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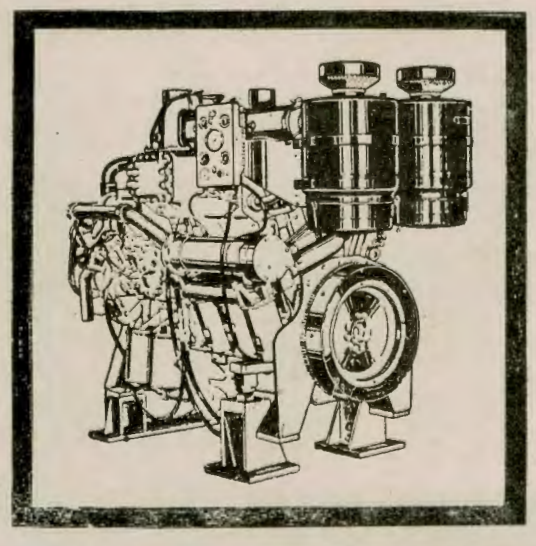
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Vol. XVIII No. 17
1 October 1974 9 Asvina 1896

Published on behalf of the Planning Commission in Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu.

Yojana seeks to carry the message of the Plan, but is not restricted to expressing the official point of view.

Chief Editor
S. SRINIVASACHAR

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Cover : Photograph by M. Krishnan

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Editorial

The Silent Jungle

This curious world which we inhabit is more wonderful than it is convenient; more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired than it is to be used.

—Henry David Thoreau

CIVILISATIONS have never-flourished on the ashes of a great heritage. Although history is replete with examples we forget and overlook this fact. Flourishing civilizations have been wiped out in the past because in pride born out of material achievement man has unwittingly cut his own roots from nature. And it will happen again if we ignore the pleadings of nature scientists.

This issue of *Yojana* carries the statements of men well known as champions of wildlife — Salim Ali, Sankhala, Krishnan and Daniel—men who have devoted their working lives for creating public awareness of the importance of our flora and fauna to our life. Theirs is a call which takes them away from the hum and turbulance of life, deep into the fascinating recesses of nature. As it often happens with words of wisdom theirs is a call which is still only faintly heard by fellow men. Wielding binoculars, cameras, tape recorders and typewriters for tools, they live and work in a society in which other men use the very same tools to earn quicker riches and glamour. But then, the price of a thing is very different from its value. After all, man needs parchment to put his poetry down upon and what poetry can more sublime be than the poetry of Nature?

We learn as we go. After 27 years of talk of self-sufficiency in food and other basic materials, we have now come to realise that we are actually hacking away at the very foundations of our existence, nature's ecological balance, to build a superstructure of material comfort. This balance, as every school-boy knows, consists of a symbiotic relationship between the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. Each sustains the other and any imbalance between them gradually destroys both. Man, thinking of himself as something outside this frame of nature, imagines in his ignorance that he can exist in a frame of his own creation. He cannot.

All it boils down to is the dire need of man to return to fundamentals. Even if total selfishness is the motive power, we need to be considerate of nature's legitimate children. When animals and birds and insects and reptiles are destroyed with the lethal weapons we have so far wielded, the plant kingdom around them, used for millennia to a certain pattern of growth and resurrection, undergoes an unviable change for the worse, and comes to death. Drastic reduction of or change in the vegetable cover also has the same effect on living creatures. Beyond a certain point, such changes affect weather, rainfall and such other phenomena. This makes man's proud edifices of agriculture, industry, the arts and civilization itself unviable. The desert overtakes the garden and peace in men's hearts gets sullied with greed for the neighbour's grain. The tale, to thinking men, is too stale to need repetition.

We repeat it all the same, advisedly. We cannot afford to pass the Wildlife Week, or the *Vanamahotsav* Week for that matter as we would an empty ritual. Their observance may be stereotyped. Possibly, the ritual itself may be jettisoned. But we cannot jettison a whole philosophy of well-being that has sprouted from the aggregate of our experience as builders and destroyers of civilisation. The seasons, the plants and the animals are all parts of the grand rhythm of Nature and we have no right to destroy it.



Rhinoceros and Wild Buffalo in Kaziranga—E.P. GEE

Philosophy of Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife is not merely a heritage from the past; it is something essential to our well-being, now and in the future. Their preservation will sustain and give strength to our very struggle for existence. We all become a bit saner by reviving our interest in nature. The India we know and love and in which we seek our identity and happiness needs all that we can do to preserve what is left of the charm of nature and its endless variety of flora and fauna.

M. KRISHNAN

SOON after independence, the Central Government realised the need to conserve the country's wildlife, and the Indian Board for Wild Life was set up. A booklet explaining and justifying this need was written for the board by that dedicated conservationist of Assam, the late E.P. Gee, and published in the mid-fifties. It sets out, in simple, straightforward terms, the benefits derived by preserving wildlife, such as the role of animals in maintaining the balance of nature, and the recreation value, tourism gains and the less tangible benefit of aesthetic satisfaction provided by wild animals, and also speaks of our wildlife as a national heritage that we are bound to preserve, as we do historic and cultural mounment like the Taj Mahal : the argument has a marked faunal bias, and while it takes note of the scenic beauty and grandeur of mountains and rivers, it largely ignores the flora as an integral and inseparable part of the wildlife of any country. I have always wondered why this slim booklet, which has gone so close to the profound and multifaceted truth, did not reach out and grasp it firmly, but very likely its author was restricted to something superficial which the public could read casually and appreciate readily on the basis of material benefits and national uty.

This note seeks to delve deeper in the matter, and will not be easy reading, especially as with the limitation of space imposed on it here, it has to be terse and nonrepetitive. But before the reader, alarmed by this fair warning, skips hastily over what follows, perhaps it is also fair to add that it may well be worth one's while going through it, for however ineptlyexpressed, it concerns vital and sustaining values in the life of every Indian today.

Before going into the imperative need to conserve nature in India, it will be rewarding to consider why Gee's Why Preserve Wild Life? was published. In the history of this ancient land there have been many outbreaks of devastation, usually at the commencement of the acquisition of power by conquest. The devastation of wildlife that immediately followed the attainment of independence was as depletive as any of these. Licensed and unlicensed hunting was indulged in freely by everyone who could afford the means; netting, snaring and trapping became a regular industry with professional



Albino Black Buck at Delhi Zoo—P.K. DE

and its Application to Life in India

meat-hunters and poachers; the setting up of hydro-electric, irrigation and other major projects right inside or close by the reserved forests resulted in depletion for miles around, and established sudden colonies of thousands of men in areas where there were no settlements before; the grow-more-food campaign claimed its share of wildlife habitats in a somewhat haphazard and uncoordinated manner; departmental exploitation of the forests was tremendously stepped up to meet the growing demands of growing populations, and to supply the raw materials for the industries springing up everywhere; permitted and forbidden exercises of popular human rights in the forests (such as wood, leaf and produce collection, cattle grazing, and the colonisation of the reserved forests by encroachment) reached an unprecedented level; and the ceding of rights and land in the forests to the "landless poor" (who, however, had votes) became quite a feature of the benevolence of politicians.

Nor was this all. About this time a group of influential public men, including reputed intellectuals like Mr. Munshi (when he was a Governor) among them, voiced the view that with the enormous responsibility towards the people devolving on the new democracy, and the paramount needs of the people with regard to food and natural produce, we could not afford the luxury of preserving wild animals, and that the proper place for them was in cages and paddocks in zoos and parks.

The question is : is our wildlife merely a heritage from the past to be preserved as a national heirloom, and is it of such limited value in our lives that we can afford to exploit and deplete it indiscriminately for such immediate gains as we can get, or is it something quite essential to our existence, now and for the future? Little as people realise it, our wildlife (that is, the wild flora and the fauna and their settings, the natural formations of land and water) is unquestionably essential to our existence, identity and mental and material well-being, and only shallow and uninformed thinking can view it as a luxury, a mere decorative and recreational asset that is expendable and best spent. Paradoxically, the greater the depletive demands made on nature to meet immediate requirements when human life becomes more crowded and difficult in any country, the greater and more imporant is the need to conserve nature, not only for the future, but also to sustain and give strength to people in their struggle for existence.

Life is not logic, and wildlife is much less so: logical proof of this profound truth involves tedious argument and reference to understanding born of deep experience. However, certain preliminary bases can be established by applying to ourselves the well known and indisputable genetical fact that acquired characters are not heritable. In our case, the acquired characters are not confined to skills and cultivated tastes developed in the course of growth from infancy to maturity, though of course they are included; all knowledge and philosophy and values in life absorbed during this period are also included. Naturally, what is so acquired cannot be limited to a purely contemporary period, though the society in which we live and our human contacts influence our values powerfully—the entire accumulation of human thought and culture and knowledge of centuries, to the extent available to each individual, condition, support, and intergrate his or her life. When this is first realised, it seems a great and staggering truth; only on pondering

it does one appreciate the limitations of such acquired knowledge and culture as forces sustaining everday life.

What are the other values, based on entirely natural (as distinct from cultivated) things, that are important in human life? How do we develop a sense of identity and community with people and places, and what belongs to those places, and in what things do we find security and comfort? Obviously these factors are biological and environmental, though they need not be narrowly limited to the immediate environment. The answer to this question is suggested in the last lines of Robert Bridges's ode on dead child :

"Ah, little at best can all our hopes avail us
When in the dark, unwilling, alone we embark,
And he things we have known and have seen and have heard of fail us!"

The things we have known, both in nature and in our culture, impart a sense of entity and security to us. These are what we miss when, in a strange setting, a wave of nostalgia engulfs us—more than that, these provide our moorings in life, inspire courage in us, and help us to retain sanity in the midst of unpredictable vicissitudes. And these sustain, not mere parochialism, but the most authentic patriotism, a virtue greatly honoured in India today. Why else do we resist invaders and fight so bitterly in defence of our homes and country? What is this India, or part of India, with which we are so deeply identified, and of which we are so proud? Is it only a vast conglomeration of culinary, musical, graphics, literary and mythological culture, and an ancient history?

It cannot be, for civilisation is not an immutable and indestructible force, and may not only decay slowly but also disintegrate suddenly under the stress of strong emotions like fear. During the last world war this was dramatically demonstrated when the sophisticated norms of Western culture, lauded for centuries as representing the acme of civilization, collapsed overnight and the most barbarous reprisals and acts of inhuman violence were indulged in. It has taken the West over 20 years to recoup from the holocaust.

Seeking more stable moorings in life when sophisticated cultures collapse, people turn intuitively to the complex, fascinating, sustaining and therapeutic attractions of wild nature. This has happened provably in the West after the last war. More books, and better books, on wild plants and animals have been published in the last few decades than in the entire history of printing prior to the war. Scientific natural history had its origins in the West, and Western naturalists have always been an adventurous lot, given to exploration—I am *not* referring to the resurgent interest of such specialists in the world's wildlife, but to the much more significant resurgent interest of ordinary people in the wild plants and animals around them, and even in far-off countries. In fact, bodies like the World Wildlife Fund, organised on an international scale since the war, are financed largely not by expert naturalists, but by common people who feel, however, inchoately, a personal debt to nature. It is no exaggeration to say that the sanity of the West owes much to this revival of interest in nature.

Forest recreation, as a fascinating activity that alleviates the strain and ennui of modern competitive living, and refreshes jaded citizens, has become increasingly popular in the West, in the past two decades, and is being wisely organised—incidentally, forest recreation is not confined only to seeking out and watching wild animals, but involves a sojourn in a forest, a brief return to the unforced values of nature, entirely free from artificial impositions.

So much for the revitalising interest in nature of the war-scarred West. It is true that in our country we have not experienced the horrors of modern wars and bombings, on any comparable scale, but it is not only the sheer devastation of humanity by such wars that can undermine life and cause traumas—the sheer abundance of humanity can also impose great strains on a country and create problems not easily solved, as we know only too well. Within living memory, life in India has never been so difficult as now, so full of artificially created frustrations, stresses and strains and material paucity; when other reliefs fail, our people, too, will turn to nature to find something worthwhile, a live interest. That is why I said that paradoxically, when the demands made on nature to provide the needs of the people reach a highly depletory level, the need to conserve it becomes vital and urgent.

Not that other things cannot bring relief from the miseries and frustrations of life—to mention only two, long recognised in our country, religion offers solace and strength to those that have faith (incidentally, after a brief period of apathy and even antipathy, there is now a return to orthodox religion all over the country), and popular entertainments have always served to amuse people and enabled them to forget their cares for a while. I have heard intellectuals thundering against such cowardly escapes from reality—and seldom listened to them. Apart from the question, "What *is* reality?" that our sages have asked and answered with a pitying smile, it is human and natural to seek relief from circumstances when they are wearying or unpleasant. How many of the critics who condemn a film on the grounds that it is unrealistic stop to think that the majority of the audience has paid for its ticket only to get away from it all, at least for a while, from what Cezanne calls "the so-horrible resemblance"—of art to actuality !

I mention entertainments like the cinema for a reason—the deep and sustaining interest that a closer acquaintance with wild nature can bring to one is entirely free from pretence and imaginings, enduring, as unforced as the air and as real as any realist can wish for. Wildlife does more than merely take one out of oneself for the time being—it gives one a sense of belonging, a vital interest and a deep satisfaction.

An interesting question may be asked at this stage. If long familiarity with the life and quiddity of the environment, its plants, animals, hills, waters and pastures, gives one a sense of identity, orientation and security, why should we take the pains to preserve nature? What if the environment changes from something natural to something wholly artificial, from a great montane forest some distance away and a marsh teeming with wildfowl on the immedidte outskirts to a desolate, denuded hillrange and a crowded, multi-tiered housing colony built on the reclaimed marsh? Will not familiarity with these also create the same sense of security and of belonging to the place?

Of course it will not, for there can be no real sense of identity with a physical environment which is entirely man-made and which, being of our own manufacture, cannot provide the setting for our life: moreover, nothing artificiai has the quiet, compelling charm of nature, its endless variety, the pageant of its season changes, and its vital endowment with what we value most, life. But conceding for the sake of argument that such an artificial setting can also provide an adequate envisonment. it can still give one only an isolated homground unrelated to the rest of the country and the past.

(Continued on page 30)



A herd of Swampdeer—PHOTO E.P. GEE

INDIA'S WILDLIFE HAS FACED TOO MANY PERILS

A study in retrospect

J.C. DANIEL

The decimation of floral and faunal wealth which was in abundance in India has gone on for many centuries. We realise it now when the process has brought about the near extinction of some of the finest species of wild animals. Our life, as a consequence, is much the poorer for it. What we have done in the last 150 years surpasses all the known cruelties that civilization has perpetrated on the bounties of Nature. Even the little of our country's fauna that has survived is on its last legs. Only a massive conservation programme, supported by law and an awakened public conscience can salvage what remains of this magnificent heritage.

Shri Daniel is Curator, Bombay Natural History Society.

THE tiger's story epitomizes the progress of wildlife conservation in India since Independence. Indian wildlife was before independence, a reserved benefit of conquest for the British in areas directly ruled by them and in the Indian States a special privilege of the feudatory rulers. Public resentment often expressed against efforts to conserve wildlife and jungle areas stems from the misuse of this privilege of the former rulers.

Historically speaking, India was perhaps the first country to provide for the conservation of wildlife. Regulations for their protection are given in the Arthashastra, a 2300-year old treatise on political economy. In spite of this there has been, over the years, a steady eroson of the natural wealth of the country and the last twenty five years have witnessed a large scale destruction of the country's wildlife and forest areas. The trend of destruction is

now being halted and this augers well for the future. We can only hope that this reversal process has not started too late.

In India no one has attempted a total of consolidated resource but there can be no doubt that during the last two thousand years we have been living on an abundant capital. M.S. Randhawa in an article in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* provides historical evidence to prove that in the last two thousand years there has been a progressive dessication in northern India. He cites as an example the degrading of the environment that has occurred in the Mathura area of the Brij District of Uttar Pradesh. The evidence indicates that the area once received over 80 inches of rainfall as against the present day 24 inches. Randhawa bases his thesis on sculptures and specific reference in the Puranas to the Ashoka tree and other moisture loving species whose present day distribution in India is confined to areas with over 80 inches of rainfall. The Brij District thus appears to have changed within historical times from an area with luxuriant evergreen forest to an area with vegetation closely resembling that of the nearby desert areas.

The loss in the productivity of the and and the degradation of the environment is very clearly shown by the present day distribution of some of the endangered Indian wildlife. The Great Indian one-horned Rhinoceros for instance, which requires a swampy riverain habitat is now restricted to areas in Assam, West Bengal and Nepal having this type of environment. However, in historic times, the Rhinoceros was found from Peshawar where the Emperor Humayun hunted them, eastwards throughout the Gangetic plains to Asssam. It is now hard to imagine that the swamp-loving rhinoceros could have existed in the Peshawar countryside which is now practically a desert. The habitat loss is evident to us now but imperceptible to the generations who were responsible for bringing it about. Habitat destruction is above all the primary reason for the disappearance or rarity of most of our endangered wildlife and under the present population pressures it is unlikely that the trend will be significantly reversed. In the search for more and more cultivable land there is little room for the fauna which made their home in these habitats.

The position of the Blackbuck is illustrative of what has happened to animals which inhabit cultivable land and thus have a conflict of interest with man. At the turn of the century and in the first four decades, this beautiful and exclusively Indian Antelope was abundant and a distinctive feature of the Indian plains. The World War years saw the beginning of the decline as more land, even that of marginal value, was brought under cultivation. The process was accelerated since the partition of the subcontinent as the emphasis on agricultural development increased. Today a few scattered pockets remain of the large herds which once roamed the Gangetic



Spider monkey—PHOTO P.K. DE

Plains and the Deccan. Probably larger populations of the Antelope exist in Argentina and Texas where the animal was introduced than in India.

The disappearance of the Blackbuck is possibly the main reason for the extinction of the Indian Cheetah or Hunting Leopard. The fastest land animal, the Cheetah's main prey was the almost equally fast Blackbuck. In fact, the hunting of the Blackbuck with trained Cheetahs was the sport of Indian Kings and Emperor Akbar is said to have had an establishment of a thousand Cheetahs for this purpose. The Cheetah was on the decline even in the late 19th Century, unable to achieve accommodation with a settled and ever increasing human population in its habitat, the Indian plains. The thinning out of its main prey, the Blackbuck was its death knell. The Cheetah was the first animal to become extinct after our independence. The last record was of three animals shot in the Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh in 1949.

The other large cats, the lion, the tiger, and the leopard are unlikely to florish on the same scale as they did in earlier years. It is a sad but unavoidable truth that human progress and the larger carnivora are unable to coexist. They are what are termed the top of the pyramid of the faunal species, that is, to support a tiger or a lion a certain minimum number of their prey like the deer and the antelope are necessary which directly use the habitat and require a minimum foraging area. In nature the lion and the tiger keep the deeand the antelope in check preventing them from multiplying beyond the available resources of their habe tat. The situation in India at ths moment is that the wild herbivorei have been reduced to negligible numbers or replaced by cattle in the majority of forests and man frowns on the lion or the tiger continuing their natural function as checks on the herbivores or domesticated animals.

