

## CHAPTER – 2

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN CINEMA

Indian films are unquestionably the most –seen movies in the world. Not just talking about the billion- strong audiences in India itself, where 12 million people are said to go to the cinema every day, but of large audiences well beyond the Indian subcontinent and the Diaspora, in such unlikely places as Russia, China, the Middle East, the Far East Egypt, Turkey and Africa. People from very different cultural and social worlds have a great love for Indian popular cinema, and many have been Hindi Films fans for over fifty years.

Indian cinema is world – famous for the staggering amount of films it produces: the number is constantly on the increase, and recent sources estimate that a total output of some 800 films a year are made in different cities including Madras , Bangalore , Calcutta and Hyderabad . Of this astonishing number, those films made in Bombay, in a seamless blend of Hindi and Urdu, have the widest distribution within India and Internationally. The two sister languages are spoken in six northern states and understood by over 500 million people on the Indian sub – continent alone – reason enough for Hindi and Urdu to be chosen above the fourteen official Indian languages to become the languages of Indian Popular cinema when sound came to the Indian Silver screen in 1931 .

**Silent Era** – The cinematographe (from where we have the name cinema) invented by the Lumiere brothers functioned better the Kinetoscope of Edison and Dickson. The Lumiere brothers who invented the cinematographe started projection of short (very short, one to two minutes long) films for the Parsian public on November 28, 1895. Cinema was shown for the first time in India by the Lumiere brothers on July 17, 1896 at the Watson Hotel in Mumbai. This was just six months after their first show in Paris.

Indian cinema thus has more than a hundred years of history, like the European or American film industry. That first show was just a show of a series of visuals, moving scenes and nothing more, but it inaugurated a long line of movies made by talented Indians. Today India has the distinction of being the country that produces the highest number of feature films every year.

As mentioned above, the earliest show of moving pictures in India was done in 1896. But for the next fifteen years, there was no indigenous production of movies.

N.G.Chitre and R .G. Torney of Bombay were the first to make a film based on a story. It was PUNDALIK, a film based on the life of a Holy man in Maharashtra, it came out in 1912.

The next movie in India was Dhandiraj Govindraaj Phalke's RAJA HARISCHANDRA released on May 3, 1913. D. G. Phalke is acclaimed as the father of the Indian cinema because he laid the foundation for the future of the Indian film industry and because he trained several young film makers in his studio in Nasik. The Phalke award perpetuates the memory of this pioneering film maker and it goes to the

person who enriches Indian cinema through remarkable contributions to it. Phalke will always be remembered for his contributions to the development of the film industry.

Phalke established his studio in 1913 after his return from England with plenty of enthusiasm and dedication, besides a stock of raw film and a perforator for making holes on the edges of film stripes. He believed that 'Indians must see Indian movies on the Indian Silver screen.'

After his RAJA HARISCHANDRA, Phalke started other projects, but he could not complete them because of lack of funds. Other silent movies started coming out from Calcutta studios: for example, 'SATYAVAADI HARISCHANDRA' (1917) and 'KEECHAKAVADHAM' (1919). But Phalke's Nasik studio was the first regular studio where he could also train many promising young people as film technicians. It was still the era of silent movies all over the world. During the Silent Era (1896 – 1930) over a thousand films were made in India; however, only ten of them survive, now restored and preserved in the Pune archives. Meanwhile, American and European films continued to grow in popularity, though a major source of worry for the imperial Government was that they would 'corrupt' Indian minds. In 1917, the European Association warned the Government against a film called 'The Serpentine Dance', which was certainly calculated to bring the white men and women into low esteem in the Indian mind.

**Age of sound** – The films of the Silent Era did not 'talk' but they were never watched in 'silence'. Dialogue was presented through inter – titles, which were often in English, and two or three Indian languages. Almost every film had a background score, which ran through the length of film. The score was 'live', and helped to dramatise the narrative. Sometimes there was only a piano accompaniment, but there were several films where a violin, a harmonium, tablas and other musical instruments could be added. The first sound movie or talkie, viz, Al Jolson's 'Jazz Singer' in the U.S. ended the silent era in October, 1927.

Silent movies continued in India for another decade although the first Indian talkie came out on March 14, 1931. It was 'Alam Ara' (The Light of the world), made by Ardeshir Irani, admitted that the idea of making an Indian talkie came from Universal pictures production of 'Show Boat', which was a 40% talkie. But what kind of Indian film could maintain this strong link with audiences when sound came to the Indian screen in 1931? Over 150 million people at that time understood Hindustani (a mix of Hindi and Urdu, also known as the language of the Bazaar) and as the first talkie was to be made in Bombay, Hindustani was chosen over the fourteen official Indian languages to be the lingua Franca of popular cinema. Once the language question had been resolved, films looked to the Urdu Parsee Theatre for subject matter. Based on Joseph David's Urdu Parsee play, Alam Ara is a costume drama telling the story of the rivalry of two queens and involving many characters, plots and subplots. This film songs immediately proved a smash, particularly the one sung by actor / singer W.M.Khan in the role of a fakir, 'De de Khuda ke naam par pyare' (Give alms in the name of Allah). Thereafter, songs and dances were established as an integral part of Indian Popular cinema. This genre evolved out of the Urdu Parsee Theatre, a narrative form that had already skillfully dramatized Victorian plays and Persian Love Legends. The courtly love stories of the Urdu Parsee Theatre are probably the reason behind Indian cinema's dependence on

romantic themes and the way they link love, obstacles and tragedy. Another popular genre of this period was the historical film, based on stories of real characters or legendary heroes. The importance of the historical film lay in its patriotic undertones. The grandeur of Pre – Raj India, the splendid costumes, the etiquette of the nobility and high drama were a direct invitation for national self – esteem and the will to be independent. Of course, India did not need to be independent to produce films: thousands of miles of celluloid had run through the projector gate before the British finally packed their bags in 1947. Despite having first blossomed under a political power so alien to its own conventions, Indian cinema's thematic and aesthetic development seems to have remained largely free of direct concern with colonial rule. Individual film directors were deeply concerned by the independence movement led by the congress party and demonstrated their allegiance to the concept of a free India in films such as 'Sikandra' ( 1941 ) and 'Shaheed' ( 1948 ) . In the 1940s and 1950s, a small number of patriotic films and a handful of songs with a clear message of Indian nationalism were produced – the most famous is 'Door Hato O Duniya Valo, Hindustan Hamara Hai' ('Go away, you invaders! India is ours') in the 1943 film Kismet – but by and large the patriotic film isn't a genre that is hugely popular today. Indian films have never been overtly political, unlike Africa or Algerian cinema, the classics of which are clear indictments of French colonial rule.

When talkies came an unexpected criticism from art lovers was that sound destroyed the aesthetic quality of the movies. Moreover, the universal language of the cinema was adversely affected, they said. People speaking different languages could watch the silent movie and derive meanings from the acting and expression, and the visual effectiveness of the whole movie. Cinema is a visual medium, they argued, and it has its own language. An Englishman must be able to appreciate a Hindi or Tamil movie as much as a Hindi or Tamil – speaking Indian should be able to enjoy an English movie even if the movies are silent ones. But can we imagine how a silent movie would appeal to us now? We have become so used to sound movies. And in India, we cannot easily appreciate a movie without songs and dancing! The silent movies are now in the archives and they are taken out for research or for satisfying someone's historical curiosity.

Though colour movies started to come out of American studios from 1935 onwards, it took more decades for color to come to Indian screens.

**Themes in Indian cinema** – Early Indian cinema in the 1920s was founded on specific genres, such as the mythological or the devotional film. The sum and substance of the mythological theme is the fight between good and evil, and the importance of sacrifice in the name of truth. The retelling of stories known through an oral tradition was an important element in the success of the mythological film: The Ram Leela (a celebration and re – enactment of the exploits and adventures of Ram) and the Ras Leela (episodes from Krishna's life) are said to be of particular influence in Indian cinema. Such reconfirmation has always been an element of Indian culture. As Arundhati roy says in her novel, The God Of Small Things, 'The Great stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again.' Roy was speaking of the Kathakali dance form, but the argument holds good for cinema too. This trend was visible not only in the silent era. It

continued in the talkie era. NALLATHANGAL in Tamil, BHAKTA PRAHLADA in Malayalam and other languages, KEECHAKAVADHAM in Tamil etc. are good examples. In almost all the languages of India, during the silent as well as the talkie era, themes and episodes from the PURANAS, THE RAMAYANA and MAHABHARATA were treated cinematically. Some folk tales and legends also became cinematic themes.

A change in this trend came about in the 1950s, particularly in Malayalam, Tamil and Bengali movies. JEEVITA NAUKA (The Boat of life) introduced social and domestic theme, family life in Kerala and social humour, and it was among the earliest Indian movies to run for more than six months at a stretch. A more bold theme of socio – economic disparities and indication of prospective social revolution was expressed in NAVALOKAM. But among the socially relevant movies of the early 1950s in Malayalam, NEELAKKUYIL (Blue Koel) of 1954 depicted the story of powerful love breaking caste barriers but yielding finally to social pressures and the leading characters coming to grief in the face of social ostracism. This period also saw big spectacles like CHANDRALEKHA in Tamil and the beautiful celluloid portrayal in the trilogy of Satyajit Ray starting with PATHER PANCHALI. PARAASAKTI, the Tamil movie which took Sivaji Ganesan to the heights of fame was a strong and defiant portrayal of the collusion between religious and economic forces in the suppression of the poor. DO BIGHA ZAMIN questioned landlordism.

