrow set appears in the hands of supposedly legendary hero and he fells equally legendary mighty, opponents, it becomes a travesty of the picture that the imagination unfolds in the minds of a reader or the child who hear the story from its grandmother. If this

THE RAMAYAN PHENOMENON

FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

...It has set the Saryu on fire. Why only the Saryu, the Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri, even the mythical Saraswati, appears to have been affected.

Undoubtedly, *Ramayan* is a block-buster in the history of Indian television. On August 1, a crowd of over 40,000 waited patiently outside Jaipur's Birla Mandir to have a glimpse of Rama (Arun Govil) and Sita (Dipika), who were due to grace the shrine. Even ministers jostled with mesmerised fans for a *darshan*. In Chandigarh, guests at a wedding ceremony were kept waiting, as the bride failed to arrive at the *mandap* at the appointed hour. Inquiries revealed that she had refused to get married till the day's episode on the TV was over.

Whether it is Ahmedabad or Patna, Chandigarh or Jaipur, a large number of viewers, especially women, regard the serial as their main method of communion with God. Consequently, many bathe early and light sticks of incense or earthen lamps while the serial is telecast....

The Times of India, Bombay

...According to the Indian Market Research Bureau's (IMRB) recent Television Rating Points (TRPs), *Ramayan* has topped the list with an all-India rating of 74 on a scale of 100, while *Chitrahaar* comes a close second with 67....

Financial Express, Bombay

The Karnataka Government has reportedly instructed the State Electricity Board to ensure proper supply of electricity throughout the State during the telecast of *Ramayan* on Sunday morning and also asked it to change its timings of load shedding so that it does not clash with the time of the serial. This shows the impact of *Ramayan* even on a Government....

Northern India Patrika, Allahabad

....The *Ramayan* popularity saga becomes more and more incredible. A couple of weeks ago, a journalist from a leading Lucknow daily was shocked to discover that the staff of the Ursula hospital at Kanpur could not attend to the patients on Sunday mornings because they were too busy watching the serial, so much so that in the emergency ward, one patient was reportedly trying to change the glucose bottle himself! Further north in Jammu, enraged viewers attacked the electricity office and after damaging the furniture and old records, tried to set the place on fire, all because the power supply to Jammu failed during *Ramayan*'s telecast....

The Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay.

reductionism were to be remedied, and the miracles made credible in their physical impressiveness, the imagination and the resources of a Stanley Kubrick of *2001 Space Odyssey* and not the pitiful abilities of Ramanand Sagar, would be called for.

No wonder the miracles constitute an important element in the appeal of the TV *Ramayan* to the younger generation bred in the English-medium schools to which the Hindi chauvinists and the Hindu fundamentalists, particularly from the most backward areas of the country i.e. the Hindi belt (also well-known as the "Cow Belt") assiduously send their progeny. It is there that they became "convent-

educated" and also dowry-worthy. It is to them that the primitive techniques of Ramanand Sagar have a New York Punk-like regressive pop appeal. This appeal fuses bizarrely with the pull of a resurgent Hinduism that seems to sanction female infanticide after sex determination through amino-centesis, bride-burning in aid of dowry to buy more VCR's and scooters, denial of rights to Harijans, burning of widows etc., in order to reduce the number of claimants to the country's riches.

II

In more ways than one, the *Ramayan* of Ramanand Sagar is un-Indian. Its visual culture is derived from Western models imported into the country by Raja Ravi Varma, the painter from a royal-family of Kerala at the turn of the century. The Rama temples (which signified the beginning of the beatification of Rama around the 10th century) the low reliefs of Ramayana in Prambanan in Java, Rama depicted in Rajput miniatures, the Orissa *patachitras*, Madhubani paintings or the leather puppets of Andhra, to name only a few of the traditional arts have no relationship whatsoever to the *Ramayana* presented to us on our idiot box. The *Ramayana* dance in Bali even today is far more traditional in spirit and visual style than the TV epic. Rama and Sita on a piece of Kalahasti or Kalamkari textiles are Indian. The drawings are flat and there is no naturalism in the Western sense; there is no shading or perspective. If one studies the groupings in any of these indigenous forms, one finds that they achieve a far greater integration of line and colour than either Sagar's *Ramayan* or the oleographs from which they are derived.

The bastardized forms of the modern product became incongruous and bizarre because of the intrusion of an unrelated naturalism. This is in utter contrast to the "company paintings" or Kalighat *pats* or Tanjore paintings where the Western borrowings have emerged with innocence within the indigenous form and integrated themselves with the traditional elements.

While the cinema records the surfaces of reality and thus has a naturalistic exterior, it has given ample proof of the ability to develop an indigenous style of visual representation influenced by the spirit and the techniques of traditional art. In the TV *Ramayan* one will never find the variety and the expert juxtaposition of figures, the organization of spatial relationships that one finds in figurative representation in traditional visual modes.

III

The major factor behind the popularity of Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* on Door-darshan is the timing. Today's resurgent Hinduism is closely linked to the consumerist explosion. Fundamentalism and consumerism have become two sides of the same coin. Consumerism is the outcome of the manufacture of a very wide range of what are luxury products in the context of the vast majority of the people. Also, all said and done, they are the by-products of science and technology. Since applied science takes its birth from pure science, the moment that a section of traditional society adopts the products of science and technology, there arises within it a series of questions of which it may or may not be aware. For science institutionalises the right to doubt while religion enjoins unquestioning faith.

Balasaheb Deoras says neither the courts of law nor archaeologists have any business to find out whether what is believed to be *Ramjanmabhoomi* was actually the birthplace of Rama or not. Iran considers science to be the handicraft of Satan, to be used only in order to destroy him. Islamic fundamentalism in different countries has been fomented by the problem of how much of Science is to be accepted or rejected and on what grounds. Even in the Christian West, there are groups that



Ramanand Sagar's conceptualisation of Rama, duly conditioned by Raja Ravi Varma's oleographs—calendar pictures—that dominated Hindu homes for over half a century (Still from Sagar's tele-serial).

reject Science and believe literally in the Bible but these have been too marginal to affect the course of Western society. In Islam today, they are far from being marginal; indeed the very existence of an all-embracing religion that matters that must be considered secular in a modern democratic society are shot with dangerous contradictions.

There is, therefore, within today's middle class and its peripheries in India, an unresolved, unperceived dilemma, arising out of the double allegiance to Science (at least in the shape of its products) and to questioning religious faith advocated by the Khomeinis and the Puri Shankaracharyas, driving around in their sleek modern cars. That is why the marriage of fundamentalism and consumerism is fraught with danger. Yet it is a marriage being celebrated with wild exhilaration in India today and solemnised by the high priest, Doordarshan with its high tech instrumentality, its torrent of consumerist advertising and its *Ramayana*.

Of course, fundamentalism itself has arisen in India out of a complex set of circumstances. In the pre-Independence period and immediate post-Independence years, i.e. the Gandhi-Nehru era, there was an inspired understanding, assimilation and synthesis of East and West, Science and religion. Tradition and Modernity without any unresolved dilemmas buffeting the sub-conscious of the average citizen.

The fact that Gandhi was opposed to caste and that he never went to temples to pray to idols, did not prevent him from persuading masses of people to move towards a markedly rational approach to life's problems in an age when mass communication technology barely existed. Nehru was able to carry on this tradition persuading a traditional country to move towards a modern India, modern not only in the externals but in spirit. Despite his Harvard and Cambridge upbringing, he was able to convey to the masses something of his confidence in the regeneration of India within a secular framework.

In the post-Nehru period, the leadership gradually retreated from this spiritual identification with the masses and began to put its faith in the gimmicks of mass communication. In an India divided by religion, language, geography, climate, food habits, physiognomy and what have you, unity has always been predicated upon the tolerance of differences and the ability of these differences to coexist in peace. But as the fruits of industrialisation and progress began to appear, the intense competition to grab them began to emphasise differences in group identity in the absence of the sort of spiritual uniting force that informed the dominant political culture of the pre-Independence period.

With the rise of grab-culture, therefore, fundamentalism became as inevitable as consumerism. In an economy of shortages, massive accumulation of wealth, alongside grinding, large-scale poverty, the desire to grab became the motive force of society. Bride burning, female infanticide, Harijan-baiting, the glorification of Sati and Babri masjids have become part of this syndrome.

Even cultural separatism is another aspect of grab-culture, because any minority group, which perceives itself as disadvantaged in the battle for the goodies, seeks to protect its opportunities from dominant groups and superior competitive forces. Hence, those who shout for separatism for the sake of cultural protection are busy destroying the distinguishing traits of their indigenous lifestyles. The same jeans, the same shoes, clothes, haircut, the same Hindi films that inspire them, the same preferences in music, and the same addiction to *Ramayan* are sweeping across the protectionist, so-called cultural minorities asking for separatist status. Their indigenous culture is getting either totally lost or museumised and export-oriented.

This is the social context in which the TV *Ramayan* must be viewed and its popularity defined.

SAGAR'S SAGA OF RAMAYAN

NEELIMA MATHUR

When talking about the *Ramayan* teleserial, I am often reminded of the mass art I see passing around me every day. Couplets and drawings, behind scooters, on the side of trucks, overhanging *dhabba* entrances, inside small-time, noisy, street restaurants.

It is everthing *anti* to what the bourgeoisie considers as aesthetic. Very far removed from the upper-class concepts of culture. That doesn't in any way stop one more bus driver from writing *Buree Nazarwale Teraa Muh Kaalaa* (You, Man with Evil Eye, may your face be blackened. May you be damned!) at the rear of his bus.

It would be best to see the success of *Ramayan* in a similar context. By the very virtue of having attained such widespread mass appeal, it had to be made up of elements, which the upper-class sensibilities do not consider pleasing, sensitive or aesthetic.

This does not either justify the sheer poverty of creativity in the 78-part *Ramayan* serial. Nor negate the phenomenal success of the same. It is success in spite of being a shoddy, plasticised production.

The question is how such a shoddy production can become such a success with a high rating of 74 per cent viewership. For centuries, the *Ramayan* has remained the most popular, acceptable, adaptive, easily absorbed epic of India. It is not the same case with the *Mahabharata*.

In many parts of India, the *Mahabharata* is not even kept in the house as it may lead to quarrels in the joint human family. Tradition does not allow women to read it. Simply because, it is too close to reality and expresses human emotions, relationships, aspirations and ambitions in the most basic, uncouth, brutal form. Thereby, arousing base emotions of anger, violence, deceit, etc. in the reader.

In essence, the *Ramayana* has been conceptually different. It has pain, terror, desertion; but covered in a cloak of pious melodrama and fantasy. The *Ramayana*, as its name indicates, is a saga of hero-worship. Most suited to our tastes. The *Mahubharata* is a saga of the inner self. Something most of us inherently resist.

This is the very reason why, for centuries, not the *Mahabharata*, but the *Ramayana*, has been re-enacted again and again. For many centuries, the masses have been genetically adapted to bizarre sequences, weird dialogues, ludicrous costumes and idealistic speeches. All emanating from the barest backdrops. As far as everybody was concerned: Rama should wear a crown; Sita should look serene; Hanuman should carry a *gadaa*; and Ravana should have the most terrifying mustache. Anything added to this almost static scenario would be the icing, ready to be swallowed anytime, anywhere. That was the absolute ripe, ready, receptive environment in which Ramanand Sagar dropped his *Ramayan* on the masses.



Rama and Sita (above) on the throne. Arun Govil and Dipika Chikhlita, who enacted the roles, inspired religious fervour in the masses. Below, Rama and Lakshman flanked by Hanuman and Sugreev as depicted by Ramanand Sagar were stereotypes seen in hundreds of Indian films over the decades.



Without casting aspersions on Sagar's morality or commitment, one must attribute to him the most astute business mind. He knew he was sitting on the proverbial million dollars.

Here was a ready-made script. Here was a public lapping it up, generation after generation. All he had to do to make it a grand success was to cater a little to the wild fantasies of an eager public. A few arrows swirling into space. A larger than life Kumbhakaran. Flying chariots. And the pie was ready to be gobbled up.

Which is exactly what Sagar did, gaining millions in cash and millions of fans on the way, of course. In terms of technique, concept, production values, etc. it would really be unfair to keep throwing brickbats at Sagar. After all, a lot of mass media garbage being dished out today is no better (if not worse) than Sagar's *Ramayan*. We all lap up some or all of it in theatres or on our television sets. If the man was brilliant enough to cash in on an untapped gold mine, well, kudos to him.

No. The problem is a little more serious than the its bits of cinematic technique or garish garb and sets or rhetorical dialogues, spiced with unaesthetic, idealistic speeches.

Over a period of time, poets, litterateurs, philosophers, theologians and dramatists in all parts of India and South-East Asia wrote, recited, analysed and enacted this epic in colloquial variations. Folklore mixed with mythology. Local flavours enhanced the basic epic. Whatever the case, all those enlightened men were thinkers, who did not tamper with the epic. In fact, they added to the richness of the epic. Those major additions or adaptations occurred after lengthy spans of time. Allowing the inherent story and value of the epic to be retained with all its grandeur and validity.

One would need to stretch the imagination a bit too far to believe that Ramanand Sagar is one of those men destined to usher in yet another version of the *Ramayana*. That has become the biggest danger of the success of the *Ramayana*. That a whole new generation in India, will be terming this as the *Sagar Ramayana*. Just like we have *Valmiki Ramayana* or *Tulsi Ramayana* or *Kamba Ramayana*.

No doubt, Sagar televised a powerful melodrama and received unprecedented viewing. But here, we return to the real anti-aesthetics in the *Ramayan*. It had not classical aura in the presentation or technique; in language; or style. It awed; it fascinated; it captivated. Like Amitabh and *Amar Akbar Antony*, or an Amjad Khan and a *Sholay*. Unfortunately, it definitely did not grip the soul and the conscience like Valmiki and his *Ramayana*; or Tulsi and his *Ramayana*; or Kamba and his *Ramayana*.

That is the one damage that some thinking, committed, enlightened producer-director will soon have to undo. If the historical tradition of the *Ramayana* has to be saved, with this big dent. One can only hope if a *Hamlet* with Laurence Olivier enacting the lead role and also directing it, or a Franco Zeffirelli with Richard Burton (*Taming of The Shrew*) can express Shakespeare exactly as it was meant to be on the stage and on film. Then there probably will be someone who, with others, will express through celluloid, not just depict the *Ramayana*, as it was meant to be.

Whether you, I or anyone likes it or not, until then, the *Ramayan* telecast on the idiot box will remain, if not an "idiotic" version, then definitely an unaesthetic, impure, street-corner version of the glorious epic.

VIDEO: BANE OF INDIAN CINEMA

AMIT KHANNA

The advent of Video in the early eighties has wrought havoc to the Indian film industry. With a poor per capita availability of cinema seats (eight per 1,000 population) and an over-production of films (1987: 896), there was already a crisis of sorts. However, the cheap and easy availability of video cassettes has undermined the financial structure of the film industry. The middle class family, which was the mainstay of the theatrical audience, has been weaned away by the VCR.

More dangerous social ramifications are the blatant and illegal exhibition of objectionable films, specially in rural areas. Besides distorting social attitudes, people are being exposed to alien cultures. Of course, this has financial repercussions also. Since almost the entire operation is illegal, no money flows back into the industry. Recent trends have also shown an increase in the proliferation of Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) and Cable TV. Even these operations are largely illegal.