Both the lion and the tiger now face a perilous future. The lion once inhabited a vast territory in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and the plains of the Punjab and Haryana were its stronghold. In the closing decades of the 19th Century, expanding agriculture and the British military establishments wiped them out except for the few which now survive in the Gir forest in Saurashtra where they are completely protected since the beginning of this century. The tragedy of the lion is that the Gir Forest itself received no such protection and has shrunk in area from a thousand square miles to less than half the area which is not enough living room for the less than two hundred lions that exist today. The Gujrat Government is now involved in a massive rehabilitation programme to save and improve the lion's environment.

The situation of the tiger is even more precarious, hunted as it is by its reputation as man eater. Many still do not know that man-eating is an abnormality confined to a few old or incapacitated animals and that every day hundreds of people walk through forests inhabited by



An elephant herd crossing a jungle path in Corbett Park. The leader, a magnificent 60 year old tusker shows his resentment at the approach of the photographer.

PHTO S.J. SINGH

tigers unarmed and unharmed. The number of tigers that exist in India today is belived to be less than two thousand but the figure is not exact nor can it be expected to be considering the secretive nature of the animal. However to anyone who has experience of Indian forests it is evident that the tiger has disappeared from many of its original habitats through the destruction of the forests, the slaughter of its natural prey animals, and trigger-happy trophy hunters. Already the tigers of the peninsula are separated from the tigers of the Himalayas and eastern India by a solid belt of humanity in the Gangetic Plain.

The leopard is likely to linger than the lion or the tiger. It is more eclectic in diet and is able to adapt itself to changing conditions. This is well illustrated by the leopards living in the Borivli National Park in Bombay city. Once considered a threat to the introduced into the Park it has now been found that they are actually beneficial as they prey on the stray dogs that enter the Park and kill the deer. The leopard is now a protected species in Maharashtra.

The condition of the large herbivores is not dissimiliar to the fate that has overtaken the larger carnivora. The Rhinoceros and the Wild Buffalo which live in marshy riverine grasslands and were once widely distributed in the Indo-gangetic plains and the flood plains of the Brahmaputra now exist in small pockets confined to eastern states only. Their habitat was also ideally suitable for cultivation and expanding agriculture has driven them away into ever-narrowing reserves. The rhinoceros has become particularly vulnerable to the greed of man because of the mistaken belief that its horn is invested with aphrodisiac properties. Poachers are therefore still a continuing threat to its survival though recent conservation measures have arrested their decline in numbers.

The larger dear are a species

A lone bison browsing in the Kanha forest

PHOTO S.J. SINGH





A herd of Swamp-deer in the Kanha Sanctuary. PHOTO: K.S. SANKHLA.

Lion of The Gir Sanctuary PHOTO: S.J. SINGH.



which are the most endangered. The Kashmir Stag or Hangiul, the the Thamin or Brow-antlered Deer in Manipur and the Swamp Deer of Madhya Pradesh are each less than hundred in number and they appear to have reached the point of no return. Each species of animal needs to have a minimum number of its kind to be in existence below which it is unable to withstand environmental stress.

At the time of Independence only two animals needed total protection, the lion and the rhinoceros. The recently enacted Indian Wildlife Act lists sixty-one animals on its completly protected schedule. These animals also would have become extinct if it had not been for the timely action of State governments in setting up sanctuaries for their protection. Sanctuaries are the last hope of saving the forests and wildlife of India. Those of India's wildlife like the sambar, the chital and the gaur which are still found in forests other than sanctuaries will ultimately have to be provided with sanctuaries for their survival. It is unrealistic to think that the trend can be reversed under existing or future conditions.

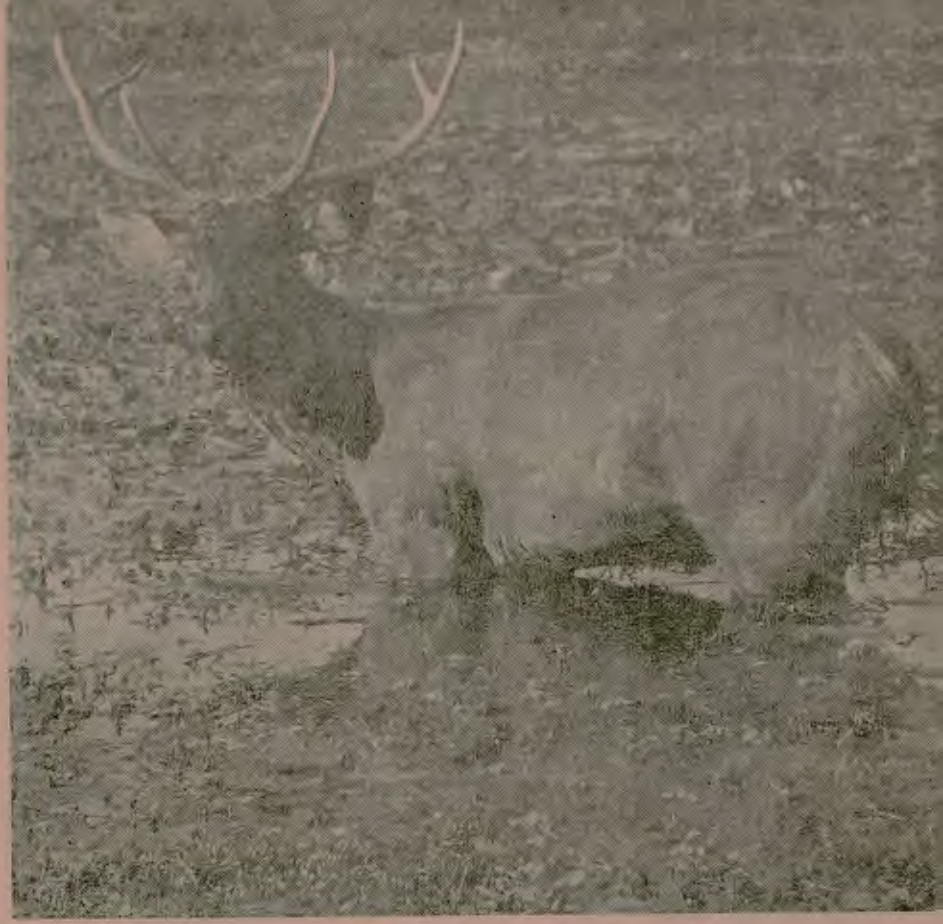
Most Indian sanctuaries have had a chequered career. In point of size they are all small compared to sanctuaries elsewhere in the world. The forest departments continue their commercial operations and human disturbance is a permanent factor to be reckoned with. Yet the Kashmir Stag in Dechigam, the Lion in Gir, the Swamp Deer in Kanha, the Brow-antlered Deer at Logtak and the Rhinoceros and the wild Buffalo in the Kaziranga Sanctuary have survived. They will continue to do so if two factors are guaranteed—protection and scientific management.

A study of any endangerd natural resource will show that the basic problem is human population pressure and efforts made without due consideration to this factor are futile. Conservation measures are now undertaken and those likely to be undertaken in the furure will be merely holding actions and there will be no permanent remedy unless there is effective control of human population. This then is the problem. Human ecology is an integral part of conservation and all those who take a total view of life on earth cannot but echo the poet John Donne that "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the maine." Unless man is able to discipline himself there is no chance of avoiding the ecological disaster towards which we are rapidly heading. Max Nicholson, the well-known conservationist, very aptly says in his book *Environmental Revolution* that "To live during the technological revolution and the population explosion is to be a conscrip to freed to sweep the streets of a slum civilisation."

Perhaps ten thousand years have passed since man settled down in the Middle East as an agriculturist and herder. That cradle of civilisation is now an arid monument to human misuse of land. A fair number of ancient civilisations destroyed the natural resources that surrounded them, lived on their capital so to say, and culminated in deserts. Examples are many: Egypt, the Kingdoms of the Middle East, Carthage and our own Indus Valley civilisation. We have not profited by the knowledge of earlier disasters. Today improved communication and technology permits man to exercise on a global scale his expertise as a maker of deserts.

Conservation demands that the population of man be regulated not only for the wise use of natural resources but for the very existence of man.

□



Sambar. the largest Indian deer

Below: Cheetal, an exclusive Indian animal PHOTOS: BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





A large majority of the wild duck species found in India are winter visitors. These beautiful winged creatures come from far off lands, some from as far away as 5000 to 7000 kms. Man has proved to be their chief enemy and he slaughters them for food or for pleasure. The world over, enlightened opinion today clamours for their protection. The only hope for the survival of the many species of waterfowl is the spread of this enlightenment.



From Top to bottom : Nakta or Comb Duck, so called from the possession by the male of a hard, horny knob or comb at the base of his bill which becomes greatly swollen and conspicuous in the breeding season. *Middle* : The Lesser Whistling Teal, one of our commoner resident ducks. *Bottom* : Shortbill Duck, a large Indian resident, distinguished by a bright yellow spot at the tip of the bill. Photographs : E.P. Gee; Courtesy, the Bombay Natural History Society. *Facing page* : A large congregation of waterfowl. Photograph : T. Kasi Nath.

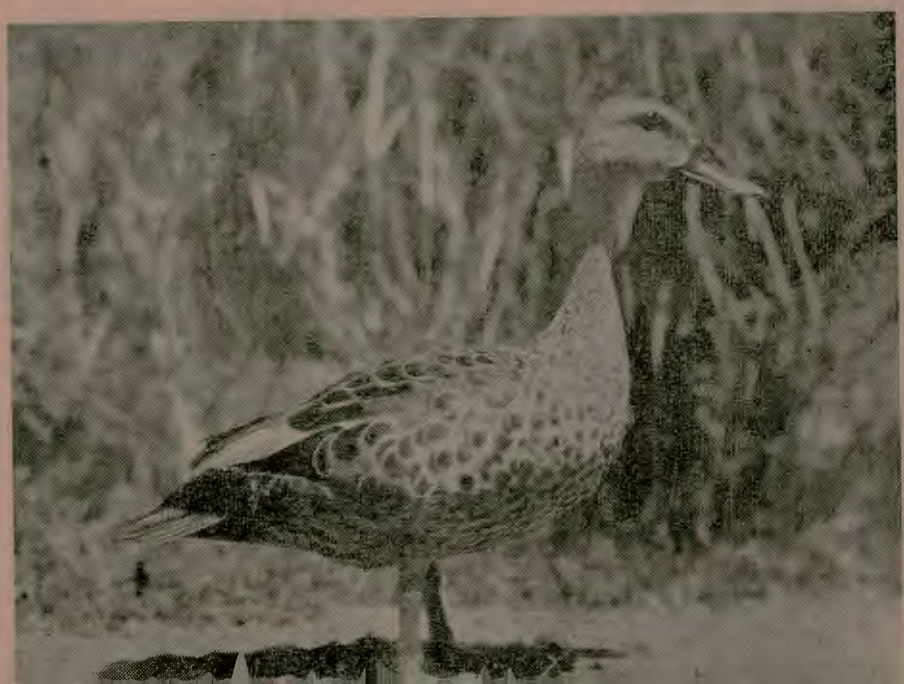


Waterfowl

SALIM ALI

ONE of the most harassed and persecuted tribes of birds in the world today, causing grave concern to conservationists and sportsmen alike, is the Duck family (Anatidae), which includes also the geese and swans. They have provided food for man from times immemorial, and their soft down feathers are in great demand for quilts and padded garments throughout the colder regions of the globe. In the Eastern Hemisphere the principal breeding grounds of the duck family extend right across the Palaearctic Region, west to east —northern and central Europe and Asia (Eurasia), up to the Arctic Circle—particularly the vast swampy plains of the Siberian Tundra.

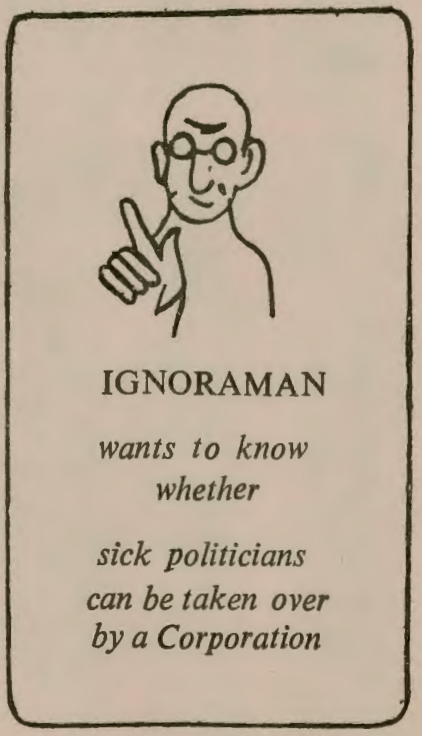
Of the thirty odd species of wild duck normally found in the Indian Subcontinent, 24 or so are winter visitors from central and northern Asia, met with in our area chiefly



between September-October and February-March. Five species, namely Nakta or Comb Duck, Spot bill, Whitewinged Wood Duck, Whistling Teal, and Cotton Teal, are indigenous, or resident, and breed within our geographical limits. The Whitewinged Wood Duck, which is the size of a large domestic duck, lives in the jungle swamps of the Brahmaputra flood plains in Assam and has become alarmingly scarce during recent years. It is now regarded as a species in danger of extinction, and serious efforts are being made to protect it in the wild and also to breed it in captivity in India as well as in England and the United States for ultimate release in its homeland in order to boost the dwindling native population. Yet a sixth endemic species, the beautiful and unique Pink headed Duck which was rare even in the 19th century, is now believed to be extinct. There are no live examples to be seen today even in zoos: the last wild specimen was killed in Bihar in 1935, since then the bird has not been authentically reported.

We have no resident wild geese. Our commonest migratory species are the Barheaded Goose which breeds in Tibet, and the Greylag Goose breeding farther north in central Asia and Siberia. Swans of two species straggle into our limits only at rare intervals under stress of exceptionally severe winters in their Arctic homeland.

The duck family enjoys high esteem as sporting birds. In every country through which they 'swarm' during their bi-annual migrations in spring and autumn—all along their migration routes, or flyways—hundreds of thousands of sportsmen eagerly await their coming, in addition to the thousands of professional hunters who slaughter them *en masse* with large bore cannon-like punt guns, or trap them in a hundred cunning ways for commercial marketing. Until Safety Film was invented a few years ago there was heavy drain on breeding duck populations, especially in Russia, through the mass collection of duck eggs by ruthless commercial exploiters for the sake of the albumen required in the manufacture of raw cine film of the older inflammable type. Happily these depredations which had reached alarming proportions in some of the breeding areas have now abated. But the improved deadliness of modern sporting firearms and ammunition, and facilities such as the aeroplane and the jeep for quick transport of shooters to the hunting ground and for transporting commercial catches to urban markets have seriously aggravated the situation. Added to this is the large scale development activities everywhere—the opening up of remote tracts for settlement of our exploding human population, and for industrialization and agriculture. In the relentless march of 'civilization' the reclamation of swamps and marshes which comprise the feeding and nesting grounds of the duck tribe, has had a catastrophic impact upon the birds. Wild ducks, fortunately, are prolific breeders. Females lay an average of 6 to 12 eggs in a clutch—in some species as many as 16 to 18. With normal losses due to natural causes they should therefore be in no danger in spite of the very heavy hunting pressure they have to withstand, provided they receive reasonable protection against human exploitation during the breeding season. However, in recent years—especially since the end of World War II—new forces of destruction have appeared on the scene, with a tendency to intensify and proliferate. Thus even with the millions of migratory duck on the move at the appropriate seasons every year—numbers that would seem inexhaustible—it has become increasingly apparent, first as a glimmer of suspicion and then as stark reality, that the world population of ducks is diminishing at a fast rate and needs drastic control. In the new world elaborate procedures have been evolved for counting ducks on their breeding grounds in the vast prairie marshes of Canada and the nothern United States, as well as while the birds are on their transcontinental migrations along the accustomed flyways, and on their wintering grounds. The Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior is responsible for conducting these national censuses on the basis of which are prescribed the yearly bag limits, i.e. how many ducks each hunter may shoot in a day, and the total number he may kill during a shooting season. The season itself is shortened or lengthened as dictated by the censuses. No one in America may shoot a duck unless he possesses a Duck Stamp in addition to a valid shooting licence. A duck stamp costs something like 3 dollars, and so popular is the sport of duck hunting in the States that from this source alone the Government realizes a revenue of several million dollars annually. This money is earmarked for the improvement of marshes, making them more attractive for ducks, and for acquiring unused or waste land and converting it into artificial wetland for the benefit of the birds.



The growing international concern at the diminishing world population of waterfowl, including migratory marsh birds such as plovers and sandpipers, resulted in the convening of an International Conference at Ramsar (Iran) in early 1971 on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl. India was represented at this conference and is a signatory to the draft convention along with many other nations—the others from Asia being Iran, Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan. The burden of this convention is that each country shall undertake to identify in its own territory at least three wetlands conforming to certain prescribed standards, and maintain them as permanent refuges for migratory waterfowl while on passage or during their winter sojourn. In addition to these three (or more) major inviolable wetlands of international importance—controlled by the federal government in the same way as National Parks are—each State or Province shall undertake to maintain as many wetlands as feasible within its own jurisdiction for the protection of migratory waterfowl. In this manner it is sought to create a chain of refuges along the regular flyways of the birds where they may enjoy rest and freedom from harassment by hunters and trappers, and

other forms of man-made disturbance, during their temporary stay. By means of a carefully prepared questionnaire issued to a large number of government and private agencies, and to individual sportsmen and others throughout the Indian Union, the National Committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination has collected relevant details concerning over a thousand wetlands, big and small, scattered all over the country. These data are being processed and analysed to determine which satisfy the required standards and which of them are eligible for consideration as National wetlands. Obvious among those that qualify for the latter are Chilka Lake in Orissa, and Keoladeo Ghana in Bharatpur (Rajasthan). Among the other possibles may be Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan, Pulicat and Kolleru in Tamil Nadu, and portions of the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. Unfortunately no proper censuses of waterfowl have ever been made of the myriads of birds that frequent Chilka in the cold season, but the visual abundance is astounding, and apparently well above the prescribed requirement for an International wetland. So is it the case with Keoladeo Ghana. Censussing here is particularly difficult because of the non-applicability of the normal counting techniques to the wooded nature of this jheel. The fact that during the garguantan shoots that used to be held here by the rulers of Bharatpur up to the time of the State's merger between 2,000 and 4000 were not infrequently slaughtered in a single day, is by itself sufficient indication of the enormous quantities of migratory waterfowl that congregate here in winter, With the stoppage of shooting and removal of other forms of disturbance, such as too many grazing buffaloes and deadwood-gathering villagers, the position at Keoladeo may be expected to improve considerably. One of the more important recommendations of the Ramsar Conference to the signatory governments is for the promotion of research on waterfowl and productivity of wetlands such as mortality computed on the basis of definitive data obtained from the recovery of ringed birds. In India the Bombay Natural History Society has already amassed a vast quantity of basic data on waterfowl at Keoladeo Ghana and at Point Calimere on the south-eastern coast in Tamil Nadu, which is awaiting a proper analysis. During the last 13 years that the Society's Migratory Bird Survey Project has been in operation, the total number of ducks ringed is of the order of 40,000 and that of two species of sandpiper between them about 24,000. Several hundred recoveries from both these groups have been reported revealing that the visitors are derived principally from central Asia and Siberia—often from unsuspected distances of 5,000 to 7,000 km.