Later on, Social themes were portrayed. Stories were based on the life of ordinary families. Most films were produced in the Bombay and Madras studios. The largest number of movies came out in Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, Kannada and Bengali- in that order. Among the social movies, Andaz and Mela stand out. The production of movies in all languages has dwindled in the closing years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the reduction has been more in Malayalam than in the other five languages in which production was consistently high in the 1970s and 1980s.

Of the Historical movies of those days, the first choice falls on ANARKALI. Then come MUGHAL – E – AZAM and MOTHER INDIA. To the credit of Raj Kapoor and his R.K. Studios, a series of mild but poignant criticism of the oddities in social life of the 1950s and 1960s came, that were also great entertainers and pieces of artistic attainments: AWARA, SHRI 420, etc. In the 1970s, Amitabh Bacchan ruled the Indian cine world portraying the defiant angry young man of the new generation.

Till the late 1960s, movies were directed by people who learnt the art on the job. There were no schools or training institutes for actors, directors, producers and technical experts. The National School of Drama, New Delhi and the Film and Television Institute (FTII), Pune trained actors and directors and several other personnel connected with film. This was also the period when serious thinking was given to a cinematic style that was entirely different from what it was in the past. Critics have called the new trend 'New Wave Cinema'. What is termed the 'New Wave' in the history of Indian Cinema is not the 'nouvelle vogue' of French cinema with which Bresson, Godard and other experimental film makers were associated in the fifties and sixties. In the Indian context, the terms are rather loosely used to describe the deliberately realist and non-commercial style of film making that sometimes experiments with form and content. Its roots are in IPTA theatre, the realist novel, and European cinema (especially Russian, French and Italian). It eschews the escapist Hollywood and the Bombay film

traditions, and is concerned more with real – life issues of Indian society than with just entertainment. Other terms used to talk about this cinema are 'alternative', 'parallel', and even 'another' cinema.

**Major Studios** – The creation of the major studios in Madras, Calcutta, Lahore, Bombay and Pune in the 1930s was a crucial move in the development of a proficient Indian film industry. Studio owners including Himanshu Rai and Devika Rani, V. Shantaram, V. Damle and S. Fatehlal set the tune of film production, playing an essential role in promoting national integration. People of all castes, religious, regions, sects and social classes worked together in the various studios. Film production has always prided itself in the way it has been inclusive and continues to be a shining example of communal (i.e. inter religious) harmony and tolerance. Hindus and Muslims work together and promoting and National Integration and communal harmony has always been a favourite theme of the Indian film.

The studios, including Bombay talkies, the New Theatres in Calcutta, Prabhat Film Company and Gemini and Vauhini in Madras, were also responsible for broadening the choice of screen – subjects, with music as a primary ingredient. Like the great Hollywood studios, they experimented with different stories and themes while each developing their own brand of film making. The key films of this period show the origins of themes and subjects that have recurred over subsequent decades of film making. For example, the New Theatres films , particularly the 1935 classic DEVDAS by actor / director P.C.Barua , made in both Hindi and Bengali versions , gave Indian cinema its most recurrent theme : the love triangle . DEVDAS is an adaptation of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's Bengali novel of the same name. This film also gave its most enduring male character: The tragic romantic hero. Devdas is a high caste Brahmin who cannot marry the love of his life, Parvati, his neighbour's daughter, because she is of a lower caste. He later befriends Chandramukhi, a prostitute who gives up her profession and turns to spirituality. In a downward spiral of self – destruction, the Hamlet like Devdas becomes an alcoholic and ultimately dies at the gate of Parvati's marital home.

The story of Devdas touched millions of Indians in the 1930s who felt that his anguish would become their own if they dared marry against parental authority. This theme returns regularly every decade , either in a direct remake , e.g. Bimal Roy's 1955 Devdas ( director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's new version released in 2002 ) , or as an important theme , as in Guru Dutt's PYASSA (1957 ) or Prakash Mehra's MUQADDAR KA SIKANDAR ( 1978 ).

V.Shantaram was a co – founder (along with V. Damle , S. Fatehlal and Dhaiber) of the Prabhat Film Company , based in Kohlapur and later Pune . He made many stunts and action films early in his career, favoured socially progressive subjects and dealt with themes considered taboo. Shantaram's best work included a period drama about the vengeance of women (AMAR JYOTI, 1936 – the first Indian film to be shown at an International Film Festival, in Venice), the cruel injustices against women brought about by the arranged marriage system (DUNIYA NA NANE, 1937), to the rehabilitation of a prostitute (AADMI, 1937), and the promotion of Hindu – Muslim friendship (PADOSI, 1941). In 1942, V. Shantaram left Prabhat to start his own production company and studio, Rajkamal Kalamandir , in Bombay. There, he continued

to make internationally acclaimed films based on social concerns, including Dr. KUTNIS KI AMAR KAHANI (1946) and DO AANKHEN BARAH HAATH (1957).

Bombay Talkies also made social films, the most celebrated example of which is Franz Osten's ACHUT KANYA (1936) starring Devika Rani and Ashok Kumar. It was one of the first films to deal with the evils of untouchability. Bombay Talkies made many popular movies, including Gyan Mukherji's afore mentioned KISMET, a film that introduced another favourite theme in Hindi cinema – the 'lost and found'. Though the lost and found theme can be traced back to mythology in the story of SHAKUNTALA, KISMET made it popular in cinema.

An interesting twist on this popular theme occurs in Manmohan Desai's AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY (1977), in which the director depicts three brothers separated as young children and brought up by members of the three main Indian religions : Hinduism, Islam and Christianity ( hence the names AMAR , AKBAR AND ANTHONY) . The film was a massive success and Desai himself made several other films combining the importance of communal harmony with the theme of loss and recovery. In his NASEEB (1981), the Amitabh Bacchan hero is called 'JOHN, JAANI, JANARDAN' and is proud to be seen as Christian, Muslim and Hindu. As long as the separated family members are played by well – known stars, the audience never seems to tire of the repetitions of themes.

**End of Studios** – Financers who made money during the war years found film – making an easy way of gaining quick returns, and this new method of financing movies ultimately brought about the end of the studio era. The studio owners could not afford to pay high fees for their staff and stars, and so freelancing made a return – a system whereby all film practitioners were employed on a contract – by – contract basis. The studio system was over by the late 1940s, and widespread freelancing, established by the 1950s, set the pattern for film production thereafter.

**Golden Age Of Indian Cinema** – The 1950s was led film historians to refer to this glorious time as the golden age of Indian Cinema. Film makers created authored and individual works while sticking strictly within the set conventions of the films. The example of Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Nehru's vision of the newly independent nation was also highly influential throughout the decade, and many excellent Urdu poets and writers worked with film makers in the hope of creating a cinema that would be socially meaningful. It is no surprise that the 1950s is regarded today as the finest period in Indian cinema, and the era has profoundly influenced generations of Indian film makers in a way that no other decade has done since.

The best directors of the time, including Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt, brought new depth to established themes. They drew on the wide spectrum of cinema stories, but brought to them a personal vision. The films of the late 1940s , 1950s and early 1960s were lyrical and powerful and dealt with themes including the exploitation of the poor by rich landlords (DO BIGHA ZAMEEN, 1953), the importance of sacrifice and honour (MOTHER INDIA), survival in the big city ( BOOT POLISH, 1954) , untouchability (SUJATA, 1959) , the changing role of the woman (Mr. and Mrs.55, 1955), urban vs rural morality (SHREE 420, 1955), nature vs nurture

(AWAARA, 1951), dilemmas faced by modern Indians (ANDAZ, 1949), materialism vs spiritualism (PYAASA, 1957) and the importance of destiny (CHAUDHVIN KA CHAND, 1960). These films show a complex and sophisticated mix of characters, plots, ideas and morals.

The important film makers of this period not only made commercially successful works but also mastered the language of cinema. They understood how performance, photography, editing and above all, music could be used to create a new aesthetic. It was around this time that Indian films started to receive regular worldwide distribution, and films such as AWAARA made by Raj Kapoor and his co-star Nargis major celebrity in places as far afield as Russia and China. Mehboob's AAN (1952, AKA MANGALA, Daughter of India) and MOTHER INDIA (Perhaps the best known Indian films of all) also won large audiences beyond the Indian sub continent.

The average Indian film does not pretend to offer a unique storyline. A new twist to a familiar storyline helps a film to succeed, if the audience is looking for originality, they know it is principally to be found in the score. Film music is of such primary importance in today's Indian cinema that it more or less determines the box-office fate of most movies. Leading choreographer Farah Khan believes that, 'What is saving Indian cinema from being engulfed by Hollywood is our song and dance routines, because they just can't imitate that'.