The industry is slowly trying to cope with the problem. But it seems a futile attempt. Drastic and radical steps like changes in copyright laws and new marketing strategies are required. Otherwise, video, which can be a boon, will become the bane of cinema in India.

ESTIMATES

Total No. of VCRs: 15,00,000

No. of Video Libraries: 1,00,000

No. of Video Parlours/Theatres: 1,00,000

No. of Hotel Rooms with CCTV: 10,000

No. of Coaches/Buses with Video: 3,000

No. of Video Cassettes sold: 3,00,000 per month

Annual Turnover of Video Industry: Rs. 1,000 crores

Piracy Penetration: 85%

No. of Video Studios/ Production Units: 250

Post-production with special effects: 20

Turnover of Hardware Industry

(Including imports) Rs. 150 crores per annum

No. of Cassette Manufacturers

(Large-scale): 5

No. of Cassette Manufacturers (Small-scale): 100

Duplicating Units : 40

Total VCR's used in duplication : 1,00,000

Telecine Machines : 10

Video Cassette Manufacture

(installed capacity) : 5 million per annum

Export of video cassettes (Pre-recorded) : Rs 10 crores

Average selling price for Hindi Film:

Home-viewing Rights (Domestic)

- A Grade Rs. 20.0 lakhs

- B Grade Rs. 10.0 lakhs

- C Grade Rs. 5.0 lakhs

Home-viewing Rights (Export)

- A Grade Rs. 15.0 lakhs

- B Grade Rs. 7.5 lakhs

- C Grade Rs. 2.0 lakhs

Projections for 1990

Total No. of VCRs : 60,00,000

No. of Video Cassettes : 25 Million per annum

Annual Growth rate of Software : 30%

Piracy : 60%

Source : A.K.

All figures are estimates based on rough and ready calculations.

INDIAN PANORAMA '89

FEATURE FILMS

The All India Panel for Indian Panorama '89 for feature films met at Films Division Auditorium, Mahadev Road, New Delhi from 5th October 1988 to 13th October 1988.

During the course of nine days the Panel saw 48 films recommended by the Regional Selection Panels for Indian Panorama 1988 from Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

The Panel decided unanimously not to entertain appeals against the decisions of the Regional Panels.

The Panel recommended inclusion of the following 16 films in the Indian Panorama Section of the 12th International Film Festival of India.

1. *ANTARYALI YATRA* (Bengali): Director: Gautam Ghose
2. *ASTHIKAL POOKKUNNU* (Malayalam): Director: P. Sreekumar
3. *1921* (Malayalam): Director: I.V. Sasi
4. *KADALTHEERATHU* (Malayalam): Director: Rajeev Nath
5. *KOLAHAL* (Assamese): Director: Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia
6. *NAYAKAN* (Tamil): Director: Mani Rathnam
7. *ORU MINNAMINUNGINTE NURUNGU VETTOM* (Malayalam): Director: Bharathan
8. *PESTONJEE* (Hindi): Director: Vijaya Mehta
9. *PUSHPAKA VIMANA* (Kannada): Director: Singeetam Srinivasa Rao
10. *RAAKH* (Hindi): Director: Aditya Bhattacharya
11. *SALAAM BOMBAY!* (Hindi): Director: Mira Nair
12. *SWARNA KAMALAM* (Telugu): Director: K. Vishwanath
13. *TAMAS* (Hindi): Director: Govind Nihalani
14. *TRISHAGNI* (Hindi): Director: Nabendu Ghosh
15. *VEDHAM PUTHITHU* (Tamil): Director: P. Bharathirajan
16. *VEEDU* (Tamil): Director: Balu Mahendra

Prints of these films are being purchased by the Directorate of Film Festivals and will be subtitled in English.

Atma Ram,
Buddhadeb Dasgupta,
A.C. Tirilogachander,
P. Bhaskaran,
Jahnu Barua,
R. Lakshman,
Ramdas Phutane,
J.V. Somayajulu,
Ms Parbati Ghosh,

Member
Member
Member
Member
Member
Member
Member
Member
Member



October 13, 1988.

Basu Chatterjee, Chairman



Gautam Ghose's *Antaryali Yatra* provides an insight into an outmoded Bengali Brahmin custom of marrying off unmarried girls in the village to dying bridegrooms. It is better to be a widow than an eternal bride or a *sati*. Sampa Ghosh and Pramod Ganguly in a scene of pathos (Photo: Ranjan Ghosh)

ANTARYALI YATRA (The Voyage Beyond)

1987/Eastman/140 Minutes/Bengali

Production /	NFDC Limited
Director/Screenplay:	Gautam Ghose
Story:	Kamal Majumdar
Camera:	Gautam Ghose
Editor:	Gautam Ghose
Music:	Gautam Ghose
Lead Players:	Shatrugan Sinha, Pramod Ganguly, Robi Ghose, Mohan Agashe, Shampa Ghose & Vasant Chowdhury
Enquiries:	NFDC Limited, Nehru Centre, Bombay 400018

Gautam Ghose's film is set in the 1830's; and the location is the delta region of the Ganges. A derelict temple, a cremation ground and obviously a village, not very far away, are the landmarks in this wasteland.

An old and dying Brahmin, Sitaram is brought to be near the cremation ground and the holy river. The local astrologer announces that Sitaram's is a case of death foretold and adds the rider that he must be accompanied by a *sati*. Since the British rulers had banned the "suttee", the Brahmins of the village want to score a point over the rulers. In the village is a poor Brahmin with an unmarried daughter. By marrying her off to a bridegroom on the deathbed, his problems would be solved. More, his daughter would be canonised as a *Sati*.

A "discordant" note is struck by Baiju, an untouchable who looks after the funeral mounds and cremation rituals. He tries his best to get the police informed but in vain.

Finally, the sacrificial goat is the bride, Yashobati, whose presence by his side acts as an elixir and revives Sitaram. But the full moon rises. Sitaram's condition deteriorates. The drunken Baiju intervenes and implores Yashobati to flee. But she, caught in "the web of superstition and fear" refuses. Baiju even tries to hasten Sitaram's death. Yashobati intervenes. In the process, the Brahmin virgin's flesh touches the flesh of the untouchable. "In the soft mud of the delta, they become the primordial man and woman." Time and tidal bore cannot wait for anything—man or woman. Sitaram is swept away with Yashobati having a watery end in trying to rescue Sitaram. Baiju is a mute witness.



GAUTAM GHOSE

A committed film-maker, owing his loyalty to film medium and to his ideology, GAUTAM GHOSE has between 1976 and 1988, made an impact on the masses and the cognoscenti, here and abroad. While his themes may be varied, they have the basic unity of ideological perspective.

Hungry Autumn was his first film (1976), which as the title indicates is about hungry people going through the autumn of their lives. It was a promising film that won awards at Oberhausen and Leipzig. His next, *Ma Bhoomi* (1980) was a feature film in Telugu, based on the Naxalite movement in Telengana, Andhra Pradesh. His longish article on how he made this film (published in *Splice*) is a revealing document of how this undaunted film-maker surmounted difficulties, especially linguistic barrier and how he had to rewrite the script after a *reece* of his locale. It was the Best Telugu Film of the year.

The next year, Gautam Ghose made *Dakhal*, a powerful film about the tribal people's confrontation with all-round exploitation and social degradation. It earned for him the President's Award for Best Feature film and the Grand Jury Prize at the French Human Rights Festival. *Paar* pushed Naseeruddin Shah into international limelight at Venice, where he won the Best Actor's prize. The UNESCO Solidarity Award also went to this film.

Antaryali Yutra a Panorama entry in this year's IFFI has already won a National Award for the Best Bengali film. It was included in *Un Certain Regard* section at Cannes' 88. Ghose's latest two films are characterised by economy of means to achieve maximum of cinematic effect, an achievement indeed.



In the Malayalam film *Asthikal Pookkunnu* (And Bones do Blossom) the director, P. Sreekumar tells a remarkable tale of Bhaskaran, a murderer, who lands himself in a politically conscious rural community. He is looked after by a widow to whom he gets attracted only to discover later that he had actually murdered her husband—a trade union leader.

ASTHIKAL POOKKUNNU (And Bones do Blossom)

1988/Eastman/125 minutes/Malayalam

Production:	Pebbles-Movie Makers
Producer:	Pebbles
Direction:	P. Sreekumar
Screenplay:	R. Narendra Prasad & P. Sreekumar
Story:	P. Sreekumar
Camera:	Gopinath
Editor:	Venugopal
Music:	Raveendran
Sound:	T. Krishnan Unni
Lead Players:	Munali, Chitra & Chandran Nair,

Enquiries: Pebbles: Movie Makers, Press Road, Trivandrum 695001

Rajamma is a young widow who lives with her ageing parents in a bamboo forest, where the people eke out a living with difficulty. Her husband, a trade union activist, was murdered. Rajamma manages to live a life of self-dignity.

The tranquility of this village is disturbed by the arrival of a stranger, unconscious and bruised. Rajamma's father, Asan, gives him medicine. Later, he reveals himself to be Bhaskaran, falsely implicated in a case by his employers.

and now a fugitive. He is allowed to live there and work. One day, Rajamma sees his identity card with his photograph but a different name and she becomes wary, especially when he takes interest in her. Bhaskaran discovers ideology and the trade union spirit among his fellow-workers. But he resists falling into the mainstream of the life in the village.

On a festival day, Bhaskar, bribed by Vareechan, the bamboo contractor, gets drunk. Drink makes him loquacious. Rajamma coaxes him to talk and the truth is out. He is the man, who egged on by his employers had killed Padmanabhan, Rajamma's husband. Bhaskaran sees the wedding photograph of Rajamma and her husband. It is a moment of truth. An unusual political film, in which the *human condition* of people is delineated excellently.



P. SREE KUMAR

Born in 1946 at Trivandrum, Kerala, P. SREEKUMAR apprenticed himself in the Malayalam stage as actor, playwright and director-and he has won awards too. *Kayyum Thalayum Punathidarathu* was his first directorial venture, which was followed up by *Asthikal Pookunnu* (And Bones do Blossom) this year's Panorama entry, which is based on his own story.

KADALTHEERATHU (On the Seashore)

1988/Orwo NC 3/92 Mtnutes/Malayalam

Production:

Rasika Films

Producer:

Rajeev Nath

Direction/Screenplay:

Rajeev Nath

Story:

O.V. Vijayan

Camera:

Santosh Sivan

Editor:

Ravi

Music:

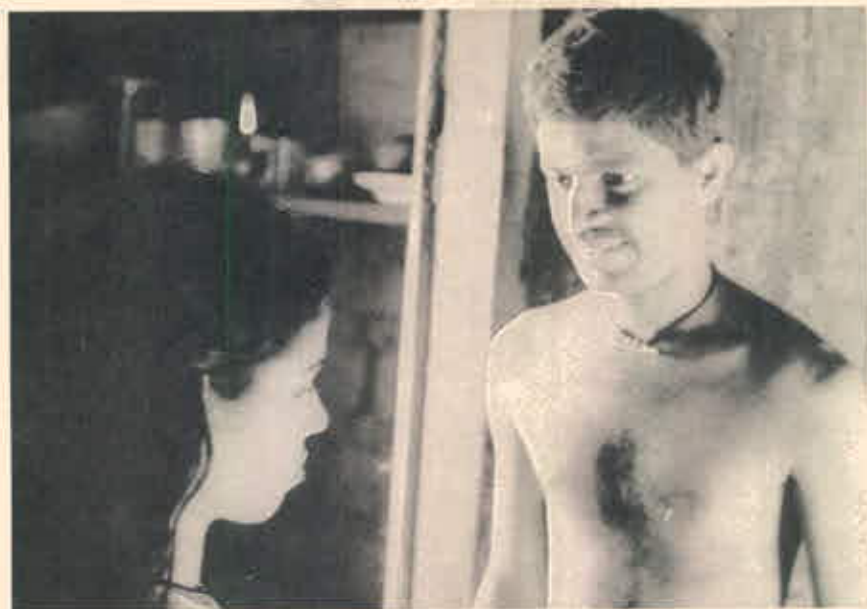
G. Aravindan & Kavalam

Sound:

Deva Das & Hari Pradeep S.R. K.N. Ravi,
Master Ameer Abbas & Leelamma Verghese

Enquiries:

T. Rajeev Nath, Mani Mandiram, Poojappura,
Trivandrum 695012



Based on a story of Malayali writer-cum-cartoonist, O.V. Vijayan, *Kadaltheerathu* (On the Seashore) is centred round a father and his son, sentenced to death for murder. The sad and forlorn father goes on a pilgrimage to where his son is to be executed. Rajeew Nath, the producer-director-screenplay writer uses the flashback technique to recreate their lives.

This is a film with a philosophical undertones. Where the lands ends, the sea begins and into the sea pours the world's refuse, brought by the rivers. The good and the bad in life end in death, the great divide between life and the so-called other world about which we have only many conjectures.

These are some of the basic thoughts, which in simplest terms haunt Vellayiappan, who is on a "pilgrimage" to a "citadel of death", the far-away prison by the sea-side. His son Kundunni is to be executed for murder, which he had committed unwittingly in his village. The local landlord's goons had humiliated Vellaniappan and Kundunni wrecked his vengeance on the landlord.

Now as the father plods his weary way, he remembers how he had bathed his son in the very river flowing before him. He also recalls how Kundunni asked him as to where the river flowed into. And he had replied, "The sea, at the land's end". In the course of this odd pilgrimage, Vellayiappan has several flashbacks. His life in the village with his son and others is recreated thus. A challenging them, well done.

Rajeew Nath, the Malayali director of *Kadaltheerathu* is in his late thirties now. He has had the itch for making films ever since he left the college. Handling 16 mm and 8 mm cameras was a passion with him. So much so, 21 years ago, his short film, *Rhythm of the Hills* was hailed by his peers as "a film with a difference." He made his first feature film, *Thanal* (1977), *Sooryante Maranam* (1979), *Purappad* (1981) and *Kaveri* (1986) — and each of them has made an impact on the film buffs.

Among these, *Sooryante Maranam* (Death of the Sun) dealt with the life-pattern of a factory worker that gets changed with his transfer from the day-shift to night-shift. Rajeew Nath has handled this unusual theme with understanding and



RAJEEV NATH

feeling. The worker's attempts to create the night atmosphere in his modest dwelling, to get a little rest, are futile. Rajeev Nath has shot this portion of the film with the "silhouette" effect.

Based in Trivandrum, he is the Secretary of the Film Makers Forum of Kerala.

KOLAHAL (The Turmoil)

1988/Eastmancolour/118 Minutes/Assamese

Producer:	Bhabendra Nath Saikia
Direction/Screenplay:	Bhabendra Nath Saikia
Story:	Bhabendra Nath Saikia
Camera:	Kamal Nayak
Editor:	Nikunja Bhattacharjee & Asish Nandi
Music:	Mukul Barua
Sound:	Pijush Kanti Roy
Lead Players:	Runu Devi Thakur, Arun Nath & Bibhu Ranjan Choudhury.
Enquiries:	Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Basisthapur-2, Guwahati 781028

Based on a radio-play by Dr Bhabendranath Saikia, this film provides intimate insights into the lives of the dregs of society in a typical town of India. In one part of this congested city, where two lorries can pass by with difficulty, most of the action takes place. There are traffic jams galore, with the drivers cursing one another. Out of the jam-stuck lorries, urchins quickly extract foodgrains, salt and sugar by using iron spikes.