Bird ringing (or banding) is the most rewarding technique employed now-a-days for collecting factual data relating to migratory birds: information, for instance, on their place of origin, destination, routes travelled, age, longevity, sex ratio, moult, ectoparasites, virus infection and dissemination, and many other details impossible to obtain in any other way. The birds are captured in special nets and by a number of ingenious trapping devices. Strips of aluminium of appropriate sizes are fastened to a leg, stamped with a serial number and the return address of the ringer. The bird is released unharmed after recording on special forms (to be subsequently transferred to punch cards for computer analysis) all relevant information concerning the individual. The rings used in India carry the legend INFORM NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, BOMBAY. It is hoped that any reader who comes across such a ring, or a ring bearing any other legend, whether Indian or foreign, will kindly forward it to the Bombay Natural History Society (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Bombay-400001) who will be glad to furnish the identity and case history of the bird concerned.

QUOTATION BOX

Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's aim is only to get the Assembly dissolved, like a small boy who must have his toy.

—Umashankar Dikshit

A vital issue today is corruption. Everyone is against it, including the corrupt.

—V. V. John

I always travel in the Bihar Government's small aircraft in the hope that some day it will crash, relieving you of your predicament about my remaining in office.

—Abdul Ghafoor to Shri L. N. Mishra

Policemen (in Pakistan) are long past the stage of confining themselves to tackling crime. Irrespective of enhanced salaries and other service benefits, the force now gets its cut from burglars, hold-up men and protection racketeers. Exceptionally remunerative police stations are auctioned off by high police officials to the highest bidding subordinates, who make good their promises through regular stipends from brothels, gambling dens, narcotics pedlars and smugglers.

—The Far Eastern Economic Review

It is possible to freeze meat and vegetables but not their prices.

—Gough Whitlam

Furtherance of party interests has become another source of irregularities (in Pakistan). For instance, during the National Awami Party (NAP) rule in the Frontier Province, arms licences were issued to anyone going through party channels. "Please issue" was written so automatically by the Ministers that it was jotted on one application by a rustic Pathan asking to buy a Sherman tank.

—Far Eastern Economic Review

Marriage is not 'up' or 'down' issue. It's a side-by-side one.

—Prince Charles

If you mislead the press consciously and you are caught at it, your credibility is destoyed for ever.

—Henry Kissinger

When you bring journalists into a government you are asking for trouble.

—The Financial Times (London)

In the absence of coordinated action the richest countries are moving towards recession. And the poorest countries will be making an adjustment too...starvation.

—Guido Carli
The Governor of the Bank of Italy

I cannot rely upon public opinion polls to tell me what is right.

—Gerald R. Ford, U.S. President

If a private corporation is expected to be a great, good and moral gentleman, there is no reason why a Government trading corporation should not submit itself to the same discipline and eschew profit, making by hook or by crook as its corporate goal.

—Mr. Justice Nain

NATIONAL PARKS AND SANCTUARIES

B. D. SNATAK

FORESTS are the base of wildlife which comprise plants (flora), animals (fauna) and avifauna (birds). Man's apathy towards them has resulted in the degeneration of many cherished values—Social, cultural, moral, economic and even meteorological and geological. Indian flora as well as members of fauna are since many decades now in a diclining state. The animals are in danger at the hand of trigger-happy poachers, masquerading as sportsmen. And this is in sharp contrast with a culture which has since ages learned best to live peacefully and harmoniously with nature. Our ancient texts are full of instances of this graceful harmony. Even today, many aboriginal tribes who thrive on the abundance of wildlife and who have made forests their home, are unfailing in their scrupulous regard for the ground rules which govern their relationship with the fauna and flora which sustain them. In fact, it is these tribal peoples who conserve our rich heritage *vis-a-vis* man's relationship with nature.

In olden times, the shikari used to pursue his sport with the observance of certain established rules and self-enforced traditions. The hunting of certain birds and animals was strictly prohibited during particular periods. It was restricted to certain animals which were again limited to a certain age. At the time of mating or during pregnancy, or at the time of incubation in the case of birds, game was never touched by the tribal shikari. But suddenly during the last century, grave dangers arose to our fauna with the penetration of foreigners who found a heaven of wildlife in India. Destruction wrought by them was vast and indiscriminate. The Indians followed the British example, forgetting their own traditions of refinement and discrimination.

Animal life was plentiful in the country. Large herds of black buck, spotted deer and neelgai inhabited the great plains. The forests were full of gaur, samber, tiger and elephant. The great one-horned rhino, which was found in aboundance in areas as far west as the Punjab, is now found only in small pockets in Assam and West Bengal. The lion, once widely found in the open jungles of Northern India, now survives in its only foothold, the Gir forests of Gujarat. The Cheetah, which was once common in central India, can now be seen only in zoological parks. Similarly, the wild buffalo, once found over a wide range, can now be seen only in the Kaziranga and Manas sanctuaries of Assam and some parts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The Nilgiri tahr and langoor are threatened with extinction. So are the chausingha, barasingha, snow leopard, Kashmir stag, musk deer, the great Indian bustard, pink-headed-duck and white-winged wood duck.

As more and more grow-more-food compaigns or land reclamation schemes were started, forest areas began to dwindle. With more of firearms licences issued and a larger number of shikar parties and sports clubs organised, the problem became critical and the annihilation of wildlife was speeded up. Skins and hides, furs and ivory fetched fabulous prices. Settlers in the Terai area carrying trapped peacocks on their bicycles became a common sight. In the Pilibhit forests, I have even come across a district supply officer carrying a jeepload of deer. Some does were pregnant when killed. The carnage was carried out with flashlights and guns. Some were deliberately run over by the vehicle. Now, fortunately, the old rules and Acts relating to preservation of wildlife are reactivated and new efforts are made to streamline conservation. But such measures have to be complemented with efforts at informing public awareness. The Rigvedic prayer which invokes a benediction of peace and happiness to all two-and four-legged creatures should become our national motto. Shikaries should seek wildlife, not with bows and arrows or with sophisticated rifles and flashlights, but with binoculars and cameras.

A national park is a place where peace and tranquility prevails, undefiled by men. The basic purpose is to preserve an area containing magnificent objects of geographical, geological, biological and historical interest for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people. A national park is, therefore, a place where citizens can enjoy as privileged visitors the plants, animals, birds and other indigenous features.

In India, national parks are constituted under an Act of Parliament, with exact area and location prescribed and demarcated for the preservation of wildlife. In the case of sanctuaries, the preserves are demarcated and determined by the State Governments under a special act. Their areas are enlarged or redefined as need arises, under Government notification. Zoos and botanical gardens are other artificial, man-made preserves to keep such wildlife, fauna and flora for the benefit, study and amusement of the people, at selected places.

Indian wildlife can be divided into four main geographical zones: (1) the Himlayas; (2) the Indo-Gangetic plains;(3) the Thar desert; and 4) the Peninsula. They have their characteristic geography, geology, climate, flora and fauna.

There are in all five national parks in India. They are the Corbett National Park of Dhikla in Uttar Pradesh, Shivpuri and Kanha in Madhya Pradesh, Hazaribagh in Bihar and Taroba in Maharashtra. One more national park is under demarcation at Betla in Palamau in Bihar, close to Hazaribagh. Madhya Pradesh which already has two national parks will soon have the third one at Bandhugarh. The two sanctuaries of Assam at Kaziranga and Pench will be converted into national parks. Under Project Tiger, Orissa will have one at Simlipal.

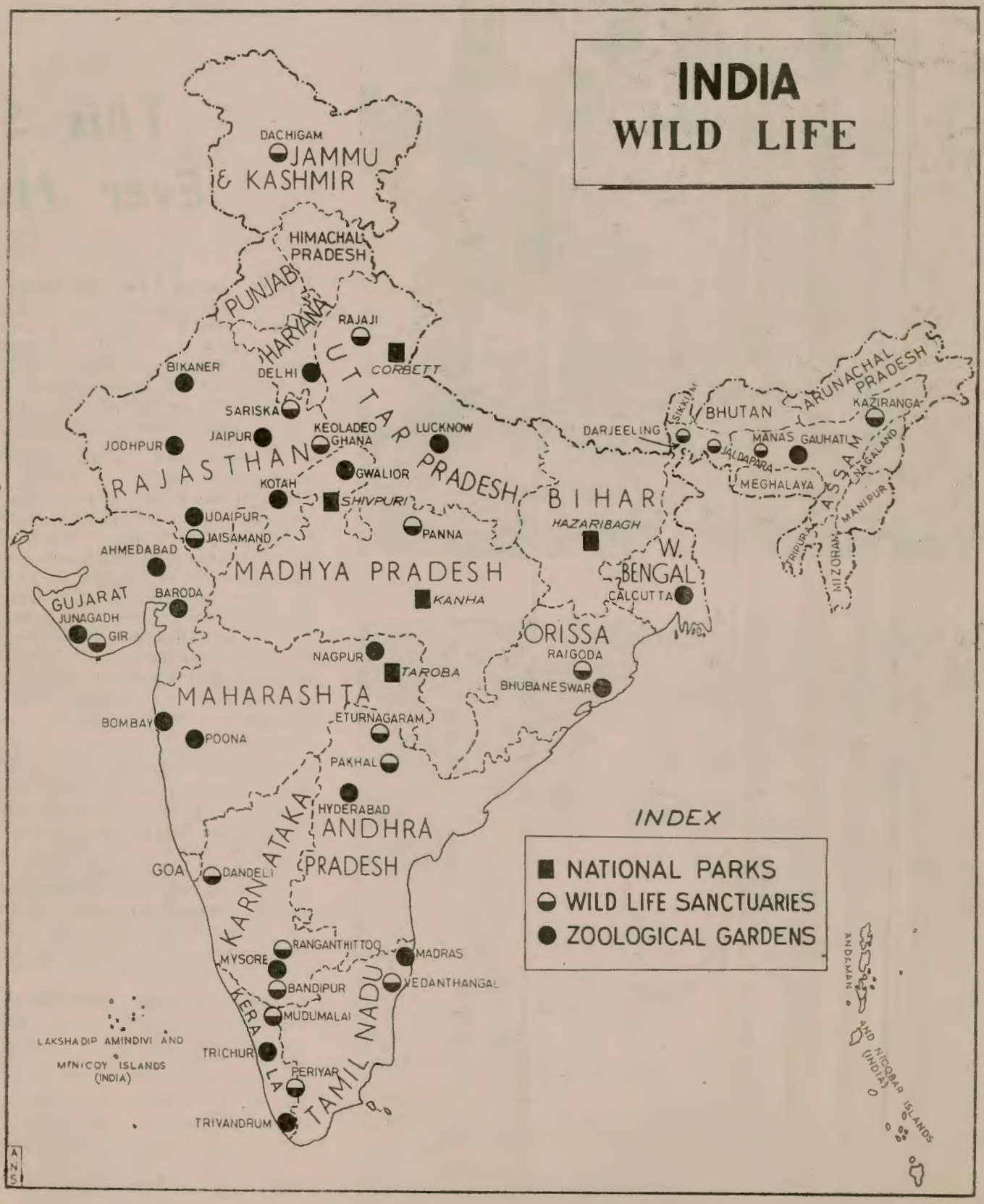
The Corbett National Park is named after Jim Corbett, the famed author of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. It is the home of tigers. Besides, leopard, sambar, cheetal, etc., are also found there. The area also abounds in birds of rare species, reptiles and crocodiles and the Mahsheer fish.

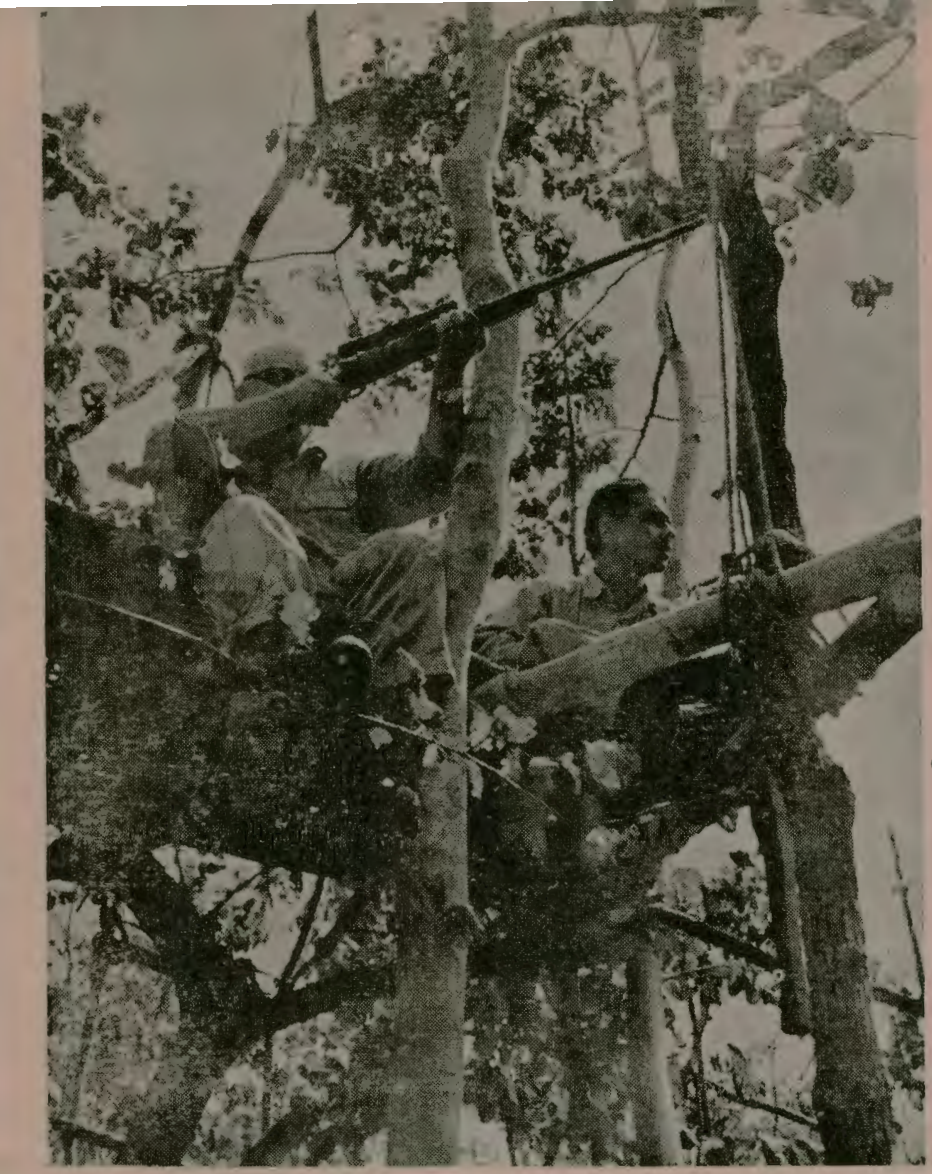
Kanha National Park is the best place for wildlife in India. Ninety species of birds and a large number of animals including several species of deer, chital, leopard and sloth bear are found here. The open central grassy area of the Park is famous as a beauty spot. Kanha is distinguished by its sal trees. Shivpuri is another adojoining national park where a large number of species of deer, nilgai, wild pig, tiger and leopard are found.

Hazaribagh National Park has been developed recently. It lies on the Patna-Ranchi highway. Here the dense forests are covered with sal trees. Tigers and leopards are known to inhabit this area of 194 square kilometers. Ten watch towers are provided in this national park for the convenience of visitors; but I was unable to see any animals there because of the dense forests. There is

a small perennial rivulet in the park where wild animals come regularly for drinking. As tigers used to get their ration of animal food at this spot, it was named Tiger Fall. I was there in 1957 when a dam was laid across the river. It is now named Tiger Dam.

In all 125 sanctuaries have been set up in India since 1898. They cover some 20,000 square kilometeres. Out of these, 32 are in the Himalayan region, Rajaji in Uttar Pradesh, Kungti in Himachal Pradesh and Dachigam in Jammu and Kashmir, being the important ones. The Gangetic plain has seven sanctuaries, the old and prominent ones being Kaziranga and Manas in Assam, Jaladapara in West Bengal and the Koeladeo Ghana bird sanctuary near Bharatpur in Rajasthan. Sariska is another notable place in Rajasthan. The Peninsula has the famous Gir sanctuary,—the home of Asiatic lion. There is also Chandraprabha in Uttar Pradesh worthy of mention. There are nine sanctuaries in Orissa. Bihar has eight which Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have four each. Bandipur of Karnataka has now become a tiger preserve. On the Western Ghats, Periyar in Karala is an old one, while Madumalai forests are famous for its elephants. □





PHOTOGRAPHS:
R.D. LUTHRA

When a man wants to
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UNTIL recently, he was among our "honoured guests". All he had to do was to bring his own rifle and ammunition and liquor. His other requirements would be taken care of by the Shikar outfitter for a price ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000. He could bag tigers, leopards, wild bears or other game.

The 'sportsman' sat in comfort on a cushioned *machan* with rifle in hand. The tiger was driven from its cover into his rifle range by "beaters" recruited from among the tribals. The moment the doomed victim came into view the gallant gentleman poured lead into it. This feat of "sport" accomplished, the carcass of what was once the king of the forests was despatched to the camp where the skinner waited with his knife. In this sordid bargain what India gained was a paltry sum in foreign exchange. What India lost was irretrievable wealth.



In thousands of other cases involving the death of our wild fauna even this small consolation did not exist. In less than 100 years, man has killed with the rifle more animals and birds than he had ever done over centuries with the spear, bow and arrow. Hunters, poachers and traders have done such irreparable damage to our magnificent fauna that with all our ingenuity it is difficult to salvage a small fraction of this rich heritage. A few facts will bear out this statement.

Once upon a time elephants roamed freely in all our forests; today they are confined to a few of them. Bastar in Madhya Pradesh was famous for its wild buffaloes; now hardly a dozen of them survive. The *barasingha* known for its majestic antlers was found in plenty all over Central India; a mere hundred of them now exist in the sanctuary of Khana (M.P.). In the Hissar district (Haryana)

nurder a tiger he calls it Sport;
der man he calls it ferocity.

—George Bernard Shaw

that Man, the last comer to this
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Maurice Maeterlinck, Poet and Dramatist

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alone there were as many as 10,000 black bucks; there are now none left. In the dry belts of India right from the north-west to the Deccan, the sleek, fleet-footed Cheetah hunted freely. The Indian Cheetah is now dead like the Dodo and the passenger pigeon. In 1939, according to one estimate, there were as many as 30,000 tigers in India's jungles; of them now barely 2,000 exist. About three decades ago, as many as 130 tigers a year were being killed in Khandesh; there are none left now.

Belated though, we are now making efforts to preserve, wherever possible, a few grand specimens of our fauna. In 1907, India's rhino population was believed to be more than a dozen; today, there are about 1,000 rhinos in Khaziranga, the islands and banks of the Brahmaputra and the Jaldapara sanctuary (West Bengal). Likewise, there were barely 25 lions in the Gir forests (Gujarat) before conservation measures were taken; the 1974 census places the number at 180. The great Indian Bustard, once found practically all over India, now exists only in some small numbers in the Jaisalmer area of Rajasthan.