**The Middle Cinema** - Indian Cinema, dominated in the 1970's by the Sippy's, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, B.R. Ishara and Vijay Anand, was jolted out of its wits when Shyam Benegal assisted by Blaze enterprises, shot into prominence with 'Ankur' (1974), and later with 'Nishant'(1975), 'Manthan', 'Bhumika'(1977) and Junoon (1979). Benegal turned his back on the standard 'Kalyug' and 'Aradhana' (1981) genre, injecting a dose of caste – politics into his first three films. He was closely associated with the making of Govind Nihalani's 'Akrosh' (1980), a political film about the exploitation of illiterate Adivasis. 'Ardh Satya' (1984), 'Party' (an expose of the upper middle class), and his TV serial on the partition of India, 'Tamas', have been significant success.

While the films of Mrinal Sen, Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani did not fare very well at the box office, those of the 'middle cinema' reaped a good harvest. Saeed Mirza's 'Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai', 'Mohan Joshi Hajir Ho' and 'Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro', Rabindra Dharmaraj's 'Chakra' and Ketan Mehta's 'Bhavni Bhavai' (in Gujarati and Hindi), 'Mirch Masala', and later 'Maya Memsahib', 'Sardar', started a trend in the making of socially conscious and political films which were entertaining as well. Both the New Wave and the Middle Cinema wilted under the impact of multi-channel television, 'Commercial cinema', the commercialization of the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), and above all the abysmal lack of exhibition outlets. The gradual decline of the Film Society movement too had a role in the fading away of 'Parallel cinema'.

**The Second New Wave** - As the century drew to a close, there was a revival of the New Wave spirit, with some assistance from the NFDC, Doordarshan, overseas TV companies such as channel four of Britain, and private financiers. Some termed this

revival the 'Second New Wave', even though most of the film makers involved in the revival was also part of the first New Wave. Mani Kaul (Nazar, The Idiot, Siddeshwari), Hyam Benegal (The Making Of The Mahatma, Mammo..... Saatvan Ka Ghoda, Sardari Begum), Saees Mirza (Naseem -1996), Adoor Gopalakrishnan (Kathapurusham - 1995), Girish Kasaravalli (Mane - 1996), Thai Saheb (1998), Govind Nihalani (Hazar Chourasi Ki Maa - 1998), Kumar Shahani (Chaar Adhayay - 1997) and others in different regional languages of the country helped keep the spark of 'alternative' cinema alive. The establishment of the National Centre for Children and Young People (NCYP) provided an impetus to the making of films targeted at Indian Youth.

**Colour And Triumph Of Romance** - The 1980s weren't a particularly strong time for film music either. The movie that brought back music and young romance was Mansoor Khan's 1988 film QAYAMAT SE QAYAMAT TAK - a love story along the lines of a modern Romeo and Juliet, showing two young lovers blighted by their feuding families. Lead actor Aamir Khan shot to fame as the teen idol of the late eighties. QAYAMAT SE QAYAMAT TAK was followed by Sooraj Barjatya's MAINE PYAR KIYA in 1989, another romantic movie with great music and family values, which brought another cinematic idol to the fore - Salman Khan. A third actor with the same surname - Sharukh Khan - became the biggest new star of the 1990s. Sharukh Khan began his career in the theatre and television before he got his big break playing a psychopath in BAAZIGAR (1993). He has acted in all of the big hits of the 1990s, including Aditya Chopra's excellent romance, DILWALE DULHANIA LEJAYENGE (1995), and Karan Johar's delightful KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI (1998). Sharukh Khan believes Indian cinema shares its dependence on love stories and simple plot lines with Hollywood.

**During the struggle for Independence** - P.K.Nair, one of the India's leading film historians, believes that D.G.Phalke chose mythology for the cinema not only because it was an easy means of communicating to the largest number of people, but also because Phalke saw mythological stories as a way of evoking patriotic feelings in the Indian Nation at a time when the country was a British colony. By showing Lord Krishna overcoming the demon snake Kamsa in his 1919 film KALIYA MARDAN, Phalke showed that it was possible to fight the powerful and to challenge the imperialism that had plundered the whole Nation in the same way the demon snake had poisoned the sacred river.

Social Film- Aside from the mythological, the 1920s saw the birth of other film genres, such as the social film (examples include OUR HINDUSTAN 1928, and ORPHAN DAUGHTER), the historical film celebrating Rajput history and grandeur, the stunt film based on the Hollywood model, and Muslim subjects inspired by Persian love legends including Laila Majnu and stories set in the splendour of Mughal Courts. The Persian love stories depended on family conflicts, court intrigue, poetic dialogue, and songs of love and lament and these were better served by cinema after the birth of sound. The Films with Muslim subjects were later developed into the 'Muslim Social', of which the author Shahrukh Hussain commented, 'Predictably, Muslim socials were about Indian Muslims and were the forum for the portrayal of many social institutions of



the exotic upper and lower classes of this community, (The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, 1989, Cambridge University Press).

**Stunt Film or Action Movie** – Another popular genre starting in the silent era was the stunt film and the adventure action film. The film makers who were largely responsible for popularizing the stunt film were J.B.H Wadia and his brother Homi Wadia, of Wadia Movietone. They became the kings of this genre, starting with the railroad thriller TOOFAN MAIL (1932), which featured several fight sequences staged on the roof of a moving train. The Wadia's loved Hollywood and were directly inspired by American serials, western and slapstick comedies. Their most famous star was the queen of the forties action movie, Fearless Nadia.

The stunt film and the adventure action film did not appeal to everyone: the educated classes saw them as populist, vulgar and a corrupting influence. This division in film styles is why distributors and producers continue to see films as being of two main categories: 'films for the classes and films for the masses.' The assumption was that the upper classes, who were more educated, expected something substantial from cinema, whereas the poor looked to cinema as pure entertainment.

**Music in Silent Era Films** – Indian silent films weren't really silent – as in Hollywood; live musician provided a sound track. The English language films shown in India's big cities had a violinist and pianist providing the music. This two – member orchestra was usually musician from Goa – a Portuguese colony at that time – who had studied music and could sight – read. The harmonium and tabla were the main instruments played with Indian silent films. In his article ' Sound in a silent era,' celebrated music scholar Bhaskar Chandavarkar notes that ' The harmonium and tabla players were not only the first music directors but also dialogue writers and dubbers , as they were expected to stamp their feet , shout and trigger excitement during the action scenes , crying ' Maro'

(Hit Him), 'Chup, Saale' ('shut up, you bastard') or ' khamosh' ( ' silence') while the villain got what was coming to him . (Cinema Vision, vol.1, January 1980).

Though this genre continued to have a healthy life in south India, in Indian cinema the mythological had virtually disappeared by the 1950s . Later , at the height of 1970s action and vendetta films , Vijay Sharma's low budget movie 'JAI SANTOSHI MAA' broke all box – office records by becoming one of the biggest hits of 1975 ( along with blockbusters such as SHOLAY and DEEWAR ) . This film made Santoshi Maa , a little – known Goddess , into a hugely popular icon and many people throughout India kept a fast , or vrat , in Her name . The film's popularity was so extra ordinary that it later became the subject of academic study by the Indian and International scholars: the anthropologist Veena Das analysed the film in her essay ' The Mythological film and its frame work of meaning' ( 1980 ) , while American scholar Stanley Kurtz examined its influence and impact in ' All the Mothers Are One' ( published by Columbia university press in 1992 ) .

**The New Cinema and Parallel Movement** – Mrinal Sen , a talented movie maker from West Bengal is considered a pioneer in the new genre called ' New wave' inema . In the

early 1970s, he was its main proponent and he had to do a lot of explaining soon after the release of his BHUVAN SHOME (1969). Without imitating the techniques of commercially successful movies which are usually mixtures of rapid action , maudlin drama , violence , erotic dancing and singing , Mrinal Sen could produce a film that was not only a financial success at the box – office but cut a new path in filmography .

Some critics are of the view that Shyam Benegal's ANKUR (1974) was the real path – breaker and that Benegal was the pioneer of the New Wave genre. His cinematic language shook the audience with its bluntless and originality.

Both Mrinal Sen and Shyam Benegal inspired many young film makers of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly graduates of the FTII, Pune . There were admirers and detractors for the new cinema. Some of the film makers created movies that could not easily be followed by ordinary spectators. Only intellectuals of a certain kind could appreciate them.

There is no doubt that these movies opened a new chapter in the history of movies in India. A totally new generation of film makers emerged. They used new techniques and evolved a new cinematic language, which was sometimes called idiosyncratic. They are all known for their originality, subversion of conventions and firm belief in the 'auteur' theory of the film.

Cinema, according to these directors, was the art of the director rather than of the artistes or the script writers . Each film is the personal expression of a view point , a personal filmic expression of the director . Many of these movies were not ' hits' at the box office but they earned the respect and admiration of National and International film – makers and critics . Big names include Govind Nihalani , Ketan Mehta , Mani Kaul , Kumar Shahni , Sayeed Mirza , Adoor Gopalkrishnan , G. Aravindan , John Abraham , Nirad Mahapatra and Girish Kasaravalli . All of them pioneered a new path in film making. All their films differed from the ones generally 'manufactured' in the 'masala' or ' fixed formula' mould .