Kolahal in Assamese means turmoil and it is writ large on the face of Renu Devi Thakur in Dr. Bhabendranath Saikia's film. It is the story of a brave woman's devotion to her man, who deserts her and her only son, who gets killed and her adjustment to the realities of the lower depths of life.

One such urchin is Moti, the beloved son of Kiron, whose husband had gone off in search of a job in another town and had disappeared. Moti's collection of foodgrains and lentil keeps the pot boiling. Kiron's attempt to work in a warehouse leads to her becoming a victim of the advances by the watchman and the clerk there and she retreats to her hovel, still awaiting her husband, Binod.

Kiron's neighbours are kindly people and they help her. One sells *bidis*; another brews liquor at home; the third, a local *dada* is willing to become a "temporary guardian" of Kiron and Moti. But Kiron resists.

Then one day, a truck carrying rice-bags overturns and Moti is nowhere to be seen, for the bags had piled up over him and killed him. Later, the truck driver and truck-owner try to buy off Kiron by offering a sack of rice, which is still stained with the blood of Moti. Kiron rejects.

Kiron's life loses its savour and she steadily sinks. Except that Badal, the truck cleaner also makes advances, but with a sympathetic heart behind his lust. Meanwhile through a well-meaning neighbour, she learns that her Binod is living with another woman in a far-away town. Her world collapses. Now she has no other alternative but to send for Badal. Life that is to be lived, for people like Kiron, is the art of the possible, with compromises along the way.



BHABENDRA NATH SAIKIA

BHABENDRANATH SAIKIA, born in 1932 at Nagaon, Assam, specialised in physics : B.Sc., Honours from Guwahati University, M.Sc., from Calcutta University and a Ph.D from London University. Twenty seven years ago, he got a diploma from the Imperial College, London. For some years he had been a Reader in Physics at Guwahati University.

Dr. Saikia is the Chief Editor of *Prantik* and Editor of *Sofura*, two important Assamese journals. Recognised as a top-ranking Assamese short story writer, he has eight books to his credit. He has also written over 100 radio-plays, including *Kolahal*, the film version of which is Panorama entry this year.

But films are his passion. His films, *Sandhyarag*, *Anirban* and *Agnihasan* have reached distant film festivals : Karlovy Vary and Valladolid (Spain) Nantes (France) and Pyong yong (North Korea) as well as Algiers. The three Assamese films mentioned above have earned for him the Rajat Kamal Awards. *Agnihasan* also got an award for its screenplay.

With his multiple talents, he has led a rewarding life as a member in various cultural bodies. He is the President of Jyoti Chitraban Society (Film Studio of Guwahati).

NAYAKAN (Hero)

1987/Eastman/145 Minutes/Tamil

Production:	Sujatha Films Limited
Direction:	Mani Rathnam
Story:	Mani Rathnam
Camera:	P.C. Srinani
Editor:	B. Lenin
Music:	Ilaiyaraaja
Sound:	Pandurangan
Lead Players:	Kamal Haasan, Saranya, Kartika & Janakraj

Enquiries:	Sujatha Films Ltd
	27 Wallace Garden
	III Street
	Madras 600017



Kamal Hassan in his stellar role as the hero in the Tamil film *Nayakan*, directed by Mani Rathnam. Based on the life of a South Indian Don of the Bombay slums, this film provides an insight into the ramifications of the underworld.

This film is based on the life of a South Indian "Don", who dominated the slums of Dharavi in Bombay. Crime was a lucrative profession for him; and gang warfare, extortions, pujas and distribution of goodies to the poor people were his hobbies. Ultimately, he went back home in South India and succumbed to illness.

Shaktivelu Nayakan, the "hero" of this film *Nayakan* (which in Tamil means hero) is another Don. Originally from Tuticorin, he had a traumatic childhood at home; later he grew up in the slums of Dharavi, where he adopts Hussainbhai, a good Samaritan, as his mentor.

Velu Nayakan takes to serious crime with his own sense of social justice and crosses swords with the police and an avaricious landlord, hellbent on depriving hundreds of their homes. Velu marries Neela and has two children by her, Charumati, a girl, and Surya, a boy. Following the example of Hussainbhai, Velu starts Tamil Narpari Mandram to spread goodwill among slumdwellers.

But his peaceful and altruistic life is shattered one day, when the former rival gang of Reddy Brothers kills Velu's wife and son out of vendetta. For the forlorn Velu, there is yet another rude shock when his daughter walks out on him. Once again, Velu Nayakan is drawn to crime and he finds his greatest enemy in Pradeep Patil, a committed police officer, who is out to get Velu, dead or alive. Velu Nayakan is arrested ultimately by Patil, which leads to his daughter's reconciliation with him. There is a wave of sympathy and support for Velu from the slumdwellers. What is more, he is acquitted. But the moment of triumph for Velu Nayakan ends in tragedy, when he is killed by Ajit, a trusted lieutenant of Velu, now aiming to be the next Don of Dharavi.



MANI RATHNAM

With a Commerce degree from Madras University and an MBA from the Bajaj Institute, Bombay, MANI RATHNAM should have gone into accountancy or business administration. But then, cinema has always lured people from different disciplines. So was MANI RATHNAM, a Tamil by birth.

Rathnam's first directorial venture *Pallavi Anu Pallavi* (in Kannada), won a state award for its screenplay. Quickly, he followed up with *Unaru* (Malayalam) *Pagal Nilavu* and *Idhaya Kovil* (both in Tamil). A number of awards were heaped on his next film *Mouna Ragam*: National Award for Best Tamil film and Filmfare Awards for Best Tamil Film and Best Director. The Tamil Journal, *Cinema Express* also awarded honours to him. This film firmly established Rathnam's reputation with critics and cinegoers. He can invest his films with thematic value, directorial skill and cinecraft.

Nayukan, which is in this year's Panorama, is based on the life of the South Indian *Don* of Dharavi slums in Bombay, Vardha Bhai. Kamal Haasan, the *Thespian* of the South has lived the role. The film's Editor is B. Lenin. And, Ilayaraja has scored the music. It has been sent to Tashkent and it has been nominated by the Film Federation of India for Oscars in the foreign film section.

Mani Rathnam's latest *Agni Nakshatram* has fared well at the box-office.



1921 is a historic year in the annals of Indian history, when the downtrodden and dispossessed Muslims rose in rebellion against our erstwhile British rulers in what used to be described as the "Moplah Rebellion." Director I.V. Sasi has reconstructed this episode of nationalist upsurge of 1921 with fidelity to historical facts.

1921 (Ayirathi Thollayirathi Irupathonnu)

1988/Eastman/185 Minutes/Malayalam

Production: Mannil Films- Madras

Producer: Mohammed Mannil

Direction: I.V. Sasi

Screenplay: T. Damodaran

Camera: V. Jayaram

Editor: K Nanyanan

Music: Shyam

Sound: Anandan-Rajan

Lead Players: Mamooty, Madhu, Suresh, Gopi, T.G. Ravi & Seema

Enquiries: Mannil Films, C-345 G (Door No. 4), 8th Avenue, Ashok-nagar, Madras 600083

The year 1921 marks a watershed in the history of India's struggle for independence. A predominantly Hindu India, under the benign leadership of Gandhiji and his Congress, decided to champion for the cause of Islam and the welfare of Muslims here and everywhere. The British abolished the Ottoman rulers and the Caliphate, after World War I, and Muslims the world over wanted the restoration of

the Caliph's rule in Turkey. In India, the Hindus and the Muslims fought side by side against the British in what is known as the Khilafat Movement.

That this movement was an all-India phenomenon in those days is well evidenced by this film, which is all about what used to be called as the "Moplah Rebellion" in British Malabar of Kerala. The socio-economic conditions of the oppressed agricultural workers, both Muslims (the Mappilas) and Hindus, was the basic cause, which later acquired religious overtones.

A dream of Mohammed Mannil for several years, the film is based on several facts in the script of T. Damodaran. And I.V.Sasi, whose genre used to be so different has acquitted himself in facing the challenge of handling a historical subject. The film has an open-ended view and steers clear of many of the controversies as to whether it was more a revolt of Muslims against Hindu landlords rather than a joint rebellion of Muslim and Hindu rural workers against British autocracy and landed aristocracy. In their zeal to undo the beneficial settlement for agricultural workers that Tipu Sultan initiated, the British, after the defeat of Tipu, resorted to restoring the land to the landed aristocracy with a predominance of Hindus. The policy of "divide and rule", which the Britishers used as an effective policy in all parts of the world wherever they ruled, can be glimpsed in this film.

In images, this film in all fairness shows Hindu patriots, Muslim leaders and protagonists, British rulers (one of whom is Tom Alter) the cruelties perpetrated by them on men and women and the basic urge of the Mappilas for independence and freedom. This is one of the rare films about India's struggle for freedom, a subject normally eschewed by our avant gardist art film protagonists. This film of Mannil partly fills in the lacunae.



I.V. SASI

I.V. SASI became a by-word for a popular director not only in Kerala but all over India, ever since he made *Avaludaya Iravugal* (Her Nights). Born 42 years ago, he has directed 95 films in Malayalam within the last 14 years. A record indeed.

Sasi hails from Calicut and he has PUC (pre-University Certificate) and a diploma in art. But he has studied and understood almost every aspect of the life of his people even as much as film-making. An all rounder, innovator and a bold film-maker, he has evolved his special formula for the box-office. It has been acclaimed that three-quarters of his films have been hits. For him, a film is an assembly-line product, though made with enthusiasm and utter concentration. Like the Hindi film

stars, he always has a steady line of under-production films.

In 1921, he has reconstructed the revolt of Muslims in Kerala under the oppressive heels of the British, in what had come to be known as the "Moplah Rebellion."



Oru Minnaminunginte Nurungu Vettom is a long title for a film even by Malayalam standards. It can be translated as "the glimpse of light of a flying fireball". It is all about an elderly teacher couple, who bring up a girl with devotion—only to lose her as well as her son. A brief interlude of happiness is all there is for consolation for them.

ORU MINNAMINUNGINTE NURUNGU VETTOM (*Glimpse of Light of a Flying Fireball*)

1987/Agfa-colour/108 Minutes/Malayalam

Production: Symphony

Producer: M.G. Gopinath & Babu Thiruvalla

Director: Bharathan

Screenplay: John Paul

Story: John Paul

Camera: Basanth Kumar

Editor: Bhamthan

Music: Johnson

Sound: Devdas

Lead Players: Nedumudi Venu, Sarada, Dévan, Parvathi & Master Vinu

Enquiries: Jubilee Productions; 51 Ganga Nagar, Kodambakkam, Madras 600016

It is a sad story of a lonely Malayali couple that this film narrates. Ramuni Nair and Saraswathi Amma were colleagues teaching in the same school and they married late in life. The great regret of their life is that they are a childless couple. Into their lonely life after retirement from service, walks in Maya, an ex-student of Saraswathi Amma. She had got admission into a local college and she was in search of a place for boarding and lodging as well as guardians. Maya, motherless for long, brings with her some cheer. The old couple almost adopt her as their daughter and Maya reciprocates.

Some time later comes Ravi with whom Maya was in love and who had gone away to the USA. Maya's father having disapproved Ravi, Ramuni and Saraswathi Amma bless Ravi and Maya and get them married. But then Ravi has to go back to USA; and he leaves behind Maya, an expectant mother. A male child is born, but Maya dies at child-birth. The lonely old couple lose a major prop of their lives. They are left with the baby, whom they look after like a grandson. One day, Ravi appears out of the blue to claim his son and now the other prop is also gone. they console each other and re-adjust themselves to live out the remaining years of their lives.



BHARATHAN

The Director of the Malayalam entry of *Panorama Oru Minnaminunginte Nurungu Vettom* (Glimpse of Light of a Flying Fireball), BHARATHAN, is just 41 years in age and he has over 30 films to his credit. Hailing from Trichur District in Kerala, his academic qualification is just a diploma in painting. For some years, he was a commercial designer, before he entered films.

Now, Bharathan is an all-rounder having tried his hand in almost all branches of film-making. In fact, that is his strong point. He has been art-director and designer (it was but natural for him with his training in art) story writer, music director, lyricist, and director. His first film was *Prayanam* in Malayalam. Since then he has rendered a good account of his multiple talents, satisfying both the critics and commoners. While his fellow-directors take pride in listing the awards won, Bharathan has just mentioned in his bio-data nothing more than "won many National, State and Filmfare Awards." They are all behind him and his next film is his major preoccupation now.



In *Pestonjee*, based on a short story by the NFDC Chairman, B.K. Karanjia (former Editor of Screen). With Vijaya Mehta, the Director, a Maharashtrian, who has established empathy with the psyche and ethos of the Parsi community. Here is Anupam Kher (*Pestonjee*) with Shabana Azmi in a hilarious episode.

PESTONJEE

1987/Eastman/120 Minutes/Hindi

Production:	NFDC Limited
Director:	Vijaya Mehta
Screenplay:	B.K. Karanjia
Story:	B.K. Karanjia
Editor:	Renu Saluja
Music:	Varraj Bhatia
Sound:	Ravindra Sathe
Lead Players:	Anupam Kher, Kiran Thakur Singh Kher, Naseeruddin Shah & Shabana Azmi
Enquiries:	NFDC Ltd., Nehru Centre, Bombay 400018

Pestonjee (Anupam Kher) and Piroj (Naseeruddin Shah) are two friends, concerned in each other's welfare. *Pestonjee* is a "doer" and the other is a Hamletian watcher. They are typical of ageing bachelor friends who can be found in Parsi colonies like Dadar or Colaba in Bombay. Their story is unfolded from Piroj's viewpoint. Jeroo (Shabana Azmi) is offered in marriage to Piroj and he takes his own time to decide. *Pestonjee* gets married to Jeroo and soon after Piroj gets transferred from Bombay to Bhusaval. *Pestonjee* and Piroj get estranged.

Pestonjee's marriage gets soured. Jeroo turns into a shrew. A child is borne by her but there is a miscarriage. She hates babies; so she is happy. But *Pestonjee* is very

sad. She introduces her friend Soona, a lawyer and "a merry widow" to Pestonjee to look after a legal battle between him and his brother. Legal consultations lead up to a liaison. Jeroo's father who has a stroke moves into their home.

Five years later, Piroj is on a visit to Bombay and sees the altered conditions--in every respect. Piroj cannot condone Pestonjee's extramarital affair, even if the marriage was doomed from day one. The two friends begin to have disputes. Piroj gets back to Bhusaval. Three more years pass by and finally Piroj is back on transfer to Bombay. During a brief meeting he and Pestonjee try to patch up their friendship, but in vain. Piroj discovers Jeroo to be a hypochondriac, lost in melancholy, blaming the world. Soona has a son by Pestonjee--and the child is named after Piroj. One day, Pestonjee dies of heart attack. There is no money for the funeral and it is the mistress, who contributes money in a gracious manner.