The extinction of a species like the Cheetah is far more serious than its death. It is the extinction of a whole ecosystem in the face of challenges that have come in the wake of civilisation. The price that India has had to pay is incalculable. We have altered the rhythm of nature without providing an acceptable alternative. Our law now seeks to protect what is left of our faunal wealth. Our public conscience, now only partially awakened, must give life to that law so that we are left with something of the beauty and the rhythm that permeate our heritage.







The king of the forests cools himself in a water-hole in the Kanha Sanctuary of Madhya Pradesh. PHOTO : THE AUTHOR

THE TIGER WILL SURVIVE

K.S. SANKHALA

The tiger, the real lord of the Indian jungle, which once flourished all over India, has for some time been facing threat of extinction though it is one of the hardiest and most adaptive of wild beasts. We have been grabbing his land and killing his natural prey for far too long. Princes, trophy-hunters and traders have all contributed to the depletion of tiger population and its habitats. Today we are left with a few hundred of this noble species in small pockets distributed over the entire country. Public conscience has at least woken up to this grim reality and a major project to conserve the tiger in carefully selected reserves has been brought into being.

FOR untold centuries India has been home for the tiger though ecological studies indicate that its original home is the cold temperate land of Siberia from where it has migrated. He is at home in all the habitat types in India. Temperature as high as 48°C in Dholpur, Kotah, Ranthambhor and as low as below zero in the sub-mountain region of the Himalayas, bone dry hot winds of arids lands of Rajasthan and moisture soaked air of the wet region of Assam do not bother him. He does not mind rugged hills of the Shiwaliks or broken lands of the Chambal ravines. He is equally at home in the flat plains of the Tarai, well-drained region of the 'Bhabhar' of the muddy swamps of the Sunderbans. He lives in open bush-land of the west as well as the impenetrable evergreen forests of the eastern regions of India. He drinks clean sweet water of the mountain-streams and also thrives on the muddy, brackish back-water of the tidal swamps of the Sunderbans. He shares the habitat without fuss with the other co-predators, the ferocious wild dogs. All this is proof that the tiger is highly adaptive. He has the capacity to adjust to a wide range of habitats. It is this quality which explains his presence even in the highly disturbed and denuded Indian jungles of today.

The tiger's needs are limited—only good ungulate (hoofed animals)

Shri Sankhala is Director, Project Tiger

population, undisturbed ambush cover from which he can spring a surprise attack, place to rest and bring up the young ones and, of course, water to drink. The tiger belongs to a biologically fertile species. It matures at the age of four to five years, retains reproductivity for about ten years, and disappears immediately after it has discharged its biological function at the age of 17 to 18 years. According to my study, the sex ratio of tiger and tigress is about 48 :52, females being 10 per cent more than males. We also know that though the average number of cubs born in one litter is 2.9, the survival is only 1.9 per litter. But the ultimate survival rate after the many hazards a cub has to pass through is less than one per litter. Since cubs remain with their mothers for 20 to 24 months, tigress delivers cubs only once in two years.

With this vital biological information we may attempt to calculate the growth rate of tigers under normal conditions. We find that in a population of 100 there are about 52 tigresses. Assuming that this sex-ratio exists uniformally in all age groups, there are likely to be 26 tigresses in the reproductive group at a time. Of these, 13 tigresses can be expected to deliver litter every year. With our estimate of their survival rate, we find that less than 13 tigers are added every year to a total population of 100 tigers. Providing again for the many imponderables that exist in the jungles, it would be safe to consider the reproduction rate of tigers to be half of this figure, that is about 6 per cent.

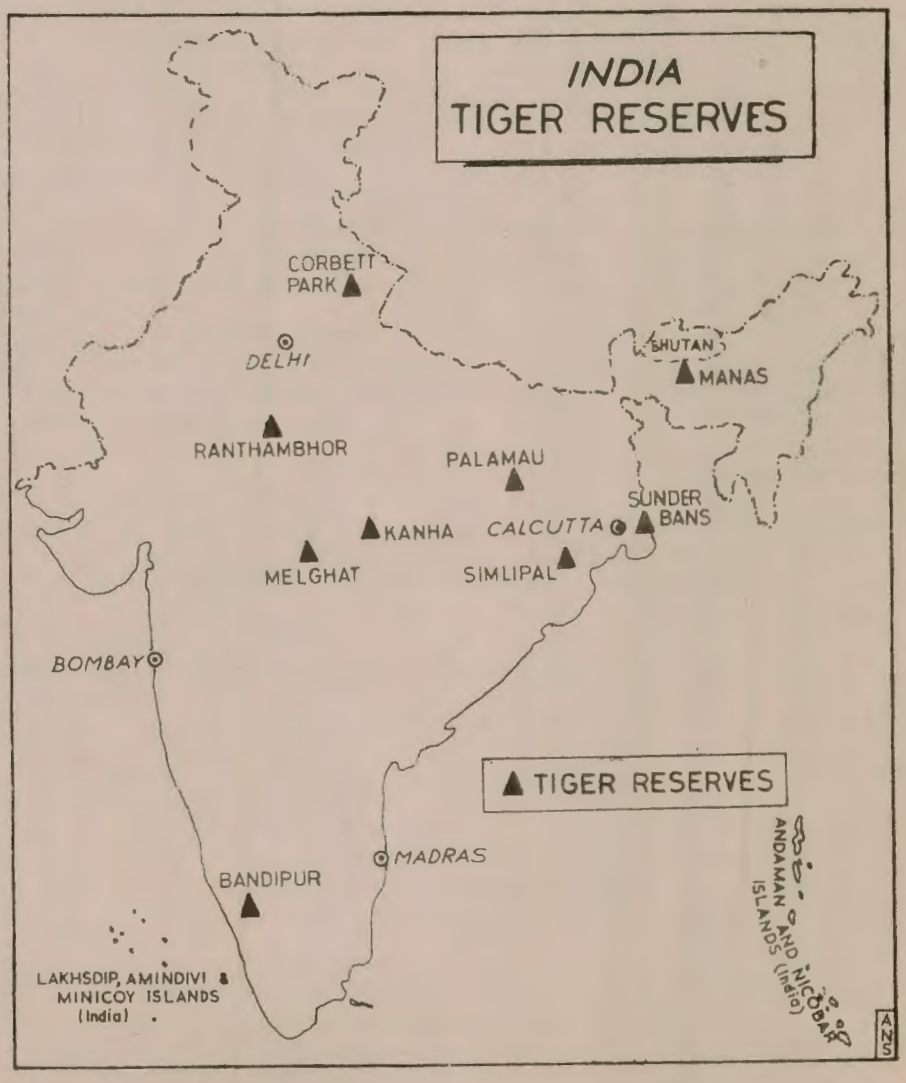
This is almost the same as that of the lion, as estimated by Schaller in Serengeti. And the lion is in no danger of extinction. For a predator like the tiger the reproductive rate appears to be quite satisfactory.

By habit, the tiger is a solitude-loving animal and is distributed over a wide range of environmental conditions. So, at any given time, there are always some group which are not exposed to adverse conditions or natural calamities. This ensures survival of at least some members of the species, and this should always be sufficient to revive the race in situations created by natural adversities. If, like the lion, the tiger also had been living in prides, it would have been picked up by trophy hunters like sitting ducks and massacred in groups to feed the booming trade in fur. Its living style has been the major factor in the preservation of its race inspite of man's wanton cruelty. Fortunately also, the species has also not acquired any "specialisation" in its behaviour' which could prove detrimental to its further preservation. The tiger's method of preying is free-style and feeding habits are non-ceremonial. A tiger does not hesitate to eat a live animal or even an animal killed by others. Faced by acute hunger he even eats diseased carcasses and is not known to spare crabs and fish.

The mother-cub relationship among tigers is governed by a degree of intensity which is touchingly human and tigresses take good care of their cubs. She is not a cannibalistic mother like the lioness but brings up her young ones by a process of elaborate training till the time cubs jump the family bond or the mother drives them away to make room for the new litter. Above all, the members of a tiger-family do not hold territories or indulge in fights to defend their preserves, resulting in waste of energy and loss of life nor does the species have cannibalistic tendencies which would prove detrimental for the survival of the race.

The tiger is not a nervous type by any means. He will not abandon a habitat because of human disturbance unless he is physically driven out. He lives in the vicinity of villages waging no war on man or his cattle. He tolerates man and modifies his ways and habits to adjust to a life of co-existence. This is amply demonstrated by the tigers living in Sariska where human disturbance both by wood-cutters, visitors and also by cattle is very high. He uses the same road at night which has been used by hundreds of men during the day. He visits the same warerhole which has been used by man but an hour earlier. He waits for the passing of the last bus or the last dying sound of a temple-bell, to start his hunting prowl. All this is proof that if left alone, the tiger is not a species doomed to extinction in the grand process of Evolution. Its extinction in any place or region is due to causes other than the natural ones.

Based on this knowledge about the life of the tiger and the cause of depletion of its population a project has been



formulated. It provides for the elimination of all the factors that have contributed to the destruction of its habitat—disturbance in the habitat by forestry operations, grazing and movement of man; loss of its natural prey population by poaching and wanton killing and direct killing of tigers both for trophy and trade. Project-tiger is the name given to a country-wide campaign that is now on to save the tiger together with its habitat.

India was once very rich in tigerlands, but for economic reasons it is not possible to preserve all of them. That would mean elimination of forestry operations. It was, therefore, decided to identify certain areas which have proven potentiality to be developed as nuclei of wildlife, including tiger reserves. The criteria for selecting an area for this purpose was that it should be a representative habitat type. The habitat should be exposed to least disturbance; population of animals including tigers should be fairly adequate or the development potential must be high; and there should be no other competing factors like prospects of mining or harvesting valuable timber or any other economic or political consideration. And as far as possible the reserves must be situated in different States of the Union so that each State can afford to give the Tiger Reserve a deserved priority in managing that area. Sometimes it may not be scientifically correct but administratively sound and easy enough for execution. Nine such areas have been demarcated: Manas in Assam; Sunderbans in West Bengal; Palamau in Bihar; Simlipal in Orissa; Corbett park in U.P.; Ranthambhor in Rajasthan; Kanha in Madhya Pradesh; Melghat in Maharashtra; and Bandipur in Karnataka.

A few more could have been added to the list. For example tiger reserves in the Bastar Plateau, another in the evergreen forest of Meghalaya, and still others in Tarai Duduwa of U.P., Sariska of Rajasthan and the famous Duars of Cooch Behar in the West Bengal. But due to limited financial resources and other practical considerations, they have not been included. Slowly they too would be brought under the umbrella of the Project.

The tiger is a predator—a second stage consumer—who cannot be preserved in isolation. He requires primary consumers—prey animals (ungulates) which depend on producers—vegetation, forests and savannahs. These producers depend on converters like soil and micro-organisms. Truely, the tiger is at the apex of the biological pyramid. Therefore, any plan to preserve the tiger has to preserve the whole range of its prey population and their habitat. This requires the thorough knowledge of the whole eco-system of the tiger land including socio-economic human behaviour, involving not a single discipline but a multi-disciplinary approach. The Project Tiger is an attempt in that direction. Fancy ideas of wildlife management by artificial manipulation of the habitat to increase wildlife population to an artificial level, has been guarded against. Its broad concepts are clear: that it is committed to the philosophy of total environmental preservation and that the nature will be allowed to play its part fully. The management will be limited to eliminating or minimising human disturbance or to repair the damage done by man.

Though the object of the Project is to manage nine eco-units. the habitat and population of tigers outside these units have not been ignored, The first step has already been taken. The tiger has been declared India's National Animal and has been accorded total protection throughout the country. The export of tigers, either living or dead has been totally banned. Attempts have been made to ban the import of tiger-skins in the receiving countries through an international convention to which India, USA, U.K. and other countries are signatories Even possession of tiger-skins is being controlled to ensure that no illegal trade in tiger-skins flourishes. Attempts are also being made to preserve the tiger niches throughout its range by manipulating forestry practices to strike a compromise between wildlife and forest production.

India's tiger reserves are, of course, not as large as the Benff National Park for the bison in Canada, Serengeti National Park for the lion in Tanzania, or Tsavo National Park for the elephant in Kenya. Because of the high density of human population in India, there are no large tigerlands in India that are completely free from human disturbance. Still, in spite of the heavy pressure on land and on forest produce, an area of 12,000 sq. km. has been set aside under the Project Tiger as tiger reserves to be scientifically managed at a cost of Rs. 40 billion. The Reserve have been selected in a different habitat types in India, where conditions are still favourable and tigers are found in numbers that make it possible to build up population units through scientific management. The locations of the tiger reserves is shown on the map above.

Not all the reserves at present have a genetically viable population of tigers. The plans prepared under the Project Tiger provide for the development of the habitat, its wildlife and the tiger population in these reserves to the optimum level. The basic requirements of all wild animals are food. water and protection. In the foregoing description of the tigerlands, we have noticed that in some areas one or more of these needs are limited. In the dry deciduous and moist deciduous forests. the forage is being conserved by eliminating competition from domestic cattle and protecting it from fire. Its production will be increased by repairing the damage done by the past activities of man causing soil erosion, and depletion of land by soil and moisture conservation and pasture development techniques like water spreading devices to produce more. Water is an important factor in maintaining wildlife population. Most of the reserved areas have rich forage, but they are not attractive to wild animals because of want of water. These grazing lands remain unutilised. Construction of water-holding devices like anicuts, dug-outs and development of springs to conserve water and make it available for a longer duration has been planned which will help to utilize the whole range.

The reserves are being strictly protected against all types of hunting and poaching and all other forms of human movement likely to damage or disturb wildlife. The areas are being kept closed to encroachings through installation of improved wireless systems. Specially screened selected and trained hands of wildlife officers have been posted to look after these reserves. They have been provided with swift transport and are being fully equipped to meet any challenge by poachers.

Controlled fires are now recognised as an important management tool in maintaining the plant community at a desired ecological state. For example, there are varieties of grasslands which, if not burnt in winter, would be unfit for grazing in spring and summer. The coarse grasses require controlled burning so that new sprouts are available for wild animals to graze. Evergreen vegetation is less favoured by wild animals and it is through fire that the plant succession in moist and wet habitats is held back from reaching a stage which may

be disadvantageous to wildlife. All uncontrolled fires, accidental or intentional, are harmful as they burn all the available fodder, kill ground fauna and plant regeneration and dry out waterholes. These fires are proposed to be prevented in the tiger reserves by the project authorities,

Since the tiger areas are far removed from one another with no corridors for inter mingling of the different racial strains, it is necessary to arrange artificial intermingling in order to maintain genetically healthy populations. This is an artificial operation, but is being provided for to bridge the gaps created by man. It is planned to be undertaken with the help of indigenous methods of trapping tigers and transferring them to genetically new areas.

The development and maintenance of the reserves at an optimum level is the main object of the Project Tiger. Since the reserves covered by the Project are surrounded by similar forest areas, the optimum level of animal population will be automatically maintained by spilling over the excessive population of tiger and other wildlife from the tiger reserves to the adjoining forest areas. This will help to restock the forests with life from these restocking centres.

The Project Tiger provides for research on the various aspects of field biology of wildlife and training of personnel. Special efforts are being made to study the daily life of tigers through tracking and long hours of observations. Care is being taken that the tigers are not made guinea pigs for experimenting new hardwares or electronics or drugs.

To popularise the Project and to create awareness and enthusiasm among the people, particularly the young men and women, for this programme of tremendous international importance, a public relations plan has been worked out to increase the awareness of the people through radio, T V, films, newspaper columns and other media. Project Tiger is a youth activity and, therefore, it plans to encourage youth participation in its various plans. A children's Safari programme to vtsit tiger Reserves is being planned. Tigers are also found in Bangla Desh, Bhutan and Nepal and similar projects are being planned in these countries. Bilateral arrangments are being finalised to help in preserving the tigers. Bhutan and India have already signed an agreement to develop the Manas Tiger Reserve.

Since racial and political barriers have been broken, distances abridged by modern modes of communication and air transport, and a wider and more lively interest in what goes on outside one's own country has developed, the wilds life of a country or a continent is no longer a matter of interest to that country alone. International concern has been voiced over the dindling population of tigers, the most magnificent of the world's predators, in its ancient homes. The savings of the tiger in India, the country in which it is still left in some hundreds, has become an international issue and responsibility. The call to support the project of the World Wildlife Fund has received prompt response from the world over. And small or big donations in cash or kind are pouring in. The W.W.F. have already collected $ 600,000 against their target of one million dollars. The imaginative publicity campaign through painting contests of children and selling of picture stamps to collect funds has reached every door. The WWF support comes to the project in the form of equipment and advice on management plans and training facilities for the staff. The most important help is that it creates a right climate and provides confidence for those who are implementing the project.

Since tigers are being given undisturbed homes where a wide range of prey animals are being developed, there is every chance that the species will be saved from extinction. It is too early to predict the exact outcome of this effort, but is certainly not too much to hope that ultimately the tiger will be saved in India and restored to a less precarious status than now. □



At the apex of the biological pyramid, the tiger requires prey animals like the Nilgai, shown above, for its survival. Any plan to preserve the tiger must include the prey population as well as the habitat. PHOTO : THE AUTHOR.



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Sixth Finance Commission and Regional Imbalances

O. P. MAHAJAN

Mal-adjustment between States' assigned functions and their resources, in a federal set-up.

IN the Indian Federation the heads of revenue and functions are distributed on the criterion whether the Centre or the State is better equipped to deal with the particular head. As a result, there has been a mal-adjustment between the functions assigned to the States and their financial resources, which, however, is an inherent feature of most Federations. But the balance being heavily tilted in favour of the Centre, the Constitution provides for transfer of resources from the Centre to the States in various ways: share in the net proceeds of income tax and Union excise duties, and grants, statutory and discretionary. A unique statutory body known as the Finance Commission is constituted after a period of five years, or even earlier if the President considers necessary, to make recommendations in regard to the distribution of shareable taxes and statutory grants. However, with the advent of economic planning discretionary grants given on the recommendations of the Planning Commission under Article 282 have overshadowed the transfer of resources effected through the Finance Commission.

Inter-State Disparities

'Because of the compelling considerations of equity and national cohesion', balanced regional development has been accepted as one of the major objectives of economic policy in India since the beginning of economic planning[1], and calls for transfer of funds from the Centre to the less developed States because the same kinds and rates of taxes yield much less revenue in these States. In fact, nearly Rs 32,000 crore were transferred to States during the period 1951-74, about one third being through the first five Finance Commissions. Substantial transfers are envisaged during the Fifth Plan period. But the Finance Commissions have been guided by several other considerations in addition to the objective of reducing the inter-State disparities. That is why disparirities in the levels of essential services, which come within the purview of the Finance Commission, have persisted. Moreover, some advanced States were given grants, denied to some backward States, by one Commission or the other, but Uttar Pradesh never got any in the last 25 years. Backward States' problems needed immediate attention. Regional balance has been, therefore, a major consideration with the sixth Commission (which submitted its report in the last quarter of 1973), particularly in regard to statutory grants. Its recommendations are briefly reviewed here.