Since these movies were not produced for any particular segment of the audience, distributors and theatre owners were not keenly interested in them; they found the conventional movies were drawing large audiences. Even the great director, Satyajit Ray's SHATRANG KE KHILAADI (1977) was not a financial success.

The New wave directors were more devoted to the artistic side of their creation. The distinction between 'art movies' and 'commercial' movies became a popular way of labeling movies ever since the new movies came on the scene. But sometimes this distinction becomes artificial or even meaningless because some ' art' movies have been commercial successes and some ' commercial' ones have shown great merit and distinction on the artistic side and been acclaimed as aesthetic productions .

Some of new movies in the early 1980s dealt with sensitive socio- economic issues. They were also commercial successes. For example, AAKROSH ( 1981 ) which won the Golden Peacock Award ; ARDHA SATYA, CHAKRA, PATINAARU VAYATINILE ( Tamil ), SAMSKAARA, MARO CHARITA, ELIPPATTAYAM and CHIDAMBARAM .These won National and International honours .

In the 1970s, there was also the parallel cinema, with directors like Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Basu Chatterjee and Guljar and later, Sai Paranjpye. Their films had songs and dances and sentiment and appealed to the middle class. By the 1980s, all

the art cinema directors were making serials for television. The middle classes wouldn't step out of the house. The cities had become so over crowded and lawless that the middle classes, even if they had a car and driver, would prefer to see something on television rather than go out. The art cinema was finished by the 1980s because there was no audience.

The justification given for such films is that the average Indian cinegoer wants relaxation. Why should he go after realism on the screen after all the hardship he encounters daily in real life. The Indian cinema is different from other types of cinema because the Indian spectator is different. He wants relaxation, entertainment, fun, frolic, singing, dancing, maudlin and sentimental stories, crying and miraculous escape from the hard realities of life – so goes the argument.

**Some New Trends** : The early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed several dramatic developments in Indian cinema . Cinema was at last declared an ' industry' in 2001 by the Indian Government and no sooner did this happen than the gradual ' corporatisation' of the entertainment and media industry took off . Banks, insurance companies and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) were persuaded to support the industry. The decline of the active dependence on funding from the 'underworld' of Bombay also had its beginnings around this time.

But perhaps the greatest impetus to the shake up of the industry was the rapid proliferation of ' multiplexes' ( multt-screen theatres ) and digital cinema theatres , first in the metros and later in the big cities such as Bangalore , Hyderabad , Ahmedabad and Pune . Multiplexes offer a different experience to cinema goers, for in most cases they are part of a shopping malls and comprise theatres of different sizes. Thus small budget films could be released in multiplexes and digital cinema theatres. Ticket rates are much higher in such multiplexes than in single screen theatres and therefore attract upper middle class families.

This has given rise to what has to be known as 'multiplex' films that is small budget experimental films on subjects which are rarely touched on in mainstream cinema. Young directors like Nagesh Kukunoor (Hyderabad Blues, Bollywood Calling and Iqbal), Sudhir Mishra ( Hzaron Khawaishen Aisi ) and Anurag Kashyap (Black Friday) have been able to make a mark thanks to the multiplex phenomenon . Small low budget films like Being Cyrus, Mixed Doubles, Joggers Park and other feature films were released in such theatres. At the end of 2005, there were at least 300 screens in around a hundred multiplexes across urban India.

The potential of low budget films at the box office has led to the introduction of new and bold themes by young directors both in the mainstream and parallel traditions. Homosexuality, old age (Being Cyrus), HIV-Aids (My Brother Nikhil), live-in-relationships (Salaam-Namaste), communication with the physically and mentally challenged (Black, Iqbal ) , religious fundamentalism (Bombay , Roja) , nationalist history (Mangal Pandey : The Rising) , patriotism (Lagaan) , and rural development (Swadesh ) have been some of the issues taken up for analysis in feature films and documentaries over the last decade .

### **Regional Cinema :**

**Maharashtra** : Indian cinema had its beginning in Maharashtra , but right from the start, films in Marathi stood no chance against those in Hindi which could draw larger crowds. Yet, Marathi films have continued to be made. Sant Tukaram, for instance, was perhaps the first Indian film to win high praise at home and abroad. This and other films produced by Prabhat Talkies have inspired Marathi cinema over the years .The first studios, however, were set up in Kolhapur – the Maharashtra Film Co. - by Baburao Painter who together with Anandrao , pioneered the silent film era in Western India .

The films of Master Vinayak who worked in collaboration with P.K.Atre, were brilliant social satires of the forties. During the fifties the foremost director was Raja Paranjpe, who collaborated with the poet and screenplay writer, G.D.Madgulkar. The role of literary figures in the making of Marathi films climaxed in the work of P.L.Deshpandey. In these hands cinema lost much of its visual character and was turned into a literary and wordy product. Perhaps the most significant film of the fifties was Anant Mane's Sangtye Aika , based on the life of a popular contemporary actress .

Few films were produced during the 60's and early 70's and these were formula films – either of the tamasha genre or the family drama. The last few years, however, during which over a hundred films have been released, have seen some healthy trends in the form and substance of Marathi cinema. The renaissance has come about mainly because of the 'tax refund scheme' introduced by the State Government. Under this scheme, a film maker has only to make a second film to get a refund of upto 80 percent of the entertainment tax collected by the State Government from his first film.

While in the early Marathi cinema, men of letters were only collaborators, they have now taken to film making as though it was second nature to them. Jabbar Patel, a paediatrician by profession, is easily the most eminent among them. Scripted by Vijay Tendulkar, his first venture Saamna (Confrontation) is about the changing scene of rural Maharashtra, dominated as it has been all these years by sugar barons and power politics. The second, which is little known, was Jait Re Jait , dealing with tribal life , and the third Simhasan (Throne) , a political satire on the goings – on in Maharashtra politics. His Umbartha (Subah in Hindi) based on the novel by Shanta Misal, has a feminist theme.

Films based on well –known Marathi stage successes have also proved popular. Ghasiram Kotwal and Shantata Court Chalu Ahe by Vijay Tendulkar, the latter directed by Satyadev Dube, are cases in point. Other outstanding films of the eighties include Sarvasakshi (Omnipresent) directed by Ramdas Phutane, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1897 , directed by Chinoo and Jayoo Patwardhan , and Devki Nandan Gopala , a biographical film on the life of Gadge Maharaj , a modern saint , directed by Raj Dutt .

Ramdas Phutane went on to make a film based on a Marathi drama, Down With Festivals, and Shriram Lagoo, a Veteran stage actor and director, made his debut as a film director with Zaakol (Omnious shadow) . Vijay Mehta, Arvind Deshpande and Amol Palekar, three big names of the Marathi stage, have also entered the world of cinema: Mehta as a director, Deshpande as an actor, and Palekar as both an actor and director. Mehta's film ventures include Smriti Chitre and Rao Sahib while Palekar has directed Bangarwadi, Daayra , Dhyasparva and Paheli (Hindi). Other directors who made a mark

in recent decades have been Sumitra Bhavé, Jabbar Patel, Sai Paranjpye and Arun Khopkar.

**Gujarati** : The first Gujarati film was a two-reeler entitled Mumbaini Sethani , released on April 9, 1932 . The first feature was Narsinh Mehto .

In the early seventies Kantilal Rathod's masterpiece Kanku could be released only in one theatre for a week at regular shown in Gujarat. Today, even the top-notch theatres show Gujarati films, and Hindi films have to struggle hard to find a theatre to patronize them.

What was brought about this dramatic turn in Gujarati cinema is the State Governments move to exempt all films in the state language from any entertainment tax. However, the kind of films made remains unchanged. In the late Rathod's words : The mental age of Gujarati cinema has remained five years though it is celebrating its golden jubilee in 1982. There is no difference between the present films and the ones produced in 1932. Earlier films such as Narsinh Mehto , Sati Savitri , Ghar Jamai were no different in treatment and content than today's films .

Until 1972, only 130 films in Gujarati had been made. Then came the film 'boom' consequent upon the State governments generosity in exempting films produced in studios within the State, on eight prints for a period of six months. Further, a grant of Rs. 50,000 per film was given to the studios where the films were shot, though the producers too were shelling out hire charges to the owners. Despite all this, no film processing laboratory, recording studios or editing rooms worth the name exists in the State. All the same, around 40 films are churned out year after year at immense public cost.

In the Gujarat Government's new General Resolution for Gujarati films , all films will be charged 10 percent entertainment tax in the first year ( 1981 ) , 20 percent in the following two years ( 1982 and 1983 ) , 30 percent in 1984-85 , and 40 percent in the year ending April 1986 . Further the General Resolution stipulates that only three ( big ) prints would be tax-free for exhibition in areas with a population of over 50,000 , as against five big prints in the past , but for smaller areas , nine tax-free prints would be allowed . The resolution has come as a severe blow to Gujarati film producers who claim that not even 75 percent of their numbers recover their investments, thanks to the prohibitive theatre rentals they are required to pay.