This story penned by B.K. Karanjia (Chairman, NFDC) 30 years ago has acquired a new lease of life through Vijaya Mehta in this film.



VIJAYA MEHTA

A Maharashtrian by birth and a post-graduate from Bombay University, VIJAYA MEHTA has been actively involved with the Bombay and Marathi stage for two decades and more. She had studied stage-craft in the UK and in her turn she has showed her own understanding and style of it through her productions in Germany.

Shyam Benegal, the discoverer of many a screen talent, had induced Vijaya to act in this Hindi film *Kalyug* (1981), a modern-day version of *Mahabharata*. Govind Nihalani offered her a short but demanding role in *Party* (1984) but she acquitted herself so well that the Best Actress Award was bestowed on her at the Tokyo International Film Festival (1984).

It was but a hop from stage to screen and she made her entry as a Director of the Doordarshan film *Smriti Chitre*, which won the Award for Best Marathi Film in 1983. Her *Rao Saheb* (1985) was an intimate study of traditional Maharashtrian household, in which she acted superbly as the *mausi*. She earned two awards -- for Best supporting Actress and Best Art Direction. *Pestonjee*, based on B.K. Karanjia's "Parsi" story and featuring Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddin Shah and Anupam Kher is her third directorial venture which she has done with great empathy with and understanding of Parsis. Two telefilms based on her own stage productions -- *Shakuntalam* and *Wada Chirabandi* have been telecast.



Kamal Haasan, the top Thespian of Tamil films, is almost unrecognisable in this close-up from *Pushpaka Vimana* the Kannada dialogueless film of 130 minutes' duration, directed by Singeetam Srinivasa Rao —considered a celluloid tour de force.

PUSHPAKA VIMANA (Flower Chariot)

1987/Eastman/130 minutes/Kannada

Production:	Mandakini Chitra (P) Ltd
Producer:	Srinagar Nagam
Direction/Screenplay:	Singeetam Srinivasa Rao
Story:	Singeetam Srinivasa Rao
Camera:	B. C. Gowri Shankar
Editor:	D. Vasu
Music:	L. Vaidyanathan
Sound:	Sampath
Lead Players:	Kamal Haasan, Amala, Tinu Anand, Samir Khakhar & K. S. Ramesh

Enquiries: Mandakini Chitra (P) Ltd
1826, II Cross, Malleswaram, Bangalore 560003

"Flower-bedecked Flying Chariot", the mythological vehicle of gods and goddesses is yet another fancy title used by Singeetam Sreenivas Rao for this "Kannada" film which has *no dialogue* whatsoever. Yet it is a *Kannada* entry. It is a hark back to the good old "movies" in this Platinum Jubilee Year (1988) of the release of the first silent film of D.G. Phalke Raja Harishchandra. It is possibly Rao's tribute to the pioneer-and also to Mel Brooks.

Pushpaka (flower) enter the film at the beginning with *Hotel Pushpak*, where most of the action in the film is centred and again at the end, when the heroine wants a flower growing on the roof to be brought to her by the hero.

The story, by itself, is hilarious. First, there is the unemployed bum Kamal (Kamal Haasan, who sustains the film without dialogue), in search of a job and is a Walter-Mitty, fantasizing about wealth. One night, he sees a chap called Khakkar dead drunk on the road, with the room-key of the hotel dangling out of his pocket. He takes the key of the room in Hotel Pushpak, thrusts it in his pocket, and deposits the man in his own room, trussed up and gagged.

From then on it is a wild spree. Two things happen. One is Kamal meets Amala, whom he has seen before and whom he can now entertain in regal style. Two, Kamal is the target of a hired killer, employed by the paramour of the wife of Khakkar, now held in hostage but looked after alright by Kamal. Kamal becomes conscious of the unknown killer dodging his footsteps.

Then comes the flower episode, a revealing incident, through which Kamal understands the realities, for he surmounts a lot of difficulties in trying to get the flower for Amala. He returns the key to Khakkar and sets him free, writes a letter to him, as well as to Amala. He also returns to his poverty and unemployment and joins the queue of job-seekers once again.



SINGEETAM
SRINIVASA RAO

The four South Indian States are familiar territory for SINGEETAM SRINIVASA RAO, who has won awards for the films he has directed in all four languages — Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. So much so, in his *Pushpaka Vimana* (the Kannada entry in *Panorama*), he has dispensed with dialogues. Such is his grip over the medium that he has narrated his complicated story through filmic means *sans* words. Possibly he has been influenced by Mel Brooks; maybe not. But he has succeeded in luring cinema buffs and cinegoers alike all over India.

Originally a physics graduate from Madras University, he apprenticed himself under the late K.V. Reddy, a veteran Telugu film-maker at one time. He was the Executive Director of Pattabhirama Reddy's *Samskara*.

Rao's two Telugu films, *Pantulamma* and *Taram Marindi* won Nandi Awards and the latter a Best Film State Award. His other Telugu film, *Mayuri* was a sensation for in it a dancer, who loses part of her leg becomes a dancer once again with the help of the "Jaipur Leg." This film won 13 awards from Andhra Pradesh Govern-

merit. His Tamil film *Dikkatru Parvathi* was based on a story of the freedom-fighter and the last Governor-General, C. Rajagopalachari, and earned for him a National Award in 1973. Another Tamil film, *Raja Parvai* got a cash award from the Tamil Nadu Government. His Kannada films, *Haalu Jenu*, *Bhagyada Lakshmi Baramma* and *Anand* earned awards from the State and Film Director's Association. The Cine Technicians Association of South India has bestowed on him the L.V. Prasad Award, the highest honour from his peers.



Raakh (Ashes) an Aditya Bhattacharya film in Hindi, is about a young man of 21 arrested for multiple murders. He recalls the episodes in his life and realises he is a mere pawn in the game of crime and police in a metropolis. The underworld is revealed in all its rawness.

RAAKH (Ashes)

1988/Agfa XI/154 Minutes/Hindi

Production:	Emotion Picture Company & Second Image Enterprise
Producer:	Asif Noor
Executive Producer:	Aditya Bhattacharya
Director:	Aditya Bhattacharya
Screenplay:	Nuzhat Khan/Aditya Bhattacharya
Story:	Aditya Bhattacharya
Camera:	Santosh Sivan
Editor:	A. Sreekar Prasad
Music:	Ranjit Barot
Sound:	Naresh Vyas
Lead players:	Pankaj Kapoor, Aamir Khan, Supriya Pathak, Homi Wadia & Chandu Parkhi
Enquiries:	A. Bhattacharya, 1 Gold Mist, 36 Carter Road, Bandra, Bombay 400050

This film has an Orwellian tinge about it in the sense the story is about what is likely to happen in a metropolitan city in India in terms of law and order, criminals and police. "After the police riots of 1990, the state forces were disbanded and

replaced by a Central one. The crime rate continued to escalate." So, the synopsis of the film begins.

The story is centred round Aamir, a "soft" well-to-do youngster, who due to circumstances, goes down the inverted spiral. It all starts off with the gang-rape of his "woman"-friend, Neeta, "an older, more pragmatic career-woman" by Hassan Karmali (a Mafia Don) and his friends. Aamir is a mute witness as also another, a police officer in mufti.

Later, when the police officer, Kapoor, tries to help Aamir, who realizes soon that he was the other silent witness, Kapoor gets suspended and he joins hands with Aamir to liquidate Karmali and his gang. Meanwhile, Neeta tries to rearrange her life after the traumatic experience.

Aamir's life is a sort of "rake's progress", with brutalisation of his soul, steadily going down the vortex in the mega-city of crime, passion and violence. Shape of things to come indeed! The synopsis ends with these words: "Amidst the lies of logical life, some times the only truth is in madness, in losing control....."



ADITYA
BHATTACHARYA

The truth about talent is amply proved in the case of 25-year-old Aditya Bhattacharya, Director of *Raakh*. He is the son of the Bhattacharyas, Rinki and Basu and a grandson of Bimal Roy, on his maternal side.

Aditya has had no formal training in film-making but he must have surely played with celluloid strips and film cans in his childhood. He has been associated with the stage as an actor, set-designer and lighting expert. He has also done some acting stints in films. Still photography has been a passion with him and he has conducted photography courses in several colleges. More, he has been a manager of a jazz-rock band. *Raakh* is his debut-making film, in which he has exhibited both filmcraft and thematic concern.



Salaam Bombay! which won acclaim from the cognoscenti and the public at the Cannes Festival in 1988 is Mira Nair's humanist film about a street urchin of Bombay hedged in by the dregs of society—prostitutes, drug traffickers and others. But there is the other side of the coin too.

SALAAM BOMBAY!

1988/Eastman/113 Minutes/Hindi

Production:	Mirabhai Films, NFDC Ltd, Channel 4, Doordarshan & La Sept
Producer:	Mirabhai Films
Director:	Mira Nair
Screenplay:	Sooni Taraporewala
Story:	Mira Nair/Sooni Taraporewala
Camera:	Sandi Sissel
Editor:	Barry Alexander Brown
Music:	(Dr.) L. Subramaniam
Lead Players:	Raghuvir Yadav, Anita Kanwar, Nana Patekar, Master Shafique Syed & Hansa Vitthal
Enquiries:	NFDC Limited, Nehru Centre, Bombay 400018

The documentary and fiction film are meshed well in Mira Nair's film. She and the script-writer, Sooni Taraporewala, spent two months researching by meeting countless number of Bombay's denizens, the homeless and parentless kids in reform institutions, jails and in the alleys and bylanes of Bombay. As many as 130 of them were brought to a "drama" workshop and they performed improvised stories based on their experiences. Out of them, 19 were chosen to act in this film.

As a counterpoint, three professional thespians Raghuvir (Mungeri Lal) Yadav, Nana Patakar and Anecta Kanwar, from stage and film are pitted against the kids. They enact the roles of Chillum, a veteran of the street selling drugs, "Baba", a mercurial "Bossman" living with a "strong, resilient" prostitute, Rekha, respectively.

The film was finally shot in the dingy streets, railway platforms, brothels, roadside tea-shops, with the fresh eye of Sandi Sissell. The emerging maestro Dr. L. Subramanian has scored the music.

The film is centred round Krishna, a bright-faced ten year-old, discarded by a travelling circus. He is soon drawn into the vortex of Bombay, the melting pot. He dreams of working and saving five hundred rupees to take home to his mother. In the process of working as a *chai-pau*, delivering tea and bread to people at their workplaces, he encounters policemen and prostitutes, "madmen and middlemen", drug-dealers and patrons of "drugs and flesh."

The waifs and urchins eking out a living by devious means, but with their movie fantasies, are the denizens of Bombay, the dregs of that mega-city. Even in their poverty and grime, hopelessness and helplessness, these kids "celebrate the spirit of survival with all their humour, dignity, strength and flamboyance."



MIRA NAIR

For one so young in age (b. 1957) MIRA NAIR's achievements are many, including the prestigious *Palme D'Or* from Cannes as well as the award of film buffs there for her *Salaam Bombay!* Her career-graph has registered an ever-climbing line.

Born a Punjabi, her education was at Loretto, Shimla, Miranda of Delhi and Harvard, Cambridge, USA with Visual and Environmental Studies at the last-mentioned.

Mira's student film-thesis was a two-reel portrait of the Muslim community of Old Delhi entitled *Jama Masjid Street Journal* (1979). (First Prize: Connecticut and Sinking Creek Film Festival, USA; theatrical release at Film Forum, New York; and Oberhausen by invitation. She was producer, director and *Cameraperson* of this film.

Three years later, she produced and directed *So Far from India* an hour-long documentary on an Indian emigrant newstand worker in New York sub-way with his wife still in Ahmedabad. Premiered in New York, it has been telecast in 9 countries and invited to 18 international film festivals. It earned for her the Cine Golden Eagle Award.

Her next film, the six-reel *India Cabaret*, about cabaret dancers in India, on and off stage, has been telecast by Channel 4 in UK, PBS in USA, NDR in West Germany and elsewhere. It was awarded the Golden Athena at Athens and the Blue Ribbon at the American Film Festival. The Global Village Film Festival hailed it as the Best Documentary in 1985.

Boy or Girl? was the intriguing title of her next film on the craze for amniocentesis in India, a revealing, topical film, which was one of six-part tele-serial on "Women and Development."

With *Salaam Bombay!* Mira Nair has established herself as the youngest, most entrepreneurial woman film-maker from India, who has carried the world with her.



Swarna Kamalam (Golden Lotus) is the fancy title given to the Telugu film of K. Viswanath in which a signboard painter becomes a catalyst in the development of his neighbour into a first-rate dancer, who is lured by an American tourist to prosperity. But there is a surprise twist in the end.

SWARNA KAMALAM (*Golden Lotus*)

1988/Eastman/150 Minutes/Telugu

Production:	Bhanu Art Creations
Producer:	Ch. V. Appa Rao
Direction/Screenplay/Story:	K. Vishwanath
Camera:	Lok Singh
Editor:	G.G. Krishna Rao
Sound:	Pandurangan (Prasad Studio)

Music:
Lead Players:

Ilaya Raja
Venkatesh, Bhanupriya, Sakshi Kanga Rao, Master Shan-
mugam Srinivas & Sharon Lowen

Enquiries:

Bhanu Art Creations, 2-A Rama Street, T.Nagar, Madras
600017

Swarna Kamalam (Golden Lotus) is the fancy title given to this Telugu film about a young dancer, Meena caught between tradition and modernity, her father and lover. Meena is the daughter of Vedantham Sathendra Sharma, a doyen among Kuchipudi dancers. And, her lover is Chandra, a painter of banners and hoardings, who is her neighbour. After "discovering" Meena as the girl next door, Chandra acquires the Pygmalion complex. He wants her to become a *prima donna*. First, he paints her face on an advertisement banner, which attracts the eye of an organiser of an art academy that arranges dance programmes.

Meena gets a breakthrough and her debut programme as a dancer is fixed. But she chooses to dance on that day in the *filmic* Western style, out of whim and caprice to put off Chandra and to "revolt" against her father. The venerable guru, that Meena's father is, dies of shock. But, Chandra, far from being disillusioned, persists. Meena, the wilful young woman joins a hotel as a housekeeper. The manager comes to know her potentialities and now Meena becomes a sophisticated cabaret dancer of sorts.

Meena attracts the attention of an American tourist—a lover of Indian dances, who wants her to excel in the traditional style and she wants to take Meena with her to USA. Meena returns to tradition that she had spurned earlier. Finally, the day dawns when she is to leave for USA. Chandra sends her a bouquet and a letter congratulating her. He goes back to his job—painting hoardings—suppressing his grief. Then, suddenly he looks around and sees Meena dancing for him. A dramatic ending indeed.



K. VISWANATH

K. VISWANATH started his life as a sound engineer, having graduated with physics as his subject. He made his debut as a director in 1965 of *Atmagouravam* (Telugu). It earned a State Government Award.

Between 1971 and 1975, his films *Kaalam Maarindhi*, *Chelleli Kaupuram*,

Sarada, O Seetha Katha and Jeevna Jyothi gathered for him a series of awards. Viswanath's *Sankarabharanam*, which won four National Awards was a filmic plea for the preservation of South Indian heritage of Carnatic music. His *Saptapadi* also won a National Award and a Nargis Dutt Award also.