We may take the shareable taxes first. The sixth Commission raised States' share in the net proceeds of income tax from 75 per cent to 80 per cent, 90 per cent of which is to be distributed on the basis of population and 10 per cent on that of assessment to allow for the incomes of local origin. States' share of basic excise duties has been retained at 20 per cent (auxiliary excise duties would also become shareable from 1976-77), because enlargement of the divisible pool would confer disproportionately larger benfit on the surplus States. Finance Commissions generally accepted population as the major criterion for distribution among States, but relative social and economic backwardness as assessed on the basis of some factors like gross value of agricultural production, percentage of enrolment in classes I to V to population in the age-group 6-II, etc., was also given some weightage, generally 20 per cent. The sixth Commission rightly took per capita income as the best possible measure of the relative levels of States' development because all other indicators of relative backwardness refer to the elements that are themselves the causes of direct or indirect consequences of low per capita income. It recommended that 20 per cent of the divisible pool of the Union excise duties be distributed on the basis of the 'distance' of a State's per capita income from that of the State with the highest per capita income multiplied by the population of the State concerned.

As for the grants-in-aid of the revenues of States, the Finance Commission is required to recommend principles to determine the grants as well as the sums to be paid to those in need of assistance. The first Finance Commission formulated a number of principles like budgetary needs, tax effort, economy in expenditure, standard of social services, broad purposes of national importance, etc., for regulating grants. The later Commissions found it difficult or unnecessary to apply some of them, and interpreted others widely in response to the competing claims of the States.

Budgetary needs are an important factor in determining the assistance required by States. But budgetary deficits should not be indentified with the actual needs, as was done by the earlier Commissions because deficits may be due to improvidence, or unwillingness to tax. Later Commissions, therefore, made efforts to rise above this mechanical approach. The sixth Commission envisages determined efforts on the part of States to reduce arrears of taxes and to improve the profitability of investments in commercial and semi-commercial undertakings. But no Commission could be completely indifferent to the plight of even the better off States facing big deficits on revenue account; for instance, the fifth Commission recommended grants for West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, and the sixth Commission for West Bengal.

Measures to promote Fiscal Discipline

A State should make the best use of its existing sources of income and the resources available to it before making a claim for assistance from the Centre. A method of assistance which gives the suggestion that the Central Government have assumed responsibility for helping the States, howsoever backward they may be, to balance their budgets from year to year, is likely to encourage financial imprudence. The sixth Commission was required to consider scope for better fiscal management and economy consistent with efficiency. Fiscal management is a multidimensional concept, covering both the raising and utilisation of resources. But no Commission had enough time to undertake the much-needed review

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[1] First Five Year Plan-A Draft] Outline pp. 42-43.

of the fiscal policies, expenditure control and quality of fiscal administration in general. The sixth Commission has, however, proposed concrete measures to promc te fiscal discipline. It suggests determined effort to ensure reasonable recovery of arrears of revenues and alons, and immidiate action to raise levels of tariffs and to improve efficiency so as to ensure a minimum return of 6 per cent on the loans advanced to Electricity Boards and to cover fully at least the charges for maintenance of medium and major irrigation projects. But past experience and current reluctance of the States to implement the proposals of the Raj Committee regarding agricultural taxation under oneexcuse or the other do not hold much hope in thisrespect. Further, rejection of the criterion of relative tax effort by the Commission on the practical ground that it would, impair the maintenance of essential services in the States showing poor tax effort but faced with big deficit cannot be reconciled with its concern for fiscal discipline, because tax revenues per capita and as percentage of State incomes differ widely even among the relatively developed States.

The level of administrative and social services provided in different States differ greatly on account of widely different levels of development. Mitigation of inter-State disparites in basic social services, particularly elementary education, medical and public health, is a prerequisite for the attainment of balanced regional development, and the main purpose of the Central assistance. The first five Commissions made no effort to initiate the process of equalisation and assessed fiscal needs of the States for purposes of grants on the basis of levels already attained. The sixth Commission was specifically required to pay regard among other considerations, to the needs of backward States for upgradation of administration with a view to bringing it to the levels obtaining in the more advanced States over a period of ten years. The Commission has, therefore, broken new ground by making adequate provision for upgradation of essential administrative and social services.

Raising per capita expnediture on essential services

Administrative efficiency depends on a number of factors like principles and procedures of recruitment, training of personnel, *etc.*, many of which cannot be expressed in terms of money. But deficiency of resources is the most conspicuous factor preventing the less developed States from achieving minimum standards of essential services. Per capita expenditure on these services, with all its imperfections, is the only convenient measure of the broad requirements of the backward States. Upgradation, therefore, requires raising the per capita expenditure on these services in the backward States upto the level of the most advanced State. The Commission has set a limited objective for the next five years: to bring the backward States' per capita expenditure on essential services upto the all-State's average, equalisation in terms of the standards of advanced States to be accomplished later. This limited task will involve an outlay of nearly Rs 816 crore over a period of five years, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh respectively, accounting for 34.6 per cent, 19.9 per cent and 6.0 per cent of the total. West Bengal alone among the structurally advanced States is expected to have substantial non-plan revenue deficit even on the basis of the existing level of services. Taking into account its requirements for upgradation, it is given the third largest amount of grant. Both the deficit and the surplus States have to spend a certain amount on the essential services, whether they get the whole amount needed for upgradation from grants-in-aid, as for example Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal or a part of it, as is the case with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Amount of transferable resources increased

Total amount of resources likely to be transferred under the recommendations of the Commission has been substantially increased to Rs 9,609 crore as against Rs 5,316 crore transferred during 1969-74. The corresponding figures for grants are Rs 2,510 crore and Rs 711 crore respectively, Uttar Pradesh getting the grant for the first time. In per capita terms, the position is generally favourable to the backward States. However, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have not fared well in this respect. The coefficient of co-relation between per capita incomes during 1967-70 and per capita transfer of resources relating to the period of award of the sixth Commission is—0.357.

(Continued on page 30)

Table—I

States	Per capita incomes 1967-70	Per capita transfers 1974-79 ff	Provision allowed for upgradation of essential services	Net Revenue Deficit oo	Net Revenue surplus	Debt relief as percentage of outstanding debt to Centre
					(Rupees in Crores)	
Andhra Pradesh	537	178.4	52.62	205.93	—	28.02
Assam	581	300.6	18.02	254.53	—	41.15
Bihar	409	149.9	166.80	106.28	—	19.14
Gujarat	667	138.1	9.19	—	335.5	11.41
Haryana	810	120.2	21.45	—	223.35	14.94
Jammu and Kashmir	426	503.1	17.33	173.49	—	41.20
Kerala	555	224.8	6.53	208.93	—	30.30
Madhya Pradesh	458	130.5	50.34	—	110.2	21.00
Maharashtra	686	141.1	3.63	—	748.4	9.50
Mysore	552	130.9	26.45	—	232.7	27.50
Orissa	488	263.1	57.06	304.73	—	30.73
Punjab	940	124.7	13.94	—	341.5	6.21
Rajasthan	455	218.9	27.43	250.53	—	35.90
Tamil Nadu	558	130.7	—	—	184.5	20.82
Uttar Pradesh	480	152.7	290.16	198.83	—	17.81
West Bengal	667	185.7	72.23	234.86	—	18.91
All-India	551*	—	838.43	2509.61	2176.16	23.50

00 Amounts to be paid as Grants-in-aid.

*All-States' average.

ff On the basis of 1971 population.

The "Economics" of Black Money

BLACK money is earned everyday through transactions carried on in violation of existing law. It is the money retained without the payment of taxes. Whether it is earned by simple bribery or undisclosed income its immediate result is that the Government is cheated of its tax revenue to that extent. In an economy which suffers from scarcity of goods and in which supply, distribution and prices of certain commodities are controlled, everyone who contravenes the law helps in the accumulation of black money.

Black money can be either or both unaccounted income and unaccounted wealth. Unaccounted wealth can be created both by accounted as well as unaccounted income. In both cases the real resources at the disposal of the community are reduced. The hoarding of unaccounted income and wealth whether in the form of currency, precious metals and stones or investment in real estate is no different from hoarding of accounted income and wealth in such forms.

The problem of black money can be tackled either by having comprehensive controls and regulations which are well administered and which ensure the flow of all income through the tax sieve or eliminating most of the controls in favour of a free market mechanism.

The Wanchoo Committee found that the assessable non-salary income for the financial year 1961-62 was Rs 2,686 as against an actually assessed non-salary income of Rs 1,875 crores. Accordingly, the income which escaped tax for 1961-62 is placed at Rs 811 crores. By applying the ratio of evaded income to the assessable non-salary income of 1961-62, to the assessable non-salary income of 1965-66 the Committee estimated that the evaded income for 1965-66 would be Rs 1,216 crores. After "making rough adjustments" the Committee arrived at an estimate of income on which tax has been evaded: Rs 1700 crores in 1961-62, Rs 1,000 crores in 1965-66 and Rs 1,400 crores in 1968-69.

Dr. D. K. Rangnekar, in his note of dissent disagreed with the Committee's estimatees of unaccounted money. His estimate based on the expenditure statistics for different sectors of the economy is that in 1961-62 tax evaded income totalled Rs 1150 crores; in 1965-66 it rose to Rs. 2,350 crores, and in 1968-69 and 1969-70 it was as high as Rs. 2,833 crores and Rs 3,080 crores respectively.

H. R. MACHIRAJU

BLACK money is defined by the Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee[1] (hereinafter referred to as Wanchoo Committee) as unaccounted money or concealed income and/or undisclosed wealth as well as money involved in transactions wholly or partly suppressed. Black money stands not only for money earned by violating legal provisions but also connotes that such money is kept secret and unaccounted for.

Is black money a flow or a stock or in other words do we mean by it income or wealth when we refer to black money ? It is both, of course, as the Wanchoo Committee itself says clearly. But a certain precision needs to be imparted to the term when we refer to black money. We should say unaccounted or black income or unaccounted or black wealth; further, when we refer to unaccounted income we should specify it in real or money terms. The need arises because the impact on aggregate demand and hence its significance in relation to prices depends on the source of unaccounted income and whether it is in real or in money terms.

Creation of unaccounted wealth is possible out of accounted as well as unaccounted income. In both cases real resources available to society would be reduced.

Unaccounted income could arise out of unaccounted wealth as well as out of accounted income or wealth. If it arises out of unaccounted wealth, an act of dissaving, it would contribute to an additional impact in money terms on total demand; and given the total output, the additional demand would bid up the prices of existing supply of goods and services. If it is a diversion from accounted income or wealth there is no additional impact because there is only a transfer in money terms, of course, from one individual to another. There could, however, be an additional impact on total demand arising out of redistribution of income. In cases where the marginal propensity to consume in the recipient groups is higher there would be an addition to total demand in money terms. Here again given the total supply, prices would bid up.

We must also distinguish unaccounted income and wealth in terms of the impact on the individual and the nation. Unaccounted income and out of it unaccounted wealth is of course created whenever the price of a good, resource or service is not determined by the free market forces but is regulated. Creation of unaccounted income does not reduce the total internal supply of goods and services. It amounts only to a redistribution. The impact on demand of course depends on the income groups involved in redistribution. Even when unaccounted income is earned by say, under-invoicing the exports total supply is not reduced. The real earnings from exports are understated and may be partly used to finance smuggling, which augment supplies. The smuggled goods could be consumer durables or luxury goods or gold, silver or precious stones which augment domestic supply.

This brings us to the question of a parallel economy being run

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1 Govt. of India, Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee, Final Report, December 1971.

with black money. Nothing could be farther from the truth. You really cannot isolate accounted from unaccounted income and wealth because physical goods, precious metals and stones and even currency in which it is received, passed on or held is the same as when income is accounted. All that happens is that a portion of the current income stream (it is immaterial whether you envisage it in real or financial terms) or national income does not pass through the reckoning of the Tax Department.

In our country the situation is complicated by the existence of a large non-monetized sector, the exclusion of agricultural income from tax (the situation has not altered much even after incorporating the aggregating provisions in the 1973-74 budget), and the existence of a small-scale industrial and business sector (small traders) which does not maintain accounts and uses cash instead of cheque money. Further, the absence of a national registry of all persons entering the labour market (like the social security number issued by the United States Federal Government) makes it too difficult to identify even the wages and salary component of current national expenditures. The income generated in these sectors also does not pass through the tax net. They all constitute outlets for unaccounted income.

Spending of Black Money

Again, when unaccounted income is hoarded, it partakes the character of the usual act of hoarding which means withdrawal of claims to current goods and services. This may reduce velocity. But when it is spent in the next time period like the spending of hoards out of accounted income, it has an additional impact on total demand.

If the unaccounted money is diverted into investment, such as real estate or retail trade most of it flows into regular income stream. But the black marketeer, exporter or professional person gets away with it because it is received by persons (such as agriculturist, small industrialists and traders) whose activity is included in national income but is not covered in any tax return.

Even where the unaccounted income or wealth is used to smuggle goods and services, such goods and services flow back into the regular income stream because they are purchased by individuals whose income is part of the total output but may not be passing through the tax net.

We may summarise by saying that unaccounted income and wealth are created out of current supply of goods and services of the nation. When income is unaccounted, the command over resources passes to people who have violated the law. The hoarding of unaccounted income and wealth whether in the form of currency, precious metals and stones or investment in real estate is no different from hoarding of accounted income and wealth in such forms.

Factors giving rise to black money

In a scarcity economy where controls operate and prices are administered, there are avenues galore to earn unaccounted income.

In respect of several commodities the price mechanism in our country is not allowed to clear the market by equating the quantity demanded with the quantity supplied. If there are shortages or scarcities, excess demand exists and the price should be allowed to rise to the point where it rations the available goods and eliminates the shortage. Persistent shortages would arise only when price is controlled. This leads to the phenomenon of black market and unaccounted income.

In general, unaccounted income consists of the difference between the prevailing market price (in the black or unofficial market) and the price which is directly or indirectly fixed by the Government. Invariably the black market price is higher. Unaccounted income sometimes constitutes money earned by violating legal provisions. The official rate of foreign exchange, the interest rate fixed under usury laws, the low regulated price at which allocations of scarce materials like steel etc., are made, import permits at the official rates of exchange, and in fact all legislation in regard to imports and foreign exchange, give rise to unaccounted income. The non-availability of goods at home or wide differences in domestic and international prices may also lead to smuggling and creation of unaccounted income. Such activity contravenes the existing legislation in regard to imports and foreign exchange.

It is only after income is earned through infringement of legal provisions that efforts are made to conceal income. The high rates of tax which lead to raising the net profit on concealment, no doubt, induce people to conceal their income. But this reason operates at a later stage in the process. First of all, people are afraid to disclose the means employed to earn the income. At a subsequent stage they may find that the net gain or profit from concealment is high and hence decide to conceal their income. In these cases the remedy lies in eliminating the sources that afford opportunity to earn black income in the country. The Wanchoo Committee's recommendation that the entire gamut of regulations, controls etc., should be examined and those that are irrelevant should be eliminated would help to a certain extent if implemented. But it would be a practical impossibility to eliminate all sources that give rise to unaccounted income for the simple reason that we cannot attain an equation between the market price and regulated price. The exchange rate and interest rate, to mention only two examples, would never reflect the true market forces of supply and demand.

Diversion of lawful income

There is another group of people who earn their income lawfully but divert it into unaccounted wealth because of high marginal income tax rates, and the large net gain from concealment of income. Professional people like writers, doctors, lawyers and cinema stars belong to this category. Professionals and cine artists resort to the diversion of income into unaccounted wealth mainly because their earnings are large only during a short span of their career and the high marginal rates do not help them in providing for their old age or uncertain future. The remedy may lie on adopting some averaging principle whereby the rigour of the high rate is reduced. But the incentive to convert lawfully earned income into unaccounted wealth will always remain, since there is always a net profit in evading tax, whatever the level of the rate.

Unaccounted income and wealth are therefore, creatures of regulations and controls which are not comprehensive and are badly administered. Unaccounted income is not the cause of inflation except where it is derived and spent out of dissaving of unaccounted wealth. To tackle the problem of unaccounted income we should either have comprehensive controls and regulations which are well administered and all income received flows through the tax sieve or eliminate most of the controls and adopt a fairly free market mechanism to determine prices which clear the market. □

CREATION OF PERMANENT RURAL ASSETS

SANAT MUKHOPADHYAY

NAYAGRAM block in Midnapur district has the distinction of being the only block in West Bengal, which has been selected out of 15 blocks spread all over the country to undertake action-*cum*-study projects under the title "Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Projects."

According to the recommendation of Bhagavati Committee, set up by the Government of India to tackle the problem of unemployment on a more intensified basis, it was decided to initiate some pilot projects in small compact areas in selected districts "to provide employment in different economic pursuits to every person offering himself for working in that area." One of the important objectives of the scheme is to create durable assets having "the multiplier effect of creating new job opportunities of a continuing nature so as to form part of an Area Development Plan. It also aims at imparting new skills to some of the workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors in rural and urban areas.

The project initiated in Nayagram block is for three years commencing from 1st November, 1972, to 31st October, 1975. The total cost of the project which is to be implemented in three phases on yearly basis, works to about Rs 1.42 crore. It includes the cost of establishment of the Project Office.

First Year Programmes

During the first year of its operation nearly 18 lakh rupees were expended creating 4,87,002 mandays of employment when more than a thousand persons were provided jobs. A sum of Rs 45 lakh was expected to be spent during the second year of its operation, of which over Rs 8.17 lakh had already been spent till April 4, this year.

In the absence of any master plan for the development of the block, the programmes under this scheme are undertaken on the basis of the felt-needs of the area with top most emphasis on the creation of productive assets within the block so that permanent benefits could be provided to the villagers of this backward area for their future use.

During the first year of the programme quite a few notable schemes have been executed. These included nine road, one minor irrigation, one farm forestry, 22 soil conservation and land improvement and 54 tank excavation or re-excavation schemes. Besides, two centres for imparting functional literacy to the local people are also operating in the area. For the second and the third year, various schemes which have had already been undertaken or will be taken up, include soil conservation, horticulture, minor irrigation, construction of wells, rural electrification, building of primary schools and training schemes.

Priorities

Keeping in view that irrigation schemes could alone provide permanent benefit to the local people and help them grow more than one crop a year, 46 per cent of the total outlay has been earmarked for this purpose. Next in the order of priority come roads with 24 per cent allocation; afforestation 11 per cent; agriculture 9 per cent, and others 10 per cent.

As irrigation has been accorded top priority in the project, necessary steps have already been initiated to see the schemes through. Accordingly the Kadamdiha Dasarath minor irrigation scheme is being implemented at an estimated cost of Rs 9 lakh to irrigate 350 acres and 250 acres respectively in *Kharif* and *Rabi* seasons. The plan provides for 14 minor irrigation projects to be built at a cost of Rs 53 lakh which will approximately benefit 4,575 acres of land in *Kharif* season and 2,130 acres in *Rabi* season.

The implementation of all these schemes will help to change the face of the countryside in as much as it will increase production of crops, create subsidiary employment through economic utilisation of various local products, increase in the production of fish and provide storage facilities of foodgrains in 10 proposed village godowns. Also the rural electrification scheme as envisaged in the plan will electrify 24 villages within the block.

Economic Prosperity

Although no industry is in existence at present in this block, there are prospects for quite a few small scale and cottage industries to be built up with the locally available raw materials. Notable among these raw materials are: (i) Mohua (locally known as 'Kochra'), Neem and Karanja seeds; (ii) Sabuigrass; (iii) Kendu leaf; and (iv) sugarcane.