Films critics, however, believe that the 'golden' period of popular Gujarati cinema based on folk tales and cheap novels is at an end. Meanwhile, with the setting up of a film co-operative called Sanchar whose members are graduates of the Film Institutes of Pune, there is hope that a new cinema is in the offing, Sanchar first venture, BHAVNI BHAVAI, made in 16mm and shot on location and directed by Ketan Mehta, has already won a national film award and the acclaim of critics. So has MIRCH MASALA. The spirit of KANKU AND KASHI NO DIKRO returned to Gujarati cinema in the early eighties though in recent years mythologicals and folk dramas have continued to dominate.

**West Bengal Cinema** : The Bengali cinema has been dominated for over three decades now by Satyajit Ray , Mrinal Sen , Tapan Sinha and Ritwik Ghatak . Ghatak died in 1976, and Satyajit Ray in 1992. Talented young film makers who have joined the ranks of the 'parallel' cinema in recent years include Purnendu Pattrea , Buddhadeb Dasgupta , Nitish Mukherjee , Gautam Chakraborty , Aparna Sen , Sandip Ray and Rituparno Ghosh . But since all of them work at their art like lone wolves there no 'movement' worth the name to provide them the support that comes from a cooperative effort. The result is that their films win laurels abroad, but can find few exhibitors at home. The Nandan Film Centre in Calcutta has now come to their rescue. The Centre has exhibition and documentation facilities, conducts seminars and workshops which draw film makers from all over the country.

The cinema of West Bengal refers to the Tollygunge – based Bengali film industry in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The origins of the nickname Tollywood, a Portmanteau of the words Tollygunge and Hollywood, dates back to 1932. The industry is known for producing many of Indian cinema's most critically acclaimed Parallel cinema art films, with several of its filmmakers gaining international acclaim, most notably Satyajit Ray.

**Etymology** : The film industry based in Kolkata, West Bengal, is sometimes referred as ' Tollywood,' a Portmanteau of the words Tollygunge, a neighbourhood of Calcutta where most of the Bengali film studios are located , and Hollywood . Tollywood was the very first Hollywood – inspired name, dating back to a 1932 article in the American cinematographer by Wilford E. Deming, an American engineer who was involved in the production of the first Indian Sound film. He gave the industry the name Tollywood because the Tollygunge district in which it was based rhymed with 'Hollywood', and because Tollygunge was the center of the cinema of India as a whole at the time much like Hollywood was in the cinema of the United States. Tollywood went on to inspire the name 'Bollywood' (as the Bombay – based industry overtook the one in Tollygunge), which in turn inspired many others similar names.

**History**: The history of cinema in Bengal dates back to the 1890's, when the first 'bioscope' was shown in theatres in Calcutta. Within a decade, the first seed of the industry was sown by Hiralal Sen, considered a stalwart of Victorian era cinema. When he set up the Royal Bioscope Company, producing scenes from the stage productions of a number of popular shows at the Star Theatre, Minerva Theatre, Classic Theatre. Following a long gap after Sen's works, Dharendra Nath Ganguly (known as D.G.) established Indo British Film Co, the first Bengali owned production company, in 1918. However, the first Bengali Feature Film, Billwamangal, was produced in 1919, under the banner of Madan Theatre. Bilat Ferat was the IBFC's first production in 1921 . The Madan Theatre Production of Jamai Shasthi was the first Bengali talkie . A long history has been traversed since then, with stalwarts such as Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak and others having earned international acclaim and securing their place in the movie history.

### **Early Development :**

**Silent Era ( 1919- 1930) :** Hiralal Sen is credited as one of Bengal's , and India's first directors . However, these were all silent films. Hiralal Sen is also credited as one of the pioneers of advertisements films in India. The first Bengali language movie was the silent feature Billwamangal, produced by the Madan Theatre Company of Calcutta and released on 8 November 1919, only six years after the first full- length Indian feature film , Raja Harishchandra , was released .

The early beginnings of the 'Talkie Film' industry go back to the early 1930's, when it came to British India, and to Calcutta. The movies were originally made in Urdu or Parsian as to accommodate a specific elite market. One of the earliest known studios was the East India Company. The first Bengali film to be made as a talkie was Jamai Shasthi, released in 1931. It was at this time that the early heroes of the Bengali film industry like Pramathesh Barua and Debaki Bose were at the peak of their popularity. Barua also directed a number of movies, exploring new dimension in Indian cinema. Debaki Bose directed Chandidas in 1932; this film is noted for its break through in recording sound. Sound recordist Mukul Bose found out solution to the problem of spacing out dialogue and frequency modulation.

**Rise of the Talkie ( 1931-1947) :** The contribution of Bengali Film industry to Indian film is quite significant . First Bengali talkies Jamai Shasthi (as short film) was released 11 April 1931 at Crown Cinema Hall in Calcutta and first Bengali talkies as full length feature film 'Dena Paona' was released 30 December 1931 at Chitra Cinema Hall in Calcutta based in Tollygunge, an area of South Kolkata, West Bengal and is more elite and artistically inclined than the usual musical cinema fare in India.

**Golden Era ( 1952- 1975 ) :** During this period , Bengali cinema enjoyed a large, even disproportionate , representation in Indian cinema, and produced film directors like Satyajit Ray, who was an Academy Honorary Award winner , and the recipient of India's and France's greatest civilian honours, the Bharat Ratna and Legion of Honor respectively, and Mrinal Sen, who is the recipient of the French distinction of commander of the order of Arts and Letters and the Russian orders of friendship .

Other Prominent film makers in the Bengali film industry at the time included Bimal Roy and Ritwik Ghatak. The Bengali film industry has produced classics such as Nagarik (1952), The Apu Trilogy (1955 – 1959) , Jalsagar (1958), Ajantrik (1958) , Neel Akasher Neechey (1959) , Devdas , Devi (1960) , Meghe Dhaka Tara (1960), etc., in particular . The Apu Trilogy is now frequently listed among the greatest films of all time.

The most well known Bengali actor to date has been Uttam Kumar, he and co- star Suchitra Sen were known as The Eternal Pair in the early 1950s. Soumitra Chatterjee is a notable actor, having acted in several Satyajit Ray films, and considered as a rival to Uttam Kumar in the 1960s. He is famous for the characterization of Feluda in 'Sonar Kella' (1974) and 'Joy Baba Felunath' (1978), written and directed by Ray. He also played the adult version of Apu in 'The World of Apu' (1959), also directed by Ray. One of the most well known Bengali actresses was Sharmila Tagore, who debuted in Ray's 'The World of Apu', and became a major actress in Bengali cinema as well as Bollywood.

The pioneers in Bengali film music include Raichand Boral, Pankaj Mullick and K.C. Dey, all associated with New Theatres Calcutta. Other famous playback singers in Bengali Film music were Hemanta Mukherjee, Shyamal Mitra, Manna Dey, Sandhya Mukhopadhyaya and Kishore Kumar.

**1980s** : In the 1980s, however, the Bengali film industry went through a period of turmoil, with a shift from its traditional artistic and emotional inclinations to an approach more imitating the increasingly more popular Hindi Films , along with a decline in the audience and critical appreciation , with notable exceptions of the works of directors like Nripen Saha , Gautam Ghosh. However , even at this time, a number of actors and actresses enjoyed popularity, including Tapas Pal, Prosenjit, Chiranjit, Rituparna Sengupta, Gautam Ghosh, Aparana Sen, Sandip Ray among others a number of popular and critically acclaimed movies have come out of the Bengali Film industry in recent years . These include Unishe April, Titli, Mr. and Mrs. Iyer, Patatghar, Bombaiyer Bombeti, Shatru Pakakkha, and Jeeban Jodha and Signal a resurgence of the Bengali film industry.

Buddhadeb Dasgupta's NEEM ANNAPURNA , DOOWATWA , and TAHADER KATHA Pattrea's STREER PATRA , CHENTRA TAMSUKHA , and MALANCHA , Nitish Mukherjee's EKDIN SURYA , NAYAN SHYAMA and RABIDAR didn't do well at the box-office .

Utpalendu Chakraborty made his debut with a documentary MUKTI CHAI and a feature MOYNA TADANTA, both of which have won national film awards. He went on to make PHANSI (1989), the tragic tale of a professional hangman, and KANNA (1989), a documentary on a Bharat Natyam dancer. Both were NFDC – funded. So were films by Gautam Ghose (PAAR , ANTARJALI , YATRA) , Aparna Sen (36 CHOWRINGHEE LANE , SATI , PARAMA , PICNIC) , Raja Mitra (EKIT JIBON) and Sandip Ray (HIMGHAR) , though some of them were in Hindi and English rather than in Bengali .