Viswanath's Hindi films, *Suargam, Kaamchor and Sanjog* were money-spinners. His *Swathi Muthiyam* got a National Award as the best Telugu film in 1988. And, the State Government has hailed him as the Best Director.



Tamas (Darkness) was the title that Bhishm Sahni gave to his Hindi novel about Punjab during the holocaust of the partition of India. Now transformed into a five-hour tele-serial by Govind Nihalani, it takes us back to the most traumatic period of the birth of the two nations. Catharsis is achieved through a sort of poetic realism.

TAMAS(Darkness)

1987/Gevacolour/300 Minutes/Hindi

Production:

Blaze Entertainment Pvt Ltd

Producer:

Blaze Entertainment pvt Ltd

Direction/Screenplay:

Govind Nihalani

Story:

Bhishm Sahni

Camera:

V.K. Murthy & Govind Nihalani

Editor:

Sutanu Gupta

Music:

Varraj Bhatia

Sound:

Chandrakant Dave

Lead Players:

Om Puri & Deepa Sahi,

This five-hour long tele-film serial about partition in terms of human realities of those involved is based on the Hindi novel of the same name written by Bhishm Sahni, brother of the late Balraj Sahni. The film turned out to be Govind Nihalani's contribution to the 40th anniversary of India's attainment of Independence, seen by millions on the idoit box, generating a controversy.

The location is a district in the undivided Punjab, and the period is 1947, just before the land mass of the Indian sub-continent was divided into two states. The narrative structure is episodic—with various episodes linked by Nathu, a chamar, a "skinner" of animals and his pregnant wife, who go through traumatic experiences.

One day, an unidentified character buys a dead pig from Nathu for the then princely sum of five rupees, saying it is for an experiment at the local veterinary hospital. It turns out to be a deadly experiment to set aflame the religious susceptibilities of Muslims, when this dead pig is found on the steps of mosque the next day. A group of Congress workers, which organises a drainage cleaning programme, is thwarted and the Muslim local secretary of the Congress Party makes the ominous statement: "Vultures are going to descend upon this town!"

There is a chain reaction to the incident. Hindu and Muslim fanatics arouse the passions, even while others appeal for peace. The local British Deputy Commissioner does not take a firm stand and says: "As a matter of policy, we do not wish to interfere in the religious affairs of any community." This is the policy of allowing matters to drift to the worse, a policy of divide and rule.

Nathu and his wife witness horror-stricken massive fires in the distant town and people in groups drifting hither and thither for safety. They too decide to move. Curfew is ultimately imposed and peace is sought to be restored by all communities—but in vain. People are deserting their homes, their shops, their plots of land. Hindus and Sikhs begin to migrate.

Amidst all the butchery and destruction, there are incidents and episodes that reveal the basic human concern for the fellow-being. Two Muslim women give shelter, much against the wishes of their menfolk, to an old Sikh tea-shop owner and his wife. Later, they are escorted to a gurudwaru in the next village. Nathu and his wife also arrive there, where scores of people offer prayers to the Guru Granth Sahib. Some of the men leave to forestall a possible attack. When the men do not return some of the Sikh women and children in panic jump into a well and immolate themselves rather than fall into the hands of the attackers. (This real-life incident is now enshrined as part of a Sikh prayer.)

A peace committee is formed by Deputy Commissioner Richard. A relief camp is set up and the dead bodies of riot victims are brought for identification and also registration of lost property. It is here that Nathu's wife lands and after tumbling over dead bodies she confronts her husband's body. She collapses. She is rushed to a makeshift medical clinic. The cry of the newborn is heard—but it stops soon after. Then, only the screams of Nathu's wife are heard....



GOVIND
NIHALANI

Forty-eight-year old GOVIND NIHALANI vibed so well with Shyam Benegal that he shot a whole string of films for Shyam — *Ankur*, *Charandas Chor*, *Nishant*, *Bhumika*, *Manthan*, *Junoon* (National Award for Best Colour Photography-1979) *Kalyug*, *Arohan* and *Kondura*. Earlier, he had photographed and co-produced with Satyadev Dubey *Shantata! Court Chalu Hai* in Marathi, which won the Critics' Award at Venice in 1971. He was behind the camera for Girish Karnad's *Kadu*. A one-time student of S.I. Polytechnic Bangalore in cinematography, he had learnt the ropes under the celebrated V.K. Murthy. His commitment to the New Wave films over a period of years acted as a catalyst and provoked him to emerge as Director-Cameraman in his own right, shouldering double responsibility.

Nihalani's *Aakrosh* in Hindi, which won for him the Golden Peacock at VIII IFFI and National Award for Best Hindi film (1981) followed by *Vijeta* and *Arth Satya* (Best Hindi Films for National Award in 1984) secured for him niche as a bold film-maker, who can tackle violence, corruption, social tensions with a panache of his own. Subsequently, he made *Party* (competition entry at 1985 IFFI) and *Aghaat* (Montreal 1986). His films have earned for him plaudits; and they have fared well at the box-office.

His five-hour tele-serial *Tamas* based on Bhishm Sahni's novel about the traumatic partition of India is the highest peak he has reached in as yet evolving career as a creative Director-Cameraman. Himself a refugee, who had left his home behind in Karachi, Nihalani had known what the partition meant to individuals and the masses. The popularity of *Tamas* was such that column after controversial column was devoted to the film and its maker. The West Bengal Government invited him and his unit as guests and arranged a five-hour continuous show of *Tamas*.

Another feather in his cap is that he was the Director-Cameraman of the second unit for Sir Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*. He has also won awards from Indian Documentary Producer's Association. His track-record presages further creative endeavour.



Trishagni (Sand-storm) is the finale of the film scripted, produced and directed by Nabendu Ghosh. It is a first century (BC) story of three Buddhist monks of a Central Asian monastery in which a simple but bewitching woman is thrown in as the femme fatale.

TRISHAGNI (Sand Storm)

1988/Eastman/130 Minutes/Hindi

Production:

Nabendu Ghosh Productions

Director/Screenplay:

Nabendu Ghosh

Story:

Saradindu Bandopadhyaya

Camera:

Moloy Dasgupta

Editor:

Afaque Husein

Music:

Salil Chowdhury

Sound:

Ashwyn Balsawar

Lead Players:

Nana Patekar, Alok Nath, Pallavi Joshi & Nitish Bharadwaj

Enquiries:

Nabendu Ghosh Productions, 2 Pushpa Colony, Malad (E), Bombay 400097

Veteran Nabendu Ghosh, who has written stories and scripts for a whole generation of film-makers, was inspired by Gautama Buddha's "Agni Upadesh" to make his first film as director-producer. The words of the Buddha that goaded him to make this film are: "All objects in this world are burning. Our eyes are burning. Our senses are burning. Our thoughts are burning. Everything is constantly burning in the fire of malice, hatred, fascination and desire."

To endow these words with flesh and to make a film of powerful images, he has set his story in the arid desert region of Central Asia; and the period is first century B.C., when Buddhism itself was still evolving. There is a small village called Sariput (obviously named after Sariputra, celebrated in Buddhist chronicles). There was a monastery around which the village had grown and it was under Pitumitta, a saintly, compassionate monk.

One day, there was a stupendous sand-storm that submerged the city and the ground floor of the monastery. Only four had survived; Pitumitta, his "fundamentalist" disciple, Uchanda, and oddly enough two children, a boy and girl, whom the monks adopted and named them Nirvana and Iti respectively.

Twenty years later, in deserted Sariput, apart from the two monks, who had renounced the world, were the two youngsters, who were in the efflorescence of youth. Nirvana, brought up through the rigours of monastic life is caught up in struggle between flesh and the spirit. And then, one day, Uchanda, sees Iti bathing. Her "wet" charms are what Mara, the eternal tempter, who had harassed even the Buddha, with his three daughters, dangles before the eyes of Uchanda. A spiritual rage is on in the mind and heart of Uchanda. It is further kindled by jealousy, when Iti, now unknowingly turned a *femme fatale* is nearer to Nirvana than to Uchanda.

Nirvana rebuffs Iti's charms and earns his "Upasampada," (monkhood) through a rigorous life of abstinence. But the Eve in Iti sees through the machinations of Uchanda and decides to win back Nirvana from monkhood. She succeeds on the sand dunes, depriving Nirvana of his *nirvana*. He falls from grace. Uchanda sees to it that they are denied food and water and finally they are driven out. They plod their way out of the non-green Eden that is around the monastery. Another sand-storm is emerging from the horizon when the disciplinarian, fundamentalist Uchanda searches his soul for jealousy and malice. He goes in search for them. The fierce storm nears the monastery. All the four are submerged.

This is basically an illuminating story revolving around how the great schism in Buddhism developed and resulted in "Mahayana" and "Hinayana." The philosophical overtones are conveyed through memorable images and trenchant words.



NABENDU GHOSH

Trishagni, an Indian Panorama entry this year, happens to be the first feature film produced and directed by NABENDU GHOSH, although he has scripted for over

60 Hindi films for Bimal Roy (*Devdas*, *Sujata*, *Bandini*, etc.) Hrishikesh Mukherjee (*Abhiman*), Basu Bhattacharya (*Teesri Kasam*), Mohan Sehgal (*Raja Jani*) Asit Sen (*Sharafat*), Dulal Guha (*Do Anjane*) Subhas Ghai (*Krodhi*) and several others.

An M.A. in Literature from Patna University, Nabendu Ghosh worked for a while in the Bihar Government Secretariat. But when he wrote a novel on the 1942 movement, he incurred official displeasure and had to give up his job. He drifted to Calcutta, where he was discovered by Bimal Roy and taken to Bombay in 1951.

His screenplays have earned for him laurels: Filmfare Award (*Majhi Didi*), Filmworld Trophy (*Do Anjane*) two Uthorath Gold Medals (*Majhi Didi* and *Teesri Kasam*. *Amrit Bazar Patrika* bestowed on him *Amrit Puruskar*.

Nabendu Ghosh has ten novels and 12 collections of short stories in Bengali to his credit and several of them have been translated into other Indian languages.



Veedu in Tamil, is a house, a home, providing a roof over the head. Balu Mahendra in this film is the director, screenplay writer, director of photography and editor. It is a simple story of a valiant woman's efforts against innumerable odds to build a house for her family. And, the woman is Archana, who earned the Best Actress Award in 1968.

VEEDU (The House)

1987/Eastman/108 Minutes/Tamil

Production:	Sri Kala International
Director/Screenplay:	Balu Mahendra
Story:	Ahila Balu Mahendra
Camera:	Balu Mahendra
Editor:	Balu Mahendra

Music:	Ilaya Raja
Sound:	Rajan, Anand, Murthy & Laxmi Narayan
Lead Players:	Archana, Bhanu Chandra, Sathya, Chockalinga Bhagawadar & Indu
Enquiries:	Kaladas, Palaniyappa Nagar, Madras 600087

When the UN declared 1987 as the "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless", it was with the idea of making people conscious of the vast human problem of habitation for the poor. Balu Mahendra was inspired by it; and along with Ahila Bahu Mahendra he fabricated the story for this Tamil film which is all about having a roof of one's own, over the head, a house, a home.

Sudha, on whom the story is centred is a working woman of 22 and unmarried. Living in a tenement with a school-going sister and an ageing grandfather, she is planning to get married to Gopi, a colleague at the office, where she is working. But then a home is a vital necessity. About this time, the landlord of the tenement sends legal notice to vacate, which acts as a catalysing agent in Sudha's life. The search for alternative accommodation ends in frustration. Attempts to sell off the small piece of land belonging to the grandfather are futile.

At this juncture, a well-meaning office colleague, Iyengar, enters the picture. He has recently built a small house and knows the ins and outs of building a home. He offers to help Sudha. Gopi, her fiance, offers his savings, but Sudha is depending on it for her sister's marriage. However, all of them join together and get going with house-building.

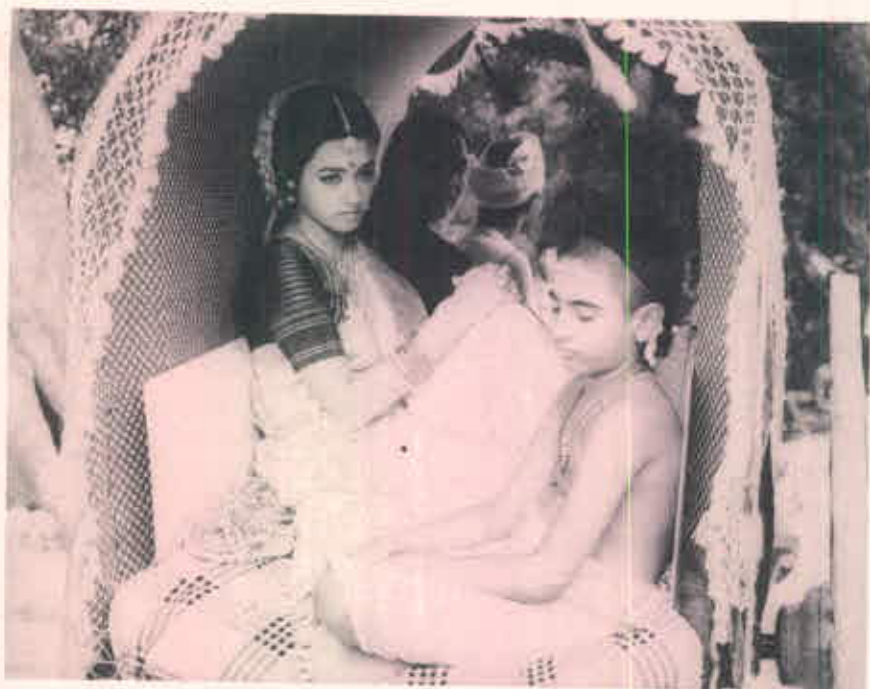
The film narrates graphically the problems of loan applications and municipal permissions and the wiles of a contractor, who cheats Sudha. Fortunately a construction worker, Manga, steps in and helps her. Tensions mount and tempers go wild when the roof of the house is to be built. This is also accomplished with Gopi financing, without Sudha's knowledge. Only plastering and flooring remain to be done, when once again they are all faced with a massive problem, which deserves to be seen on the proverbial "silver screen."



BALU MAHENDRA

Forty-two years old BALU MAHENDRA passed out of the Film and Television Institute of India in 1975 with a first class first and a gold medal in the cinematography course. For a year or so, he worked with late Ramu (Chemeen) Kariat, P.N. Menon, Bapu and K. Vishwanath as a cameraman. Some of the films shot by him for others are *Neelu*, *Shankarabharanam*, *Mullum Mallurum*. He started directing films from 1976.

Mahendra is the writer, cinematographer, editor and director of his own films- *Kokila* (Kannada) *Azhivatha Kolungal* and *Moonram Pirai* (both Tamil) *Olangal* (Malayalam) *Nireekshana* (Telugu) and *Sadma* (Hindi). He has won National Awards, Best Cinematography Awards in 1977 (for Black-and-White) and 1982 (Colour). He has won other awards for direction also. This year's Panorama entry, his *Veedu*, has been the Best Tamil film in National Awards



In the Tamil film *Vedham Puthithu* (New Vedas) produced and directed by Bharathi Rajaa, the rigidities of casteism and orthodoxy cast terrible shadows on the simple rural life of the people in a village. Through a series of incidents the people re-discover a new meaning in the millennia-old Vedas.