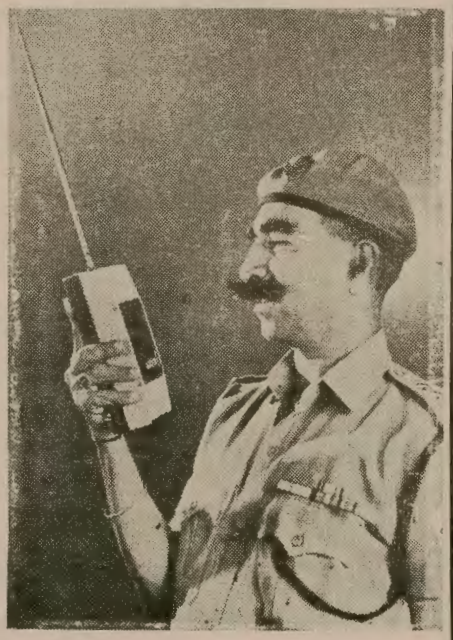
Mohua seeds are used extensively by local people to extract oil for their household purposes, which can be fruitfully utilised with the setting up of necessary extraction plants as cottage industry. Similarly Sabuigrass which is used for making ropes, is in great demand outside this area. So is the Kendu leaf which grows here in abundance. If these raw materials could be utilised within the block itself for the manufacture of ropes and *bidis*, as finished products, for ultimate despatch to the markets outside, it would change the economic condition of the villagers by creating more employment opportunities and useful vocation for them. □

Shri Mukhopadhyay is Assistant Information Officer, P.I.B., Calcutta.

Miniature Wireless

Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore, a public sector enterprise, has developed and manufactured a small compact wireless set used mainly by Police and Army personnel to communicate with each other from a distance. In addition to Police and Army, it is also used by Electricity Boards, Refineries, Chemical Plants and Fire Brigades.

The wireless set named as BEL Talkie, is a single channel, very high frequency trans-receiver used for ground to ground or mobile wireless communication. Equipped with a re-chargeable 8 volts dry battery, it has 400 mw output. Its maximum range is 5 km. depending upon terrain. It has an external speaker, ear phone, mike and antenna.



The BEL has, so far, supplied 2,500 sets and is the only organisation in India to meet the internal consumption. BEL Talkie is 80 per cent indigenous while 20 per cent of its components are imported.

SIXTH FINANCE COMMISSION

(*Continued from page 26*)

Relief to States Repayment of Debt

The Commission's concern for regional balance has also influenced its proposals for relief in repayment of States' debt to Centre, the outstanding debt having increased from Rs 196 crore to Rs 8,536 crore in the last 23 years. The Commission has rejected States' pleas for substantial reduction because (i) it would not be of much help to the backward States which could not get their due share of the Central loan assistance in the past owing to lack of suitable scheme or inadequate capacity for implementation, and (ii) it would reduce the Central resources to be lent to the less developed States. Instead, it has made several proposals for revision of the terms of Central loans, which will reduce States' repayment obligations by about Rs 1970 crore during the Fifth Plan period and here the bias seems, on the whole, to be in favour of the weaker States. Repayment relief as a percentage of outstanding debt to the Centre is much below the all-India average in the case of States like Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and West Bengal, and much above in the case of backward States like Jamm&Kashmir Assam, Rajasthan, Orissa, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. However, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh again did not fare well. The coefficient of correlation between per capita incomes during 1967-70 and estimated repayment relief as a percentage of outstanding debt to Centre during the Fifth Plan Period is—0.377.

In the end it may be relevant to mention that assistance given by the Finance Commissions can only partially correct inter-State disparities in the levels of development. A much larger volume of Central assistance flows through the Planning Commission. Besides, Central policies relating to industrial location and licensing, and the policies of financial institutions exercise a more powerful influence on regional disparities. Further, it is a problem of fiscal discipline and efficient use of the resources available to the less developed States. The problems facing these States cannot be solved unless the economy grows at a much faster rate, and "unless each State is prepared to bear its due share of the burden that the pursuit of the national objectives of economic growth with social justice calls for.[2]"

[2] *Report of the Finance Commission, 1973, p. 6*

WILDLIFE PHILOSOPHY

(*Continued from page 6*)

The wonderful thing about the wild nature of a country is that it provides not only the present physical identity and infinitely varied complexion of the country, but also assures its continuity with the past. In how many countries and languages has not the feeling of the people for their homeland been inspired and inseparably linked with tho recollection of it as the land of their forefathers? It was to make this point that this argument was based on the fact of acquired characters being not heritable.

The conservation of wildlife in our country is no easy task, for a number of reasons, but that problem is well outside the ambit of this note. One heartening feature is that conservationists in our country are asking for so little, only for 1 or 2% of the total land area to be preserved for all time in many widely separated parts of the country, so that future generations of Indians may discover and recognise their natural identity and so that people today can still find a joy in life.

STUDENTS' FORUM

is YOJANA's special feature of young opinion of all shades. Topics are announced a month in advance and students of both schools and colleges are free to write in. Three prizes are offered for the best published letters, Rs 25, Rs 15 and Rs 10. Future topics are :

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(Last date : 5th October 74)

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Letters, within 200 words, may be typed or legibly written. Give both your school/college and home addresses. Send them to The Editor, *Yojana*, 505 Yojana Bhavan, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110 001.

Bookshelf

Development Administration

Development Administration in India—*Edited by V.A. Pai Panandikar; Macmillan Company of India Ltd., 1974 Pages 238 Price Rs 75.*

THOUGH Edward Weinder's oft-quoted definition of 'development administration' as an, action-oriented, goal-oriented administrative system', has, traditionally, functioned as a focus for research yet it conceals more than it reveals. It may sound unsophisticated, indeed, to describe development administration as an administration for bringing about development. But one may ask, which administration, worth the name, does not contribute to promoting development. Where there is administration there must be some kind of development. If, as Merle Fainsod seems to think, development administration stands out only as "a carrier of innovating values", his definition loses much of its force, for, again, no modern administration can really run on non-innovative values. Thus one has to indulge in speculation to interpret the theory of development administration. Indeed, the outpourings of literature pinpointing the limitations of traditional theories of development administration seem to be in direct proportion to the decade-old growth of literature on development. But still the development administration theory is as elusive today as before.

This is not to suggest, however, that the pains-taking endeavours of researchers and theorists to build up a conceptual framework of development administration have been altogether unrewarding. Many consider it possible now to portray the picture of a development administrator (no matter if we do not find him in reality) and, side-by-side, an ordinary administrator, purely traditional, law and order-oriented and non-developmental (if you can find such species). Development Administration, as has been rightly observed by an authority on Public Administration, remains "one of those few sophisticated silhouettes of administrative concepts whose broad shadow-outlines are widely recognised, though its inner details admit of no ready and precise identification."

The volume under review seeks to bring together some of the more valuable Indian experiences with a view to analysing the issues facing development administration. Another aim is to bring to the foresome of the more important organisational components of development administration to facilitate an understanding of the subject. The edition however, contains a dozen papers produced by twelve writers, most of whom are familiar names in the theoretical field of Public Administration. One thing that has struck the reviewer is that of these, seven have (or had) been or still are, connected with the Indian Institute of Public Administration and only four are associated with 'administration', which naturally makes the tone of the discourse more academic and theoretical than real. The introduction by the Editor is a valuable contribution, so is Dr. Khosla's piece on Research in Development Administration (which could have, with profit, attempted a survey also of the 'development'-oriented literature in India).

One significant lacuna of this volume lies in not including any paper on the theme-area, termed by Tarlok Singh, as "Personnel Development and Administration.' Bureaucrats' role in national development and their response to the new range of developmental values do not seem to weigh heavily in the Editor's scale. Another thing, not directly connected with the present volume but which, nevertheless, provokes thinking, is that how is it that in our counry we cannot attain even moderate heights in the realm of concepts and produce something which can command universal acceptance, For this, we perhaps, need dedicated group of researchers, thinkers of real 'genere' and not merely 'professional' paper writers.

Before I conclude, I would like to add that even in these days of high material costs and rocketing prices, Rs 75/- for a volume of this type seems a little too high, if not prohibitive.

BATA K. DEY

Town and Country Planning

Study of Town and Country Planning in India *by Shri N.K. Gandhi; Published by Indian Town and Country Planning Association, Hirniman Circle, Bombay; Pages* 348: *Price Rs. 25.*

BOOKS on Town and Country Planning in India are too few in number, and those by Indian authors can be counted on fingers. Again, though practice of Town and Country planning is not new in India, comprehensive studies of this type are very few. With the peculiar trends of urban and industrial growth that have emerged in India during the current century, especially after the adoption of planned approach to development, more such efforts are necessary. It is heartening that a practising professional and an association devoted to the cause of planning have come forward to present this book.

A mere look at the contents of the book shows that the effort is to deal with the subject in a very comprehensive manner. The author has attempted a complete review of development trends in the world, Twentieth century developments in India, Planning legislation in various States in India and especially in Maharashtra, Framework of local authorities, District Plans, Preparation and implementation of planning industry.

While discussing Planning Principles and Techniques in India and abroad, the author has given practical examples to illustrate his points The book is, therefore, free from too many technicalities and theoretical discusstions. It is well illustrated with sketches and photographs and on the whole well presented. Planners, Municipal Officers, Councillors, Practising Surveyors, Administrators, Social workers and Planning students will all find it a useful addition to their collection.

It wiil, of course, be useful to supplement this volume by an analysis and interpretation of census data, discussion of latest tools, like aerial photography, mathematical models, us e of computers, integrated Area Planning Approach, Evaluation of some new towns and development plans for some urban and rural areas and public participation and politics of Planning.

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davp 74/192

A Text Book of Indian Economy

Indian Economy *by Shri M. Rao; Premier Book Co., Daryaganj, Delhi; Third Edition, 1974 Rs 11.*

THIS book is concerned with the salient features of the structure, problems and possibilities of Indian Economy. Its main objective is to provide a standard textbook for the Arts and Commerce students. As a paper setter and examiner for several years for the B.A. and B. Com. courses, the author has gathered much knowledge about examination answers of students on Indian economy. In some cases they may know the answer but do not know how to present it. The answers are generally vague, imprecise and ineffective. An attempt is made in the book, which contains suggested answers to 172 questions, to help the B.A. and B. Com students, to answer each question clearly, logically and to the point. Specially the note on "Examination Technique" deserves to be studied by the students.

Textbooks on Indian Economy generally are overstuffed with figures on agriculture, industries, banking etc. This makes the subject boring. Some students even attempt to memorise whole tables and feel defeated in the attempt, while some others develop a dislike for statistics. To a certain extent, statistics are necessary and cannot be avoided. The author has picked up only those figures which are essential and significant. The figures and tables which are given in this book are easy to remember.

In revising the book, which is the third edition, the author has kept in mind the need of the B.A., and B. Com. students as well as those who are appearing for such professional examinations as the C.A., Company Secretaries and C.A.I.I.B. The book has been thoroughly revised with latest available facts and figures. Many topics of current interest like prices and price policy, joint sector, self-reliance, government takeover of wholesale trade etc., have been added in this edition.

The book has been written in a simple and clear style.

—**N. N.Chatterjee**

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in the issue of

YOJANA

dated 15 October 1974

The Other 'C.R.'

Dr. C. R. Reddy *By D. Anjaneyulu Published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi; Pages 75; Price Rs 2.50.*

DR. W. Cattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy was one of the bright stars of the South Indian firmament during the first half of this century. The impress of Dr. C.R. Reddy on the culture of Andhras is hard to erase.

Born at Cattamanchi in Andhra Pradesh, educated at Madras and at Cambridge (where he became the first Indian Vice President of the cambridge Union) C.R. Reddy was a man of many parts. An educationist with vision, a conversationalist with a ready wit, a critic who blazed new trails and a poet and essavist of significance—add to these generosity, idealism (completely free from priggishness) kind, unselfish geniality'—you get an idea of this man in whom the best qualities of head and heart blended finely.

C.R. was only 28 when he took over from Aurobindo Ghosh as Professor and Vice-Principal of Baroda College, Baroda. He made his mark there as a Professor who brought a new approach to every subject—that included English literature, European history and Economics—that he handled. Spellbound by the magic of his spoken word were his students who included the late Dr. K.M. Munshi.

The Andhra University at Waltair, a pioneer among its sister-institutions in the country, owes everything to C.R. Reddy, its first Vice-Chancellor. It was his vision and his planning that chalked out the future path of this great university of India which later on, had the good fortune of having Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as its Vice-Chancellor.

C.R.'s poem 'Musalamma Maranamu' stands out as a mark of transition from the classical to the modern in Telugu literature which his critical work "Kavitva Tattva Vicharamu" has rightly been hailed as the precursor to the art of criticism in modern Telugu literature. As in thought, so in word C.R. wrote or spoke, be it Telugu or English, with precision and a classical sense of form. Nowhere is this more evident than in his volume of Telugu essay—'Vyaasa Manjari'. The most volumionus work of his however is 'Bharata Artha Sastramu' (Indian Economics) which is a more of a 'what-and-how-to-do' guide for India's economic develoment than a history of Indian economics. Incidentally it happens to be the first Talugu book on a subject like this and so has more than ordinary relevance today when Telugu is being introduced as the medium of instruction at the university level.

To capture the multi-faceted brilliance that C.R. Reddy was and compress it into a slim volume like the one under review calls for competence of a high order. Veteran D. Anjaneyulu has succeeded in giving an in depth account of the man and his works. but the account is more academic and clinical than warm and pulsating. The delectable style of the author comes as a bonus to the discerning reader.

—Vakati Pandu Ranga Rau

Development Diary

The Bikaner-Jaipur Agricultural Development Bank has distributed Rs 64.82 lakh as loans to farmers for on going minor irrigation schemes. The amount includes the cost of construction of 110 new wells, installation of over 300 electric and diesel pumping sets and purchase of tractors and fertilizers.

*

India's exports during the 1st four months of 1974-75 registered an all-time record increase of 44.5 per cent over the corresponding period last year. Of the total increase, the export of sugar accounts for Rs 57 crore. Other commodities include marine products, coffee and handicrafts.

*

The Planning Commission has approved a scheme put forth by the Harijan Development Corporation of Kerala to start production centres for the manufacture of timber products and equipment needed in schools. The Corporation has agreed, in principle, to a scheme to supply milch cows to 100 Harijan families. It has also a programme to construct 1,000 houses.

*

Two huge projects estimated to cost over Rs 300 crore are underway in Tamil Nadu. One is for opening a second lignite mine at Neyveli. The other concerns the establishment of a power station of 1,000 mw. costing Rs 200 crore. The Planning Commission has been asked to include the projects in the Fifth Five Year Plan.

*

A joint sector rubber project is coming up in Tamil Nadu. The plant, to be built jointly by the Tamil Nadu Government and the General Tyre International Company of the United States, will manufacture 4 lakh tyres and tubes every year.

*

The Medical Research Centre of the Bombay Hospital Trust has inaugurated a fully equipped mobile coronary ambulance for the benefit of heart patients in the city. The ambulance is available at the patient's residence at a moment's notice to give on-the-spot relief.

*

The foundationstone has been laid of a cancer hospital on the outskirts of Hubli, Karnataka. The hospital is to be built at a cost of Rs 10 lakh.

*

The Union Government has sanctioned loans to the tune of Rs 20.74 lakh for small-scale industries in Delhi. The Delhi Administration has, however, requested the Central Government to raise the allocation for this year to at least Rs 50 lakh.

*

The production of blister copper at the Indian Copper Complex, West Bengal has improved by over 40 tonnes to 802 tonnes in August against 760 tonnes in the previous month. The production of Selenium at the Complex amounted to 250 kgs in August this year.

*

The Union Government has decided to export another 75,000 tonnes of Naphtha during the current year. India has already exported one lakh tonnes of this commodity. The increase in export was made possible because of less consumption at home.

*

The Jammu & Kashmir State Government proposes to spend Rs 18 crore during the Fifth Five Year Plan for the development of Ladakh area. Of this, Rs 2 crore would be spent during the current financial year on irrigation, power, road—building, agriculture and animal husbandry.

*

The Tamil Nadu Government hopes to spend about Rs 260 crore on various development projects, during the first year of the Fifth Five Year Plan period. Up to the end of 1973-74, the State Government had invested Rs. 247 crore on power schemes and about Rs 400 crore on irrigation and building projects.

*

In Bihar 14 major and 26 medium continuing as well as new irrigation schemes have been included in the first year of the Fifth Five Year Plan. The schemes estimated to cost Rs 36.39 crore in 1974-75 are expected to create an additional irrigation potential of 1.5 lakh hectares.

*

The Pong Dam over the river Beas in Himachal Pradesh has been completed at an estimated cost of Rs 226 crores. Its reservoir will be able to store 48 lakh acre ft. of water during monsoon to provide rabi irrigation for the first time to the vast areas of parched Rajasthan and supplement irrigation supplies to Bhakra areas of Punjab and Haryana. It is the highest rock-fill dam in the country designed exclusively by Indian experts.

*

The Ramganga Dam at Kalagarh in Uttar Pradesh has been completed. The project is expected to irrigate 5.75 lakh hectares in 14 districts of the State thus resulting in an additional yield of 3 lakh tonnes of foodgrains annually. A power house under construction at the project will generate 450 million units of electricity annually.

*

The U.P. State Government has allocated Rs 1,000 crore during the current financial year for a massive electrification programme. The Plan envisages electrification of nearly 85 thousand villages in the State.

*

The power supply position in Haryana is expected to improve with the commissioning of the first phase of Faridabad Thermal Plant shortly. When completed, the Plant would generate between 15 to 20 mw of power. The State has also sought Centre's clearance for starting work on the third phase of the project.

*

Madhya Pradesh has become the first State to pass a Bill imposing tax on agricultural immovable property. The measure would yield about Rs 6.5 crore annually to the State exchequer. Certain amendments have also been made in the Bill to ensure that it does not affect poor farmers.

*

The Madhya Pradesh State Rural Electrification Corporation has sanctioned Rs 28.20 lakh to electrify areas in the predominantly tribal district of Surguja. Besides, two more rural electrification schemes costing Rs 133.85 lakh have been prepared to electrify about 200 villages.

*

The Madhya Pradesh State Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs 17 lakh for giving loans to reconstruct and repair houses damaged by recent floods in the Stare. Of this, a sum of Rupees one lakh has been placed at the disposal of the Collector, Ujjain.

*

During the first six months of 1974, the volume of trade between India and the Federal Republic of Germany rose to Rs 201 crore from Rs 107 crore during the same period last year. Indian exports to Germany amounted to Rs 61.5 crore.

*

A sum of Rs 8.62 crore has been earmarked under the Fifth Five Year Plan for development schemes in Rajgarh district of Madhya Pradesh. The projects include irrigation, electricity, water supply and rural roads.

*

Ground water reserves have been discovered in the desert area of north and West Rajasthan. According to scientific surveys, it is believed that the reserves can yield 500 million cubic metres of water every year. The discovery will help alleviate the hardships of the people and accelerate the pace of irrigation in the area.

*

Financial assistance worth Rs. 4.7 crore has been extended by the International Development Agency to farmers in Madhya Pradesh under the Small Irrigation Development Schemes. The amount has been utilised for sinking new wells and renovating old ones. Over 2,000 electric and diesel pumps have already been installed in Indore Division for irrigation purposes.

*

India has earned Rs 171 crore from exports of suger manufactured during the crushing season that started in October last year. The production of sugar in the current year is expectedto be around 42 lakh tonnes.