**Andhra** : In the South , Andhra produces the largest number of films every year but the least number in the genre of ' parallel cinema' . The films are pot-boilers in the Hindi cinema style, loaded with song and dance sequences. Mythologicals, folk love fantasies, socials and crime thrillers dominate. Nowhere in sight are films to match the classics of old –G . Ramabrahman's Mala Pillai Raita , K.V. Reddi's BHAKTA POTANA, Yogi VEMANA , Chittor V. NAGAIH'S THAIAGAIH and B.N. Reddi's MALLESWARI .

Shyam Benegal with ANURAGHAM, and Mrinal Sen with OKA CORI KATHA did try to break into Telegu films but without much success. B.S. Narayan has won national and international acclaim with his two features, OORUMMADI BRATUKULU, a naturalistic film about the struggle of the poor, and NAMMAJJANAM which deals with the suicide of a young bride who is the victim of rape. Two other outstanding films are Ravindran's HARIJAN and Gautam Ghose's MAA BHOOMI, which focus on the plight of the have-nots in an exploitative situation.

Telegu cinema shot into the limelight in 1981 with K.Viswanath's SANKARABARANAM which bagged the Golden Lotus for Mass Entertainer with Aesthetic Values. In 1989, his SEVARNA KAMALAM was the only Telegu film selected for the Indian Panorama.



What accounts for the big crop of film each year in Andhra is the State Government's support . It is perhaps the only State Government that ploughs back about 70 percent of the receipts from entertainment tax into the film industry. The Eenadu Group, which is the largest media company in the State, has established a state-of-the-art studio for film and television production in Hyderabad.

**Tamilnadu** : Madras has been a centre for film production in Hindi and the South Indian languages , from the early years of Indian cinema . The new wave cinema took over the Tamil cinema scene in the late seventies. The pioneers were K. Balachander, Bharati Raja, Mahendran, Balu Mahendra, Dorai, Jayabharati, Bhagyaraj, Rudraiya and H.A. Kaja. Mahendran's UTHARIPOOKAL and Dorai's PASI continued the realistic genre started by the late Bhim Singh's SILA NARANGALIL SILA MANITHANGAL which challenged the myth of the ideal heroine. Bharaathi Raja set the trend of locating films in villages, and Mahendra gave the villagers 'solidity depth and relevance' in his 16 VAYADINILE. There was a radical move away from the dialogue-oriented film, as in J. Mahendran's MULLUM MALARUM and the cooperative venture of some young people under the leadership of Robert and Rajasekaran ( ORU THALAI RAGAM ) . At the close of the century, Mani Ratnam, Illayarajah and A.R. Rehman had succeeded in putting Tamil cinema on the all-India map.

**Kerala** : The seventies was the 'golden' period of Malayalam cinema . The pioneer of the new cinema in Kerala was Adoor Gopalakrishnan , who made SWAYAMVARAM in the early seventies , and since then has been turning out films at regular intervals . His oeuvre includes : KODIYETTAM (The Ascent) (1977), ELIPATHAYAM (Mousetrap) (1981), MUKHAMUKHAM (Face to Face) (1984) , ANANTARAM (Monologue ) (1987), MATHILUKAI (The Walls) (1991), VIDHEYAN (Servile Man) (1993), and KATHAPURUSHAM ( Man of History ) (1995) .

The late G. Aravindan's films UTHARAYANAM, KANCHANA SITA, THAMP, KUMMATI, ESTHAPPAN, SAHAJA, ORIDATH, MARATTAM and VASTUHARA have won international acclaim for their aesthetic and poetic qualities. Malayalam films have had the largest representation at the Indian Panorama since the 1970s. Film co-operatives have been one reason for its steady growth. Chitrallekha , the film cooperative started by Adoor Gopalakrishnan , has provided the impetus to the growth of Malayalam cinema . The State Government has set up a film complex in Trivandrum and provides a subsidy to film-makers.

Some of the other film makers who have tried to break new ground are : Vasudevan Nair (NIRMALAYAM BANDHANAM ), P.A. Backer ( KABANI NADI CHUVANNAPPOL), Padmarajan (PEUYAZHIAMBALAM and KALLAN PAVITHRAN), V.R. Gopinath (GREESHAM), John Abraham (AMMA ARIYAN; CHERIYACHANTE KROGRA KRITHYANGAL (The Wicked Deeds of Chedyachan), Sivan (YAGAM), and K.R. Mohanam ( ASHWA THAMA ) and Shaji N. Kuran ( PIRAVI , VANAPRASTHAM ) . K.G. George (JOURNEY'S END), Lenin Rajendran (A TALE OF THE PAST), K.Ravindran's (ORE TAHVOOL PAKSHIGAL and VARIKUZHA), are other distinguished directors. Those who have made a mark in recent years are : T.Rajeevnath , (THANAL , THEERANGAL, SURYANTE MARANAM, PURAPPAD , KAVERI KADAL THEERATHU,

AHAM AND JANANI), Jayaraj (KUDUMASAMETHAN, SOPANAM, DESADANAM, KALIYATTAM AND KARUNAM) and M .P.Sukumaran Nair (APRAHANAM AND KAZHAKAM) .

**Karnataka:** The State Government of Karnataka was the first to encourage the regional cinema by offering generous subsidies, and granting tax exemptions to films made in Kannada cinema began to wrest national awards. SAMSKARA (1970), and VAMSHA VRIKSHA (1971) , KAADU (1973), CHOMANA DUDI (1975) and HAMSE GEETHE won national and international acclaim , and inspired the Kannadiga to pay more attention to the films of his own language rather than to those in Hindi and Tamil . Even the commercial ventures of Puttanna Siddhalingayya and Raaj Kumar which attempted to blend art with popular entertainment, met with success.

M.S.Sathyu of GARAM HAWA and BARA (Femine) fame, made two big budget Kannada films – KANNESHWARA RAMA and CHITEGU CHINTE – and Girish Karnad ONDANONDU KALADALLI and TABALIYU NEENADE MAGANE (jointly with karanth). Girish Kasaravalli is the foremost director now with four visually arresting films – GHATTASHRADHA, AAKRAMANA, MOORU DARIGALLU, and MAANE – to his credit. P. Lankesh's PALLAVI too is a cut above the rest. Girish Karnad's KONOORU HEGGADITHI (The Mistress of the house of konooru) (1999) retells the classic Kannada story of the near destruction of the Chandrayya Gowda family. It is based on a novel 650 pages long, and 'was part of one's growing up'. 'Directing it', says Karnad, 'was a way of confronting a seminal influence from a later perspective'.

**Assam:** Cinema in Assam and the North-East has received much attention at national film festivals in recent years . Active support from the State – run Assam Film Finance and Development Corporation has plans of establishing a chain of 'Janata halls' for regular exhibition of films. Mobile Cinemas are also being encouraged by exemption of entertainment taxes. The first Assamese film was Jyotiprasad Agarwala's JOYMATI, released in 1935. Agarwala later made INDRA MALATI, but received little recognition. He is believed to have been the first director to introduce playback singing in Indian Cinema.

Assamese cinema is cinema in the Assamese language, watched primarily in Assam, India. The industry was born in 1935 when Jyoti Prasad Agarwala released his movie 'Joymoti'. Since then Assamese cinema has developed a slow – paced, sensitive style, especially with the movies of Bhabendra Nath Saikia and Jhanu Barua .

However, despite its long history, and its artistic successes, for a state that has always taken its cinema seriously, Assamese cinema has never really managed to make the breakthrough on the national scene despite its film industry making a mark in the National Awards over the years. Although the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been Bollywood – style Assamese movies hitting the screen, the industry has not been able to compete in the market, significantly overshadowed by the larger industries such as Bollywood .

**1930s:** The origins of Assamese cinema can be traced back to the dreams and imagination of a revolutionary visionary Rup Konwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, who was also a distinguished poet, playwright, composer and freedom fighter. He was instrumental in the production of the first Assamese Film Joymati in 1935, under the banner of Critakala Movietone. Due to the lack of trained technicians, Jyoti Prasad, while making his maiden film, had to shoulder the added responsibilities as the script writer, producer, director, choreographer, editor, set and costume designer, lyricist and music director. The film, completed with a budget of 60,000 rupees was released on 10 March 1935. The picture failed miserably. Like so many early Indian films, the negatives and complete prints of 'Joymati' are missing. Some effort has been made privately by Altaf Mazid to restore and subtitle whatever is left of the prints. Despite the significant financial loss from 'Joymati', the second picture 'Indramati' was filmed between 1937 and 1938 finally released in 1939.

**1940s :** Remaining strong in the face of adversity, Agarwala made another film after a lapse of two years titled 'Indramati'. It was his second and last film. The eminent composer and singer of Assam Bhupen Hazarika, played a stellar role in the play. With the passing away of Jyotiprasad, the Assamese film scene witnessed a temporary lull for about a couple of years. But things changed with the onset of World War II, Taking advantage of this, Rohini Kumar Baruah made a film on a relevant historical topic called 'Manomati' in 1941. It was followed by films like Parvati Prasad Baruah's 'Rupahi' (1946), Kamal Narayan Choudhury's 'Badan Barphukan' (1947), Phani Sharma's 'Siraj', Asit Sen's 'Biin 1961', Biplabi', Prabin Phukan's 'Parghat' and Suresh Goswami's 'Runami'.