VEDHAM PUTHITHU(New Vedas)

1987/Eastman/130 Minutes/Tamil

Production:

Direction/Screenplay:

Story:

Camera:

Editor:

Music:

Sound:

Janani Art Creations

P. Bharathi Rajaa

K. Kannan

B. Kannan

P. Mohanraj

Devendran

S.P. Ramanathan

Lead Players:

Sathyaraj, Saritha, Raja, Nizhalgal Ravi, Charuhasan, Amala Master Dasarathi

Enquiries:

Janani Art Creations, E/2/G Parson Apartments, Madras 600006

In *Vedham Puthithu* (New Vedas) the Tamil film, the focus is on the rising generation fighting against problems of caste and colour, creed and superstition, which all contribute to a stormy situation in a Tamil village. Balu Devar, the headman lives in one part of the village. He is an atheist with a "golden heart". His son Shankarapandi is a graduate. In another part of the village lives Neelakanta Shastri, (who teaches at the Vedic school,) with his daughter Vaidehi and son, Sankaran. The flutter in the devocote begins, when Shankarapandi (a non-brahmin) and Vaidehi fall in love with one another.

On a day the lovers meet at the local temple, the idol of goddess gets stolen and to save Vaidehi's name from being tarnished, Shankarapandi takes the blame. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Balu Devar promises to replace the stolen idol with a new one. Vaidehi confesses the truth to her father, who decides to get her married off quickly as a second wife to a fellow Brahmin. But Vaidehi has her own ideas, fakes her death and disappears.

Soon Shankarapandi and Neelakanta Shastri confront one another at a nearby cliff and accidentally fall down the cliff and die. Sankar, Vaidehi's young brother is left alone with none to look after him. Balu Devar adopts him as his protege. Vaidehi returns from her hiding, only to cause further consternation. The man who was to marry her, Krishna Iyer, disappointed and humiliated as he is, lets loose superstitious rumours that it was Vaidehi, an evil spirit, who was responsible for the bad times in the village. Tempers mount and the villagers in a frenzy attack Balu Devar, who is protecting Vaidehi and Sankar—and Devar is killed. It is a traumatic moment for all villagers and they realize their folly. It is a moment of truth also and they feel the need for *New Vedas*.



BHARATHI RAJAA

For BHARATHI RAJAA, it was the hard school of life, which taught him filmmaking. Hailing from a village in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu, 46-year-old Rajaa spent half of his life doing odd jobs. He somehow managed to break the celluloid barrier in 1968 by working as an assistant director and made his debut as a director with

Pathinaru Vayathineley (At the age of 16) in 1977, which fetched him National and State Awards. After that there has been no turning back.

Through his films, *Sigappu Rojakkal* (Red Roses), *Nizhalgal*, *Alaigal Oolvaithalai* (in Tamil and Telugu), *Man Vasanai*, *Pudumai Pen*, and *Kaithiyin Diary* (Diary of a Prisoner) he was able to evolve his individual formula of blending lyricism and realism. In 1985, his *Mudal Mariyadhai* earned the double honour of Best Film and Best Director at the National Awards. In 1986, *Kadolaru Kavithaigal* was included in the "Indian Panorama." This year's Panorama entry *Vedam Puthithu* (New Vedas) has earned for him the San Thome Award and also the Award for Best Film on Other Issues. Rajaa has a special talent for launching new faces on the Tamil screen.

STOP PRESS

FILM EXPORTS UP

According to *Cinema India* of the NFDC, film exports from India showed signs of considerable improvement in the year 1987-88, after a decline dating from 1981-82 due to video piracy. As compared to 1986-87, exports went up by Rs 18.83 million (26%) in 1987-88. This increase is not due to the hike in the exchange rate, as evident from the increase in the number of films exported during the year: 829 films (contract-wise) and 137 video rights as against 722 films and 113 video rights in 1986-87.

The increase in exports was not confined to the Arabian Gulf alone, which is the largest territory and accounts for about 33% of our total film exports. In all, India caters to 90 odd countries worldwide. The increase is in almost every territory except for a few countries like Eastern Europe, UK, USA, Mauritius, Madagascar, etc. Contrary to current trends with the spread of video technology, while export of video rights went up by 20% export of films for theatrical release and TV went up by 28% over 1986-87.

NFDC's Direct Exports have also contributed to increase in export earnings; they went up from Rs 11.91 million in 1986-87 to Rs 15.11 million in 1987-88, an increase of Rs 3.2 million. Indeed, NFDC's Direct Exports have always shown an upward trend. This is due to creation of non-traditional markets, more active participation at foreign film markets and an ability to strike unorthodox deals.

INDIAN PANORAMA 1989 (NON-FEATURE FILMS)

The All India Panel for Non-feature films of Indian Panorama '89 met at the Films Division Auditorium, Mahadev Road, New Delhi from the 26th September, 1988 to 1st October 1988.

The Panel during the course of 6 days saw 72 films with a total running time of about 87 hours.

The Panel recommended inclusion of the following ten films for the Indian Panorama '89 Non-feature films section:

1. *BEFORE MY EYES*: Director: Mani Kaul
2. *DISPOSSESSION*: Director: N.H. Prasad
3. *DOORAM*: Director: M. R. Rajan
4. *FORESTS OF THE SEA*: Director: Purnima Dutta
5. *INDIAN THEATRE*: Director: Jabbar Patel
6. *KANAKAMBARAM*: Director: Dev Benegal
7. *RAMAKANT PANDEY*: Director: Hamendra Kumar Bhatia
8. *SAHAJA*: Director: G. Aravindan
9. *SCROLL PAINTERS OF BIRBHUM (PATUA)*: Director: Raja Mitra
10. *THE KINGDOM OF GOD*: Director: Ranabir Ray

Anjan Bose
Ashok Ahuja
Suresh Chabria

Member
Member
Member

October 1, 1988. Gopal Datt: Chairman



BEFORE MY EYES

1988/Eastmancolour/23 Minutes/No Text

Production :

INFRAKINO Film Production Pvt. Ltd.

Direction :

Mani Kaul

Screenplay :

Mani Kaul

Enquiries :

Lalitha Krishna

21 Chitrakoot

Altamount Road

Bombay 400026

MANI KAUL's *Before My Eyes* is in his own words a "filmscape" study of the Kashmir Valley without any commentary or dialogue, made "without reducing the natural dimensions of the valley to identifiable holiday commodities."

"The new tourist for the film is the old nature-traveller. Beginning with a white stream, the film studies a cloud, a lake, a boulder, a bridge, a river (from the helicopter first, then from ground), the water. A mountain shrouded in clouds is followed by a hot-air balloon that floats across the harvested fields, autumnal gold. To the spring green glade. The night with the moon dropping on the grey horizon. And from here the Shajahan structures appear: the houseboat has the cello player playing the *Raag Shri*. From a waterfall enclosed by rocks, the film elevates upon the snow-covered mountains. It chances upon the Gangabal Lake, where the sun is seen in a burning, but refracted moment in the still blue-black waters."



MANI KAUL

Mani Kaul made his debut as a director with *Uski Roti* and followed it up with *Ashad Ka Ek Din* and *Duvidha*, all of which have won national awards, made waves at Milan, Chicago, Berlin and elsewhere and won critical acclaim. His other films *The Nomad Puppeteer*, *Historical Sketch of Indian Women*, *Chitrakathi*, *Arrival*, *Satah Se Utatha Admi*, *The Desert of a Thousand Lines*, and *Dhruvad* have likewise won awards and rave reviews. A Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow, he has had retrospective shows of his films at Rotterdam (1981) and Pesaro (1985). His current productions are *Aangan Birha* for Films Division and *Nazar* (a NFDC-Doordarshan tele-film). He is engaged in making a long film on the life and music of Siddheshwari Devi.

Mani Kaul's philosophy: "I'd like to be like Cezanne, painting apples, but revolutionising art in the process."

DISPOSSESSION

1988/Black & White/33 Minutes/Music only

Production : Film & Television Institute of India (FTII)

Direction : N.H. Prasad

Screenplay : N.H. Prasad

Enquiries : The Director

Film & Television Institute of India

Pune 411004

Dispossession a diploma film, has been directed by N.H. PRASAD an alumni of the FTII. A graduate from Madras University and a post-graduate from the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Prasad has taught in colleges and worked as a Desk Officer in the Ministry of Defence. Then 'the bug for film-making bit him', as the saying goes and he joined the direction course at FTII.



N.H. PRASAD

Dispossession at one level underlines the documentary aspect of the polythene bags like the interior of the polythene factory. Here, small granules get converted into sheets of polythene, out of which polythene bags are made. These bags serve many purposes and are ultimately discarded and collected by rag-pickers. They are then loaded on trucks and taken back to the factory. Here, they assume a new form dispossessing their old forms. Thus recycling goes on.

At another level, the film shows the captivating and capricious journey of polythene bags on mountain tops and fields, in the busy centres of the city, on the fortune-teller's board, rail tracks and beaches. The intimate contacts of the bag with animate world are emphasised. Like an animate being, the bag flirts around a woman's ankles in an old fort, follows another on the edge of the swimming pool, chases yet another woman in a car. It follows a blind old man on a deserted street. A garbage collector meets with an accident in his effort to catch a polythene bag. One of the burning bags falls at a woman's feet. Her sari catches fire and the woman collapses.

DOORAM

1988/Black & White/34 Minutes/Malayalam & English

Production : Film & Television Institute of India (FTII)

Direction : M.R. Rajan

Screenplay : M.R. Rajan

Enquiries : The Director

Film & Television Institute of India
Pune 411004

Dooram is the diploma film (1988) of M.R. RAJAN. A graduate in philosophy from Shree Kerala Varma College, Trichur, he has specialised in direction at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune.



M.R. RAJAN

The film is about a man, who has a strong cultural background but is content to live in an alien culture his whole life-time.

Namayan, the central character of the film, is about to retire from his office. He migrated from the village to a far away industrial city during his early life. He witnessed different stages of history like feudal and colonial periods, the independence struggle and contemporary consumerist and neo-colonial society.

He is getting letters from his mother about the miseries of village life. The migration to the city continues all the same with the next generation also.

Why can't the youth stay and work in their own villages is the question posed.

FORESTS OF THE SEA

1988/Eastmancolour/65 Minutes/English

Production : Purnima Pictures

Direction : Purnima Dutta

Screenplay : Purnima Dutta

Enquiries : Purnima Pictures

95 Rushbehari Avenue, Calcutta 700029

Forests of the Sea is a documentary on co-existence and interdependence of life-forms in the mangrove eco-system of Sunderbans in West Bengal through which

the Ganga flows to reach the sea. Sunderbans is an inter-tidal zone, which faces high tidal waves and cyclonic storms but it is also the sanctuary of deer and monkeys, tigers and birds, lizards and cobras. This remote area of India has been beautifully photographed by Soumendu Roy and Gaur Karmakar through spring, monsoon and winter, under the direction of PURNIMA DUTTA. A highlight of the film is mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles in Biter Kanika mangrove on the coast of Orissa, which has not been filmed before.



PURNIMA DUTTA

Purnima Dutta, well-known narrator for films and news-reader for TV, has been involved with World Wildlife Fund as a Project Officer and now she is the Secretary-General of Forum for Action and Coordination on Environment. The daughter of an Indian Forest Officer and married to the late Ashim Chandra Dutta, a film producer of Calcutta, she has reconciled her two major interests: Wildlife and Cinema in this film which was started in 1983 and completed in 1988. Visually exciting it is a film with a message.

KANAKAMBARAM

1988/Eastmancolour/15 Minutes/English

Production:

National Film Development Corporation Ltd

Direction:

Dev Benegal

Enquiries:

National Film Development Corporation Ltd

Nehru Centre

Bombay 400018

DEV BENEGAL has been specialising in a series of films on textiles — Andhra *ikats*, Kancheepuram brocades, Panipat *jacquards*, Machlipatnam *kalamkaris* and Indian *Carpets* ever since he started on his own. His film *Anantarupam* on the *ikat* saris of Andhra won the awards for excellence and best cinematography for the year 1987 from the Indian Documentary Producers' Association. He has also made shorts on pollution of River Kaveri and on film hoardings. Earlier Dev Benegal had been a first assistant director of Shyam Benegal, to whom he is related (in *Kalyug*, *Arohan*, *Mandi*, etc) and had looked after sound design and editing of Girish Karnad's *Utsav* and Ramesh Sharma's *New Delhi Times*.



DEV BENEGAL

Kanakambaram (The Cloth of Gold) is a NFDC backed film on the intricate techniques of weaving used in the celebrated Kancheepuram brocade saris.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1987/Eastmancolour/72 Minutes/English

Production : Film Division

Direction : Ranabir Ray

Screenplay : S.V. Vasudev & Ranabir Ray

Enquiries : Films Division, 24 Pedder Road,
Bombay 400026

In this seven reel Films Division colour documentary, scripted by S.V. Vasudev, Director-Producer Ranabir Ray has paid a celluloid tribute to the thousands of anonymous folk artists spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Tracing the folk arts from the earliest extant cave paintings at Bhimbetka caves in Madhya Pradesh, this film provides a kaleidoscopic insight into the lives and artistic outpourings of simple rural and tribal folk, for whom art is part and parcel of day-to-day life or during particular seasons.



RANABIR RAY

Sacred and profane art, ritual and functional art are one and the same for the folk artists. They use indigenous colours derived from earth and plants to decorate walls, courtyards, doorways, paper, scrolls, cloth, for that matter any surface that can be painted with geometrical and symbolic designs and stylized drawings of men, women, children and animals inspired by myths, legends, *puranas*, and even contemporary history.

Ranabir Ray, who has specialised for several years in making films on folk artists of the eastern region with awe, reverence and empathy has once again made a film with historical and philosophical understones.

RAMAKANT PANDEY

1988/Black & White/31 Minutes/Hindi

Production :

Film & Television Institute of India (FTII)

Direction :

Hemendra Kumar Bhatia

Screenplay :

Hemendra Kumar Bhatia

Enquiries :

The Director

Film & Television Institute of India

Pune 411004

Ramakant Pandey around whom this diploma film is made, habitually sleeps in his office, oblivious of what goes around. One day, he is caught red-handed by a new boss, who is a strict disciplinarian. The other employees are afraid that he may get a memo or he may be transferred. Pandey gets panicky and is afraid that his services may be terminated. In his despondent mood, he resorts to "black magic." When the boss dies of a heart attack, remorseful Pandey feels responsible for his death and goes to seek atonement.