*

A scooter menufacturing factory with an investment of about Rs 13 crore will be set up at Nabha in Patiala District. All formalities for the establishment of the factory have been completed.

*

Bangladesh has placed an order with the Bharat Earth Movers Ltd. for the supply or 50 rail coaches. The order which values at Rs. 4 crore is to be executed before March, 1975. This is the first time that the Company has entered the export market.

*

Tha Industrial Development Bank of India disbursed Rs. 161.8 crore as aid during the accounting year 1973-74 (July-June). The total sanctioned assistance of Rs. 230.6 crore represents an increase of 69 per cent over the year 1972-73 period. Direct assistance to projects in backward areas constituted 46.9 per cen of the total assistance in 1973-74.

*

About 2.12 milliod Kw of generating capacity is expected to be commissioned during the first year of the Fifth Five Year Plan. Of this, the Southern region will get 309.1 Mw.

They did it

A BANK IN THE SERVICE OF SRI LANKA REPATRIATES

WITH the help of an Indian friend, three repatriates from Sri Lanka have opened a small bank at Mandapam Camp in Ramnad district. The pawn broker shop type bank, the first of its kind in Tamil Nadu, has been set up by them to help their fellow repatriates who are in need of money and who need to be saved from unscrupulous money-lenders.

This bank, which has been approved by the Government, is now seeking authorisation by the Reserve Bank of India to exchange dollars and pounds brought by the repatriates. Each of the four partners of this venture has so far contributed Rs 4,000 towards its authorised share capital of Rs 1 lakh. Within a fortnight of its existence, the bank has helped five repatriates with loans against their gold ornaments and brassware on an interest of one per cent per month.

Its patrons, the Sri Lanka repatriates at the Mandapam transit camp, said that the bank was a boon to them. Until a fortnight ago, they were finding it difficult to get loans on reasonable terms. There had been instances where repatriates did not have money even to travel to cities in other states to claim their money transferred by the Sri Lanka Government to India. The money-lenders took full advantage of their plight and charged heavy interest on the loans. What a repatriate could get as loan from them was hardly one quarter of the value of the gold he pawned. Most of the borrowers never returned to the camp to claim their pawned articles and the money-lenders were all the merrier.

But the repatriates' bank, its directors claim, will see to it that its clients do not lose the articles that they pawn even if they had to go far away for employment or under the repatriates' colonisation scheme. The bank will operate on a minimum margin of profit in service of the repatriates.

BEST BIRD OF THE SHOW

MAJID Chisti is an enterprising poultryman of Ajmer. Young and soft-spoken Majid who has won several first prizes in poultry shows held all over the country, earns a net income of about Rs 2,000 a month from his vocation.

His crowning success came in 1971 at the All India Livestock and Poultry Show which was organised by the Extension Directorate of the Union Ministry of Agriculture at Bhiwani. He was awarded the prestigious President's Silver Plaque for his "Best Bird of the Show," a New Hampshire cock.

Some 15 years ago, Majid Chisti who lives on his 16-acre farm 7 miles away from the town, entered the profession with only a few birds. Now his flock consisting of 2,000 fowl includes world-famous breeds as White Leghorn, Black Minorca, New Hampshire, Barred Plymouth and Rhode Island. The birds that really spin money for Majid are his cross-breds. Then there are eggs to sell, for which there is a good market in and around Ajmer.

Majid Chisti has successfully tried a recipe to get more eggs from the birds: feed the hens with one to two per cent shark liver oil mixed in poultry feed. This will also make the birds disease-resistant. He has numerous tips to offer on successful poultry business.

What is the secret of his success? "I prepare my own poultry-feed and feed the birds according to their needs. For instance, the growing chicks need butter milk for faster growth, besides, I also feed them with green fodder, like berseem and lucerne. A leguminous crop supplies both proteins and vitamins to the birds," says Majid Chisti.

Majid, however, cautions against any sudden change in feed ingredients. This, he says, is bound to cut down egg production.

Majid knows how to keep his flock trim and tidy. Like a wise poultryman he invariably culls out birds from his captivity that are over one year of age. Poultry birds become less productive after one year and it does not pay to keep them. He gets all his one and a half month's old chicks vaccinated against Ranikhet and Small-pox.

Proper housing for the birds, clean and fresh water for their drinking and protecting them from extreme weather conditions are other simple rules of poultry farming which Majid follows with utmost care.

THE YOUTH RESOLVE

A small contribution of ten paise per family collected four times a month soon added up to Rs. 10,000. With more voluntary contributions to come, the young people of village Paran Chhapra in Block Padrauna, district Deorid (UP) propose to build a *Chaupal* in their village, where community activiites could be conducted.

Earlier, the youth were encouraged in their endeavour when they organised themselves into Yuvak Mangal Dal and gave a call to the villagers to Join them in shramdan for constructing a link road.

Paran Chhapra is in the Tarai area of U.P., 18 km from Padaruna and about 2.4 km off the nearest road that passes by the village. It is cut off by knee-deep water for most part of the year, making communications difficult. To overcome this handicap, the youth did not wait for or demand any help from the Government. Assisted by the villagers, they have now constructed 2 km of road. The rest of the task will be taken up as soon as the villagers get some respite from kharif operations.

SELF-HELP CREATES HOUSING COLONY

SELF-HELP and self-reliance has resulted in the creation of a rural housing colony in the little village of Medehalli in Chitradurga district. "New House for Old" was the slogan combined with harnessing local initiative and labour.

A number of families of this district, mainly farm labourers, had no houses of their own and lived in hutments. Under the Janta Housing Scheme and by the co-operation of the people of Medehalli, sites for first 120 houses were selected. Some of the owners of the lands readily responded to the call of the Deputy Commissioner by selling their lands at a price fixed by the Government. About five hectares of land were taken up for the colony. The Housing Board advanced a loan of Rs 1,600 to each labourer. Thus 120 new houses cropped up in the village.

Ninety-five houses were constructed under Rural Poor Housing Seheme, and 15 under Janta Housing Scheme. Of these 44 were given to Harijans and the rest to other communities. □

Regd No. D(D)-152

A New Deal for Groundnut

GROUNDNUT is known to be an "unpredictable legume", because it needs more moisture than many other crops and is being grown even in drought-prone areas. With timely rains one reaps a good harvest and when the rains are little and untimely it is a failure. Still groundnut is grown on such lands because even with a poor crop, the farmer makes some money.

In areas which are risky for groundnut, sunflower can be a good replacement. Another possibility is soyabean. In some cases sunflower yield is almost twice as much as groundnut in such soils. Both sunflower and soyabean do much better than the traditional groundnut on heavier soils. When the sowing of groundnut gets delayed due to late rains, it is wise to bank on sunflower, which is amenable to late sowing.

Groundnut crop is at its best when there is assured supply of water and good management. Command areas of major irrigation projects, tank and tubewell irrigated areas are good for groundnut cultivation

Taken as a rabi-summer crop in these areas groundnut yields on an average 2.5 tonnes per hectare, the yield touching even four tonnes.

Here are some of the areas, where ground nut can follow kharif paddy: Nagarjuna Sagar Project area and the well-irrigated areas of Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, Tungabhadra Project area in Karnataka, well and tank irrigated areas of Tamil Nadu, assured rainfall tracts like Polachi, Srikakulam, Hirakud Project area in Orissa and canal irrigated areas of Rajasthan.

Improved Seed

Now there is a whole line-up of high yielding varieties of groundnut suited to different areas:

Vikram, the latest to be released for growing in the assured rainfall and irrigated areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra has around 48 per cent oil content. It is a table variety with export possibilities.

J-11 is another improved variety recommended for Gujarat and Maharashtra. Itcan yield around 1,435 kg. per hectare and is free from alfation.

EG-61-240 variety of groundnut will suit Madhya Pradesh as well as Maharashtra. In Punjab, farmers go in for M-13. On an average it gives a yield of 2000 kg. per hectare.

Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have another choice—No. 268. Karnataka farmers can go in for S-206.

For Tamil Nadu Pol-1 and TMV-10 are recommended. TMV-10 has 54.4 per cent oil content.

TG-3 which yields 1,471 kg. per hectare on an average and 3,147 kg. when at its best, is a good variety for Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan. TG-7, is especially suited for export, and G-8 can be grown in Maharashtra. TG-8 and TG-10 can be grown in Punjab and Rajasthan.

Management

Besides the recommended doses of major plant foods, groundnut also needs micro-nutrients for heavy yields.

As a rule, groundnut crop needs 20 kg. to 40 kg. of nitrogen and 40 to 80 kg. of phosphoric acid per hectare depending upon the area. The best method is to get the soil tested before deciding on fertiliser dose.

A saving on nitrogen fertiliser can be achieved by applying half of the plant-food through soil and the other half as spray. This will result in increased yield.

Soils in some groundnut growing areas such as in Tamil Nadu are poor in boron. The yield in such areas could be raised by 17 per cent when a small dose of 5 kg. borax per hectare was applied.

In acidic soils of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, groundnut yield can be stepped up by regular application of lime. The usual dosage is 40 kg. per hectare.

In Madhya Pradesh groundnut responded well when magnesium sulphate was applied at one kg. per hectare.

Low yield of groundnut is often due to patchy stand due to poor germination or early death of seedlings. Often the seed and soil borne diseases account for this loss. Treating the seeds and soil with fungicides will help reduce the loss.

Dressing the seeds with Benlato at one part with 400 parts kernels can check collar rot to a great extent. This should be done three months before sowing.

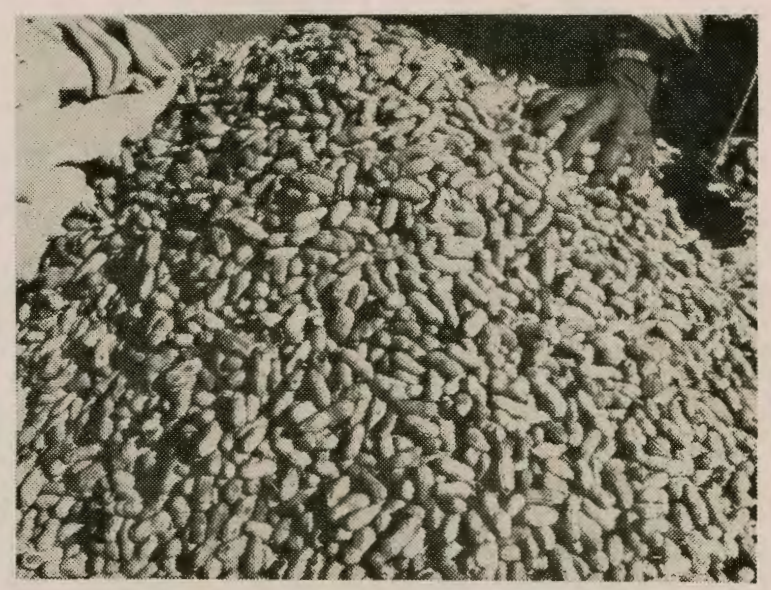
In case this treatment is not already carried out, treat the seed with thiram at one part of the chemical with 200 parts of seed just before sowing.

In Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan white grub poses a problem. Phorate at three kg. per hectare can control this pest. Apply half of the chemical at the time of sowing and the rest after six weeks.

In Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, spraying Dithane 0.2 per cent is found effective against tikka disease.

Remember, weeding is very necessary for a good crop of groundnut. Use of weedicide like Lasse or To-E-25. is recommended when hand weeding proves difficult.

Groundnut performs best with good management and assured water. Half the Nitrogen should be applied to the Soil and the other half as spray



Printed at The Caxton Press (P) Ltd., New Delhi-110055, and published by the Director, Publications Division
Patiala House, New Delhi-110001

YOJANA

Vol. XVIII No. 18 15 OCTOBER 1974 60 PAISE

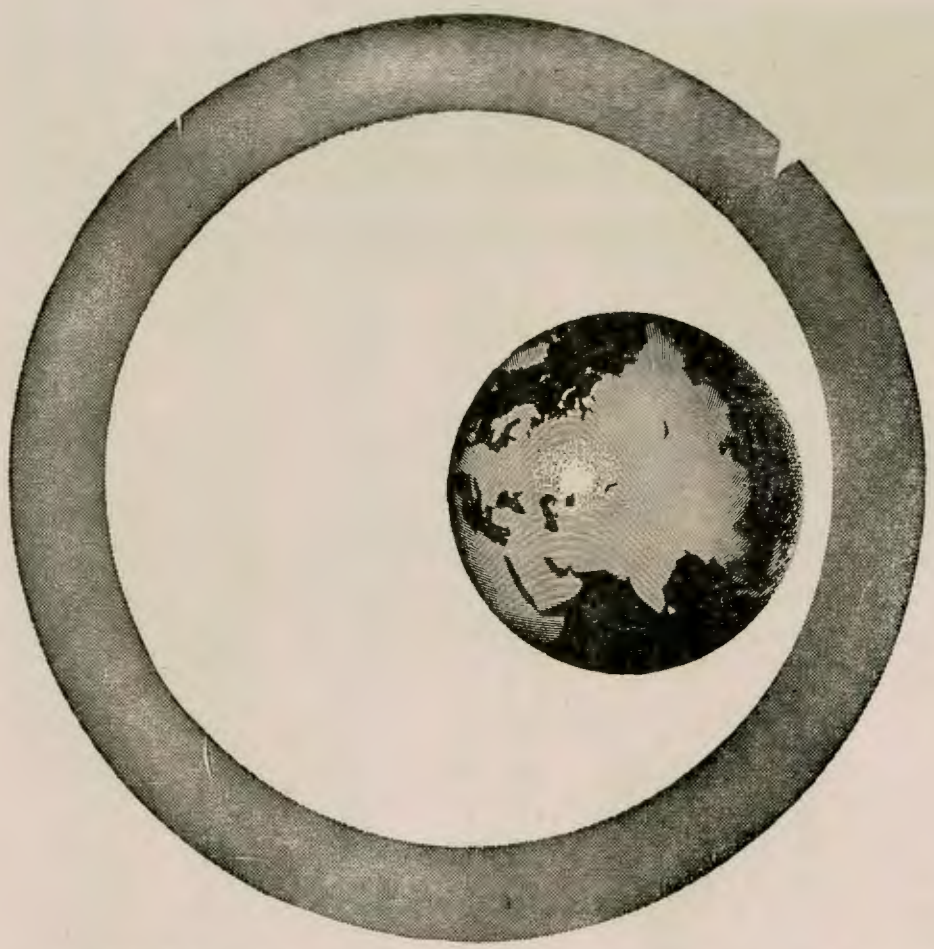
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on

THE INDIAN FILM

ALSO INTERVIEWS WITH

STARS



The world had nothing before it got zero

India introduced the concept. The Sanskrit name for the figure was Śūnya meaning void. India was the first to use it in the modern form. The earliest inscription dates back to 800 A.D. But there is evidence in Indian scriptures that the zero was used centuries before.

In this and other spheres Indian talents have enriched the world. We at L&T try to continue the tradition by enriching life through industrial development. We design, manufacture and instal plant and equipment for every vital industry—steel, cement, fertilizer, paper and pulp, nuclear. Leading companies like Toyo Engineering, Snam Progetti, Humphreys and Glasgow, Davy Powergas have called on us for complete engineering, manufacturing and construction services in and outside India.

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YOJANA

Vol. XVIII No. 18
15 October 1974 23 Asvina 1896

Published on behalf of the Planning Commission in Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu.

Yojana seeks to carry the message of the Plan, but is not restricted to expressing the official point of view.

Chief Editor
S. SRINIVASACHAR

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Cover designed by *Jeevan Adalja*

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Editorial Office: Yojana Bhavan, Parliament Street, New Delhi 110001, **Telegraphic Address:** Yojana, New Delhi, **Telephones:** 383655, 385481, extensions 340, 402 and 420, **Circulation:** Business Manager, Publications Division, Patiala House, New Delhi 110001 **Inland Subscriptions:** Annual—Rs. 13, Two years—Rs. 22, Three years—Rs. 31, **Foreign Subscriptions:** One year—£1.30 or $4.00, Two years—£2.20 or $7.00, Three years—£3.10 or $9.50, Single copy—six pennies or $0.20.

Editorial

A Bilateral Start

THE problem of world inflation as it affects developing nations was one of the topics discussed by the Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi and the Shah of Iran when the latter visited India during the first week of October. The Shah's initiative in creating a special fund to aid nations whose trade balances are in jeopardy was welcomed by India.

As we have noted before in these columns, Iran's stand in this matter is one of reciprocation. A victim of cartels and colonialism herself, Iran does not see any virtue in holding on to economic advantages gained at the expense of others. While being fully aware of her own strength when it comes to resources and money, she wants to encourage trade for mutual benefit wherever possible. Her acknowledgement of India's modest abilities has now been translated into action. She has contracted to buy from India whatever India can produce by way of surpluses,—iron ore, alumina, printing paper, railway equipment, cement and other mineral and natural resources—the output in all categories to be optimised by the deployment of Iranian capital wherever feasible. The vital difference between this capital and the capital that usually flows out from affluent capital exporters is that it will generate self-reliant economic strength in the receiving country.

The wider application of the concept of regional economic cooperation to Asia as a whole or even to littoral countries of the Indian Ocean is constrained by social, political, cultural and economic considerations. Not only are the countries in the region at varying levels of economic achievement, the region also embraces the vastest and the smallest of nations, technologically the most advanced as well as the most backward, with a whole spectrum of social and political institutions and ideologies finding representation in their organisations. While the task of unifying them in some kind of common economic effort may have to wait the successes of further efforts, there is one thing in common to all of them: a predicament which will reach solution only on the basis of cooperation. The joint communique issued at New Delhi at the close of the Shah's visit notes that greater economic and cultural cooperation would benefit the people of all the countries concerned. The effort now should be to identify areas where common cause could be made for common good.

Iran's bilateral efforts at tackling the problem of recycling petro-dollars is coincident with multilateral efforts also—at the forum of the International Monetary Fund. The 126 member-governments of this body have now given their full political backing to the ministerial committee of 20 which will make a study of the need for new steps to recycle surplus oil money. One of the recommendations before the committee is to enlarge the role of the IMF itself, to make it the prime agency for borrowing from oil-producing countries and for lending to needy ones. Such an arrangement when it comes will have to be without prejudice to private arrangements between governments already contracted. While international monetary problems are the concern of the international community at large, what the powerful ones have to remember is that the international order is no longer the private preserve of any one, and that paternalistic predilections will no longer go unchallenged. As the Shah reminded them, no one is going to wave the finger, for they are going to have it waved right back at them. □

Film and Society

K.A. Abbas

THE relationship between Indian cinema and society is as old as the origin of Indian cinema. The first Indian film (contrary to popular misconception) was not Dada Saheb Phalke's mythological feature *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) but *Coconut Fair*, a documentary-type short film made as early as 1897.

Among the earliest films (short only at that time) produced in India one comes across titles like *A Panorama of Indian Scenes, Train Arriving at Bombay Station, Poona Races* (1898), *Reception Given to Wrangler B. P. Paranjpe* and *Dilli Durbar* (1912), *Great Bengal Partition movement* (1905), *Tilak's Visit to Calcutta and Procession* and *Great Sacrifice at Kalighat* (1906), *Terrible Hyderabad Floods* (1908).