**1950s :** The most remarkable film of the fifties was Piyali Phukan which went on to win a National Award. The movie was produced by eminent film producer Gama Prasad Agarwala under the aegis of Rup Jyoti Productions. The film was directed by Phani Sharma and music was composed by a young Bhupen Hazarika. The film was about the life of the freedom fighter Piyali Phukan, who stood against the British rule. He was executed by the British on charges of Treason. This film technically was very advanced for that time. In 1955, a new talent Nip Barua made his directional debut with Smrit Paras. His subsequent films 'Mak Aaru Moram' and 'Ranga Police' bagged many state awards and the silver medal at the national level. Bhupen Hazarika also produced and directed his first 'Era Bator Sur'. Prabhat Mukherjee made a film on the University of Mother – hood, 'Puberun' (1959), which was shown in The Berlin Film Festival.

**1960s :** The next notable film production was Lachit Barphukan by Sarbeswar Chakraborty. Bhupen Hazarika made his unforgettable musical 'Shakuntala' which proved equally successful with critics and the press, winning the President's silver medal. Following this, a chain of films went into regular production and got released, including Nip Barua's Narakasur, Anil Choudhury's 'Matri Swarga', Brogen Barua's 'Itu Situ Bahuto' and Mukta and Anwar Hussain's 'Tejjimala'. By the middle of the sixties, film began to be produced in Assam on a regular basis. However, between 1935 and 1970 a total of 62 films were produced. Besides, the film makers already referred to,

many others engaged in film making during the period included Pravin Sharma, Saila Barua, Abdul Mazid , Amar Pathak, Indukal Pattazarika, Diben Barua, Debkumar Basu , Amulya Manna, Gauri Burman, Atul Bardoloi, Sujit Singh, Nalin Duara, and Prafulla Barua .

**1970s** : During the period of 1970-82 a total of 57 Assamese films were made. New directors started emerging on the horizon , Samarendra Narayan Deb's 'Aranya' (1970), Kamal Choudhury's ' Bhaity' (1972 , the first color film of Assam) Deuti Barua's ' Bristi' (1974), Manoranjan's Sur's ' Uttaran' (1973), Prabin Bora's ' Parinam' (1974) , Pulok Gogoi's ' Khoj' (1974), Padam Barua's 'Gonga Silonir Pakhi'(1976), Bhabendranath Saikia's 'Sandhya Raag' (1977) and Atul Bardoloi's ' Kollol' (1978) are films worth mentioning .

**1980s** : Notable directors of contemporary Assamese cinema are Jhanu Barua ( who directed Aparoopa , Papori , Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khai , Bonani , Firingoti and Sagaroloi Bohu Door ) , Sanjiv Hazarika ( Haladhar, Meemanxa ) and Bhabendra nath Saikia who directed 'Sandhya Raag', 'Anirbaan', 'Agnisnaan', 'Sarothe' , 'Kolahal', 'Abartan' , 'Itihaas' and 'Kaal Sandhya' ) . Other directors include Santwana Bordoloi who directed 'Adaiya' and Bidyut Chakraborty who made 'Rag Birag', both of which have won national and international awards.

The forties and fifties saw a crop of films by Rohini Kumar Barua, Parvati Barua and Phani Sharma. In 1955 PIYALI PHUKON won a national award . In the sixties, the best known film – makers were Bhupen Hazarika, Padma Barua , Abdul Mazid , Attul Baroli and Manoranjan Sur . By the end of eighties, however, film production had slumped as in the rest of the country. The new films that were made won national acclaim. In 1986 only 11 films were made, and only eight in the following year. But this too is creditable since the whole state has only one government owned studio and minimal infrastructure. Most post production work has to be completed in laboratories in Calcutta, Bombay or Madras . Exhibition theatres do not number more than 143 in the entire State.

Jhanu Barua and Bhabendranath Saikia have now put Assamese Cinema on the international festival circuit. Saikia's major films include SANDHYA RAG, ANIRBAN, AGNISNAAN , and KOLAHAL (1988) , and Barua's are : APAROOPA ( 1979) , PAPORI (1985), HALODHIA CHORAYE BAODHAN KHAYE (1987), BANNAI (1989) HKHAGOROLOI BOHU DOOR, KUKHAL , and POKHI (1999). CHOAYE BOODHAN KHAYE won the Golden Lotus in 1988 , and also the Grand Prix for Best Film and Best Actor at Locarno, while HKHAGOROLOI BOHU DOOR bagged ten international awards including Best Director at the Brussels Festival of Independence Film Makers. Barua and Saikia are in the tradition of 'new wave' Indian cinema. They strive for authentic portrayal of the village ethos , of the struggle of men and women against oppression and exploitation . Other film makers of note in Assam include Siba Thakur (ASOUTA PRAHOR), Padma Barua , Jones Mohalia , Gautam Bora , Mridul Gupta and Hemanta Das .

**Manipuri Films** – Around ten films have been produced so far in the Manipuri tongue, with the first film made in 1972 . Perhaps the most acclaimed Manipuri film has been 'Imagi Ningthem (My Son , My Precious) – 1981], directed by Aribam Shyam Sharma . It won the Grand Prix at Nantes , France , in 1981 . The film weaves a sensitive tale of a boy who , following his unmarried mother's death in childbirth , is brought up by his grandfather . The boy's father is traced by the local school teacher , and is found to be married ; but his wife is only too happy to adopt the boy as her own . Among the other Manipuri films of note are : ' Matangi Manipur (1972), Ngak – ke-ko Ngangse (1974, 'Lamja Parasuram' (1975), 'Khuttang Lamjet' (1979), ' Olangthagee Wangmadasoo' (1980), ' Khonjel' (1981) , and ' Wangma Wangma' (1982). The Manipuri film is basically Meitei in content , theme and behaviour , though not mainly in form and style . The Meitei film is Imphal based and middle class in Outlook and temper . And the middle class mind is what constitutes the ' Manipuri mind' .

**Oriya Cinema** - Perhaps the first film to be made in Oriya was ' Sitavivah' in 1934 . As in the cinema of the other Indian languages , the early Oriya films were for the most part mythologicals . Time was when Oriya films matched the popularity of Bengali films. Notable films up to the fifties were: 'Lalita', 'Mahalakshmi puja', 'Dasyu Ratnakar' and 'Parinam'. Mrinal Sen made Matira Manisha in Oriya , a film based upon Kalandi Charan Panigraha's Oriya novel of the pre- Independence period . One of the most popular films of the 1960's was Prabhat Mukherjee's ' Nua Bou' , replet with songs ; the lead role played by the Veteran Dhira Biswal .

Around 16 feature films are made each year in Orissa, which has only one film laboratory, namely, the Prasad Kalinga Film Laboratories . A clutch of Oriya film makers of the last two decades , most of them alumni of the film and Television Institute of India , have made a valuable contribution to Oriya cinema . One of the most distinguished is A.K.Bir , whose work includes 'Aadi Mamansa' , 'Lavanya Preeti' , 'Aranyaka' and 'Shasha Drusht' (The Last Vision) . Nirad Mahapatra, an FTII alumni, has been relentless in his scrutiny of the Oriya family system in films like ' Maya Miriga' (The Illusion) (1983) . Other film makers like Sagir Ahmed have focused on children who grow up without love and care in Dhaare Aalua (1983), and Prafulla Mohanty on child marriage in ' Bhanga' ( Broken Slate ) (1987).

**Punjabi Cinema** - Prior to partition , Punjabi films were made in Bombay and Lahore where modern studios hummed with activity . There were three studios in Lahore (Punjab Film Company , United Players and Kamla Movietone ) established during the silent era . Himansu Rai's ' Love Of a Mughal Prince' was made in the Lahore studios, but the most successful was A.R. Kardar ( who owned united players ) who made around nine silent films, with English titles such as ' Golden dagger', ' Brave Heart', 'Serpent' , ' Shepherd', 'Mysterious Eagle' and ' Wandering Dancer'. The English titles invariably had alternative titles in Punjabi . ' The Victim' for example , was called Bhukh un Bhog , ' Wooing Nightingale' bore the Punjabi title ' Bol Tu Bulbul' , ' Jewelled Arrow' was ' Poonam Nu Chand', in Punjabi , and ' The Dancing Girl' had the creative title 'Gutter Nu Gulab' . However, the 'talkies' in the early 1930's and latter the partition brought an end to the Lahore ventures . The first Punjab film , K.D.Mehta's ' Sheila'

(1935), inspired by Tolstoy's ' Resurrection' , was premiered at the Corinthian Theatre in Calcutta ; Mehta's ' Heer Sayal' , based on Warriss Shah's ' Heer Ranjha' , the immortal tale of Young love , revived the studios of Lahore , though only until the partition .