HEMENDRA KUMAR
BHATIA

A Graduate in Commerce from Kanpur University (1975) HEMENDRA KUMAR BHATIA has worked as a teacher in Stage-craft in the Bharatendu Academy of Dramatic Art, particularly scenic design, stage-lighting, and architecture etc. He has directed about 20 plays and acted in about 14 plays for organisations like Bharatendu Academy, Darpan, Abhinav and Khoj. He has also written about 12 plays including those for children. He has worked as an Assistant Director in a Hindi feature film, *Main Chup Nahin Rahoongi*. He is an alumni of FTII

SCROLL PAINTERS OF BIRBHUM

1988/Colour/17 Minutes/English

Production :	Cinema Four
Direction :	Raja Mitra
Screenplay :	Raja Mitra
Enquiries :	Cinema Four, 26/2, Purbachal Calcutta 700078

Scroll painting, the Indian version of the comic strip, has had a distinct tradition in India from the medieval period. Known as *pat* paintings and their painters as *patuas*, they have had their heyday and now they are on the decline. The *patuas* were well versed in Hindu mythology and epics and they painted in a stylized manner on specially prepared scrolls. They travelled from village to village with their scrolls, which they unfolded before the rural folk and narrated the stories in a sing-song manner, mimicking and gesticulating now and again. Now, with the cinema, video and television penetrating remote villages, *patuas* have lost their charm. They are an endangered species and their *pats* are disappearing, with more and more villagers becoming daily labourers in the towns.



RAJA MITRA

RAJA MITRA, who has made several documentary films (on Coal, Indian Railways, Calcutta, past and present and tribal resistance) as well as the Bengali feature film, *Ekti Jiban* (which received the Indira Gandhi Award) has now spotlighted a *patua* family of Malanchi, an obscure village of Birbhum, in West Bengal. It is the family of Moniram, whose eldest member, Dukhiram, is perhaps, the last inheritor of the *patua* tradition. With sympathy, Raja Mitra reveals the life-style of a painter-story teller and the rich, vanishing tradition of *pat*-painting, which is part of the legacy of rural parts of Bengal and Orissa.

SAHAJA

198/Eastman Kodak/33 Minutes/English

Production :

Surya Kanthi Film Makers

Direction :

Aravindan

Screenplay :

Chandrasekhar

Enquiries :

Skills, 1 Elliot Beach Road,
Beasant Nagar, Madras 600090.

Sahaja, which means *becoming*, is a highly evolved concept in Indian Culture : Ardhanarishwara-God who is half male, half female. This concept charged with mystique, in which the male and the female are seen as unity and not as disparate entities. "In many ancient cultures, there are parallels to this concept, expressed by a curve, a flow, but not a dividing line. There are various manifestations of this concept, philosophical, scientific and aesthetic, expressed in forms of art, in poetry and songs of the meditant saints, in iconography and crafts and in performing and narrative arts."

"In folk and classical dance and theatre, the male actor playing a female role does not merely acquire a hypothetical state of neutrality by careful exercises or techniques but has the positive ideal of arousing the femininity inherent in all men, transcending the male in himself and becoming the female."

In this film veteran artistes like Kelucharan Mahapatra (Odissi) Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma and Kala Krishna (Kuchipudi) Kodamalur Karunakaran Nair (Kathakali) Kunhiraman (Theyyam) Gaurang Charau Raul and Bhagiraathi Raul (Chhau) have taken part.



ARAVINDAN

Sahaja has been directed by G. Aravindan, cartoonist of long standing (with Mathrubhoomi) and painter turned film-maker with several highly-rated films to his credit. In 1974, *Uttarayanam* through which he made his debut won National and State Awards. His *Kanchana Sita* and *Thampu* earned for him National Awards for Direction. His next film *Ezthappan* won the State Award (Best Film and Direction) and four other awards. *Kummatty* was Aravindan's departure into children's films. *Pokku Veyil* brought in more awards. He had *Chidambaram* in the "Indian Panorama" at the 1986 Filmotsav. The much talented film-maker has also provided background music to the experimental film, *Yaro Oral*.

INDIAN THEATRE

INDIAN THEATRE

1988/Colour/100 Minutes/English

Production :	Films Division, Government of India.
Direction :	Jabbar Patel
Screenplay :	Jabbar Patel
Enquiries :	Films Division, 24 Pedder Road, Bombay 400026

This is a carefully researched and painstakingly compiled celluloid tribute to the Indian Theatre and the *Natyashastra* of Bharat Muni, which has sustained our drama traditions over the millenia. Appositely enough, it has been conceived and executed by Jabbar Patel, veteran producer, director and actor of the Marathi stage and film-maker, along with Yash Chaudhry of the Films Division.

The various regional dramatic traditions from *Ram Leela* to *Jatra*, from *Tamasha* to *Krishnattam* are dealt with. The contributions of the great Sanskrit dramatists from Kalidasa to Bhasa are acknowledged. But the Parsi theatre is not forgotten. Nor Annasaheb Kirloskar.



JABBAR PATEL

The emphasis is on the renaissance in Indian Theatre. In this panoramic survey Shombu and Tripti Mitra, Adi Marzban, the National School of Drama of Ebrahim Alkazi, Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, and Girish Karnad (playwrights) Badal Sarkar, Satyadev Dubey, B.V. Karanth and Vijaya Mehta (directors), M.K. Raina, Om Shivpuri, Naseeruddin Shah (actors) and others are all featured in more ways than one. And Naseeruddin Shah whose first love is the stage is the narrator of the commentary. The film brings the history of modern Indian Theatre uptodate with the inclusion of plays by Dalit playwrights. Excerpts from about a dozen plays are incorporated into the film, making it a delectable "moveable motion picture feast." A colourful, long feather in the cap of Jabbar Patel.

FILM FESTIVALS: PROMOTION OF INDIAN CINEMA ABROAD

SUNIT TANDON

It is fairly common knowledge that the Directorate of Film Festivals organises the International Film Festivals of India in New Delhi and the Filmotsavs in various film centres of the country every alternate year, as well as the National Film Festival (the selection of National Film Award winners) every year in New Delhi. What is perhaps not so well known, even within film circles, is that the Directorate, set up in 1973, is also entrusted with the organisation of participation of Indian films in foreign festivals and the organisation of film weeks under Cultural Exchange Programmes in India and abroad.

The organisation of national and international film festivals within the country helps to stimulate the Indian film industry through a process of affording film makers due recognition, as well as the chance for directors, artistes, scholars and critics to catch up with the latest trends in world cinema. However, it is the promotion of Indian film participation abroad, the organisation of Indian film weeks in different countries and the impetus provided by special programmes of Indian films that help foster an understanding of our films outside the country. It leads to a wider recognition of the achievements of Indian film makers all over the world.

These activities, by their very nature, tend to hit the headlines only occasionally. Such as when a Naseeruddin Shah or an Om Puri wins a best actor award at the Venice or the Karlovy Vary festivals. Or when directors like Mrinal Sen bag awards at Cannes and Montreal. Or when Costa Gavras organises a retrospective of an actress of the calibre of Smita Patil at La Rochelle in France. Or when Mira Nair arrives on the international film scene by winning the "Camera d'Or" for her first feature film at Cannes.

In reality, of course, these awards and accolades represent just the tip of an iceberg, which often passes unregarded. Little is heard of the dozens of festivals in which Indian films participate every year and win acclaim. Even less is heard of the "Indian Film Weeks" being organised in cities all over the world and the large packages of films tracing the history, evolution and the varied strands of Indian cinema that have been specially prepared for screening in several countries.

To tackle participation in foreign film festivals first, it must be mentioned that the Directorate really acts as a nodal, coordinating agency. Film producers can, if they wish, enter their films directly in different festivals at their own cost. However, this cost of participation, entailing the preparation of sub-titled prints, air freight and handling charges, can be prohibitive and quite beyond the reach of the makers of low-budget films. This resource gap is filled partially by the Indian Panorama organised by the Directorate every year, as films selected for it are sub-titled at government cost and sponsored for participation in various film festivals abroad which show an interest in them. Moreover, the director of any Panorama film, which is selected in the competition section of

one of the major film festivals also has his visit to the festival to promote his film sponsored by the Directorate.

The secret of successful organisation of participation in international film festivals lies in an appropriate matching of available films to upcoming festivals every year. An intimate knowledge of the character and predilection of each festival and its organisers is required in order to decide which film stands the best chance of being appreciated at which festival and where one can best hope for an award, which will bring some deserved recognition to its makers. A film which might emerge a winner at Venice may not even create a ripple at Cannes and what would be appreciated at Karlovy Vary would tend to be very different from what would impress at Berlin.

Similar considerations of national character and local tastes also guide the selection of films for the various Indian Film Weeks that are arranged every year in different countries. These are organised both under the provisions of the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programmes, which India has entered into with various friendly countries and, more informally, in collaboration with different Indian missions and film organisations abroad. About eight to twelve such programmes are held on an average every year and they have steadily attracted audiences in countries from Afghanistan to Austria, from Iraq to Indonesia, from Kenya to Kuwait, from Mauritius to Mongolia, from Portugal to the Philippines, from Sweden to Syria and including Burma, China, Ethiopia, Kampuchea, Qatar and Vietnam -- all told, a total of about 45 countries on all continents in just the past five years or so. The impact of such programmes in the country concerned is always heightened when a film delegation from India attends the screenings to give the event a publicity boost and an added edge of interest for the public. Unfortunately, this is possible only in a very few cases.

By any yardstick, Indian films have also successfully carved a niche for themselves in the international festival circuit. The last six or seven years have witnessed a quantum leap in Indian participation in festivals abroad. For instance, in the financial year 1981-82, Indian films participated in 15 international festivals. By 1983-84, this figure was up to 23, by 1985-86 it leapt up to 41 and, in the period January-December, 1988 alone, this has climbed to 51 festivals worldwide. These range from the Alexandria, Amiens, Ankara, Belgrade, Berlin, Cadiz, Cairo, Cannes, Carthage and Como festivals at one end of the alphabetical spectrum, to the Tashkent, Troia, Vancouver, Venice and Washington festivals at the other.

In many ways, the great thrust apparent from even a cursory examination of the facts and figures relating to Indian Film Weeks abroad and participation in foreign film festivals has been assisted by the sudden influx of new prints subtitled in English and French that has come with the organisation of large special packages initiated as far back as 1981-82 with the *Film India Project* for the USA and the package for the *Festival of India* in Britain. This is a major activity of the Directorate, which has come to it over the years and which was not originally envisaged in the responsibilities entrusted to it. There have been nine such large packages assembled so far, two for France, two for the USA and one each for Britain, Canada, Sweden, the USSR and Japan. These packages have ranged in size from about 100 films for the French and Canadian screenings to only about 20 for the Swedish lot.

However, the important thing is that once prepared, the prints become an asset for the Directorate and the film-maker, available for further special, non-

commercial screenings if required. And the exposure that the packages have received in the international arena ensures that interest is aroused and the films are required in various other manifestations, as the word about their availability spreads.

For instance, without the prints prepared for the Festivals of India in France and USA in 1985-86, it would not have been possible to organise a major "Indian Retrospective" of 44 films in Lisbon in 1986 or a festival of 27 films in connection with the Frankfurt Book Fair and a 13-film festival in Vienna (both in 1986). And, some of the same films served once again to put together a package of 20 films for the "India in Switzerland, 1987" Festival, organised in association with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations and the Swiss cultural organisation, Pro Helvetia.

Thus, it is important to realise that each package for which new prints are produced will have a multiplier effect by vastly enhancing the Directorate's ability to supply films to interested film promotion organisations the world over. At the same time, the screening of each package abroad which catches the attention of the international media stimulates greater interest amongst film programmers in third countries as well, so that the Directorate's library of films, and requests for the loan of its contents increase hand in hand. Here, it should be kept in mind that since the Directorate receives funding for print acquisitions only on a programme-to-programme basis, the budgets that come with these special festivals and packages are the only sources for new, subtitled prints for it, apart from the maximum of 21 English-subtitled prints that are made each year under the Indian Panorama scheme.

Of course, one handicap in the wider dissemination of Indian films so far has been that prints available with the Directorate have been sub-titled almost exclusively in English or French. Two large groups of countries which have been relatively neglected as a result are those which speak Spanish and Arabic.

However, awareness of this problem exists and, recently, an experiment has been made in sub-titling a few films in two languages simultaneously - in both French and Spanish in the first instance. While some problems still remain to be ironed out, there are hopeful signs in the development of our sub-titling expertise with the successful preparation of a package of 25 films sub-titled, for the first time, in Japanese for the Festival of India in Japan, which was held beginning in April, 1988.

There are other benefits, which accrue from the preparation of special film programmes as well and these are naturally more welcome to film-makers. Some possibilities for commercial release of Indian films have opened up after they have been seen fleetingly in one of these festivals. For instance, Guru Dutt's artistry was appreciated for the first time in France after his films had been seen in the Pompidou Centre programme of over a 100 Indian films organised by the Directorate in March-May, 1983. In 1985, while visiting Paris, I found *Pyaasa* playing in not one, but three public theatres in the city. And *Kaagaz ke Phool* was also released in commercial theatres subsequently.

Perhaps, even more than commercial theatrical releases, Indian films have benefitted increasingly from enhanced interest in the purchase of television rights as a result of the Festivals of India. But it would be simplistic to expect that the screening of an Indian film in a festival would automatically lead to its sale for screening in theatres or on television. This, indeed, is not the primary

aim of screening our films at such festivals. We have to take a long-term view.

The main concern of the Directorate and the primary thrust of its promotional activity for Indian Cinema abroad is to provide exposure to the achievements of our film-makers to cinephiles the world over. There is a need to do the necessary groundwork to provide foreign audiences with a framework, within which they can evaluate our films and see them in perspective, appreciating there individual flavour within the larger context of Indian culture.

This process is necessary as our films are often (like the best films anywhere) so culture-specific that their nuances are lost on people belonging to societies with completely different social relations and economic priorities. This task is made all the more difficult because so many Indian stereotypes are already embedded in the consciousness of people across the world as a result of the images created by Hollywood and the Western media. In this context, a steady increase in the screenings of Indian films abroad in festivals, film weeks and special programmes is the only way to overcome these stereotypes and to evoke interest where, at present, there may only be ignorance and indifference.

RECENT INDIAN PARTICIPATION AND AWARDS WON IN FILM FESTIVALS ABROAD

1983-84: Participation in 23 Festivals. Awards: 1. *Chokh* (Director Utpalendu Chakraborty) Cash Award equivalent to Rs. 12,000, Berlin 2. *Kharij* (D: Mrinal Sen) Special Jury Award, Cannes 3. *Phaniyamma* (D: Prema Karanth) International Critics' Award for the Best Films, Orkunde Jury Award for the Best Film, and Film Dukaten Official Cash Award of DM 2,000 plus a Gold Medal, Mannheim.

1984-85: Participation in 26 Festivals. Four films in different sections at Cannes and three films in different sections in Berlin. Mrinal Sen *Retro* at Tashkent, Smita Patil *Retro* at La Rochelle, Satyajit Ray *Retro* at Sao Paulo and screening of the *Apu Trilogy* at Rio. Awards: 1. Om Puri, Best Actor for *Ardh Satya*, Karlovy Vary 2. Naseeruddin Shah, Best Actor for *Ardh Satya*, Karlovy Vary 3. Naseeruddin Shah, Best Actor for *Paar*, Venice 4. *Paar* (D: Gautam Ghose) Unesco Award for a film from a Third World country, Venice 5. *Khandhar* (D: Mrinal Sen) Special Jury Award, Montreal 6. *Khandhar* (D: Mrinal Sen) Best Film Golden Hugo Award, Chicago 7. *Godam* (D: Dilip Chitre) Special Jury Award Festival of Three Continents, Nantes 8. *Maya Miriga* (D: Nirad Mohapatra) Third World Competition Award, Mannheim.

1985-86: Participation in 41 Festivals. Awards: 1. *Umburtha* (D: Jabbar Patel) FIPRESCI Award, Varna 2. Gopi, Special Jury Award for Acting in *Katathe Kilikkoodu*, Asia-Pacific Film Festival, Tokyo 3. Vijaya Mehta, Best Supporting Actress Award for *Party*, Asia-Pacific Film Festival, Tokyo 4. *Saaranush* (D: Mahesh Bhatt) Special Jury Award, Moscow 5. *Ghare Baire* (D: Satyajit Ray) Special Golden Prize Damascus 6. *Maya Miriga* (D: Nirad Mohapatra) Special Jury Award, Hawaii.

1986-87: Participation in 35 Festivals. Awards: 1. *Amrita Kumbher Sandhaney* (D: Dilip Roy) Best Film on Human Relations, Santarem 2. *New Delhi Times* (D: Ramesh Sharma) Prof. A.M. Brousil Memorial Opera Prima Awards, Karlovy Vary 3. *Janam* (D: Utpalendu Chakraborty) Gold Medal for Direction, Locarno 4. *Mayuri* (D: Singeetam Srinivasa Rao) Best Art Direction, Asia-Pacific Film Festival.

tival, Seoul 6. Rao Sahab (D: Vijaya Mehta) Best Film in the Third World Section, Mannheim.

1987-88: Participation in 45 Festivals. Awards: 1. *Paar* (D: Gautam Ghose) FIP-RESCI Award, Varna 2. Geeta, Best Actress Award for *Panchagni*, First NAM Film Festival, Pyongyang 3. Mahua Roy Choudhury, Best Actress Award for *Admi aur Aurat*, Damascus 4. *Mirch Masala* (D: Ketan Mehta) East-West Centre's Best Film Award, Hawaii.

1988-89 (Jan.-Dec.): Participation in 51 Festivals. Awards: 1. *Salaam Bombay* (D: Mira Nair) Camera d'Or Award, Cannes 2. *Antaryali Yatra* (D: Gautam Ghosh) Golden Semurg Award for the Best Film, Tashkent 3. *Anantaram* (D: Adoor Gopalakrishnan), FIPRESCI Award, Karlovy Vary 4. *Halodhiya Choraye Baodhan Khai* (D: Jahnu Barua): Three Awards (a) Grand Silver Leopard for the Second Best Film (B) Locarno city's Second Award (C) Honourable Mention by the Ecumenical Jury Locarno 5. Indra Bania, Best Actor Award for *Halodhiya Choraye Baodhan Khai*, Locarno.

RECENT INDIAN FILM WEEKS ABROAD: A GLANCE AT COUNTRIES COVERED

1983-84: Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) Poland, Algeria, Yugoslavia, China and F.R. Germany.

1984-85: (a) CEPs: Greece, USSR, Mauritius. (b) *Out of C.E.P.s*: Indonesia, Norway, Sweden and Madagascar.

1985-86: (a) CEPs: Syria, Finland, USSR, Mongolia, F.R. Germany. (b) *Out of CEPs*: Japan, Singapore, Yugoslavia.

1986-87: (a) CEPs: Norway, USSR, Portugal, G.D.R. (b) *Out of CEPs*: Sri Lanka, Italy, F.R. Germany, Bangladesh, Kampuchea and Austria.

1987-88: (a) CEPs: Czechoslovakia, Mauritius, Vietnam, Spain, Yugoslavia, Iraq. (b) *Out of CEPs*: Mauritius, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Philippines, Kenya, Qatar, Burma, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Syria, Ethiopia and Sweden.

1988-89: (a) CEPs: Mexico, Bulgaria, Poland, Mongolia, Qatar and Cuba. (b) *Out of CEPs*: Mauritius, Guyana, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Thailand.

FESTIVALS OF INDIA AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES: A SUMMARY

1. *Film India Project in USA*: Over 70 films in 1981-82
2. Georges Pompidou Programme, Paris: Over 100 films sub-titled in French and English - March to May, 1983.
3. *Exposition of Indian Films in Canada*: About 90 films shown in Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver in collaboration with the Conservatoire Art Cinematographique de Montreal - July to September, 1984.
4. *Festival of India in France*: About 100 films in four categories (i) Retrospectives of Actors and Actresses, (ii) "One-Man Industry" packages (iii) New Indian Cinema (iv) South Indian Section. Inaugurated on September 25, 1985. A Seminar on "Cinema and New Audio-Visual Technologies" was held in Paris October 16-18, 1985, attended by a 15-member delegation. Also a photographic and slide exhibition.
5. *Festival of India in the USA*: About 50 films. Organised in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Inaugurated in New York on October

- 25, 1985 with Raj Kapoor as the Chief Guest. Inaugurated in Los Angeles on November 2, 1985. Screening continued till November, 1986.
6. *Festival of India in Sweden*: 12 feature and 8 non-feature films. Held from September 25 to November 1, 1987.
 7. *India in Switzerland 1987*: 20 films sub-titled in English and French. Organised in collaboration with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Pro Helvetia.
 8. *Festival of India in the USSR*: 65 films. Four delegations attended the Festival in different venues. Seminar on "New Decades of Indian Cinema" held in Tashkent. A film music group led by Asha Bhonsle performed in 3 cities.
 9. *Festival of India in Japan*: 25 films subtitled in Japanese in five thematic packages: (a) History of Indian Cinema (b) Commercial Cinema (c) Trends in New Cinema (d) Women Characters in Cinema and (e) Young Directors. Inaugurated on April 15, 1988.

DFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are the Members of the Advisory Committee for the Directorate of Film Festivals, New Delhi

1. Mr. Gopi Arora, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; 2. Mr. D.V.S. Raju; 3. Mr. Adoor Gopalakrishnan; 4. Mr. Girish Karnad; 5. Mr. G.P Sippy; 6. Mr. Buddhadev Das Gupta; 7. Mr. D.K. Sircar; 8. Mr. Mrinal Sen; 9. Mr. B.K. Karanjia; 10. Mr. N.V.K. Murthy; 11. Mr. Shyam Benegal; 12. Ms. Shabana Azmi; 13. Ms. Aparna Sen; 14. Mr. Ramesh Prasad (FFI) 15. Chairman of the Federation of Film Societies of India (or his nominee) 16. Mr. Lalit Mansingh (ICCR) 17. Mr. P.K. Sarkar; 18. Mr. B.K. Zutshi; and 19. Ms. Urmila Gupta (Member — Secretary).

NATIONAL FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD — 1987-88

During the year 1987-88, NFDC has maintained a steady growth and the various promotional activities have helped in bringing the film industry into a close rapport with the Corporation. Though NFDC has been offering all its services and facilities at concessional basis as against market rates, it has succeeded in converting some of the cost centres into profit centres. On the other hand, some of the new activities have turned out to be profit centres.

Revenue receipts for the year were Rs.7711.26 lakhs as against previous year's Rs.602.56 lakhs and the profit before tax amounted to Rs.81.46 lakhs as compared to Rs.78.09 lakhs of 1986-87.

Apart from sanctioning loans and continuing with 100% productions, NFDC collaborated with Doordarshan for production of special feature/television films and also successfully completed productions with foreign co-producers. NFDC financed/produced films have so far won 133 awards at national and 33 awards at international levels. During the year, loans were sanctioned in eight cases and an amount of Rs. 52.99 lakhs was disbursed. *Gandhi* continued to bring in profit and during the year, an amount of Rs. 12.87 lakhs was received mostly from foreign sales. As a part of its efforts to popularise good cinema, the National Film Circle continued its screenings at Nehru Centre.

During the year 1987-88, NFDC processed and passed shipping bills for Rs.906.74 lakhs. This is a considerable improvement over last year's export figure of Rs.718.42 lakhs. Direct export by NFDC showed marked improvement by touching a figure of Rs.150.99 lakhs as against Rs.119.07 lakhs of 1986-87. Out of this, the amount generated on account of export of regional films works out to be Rs.26.51 lakhs. Effective business contracts worth around Rs. 740.37 lakhs have been made from market participation right from 1980-81 of which contracts worth Rs. 445.66 lakhs have already been fulfilled. NFDC's earnings from agency commission and canalisation service charges are Rs. 58.35 lakhs. Recovery towards its own investment, outstanding loans and bad debts works out to Rs. 39.66 lakhs, making the earnings of the Corporation because of participation in Film Markets, Rs.98.01 lakhs.

From the distribution of foreign films, the Corporation's gross earnings have been Rs.203.99 lakhs. Sixty-three films were imported. The important titles are Nicholas Roeg's *Insignificance*, Maria-Luisa Bemberg's *Camila*, Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice*, Thomas Alea's *The Survivors*, Emanno Olmi's *Long Love The Lady*, Andrzej Wajda's *Danton*, Francesco Rosi's *Carmen*, Volker Schlöndorff's *Swann in Love*, John Badham's *Short Circuit*, Randal Kleiser's *Flight of the Navigator*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*. In addition, nine classics of David Lean, four of Alfred Hitchcock and four films of Norman Wisdom have also been imported during the year.

NFDC's project of producing and marketing recorded video cassettes proved successful during 1987-88. From the video cassettes of foreign films, the activity branched off to Indian classics. Satyajit Ray's *Apu Trilogy* released during the period has been very well received.

During the year, NFDC sanctioned 12 *loan applications* for construction of theatres involving an amount of Rs. 92.50 lakhs in partnership with State Film Development Corporations and Commercial Banks, where NFDC's share of loans worked out to be Rs. 65.75 lakhs.

The earnings from special *technical projects* went up to Rs. 60.73 lakhs, a big jump from last year's Rs. 38.28 lakhs. NFDC's Subtitling Services have contributed right from the beginning to save *foreign exchange* worth Rs. 200 lakhs with an initial installation cost of Rs.49 lakhs. The facility of electronic subtitling on video tapes has also been added.

The other important activities during the period have been *non-commercial exhibition* of Indian and foreign films, holding regional film festivals, fighting against video piracy, publishing *NFDC News and NFDC Samachar* and the expansion of NFDC Library. NFDC's quarterly magazine *Cinema in India* has been accepted as an important publication dealing with all aspects of Indian Cinema.

The Corporation continued with its Hindi programme and during the year it received the National Award under the "Indira Gandhi Rajbhasha Scheme" for Public Sector Organisations in 'B' Region for outstanding work in Hindi and implementation of official language.

NFDC: NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The new Board of Directors of the National Film Development Corporation Limited was announced in mid-November, 1988. The Board Members are: Chairman : Mr. B.K. Karanjia (former Chairman of the erstwhile Film Finance Corporation Ltd and former Editor of *Filmfare* and *Screen*); Ms Malti Tambay Vaidya (Managing Director); Mr. N.H. Rama Krishna (Executive Director, Finance); Mr. Shiv Sharma (Acting Director-General, Doordarshan); Ms Urmila Gupta (Director, Directorate of Film Festivals) Mr. B.K. Zutshi (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting); Mr. Tapan Sinha (Bengali Film Producer and Director); Mr. M.T. Vasudevan Nair (Malayali litterateur and film-maker); Ms Sai Paranjpe (Stage, Film and TV Director); Ms Mrinal Pandey, (Editor, *Hindustan Saptahik*); Mr. Rauf Ahmed (Editor, *Filmfare*); Ms Suhasini Hasan (South Indian Film Star) and Mr. Ramesh Sharma (Documentary Film Producer/Director).

CONTRIBUTORS

1. AMIT KHANNA: Film producer, director, story-writer, scenarist, lyric-writer, and a spokesman of the Indian feature film industry at seminars and in publications; a researcher and writer.
2. T.M. RAMACHANDRAN: Editor formerly of *Film World* and now of *Cinema India-International*; long time ago, he was with *Sports and Pastime*: one of the key founders of Indian Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.
3. MAITHILI RAO: One of the leading film critics maturing as a filmologist; an activist in the Feminist Movement in the country; has been associated with DFF publications.
4. B.D. GARGA: Film-maker and historian of the Indian Film, who has specialised in making documentary films on "artists"; a filmologist recognised by UNESCO and other international bodies; a one-man archivist of filmlore, documents and photographs.
5. PRABODH K. MAITRA: Chief Executive, NANDAN, Calcutta, and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Culture, West Bengal Government; film society activist; at one time associated with DFF.
6. JASHWANT JADHAV: A lecturer at a Sagar (Karnataka) College; keen promoter of the film and drama movement triggered off by Ninasam: he is an associate of K.V. Subbanna, founder of Ninasam.
7. BUNNY REUBEN: Long-time film critic of Bombay, short story writer, an "experimentalist" litterateur with international recognition; close associate and adviser to feature film producers and directors from Raj Kapoor downwards. His book on Raj Kapoor is being published by NFDC to coincide with the Raj Kapoor Retrospective.
8. AJOY K. DEY: Till recently the General Secretary of the Federation of Film Societies of India; a long-time film buff, dividing his time between the Reserve Bank of India and films.
9. A. RAM BABU: Film Critic of *Deccan Herald*, Bangalore: he is also in charge of the Arts and Culture pages of the journal: a keen student of the history and development of Kannada films.
10. PURUSH BAKAR: Starting life as a Cinematographer in the Films Division, he has made a mark as a chronicler of Marathi films. He is a producer-director of several films, mostly documentaries. He is General Secretary of IDPA.
11. C.V. ARAVIND: A freelance journalist, who has done a great service to films from Tamil Nadu by writing about them with a proper perspective, untainted by ideology and box-office mythology.
12. G. KRISHNA MOHAN RAO: A *mulki* and an alumnus of Osmania University, Hyderabad, who has gone into various fields, from films to politics; he is working with *Mainstream* and IPA.

13. CHIDANANDA DAS GUPTA: The *doyen* of serious film critics, film-maker, regular writer on films in national dailies, author of books on Cinema: College-mate, former colleague and chronicler of Satyajit Ray's development as a maestro; he is also founder of the FFSI; his contributions to a "Better Cinema" in India are many-sided.
 14. BRAJESHWAR MADAN: A leading Hindi film critic, who writes for several papers. He has an instinctive nationalist perspective, well-versed as he is in Indian Culture.
 15. BACHCHAN SRIVASTAVA: A *doyen* among the Hindi film critics, he is much more than a mere critic; his contributions being many. His word has invariably been the last in discussions.
 16. V.K. CHERIYAN: Film Critic and journalist; a Delhi Correspondent of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*; now involved in current affairs television programmes.
 17. NEELIMA MATHUR: Scriptwriter and Executive Producer of the tele-series *Aise Bhi Hota Hai* and *Kya Baat Hai*. An alumnus of Indraprastha College, Delhi and the International Institute of Mass Communications, Berlin (GDR).
 18. SUNIT TANDON: Deputy Director, Directorate of Film Festivals; and alumnus of St. Stephen's College, Delhi; actively involved with the Theatre; drama critic, Western music buff; music critic; news reader, Doordarshan.
 19. JAG MOHAN: Filmologist; Edited two journals devoted to serious cinema; former lecturer at FTII; Written two monographs for NEAI; also over 30 scripts for documentaries; at one time in the Censor Board; one of the seven founders of the Federation of Film Societies; chronicler of the Documentary Movement (official and non-official); Author of *Kama Kreedā/Sexistentialism*.
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