Dalsukh Pancholi (Soni Mehiwal , Gul Bakawli and Yamla Jat) , Roshan Lal Shorey (Chaman – 1948) and Roop Shorey ( Mangti , Dulla Bhatti , Koel and Tarzan Ki Beti ) contributed much to Punjabi cinema during the post- partition years . Bombay became the hub of Punjabi cinema after the partition , but Pakistan's ban on Indian films, the further division of the state of Punjab , and above all the competition from Hindi films dealt a deathly blow to Punjabi films . Devotional films ( Nanak Nam Jahaz Hai , Nanak Dhukia Sab Sansar , Dhanna Jat , Dukh Banjan Tera Nam , Man Jeeta Jag Jeeta , and Sherni ) proved to be a big draw during the years of fear and terrorism . Other films worthy of note are : Virendra's 'Sarpanch and' 'Lambardarni', Dharmakumar's 'Daaj', Peepat's 'Chann Pardesi' (1980) and Vijay Tandon's 'Kachehari' (1993) .

**Animation Films in India:-** Today , when U.S. companies are doing wonders with 3D Computer Generated Imagery (3D CGI ) , India still clings to 2D techniques . Musical instruments are modeled using commercial 3D animation software and then animated via proprietary algorithmic animation software in the U.S. , while Indian animation companies are still struggling with existing 2D software . Arduously , 2D software takes the frames drawn by an artist and scans them , and for each character , the animator creates a model .

But what is attracting Indian animation firms is the estimated \$50- billion market. Top Indian companies like Pentamedia Graphics Ltd, UTV Toons , Crest Communications , Unilazer , Toonz Animation India Ltd , Tata Elxsi and Digital Canvas are busy clinching deals with companies in the U.S. These companies nurse smaller animation companies by sub-contracting a part of their international projects , including those from Disney and Warner Brothers (WB) .

Indian animation has interested history . In 1912 , Dadasaheb Phalke produced the first Indian animation movie , which was followed by a hiatus that lasted over 40 years . In 1956 , the Films Division set up a cartoon film unit , where Clair Weeks , the veteran Disney animator , was invited to train students . And one of his first students , Ram Mohan , went on to found UTV Toons .

In 1997 , Mohan , who had already spent two decades at the Films Division , teamed with United Studios , a division of the UTV group , to spin off an animation company . The venture , initially called RM-USL Animation , was rechristened UTV Toons in 2000 . Today , it is one of the largest 2D animation companies in India , and Mohan is considered the ' father of Indian animation' .

**Cost Factor** :- It costs a prohibitive \$400,000 to 500,000 to produce one hour of animation footage in the U.S. Perhaps that explains why studios there are looking to outsource .

According to Nandini Vaidyanathan , COO of UTV Toons , a division of UTV Software Communications Ltd, 'To cut costs , most studios in the West have been

contracting work to countries such as Taiwan and Philippines . India is relatively much more cost – effective – it could even be as low as \$20,000 per episode .’ It is still unclear whether top animation companies like Disney and WB are really looking toward India for outsourcing , although many claim to be executing projects for them .

Take the case of Chennai –based Pentamedia Graphics Ltd . The parent company Pentafour Software and Exports Ltd, started with selling CD titles and corporate presentations . A joint Project with Griboullie , France , for Excalibur was a breakthrough for the company . The company went on to bag other international projects like The King and I from WB in 1999 .

V. Chandrasekaran of Pentamedis says , ‘ Initially it was difficult to pitch for the foreign animation projects since India figured nowhere compared to the international levels of sophistication .’ The Warner Project served as a springboard and it soon bagged Sindbad : Beyond the Veils of Mists from Improvisation Corp.

Today , the company’s turnover for the third quarter stands at \$2, 123 million . ‘The joint venture with 3dMaxMedia Inc, U.S., to create high –end digital entertainment content using cutting –edge tools for Internet , cinema and TV media was really a fillip ,’ says Chandrasekaran . Last year, major Hollywood and European studios outsourced services worth \$300 million to India because of the obvious cost advantage . ‘ While a 20-minute special effects animation sequence costs about \$75,000 in India , studios in the US charge \$150,000,’ says K.Chandra Shekar , head , ( Animation Business ) , Tata Elxsi (P) Ltd.

Overseas studios , including American and Canadian ones , which normally outsource their back-end animation work from Australia , Philippines , Taiwan and Korea , are now increasingly veering toward India .

**Maturity :-** Although yet to mature , animation companies are throwing their ring on the ‘ classic outsourcing model,’ to which goes the credit of building the ‘ Indian software industry,’ until of course , the slowdown happened . ‘ If a company can keep the quality of its output at a desirable level with low costs , it can expect to produce movies for Hollywood ,’ says Chandrasekaran . While most companies were reeling under the slowdown of last year , it turned out to be one of the best for the Indian animation industry . [ [www.siliconindia.com/magazine/](http://www.siliconindia.com/magazine/) ]

In India, however, there seems to be a greater divide between city and rural audiences, as the changing values and modern heroes depicted on the screen do not reflect the social reality that exists across the country. Alike director Karan Johar, the other Director’s in India, break up their business into ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ class centres . ‘A’ class are the cities, ‘B’ are slightly smaller towns and ‘C’ centres are villages and rural areas . In a village, a woman is a wife, a woman is a mother , a woman is a sister , but a woman as a friend ? No way. That is their belief, and that’s how they’ve been raised, they hav’nt been educated, so they don’t understand a concept like that. So the business of the Director Karan Johar’s film KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI , did in ‘C’ class centres was much less than everywhere else . Karan Johar always say the most difficult thing to do is to make a universally commercial Indian Film.

Any Indian film juggles several genres and themes at the same time. A violent action scene can quite seamlessly be followed by a dialogue in which a mother tells her

son never to be dishonest, and this exchange can then be followed by a comic scene led by one of the film's secondary characters. It is precisely this mix of genres that makes the Indian film unique. The multi – genre film was known in the 1970s and 1980s as the 'masala' film – the term comes from the idea that, like a curry cooked with different spices, or masala , the Indian film offers a variety of flavours . However this mixing and matching hasn't always been the norm.

National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) – The NFDC was established by government in 1975 with the major purpose of encouraging the production of quality films with a social purpose. Its functions also include the import and export of feature films , the distribution of raw film stock , cameras and other production equipment imported from abroad , exhibition of films through existing cinema halls and new ones planned by the NFDC , providing loans and grants for the production of quality films , and encouraging research and development activities for improving film production materials .

Collaboration with film production companies nationally and internationally also comes within the purview of the NFDC. A case in point is NFDC's collaboration with Indo British Films in the production of the famous 'Gandhi' movie.

Sub – titling movies is another major activity of the NFDC for which it has established the necessary facilities in Pune. It has also opened offices in New York, London and Hong Kong, for promoting Indian Films in the foreign market. The NFDC also provides facilities for the videotaping of films. It has regional offices in different states.

The Film Festival Directorate which is responsible for organizing National and International film festivals and for sending Indian films for participation in foreign festivals was established in 1973 under the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

**Film Awards** – National Film Festivals are being organized since 1953 onwards to encourage producers, directors, artistes and technical experts. All essential personnel connected with films are honoured annually. One prestigious award is Dada Saheb Phalke Award given for outstanding contribution towards the development of Indian Cinema. The Award is given on the basis of the judgement made by two national juries who scrutinize the films submitted for judgement . The biggest National award is the Golden Lotus ( Swarna Kamal ) and the next one is the Silver Lotus ( Rajat Kamal ) . Cash awards and certificates are given along with the medals. Besides National awards, there are state level awards also. The Children's Film Society (CFS) – Almost all children's films in India are produced by the CFS, an independent institution incorporated in May 1955. During the past 45 years, the society has produced feature films , and short films including puppet and cartoon films . Its films are exhibited through schools and social welfare organizations and through rural mobile film units. Other activities of CFS include organizing children's film festivals.

The National Film Archives Of India (NFAI) – The NFAI was established in Pune in 1964 for the collection, classification, documentation and preservation of films for special viewing and research. It encourages film studios and the spreading of a healthy film culture among people.



By now, the NFAI has collected almost 10,000 movies, including free deposits of originals and copies of films. It also has about 15,000 film – related books, 300 periodicals, 2000 disc records, about 20,000 still photographs, 5000 film posters, 3,000 song booklets, 15,000 film strips, 5.000 pamphlets and thousands of press clippings in its collection.

From time to time, the NFAI organizes film appreciation courses to spread a proper film evaluation culture among moviegoers. The FTII Pune, and different universities

Co-operate with the NFAI in conducting these courses. Cultural societies can borrow films from the 155 Indian and Foreign films in the archives library and exhibit them free of cost.

To sum up, the Indian cinema has grown quite big during the past century, especially during the past six decades. This latter period saw the growth of the cinema into a mass medium. Despite thematic peculiarities and drawbacks, social conditioning and cultural inhibitions, it has proved its merit in technical perfection, artistic evaluation and directorial innovations. Indian cinema, by and large, has remained on the path of clean popular entertainment. In the coming decades , it can give more attention to the social dimension of the medium , particularly its use in mobilizing the masses through effective messages on serious issues such as social justice , environmental safety and a more rational and scientific approach to human problems .