The straight depiction of social reality *preceded* the glamour, the glitter, the star-value, the melodrama that constituted the box-office attractions in later years. The film was depicting social reality before it learnt to provide escapist entertainment. Nevertheless, even glamorous entertainers like *Amir Garib* have reference to urgent social problems like black marketing and hoarding!

Social Significance

Even in the heyday of popular films—both in India and abroad—the theme of social significance had always the pride of place.

What is common between *I Am A Fugitive From the Chain Gang* and *Garm Hawa*, between *Grapes of Wrath* and *Pather Panchali*, between *Battleship Potemkin* and *Dharti Ke Lal* and *Asani Sanket* ? The tradition of social realism—the truthful depiction of society—which, according to my way of thinking, is the final essence and ultimate purpose of the film art.

I still remember the great films of social significance. From Hollywood came a series of films on themes of historical, psychological and disturbing social reality—films like *I Am a Fugitive From the Chain Gang, The Informer, All Quiet on the Western Front, City Lights, Life of Louis Pasteur, Emile Zola, Good Earth, The Great Dictator, Juarez, Mr. Deed Goes To Town, Mr. Smith Goes To Washington, Grapes of Wrath* and a score of others.

At last after many years, there are signs to indicate that an effort is being made to balance opulent production values with varying degrees of social awareness. While the box-office failure of several opulent commercial colour films with frivolous boy - meets - girl stories is inducing a healthy respect for thematic content even among the money-minded producers, the artistic film-makers like Satyajit Ray are coming to realize that aesthetic self-expression is not enough; a film must communicate with the audience. Though some of the New Wave Films made recently by young and talented directors are undoubtedly significant, they seem to be more concerned with artistic form than sociological content.

The theme of social responsibility was all important at that stage of cinema history, when films had something serious to say. The producer's minds, like peoples minds, at that time, were concerned with serious realities of life and not merely with the frivolous inanities or formalistic photographic gimmics.

National Renaissance

At about the same time—in the Nineteen Thirties and the early Forties—the Indian films, too, or at least the better class of them, were concerned with themes of social significance. This was the time of the upsurge of the national movement; there was a ferment of ideas in the minds of men. The cultural renaissance which accompanied the growth of the freedom struggle was also manifested in the humanistic and rationalistic movements of social reform. Under this influence even our films dealing with the lives of medieval saints came to have humanistic and reformist overtones, as the Men of God were depicted (and quite rightly) not as miracle-workers and recluses, cut off from society, but as compassionate idealists who sought to serve their fellow-beings, and preached the gospel of love, social equality and human brotherhood. This was the theme of *Sant Tukaram, Sant Dnyaneshwar, Bhakt Kabir*, and *Surdas*.

In the general atmosphere of growing anti-imperialism, the theme of democracy and the people's right to revolt against tyranny was subtly introduced even in mythologicals—for instance in *Gopal Krishna*, the cowherd Krishna's struggle against

Shri Abbas is a well-known writer and film-maker, Bombay.

the tyrant Kansa could not but strike a patriotic chord of defiance in the hearts of the cinegoers. Historicals like *Pukar* and *Sikander* were used to inculcate a pride in the valour and sense of justice of our earlier kings. The resistance of Porus against the armies of Alexander, a foreign invader, could not but rouse and re-inforce the anti-imperialist sentiment. Even stunt films and "action thrillers" of the *Toofan Mail* type, with their background of fictitious ruritanian princely states, lent themselves naturally to depict and glorify the people's democratic aspirations. As elsewhere the triumph of good over evil was the most popular theme in Indian films, presented and depicted in many different forms and styles—ranging from the sublime (as in *Seeta*) to the ridiculous (as in *Shahi Lakadhara*).

With the coming, and eventual popularity, of pictures with contemporary social atmosphere (called "socials" to distinguish them from "mythologicals" and "historicals"), themes like the education of women, widow remarriage, the evils of drink, the pitfalls and contrasts of urban life, the craze for Western fashions, came to be increasingly—albeit crudely and naively — treated in films. Titles like *Fashionable wife*, *Indira M.A.*, *Doctor Madhurika*, *Lure of the City* are indicative of the themes of these films.

The Devdas Era

In Bengal, there was a more conscious attempt to refine the thematic and dramatic content of the films by transferring to the screen the works of writers like Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, and Sarat Chandra Chatterji, all of them imbued with social purpose. These novels and stories depicted contemporary reality and posed the problems of our times. This was particularly true of the works of Sarat Chatterji like *Dena Paona* (*Pujarin*), *Devdas*, *Grihadaha* (*Manzil*), *Kashinath* and *Chhota Bhai*. Here were themes,—homely and profound—culled out of the contemporary life of the Indian people. *Devdas*, the most popular of them all, presented, perhaps for the first time the tragic story of a young man frustrated in love and life by ruthless caste barriers. It had no propagandistic overtones, no attempt at generalising the personal tragedy of Devdas, but so powerful was its impact on the minds—and the hearts—of the spectators that Devdas became synonymous for a whole generation of love-starved youth; since Devdas has sought to drown his frustrations in drink, thousands of young men who were likewise frustrated, or imagined themselves to be love-lorn, took to the bottle. It was called *Devdasiyat* (or Devdas-ism), and the cult was particularly fashionable in colleges and universities where the students needed some excuse to lead a bohemian life. But it had an impact on the parents and teachers too at least some of whom came to have an understanding of, and adopted a sympathetic attitude to, the problems of the wayward youth.

Though the theme of *Devdas* was youthful frustration born out of disappointment in love, the two lovers belonged to different subcastes of the same caste. It was not so much the tyranny of the caste system as the fact that, according to the orthodox code, the very concept of romantic love and young people themselves choosing their marriage partners, was taboo in Indian society. While *Devdas* had several imitations, and many more pictures were made inspired by the same theme, they all ended, after the hero and heroine had sung a number of sad songs, in the death of the hero or the heroine, or of both.

It was left to the less romantic, and more robust, Maharashtrians to introduce a more dynamic element in the stories based on this theme. Shantaram's *Duniya Na Mane*, (literally, "Let Not the World Believe" but its English title was "The Unexpected"), was, perhaps, the first completely realistic picture made in India. It depicted the problem of a young woman who is married to an aged widower and is not prepared to consummate her marriage. She has no lover, she repels the advances of her husband's lecherous son, but nevertheless she is not reconciled to her fate as the partner of a man old enough to be her father. In this case, it was not the girl, the victim of the social system, who dies but the old widower, who is killed by remorse, a gnawing conscience, or guilt complex—symbolic of the death of the old, inequitable order.

Shantaram's next film, *Admi*, (literally, "Man", but its English title was "Life is For Living") was in a way, an essay in dramatic dialectics. It was inspired, or rather, provoked by what Shantaram believed to be the negative, life-destroying philosophy of *Devdas*. Here again was a story of disappointment in love—the honest policeman cannot marry the prostitute who is willing to reform, but is afraid to become the daughter-in-law of a devout and pious old woman. The policeman brings her out of her sordid surroundings and keeps her in a rented room but dare not visit her in the day for fear of the social odium—and the impasse continues till the former prostitute has to kill the pimp who has been pursuing her like nemesis. She is sentenced to life imprisonment, and the unhappy lover wants to end his life (*a la* Devdas?) but is saved by a friend who reminds him that, despite unhappiness and frustration, life is for living.

Still, the themes of the Indian cinema had not till then gone beyond that—life is for living. That life implies not just animal-like existence, suffering one's fate, but that life is for struggling, for striving, to change and improve the social environment—that could not yet be suggested, because it would involve challenging too openly the stranglehold of British imperialism, and the Indian orthodoxy. The shadow of the censors was an ever-present menace—but the more effective censor was the timidity or apathy of Indian producers and directors to break totally new ground.

Gandhiji and the New Mood

Mahatma Gandhi with his gospel of Satyagraha, his humanism and zeal for social reform, had informed and inspired many areas of national life—not excluding the arts, among them the new art of the Cinema. And then Nehru appeared on the Indian scene, and his emphasis on rationalism and socialism created a new situation in the country, a new mood among people.

Reflecting this new mood, a new class of socially-conscious and aesthetically aware film producers and directors was emerging. And it was left to them to break the old taboos and take up bold new themes—political, social, psychological. The treatment, under the circumstances, had to be circumspect, allegorical or symbolic, but the meaning was clear.

Hindu-Muslim unity was a popular theme. As early as 1930, a silent film *Ram-Rahim* was produced on this theme which also recurred in another silent film called *Wrath*. But it was left to Shantaram's *Padosi* (1941) to project it in a dynamic and dramatic manner, without overt didacticism.

The world was, meanwhile, full of new ideas, revolutionary ideologies, new social concepts and new moral values. Significantly enough,

many of the stories on the new themes, corresponding to the new awareness, had "*Naya*" or "*Nai*" in their titles—*Naya Sansar*, (The New World), *Naya Tarana* (The New Anthem), *Nai Kahani* (The New Story) and *Nai Zindagi* (The New Life), to mention a few, with different levels of artistic success. But there were others too—Nitin Bose portrayed a new kind of emancipated woman in *President*, Barua probed the sub-conscious of the new I dian in *Mukti* (Salvation) and in *Zindagi* (Life). A Marathi film *Savkari Pash* (The Moneylender's Net) depicted the plight of the indebted peasantry with a certain measure of robust realism. Again, Nitin Bose presented an idealistic view of rural life in *Dharti Mata* (1938). But it was only six years later that the first essay in social realism was presented in Indian People's Theatre's *Dharti Ke Lal* (Children of the Earth) a film on the Bengal famine, directed by this writer. And it was in the same year that Chetan Anand made the daringly symbolic and impressionistic film *Neecha Nagar* (Lower Depths) on the contrasts of opulence and poverty and their inter-relation.

Social comment through satire has been an age-long literary phenomenon from the time of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. In Indian cinema, Maharashtrian writers and directors like Acharya Atre and Master Vinayak used the medium of satirical comedies to put over contemporary themes of social significance as in *Brahmachari* (on the craze for continence), *Dharmveer* (exposure of religious hypocrisy), *Brandichi Batli* (on the evils of drink), *Lagna Pahave Karun* (a delightful satire on marital misadventures) and *Sarkari Pune* (a take-off on the feudal princes).

"Awara" to "Joker"

Not unrelated are the stories on the Chaplinesque theme of the Eternal Tramp who goes, from nowhere to nowhere, having comical misadventures and dispensing a simple home-spun philosophy. Raj Kapoor has produced, or acted in, the largest number of these. *Awara* (Vagabond) set the trend, which was followed by *Shri 420* (Mister Fraud) which, incidentally, exposed the hypocricy of the "pillars of society"; *Jagte Raho* (Keep Awake) which contrasted the simple honesty of a village yokel with the crimes and corruptions and heartless iniquities rampant in the big city. *Mera Naam Joker* was in the same tradition. Indeed, it may be called the climax of Raj Kapoor's joker theme.

Made by different producers, they achieved varying degrees of success. But the popularity of this theme and this character can be understood only in the context of a country and society, where poverty abounds amidst the riches of the few, and the mass of the have-nots are beginning to be restless and discontented with the economic reality, for they see in the tramp the projection of their own selves, an object of sympathy and pity with which it is possible to achieve self-identification.

The coming of the war, inflation, the advent of black money in films, the get-rich-quick tempo of the war years, the coming of independence in the confusion and violence of partition riots, the resultant disillusionment and frustration, the escapist yearning of angry but confused minds—all these factors put a premium on stars, glossy production values and opulent techniques, and for nearly a decade, the thematic content of the film stories went into the background, if not into oblivion altogether.

The Ray Era

The world-wide acclaim for *Pather Panchali* and the Apu Trilogy of Satyajit Ray, the deserved but unexpected success of Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin*, the impact of Indian neo-realism (which had been felt in India through the International Film Festival), resulted in revival of interest in the serious cinema and in the production of a series of films with thematic content and social purpose—e.g. *Munna*, *Boot Polish*, *Jagte Raho*, *Musafir*, *Insaan Jaag Utha*, *Shehar Aur Sapna*. In the post-independence mood, all these films were marked by a self-critical look at our society and the socio-economic situation.

But henceforward, with the advent of colour and the commercial success of colourful inanities, theme films would represent the minority cinema in India. It has taken another decade to inject themes of some significance into colour films. At last signs are visible to indicate that an effort is being made to balance opulent production values with varying degrees of social awareness—in such films as *Upkar*, *Satyakam*, *Adami Aur Insaan*, *Mera Nam Joker*, *Namak Haraam* and *Kora Kaghaz*. In the small-budget artistic films, *Garm Hawa* sets a new trend of social realism among formalistic but inconsequential 'art films'.

Curiously enough, the primacy of the theme is being realised at both ends of the production scale—in the big budget colour opuses as well as in the low-budgetted realistic black and white films. On the one hand while the box-office failure of several opulent commercial colour films with frivolous boy-meets-girl stories is inducing a healthy respect for thematic content even among the money-minded producers, the artistic film-makers like Satyajit Ray are, on the other, coming to realize that aesthetic self-expression is not enough. A film must *communicate* with the audience. Revolt of the modern youth was the theme of Tapan Sinha's *Apan Jaan*. A different and, perhaps, acuter slant on the same vital contemporary theme was provided in the Satyajit Ray film, *Pratidwandi* and Mrinal Sen's *Interview* and *Calcutta* 71. What is significant is that we are coming back to the basic realization that theme is what creates the link of understanding between the creator and his public, and that the most important—and the most popular—theme is the inner life of Man which tends to be changed under the stress of external social forces.

The latest and the most outstanding example of socially significant cinema is Satyajit Ray's *Asani Sanket* (Distant Thunder), which is an artistic re-creation of the tragedy of the great Bengal famine. With such delicacy of treatment has Ray handled this theme that the film, besides being a record of tragic reality, has become an artistic masterpiece, winning the highest award at the Berlin Film Festival.

Form and Content

What of the New Wave? Undoubtedly some significant films have been made by the young and talented directors ltke Mani Kaul (*Uski Roti* and *Ashadh Ka Ek Din*) and Kumar Shahani (*Maya Darpan*). While some of these films are derivative in character and are more concerned with artistic *form* than with sociological content, some others like Shivendra Sinha's *Phir Bhi* and Basu Bhattacharya's *Anubhav* are more significant because they combine concern with cinematic form with socio-psychological reality of contemporary Indian life. *Garm Hawa* represents a self-conscious return of the art film towards social realism.

While the commercial cinema only sometimes reflects social reality, albeit in a more or less distorted form, the best of our films are still concerned with an artistic yet truthful depiction of our social reality—and that is now, as ever, the special field of the cinema. □

SOCIAL CORRECTIVES FOR A POSITIVE CINEMA

I. K. Gujral

In the face of wide-ranging social changes, the cinema, too, has to change. Society cannot afford to leave the changes, and the fate of the film, in the hands of adventurists alone. While censoring provides a negative corrective, the positive corrective has to come from greater investment as well as inter-action between the socially conscious film-maker and enlightened institutional support.

I HAVE NEVER believed that the film scene can be changed by sermons. What is needed is a major financial intervention to strengthen the base of the industry and to implement positive measures with a view to improving the quality all round. In spheres of creativity and expression India has had a continuous and proud record and we have cherished the genius of our intellectuals. In the last two decades we had to face difficulties, challenges and travails but in spite of that, we have been able to change the face of the country in many fields. However, the change and progress seem to have left the mainstream of Indian film industry severely alone.

This process of change, marked by a much wider exposure to education and the influence of the modernisation process has created an intensive urge for genuine aesthetic saisfaction. It was natural to expect that our cinema will try to identify the areas in which such expectations could be fulfilled. There is a revolt against ritual, tradition and the *status quo* everywhere except, unfortunately, in the realm of films. Although the voice of protest is becoming audible, more so in recent years, yet the dominant trend in the Indian cinema is to follow the safe, beaten path which has been elevated into an alchemist's formula of quick success at the box office. True, the huge investment needed for making a film under modern conditions and standards places limitations on the film maker. But is it not possible to make good films which are relevant to our lives, entertaining and also financially viable? Do not our audiences deserve better?

Society too must discharge its responsibility if it expects better films. The term society is all-embracing, including in its sweep opinion leaders, critics, governmental agencies and the viewers. Unhealthy finance cannot contribute to the production of socially healthy films. In a way, perhaps, we are paying a heavy price for our social ambivalence towards the cinema. We dislike it and yet do pretty little to prevent it. The film scene is not likely to change unless we provide 'healthy' finance for film-making. An inter-action between the socially conscious film-maker and enlightened and responsible institutional support alone can convert it into a socially powerful tool. With this end in view, we are now giving a new turn to our film policy.

One of our claims to pre-eminence in the film world is that we now produce the largest number of feature films in the world. This, however, is only a statistical eminence and when divorced from the quality of the product, it becomes a dubious distinction. The cinema, while entertaining, can, at the same time, instruct and also create a social awareness of life within its mammoth audience. In accomplishing this, it does not have to be didactic; nor has it to abandon its role as a medium of entertainment, communication or as a modern art form.

The cinema is performing a dynamic role by projecting the travails of the contemporary man transfixed on the path of global confrontation of ideas, technologies and philosophies, but longing for a sense of universal being. All over the world the cinema is analysing the present-day reality and stimulating a candid discussion of the problems arising from the phenomenal growth of this technological civilisation. At such a time and at such a point of history, the Indian cinema cannot afford to be found wanting. It has not only to face the challenge but make a positive contribution.

We live in an age when the traditional barriers between media have been demolished by bold, creative innovations. By introducing the element of instant reportage and simultaneous mass impact, television has advanced the frontiers of traditional cinematography. Similarly, people from the field of television and the documentary have entered the area of film-making, introducing the element of social urgency and emotional immediacy into the film. I have no doubt that cinema and television will stimulate each other in India and the commencement of an integrated development programme would prove to be a decision of far-reaching significance.

Besides finance, which is the new crucial input, training for cadres for cinema and television is necessary.

Knowledge in the field of the arts is growing at a fast pace. India has the genius of imbibing what is best suited to its needs and in turn it has also influenced global thinking particularly in the field of philosophy and aesthetics both of which are extremely pertinent to cinema and television. I have no doubt that the Film and TV Institute at Poona will soon become a focal point of creative confrontation, a forum of free exchange of knowledge and experience, enabling the Indian artist to make his contribution to the growth and evolution of the cinema and television.

There is, however, a criticism that barring some honourable exceptions, the best products of this institute tend to fall into the 'commercial' rut no sooner than they get a break

in the industry. I am conscious of the difficulties the young artistes have to face in the commercial world. It is also noteworthy that over the years a very significant contribution has been made by the alumni of this Institute. They have introduced variety and depth in the Indian cinema. They have helped evolve new trends reflected in the growth of regional cinema and contributed to what is commonly called the new-wave films. A new path has been blazed and I am sure that with the passage of time this trend will gain greater strength. The future, after all, should belong to the young, the talented and the dynamic, and it is they who can transform the film into a powerful medium of social change. The best films from other cultures speak of their societies, of their individuals and reflect their problems, their struggle and their hopes. Good films the world over bear the stamp of social authenticity. Social truths vary from society to society but a creative person succeeds only when he gets closer to his own cultural roots.

Government has now implemented its decision to ensure complete autonomy for the Institute by establishing it as an independent Society dedicated to academic and cultural objectives of the cinema and the television—the two most dynamic visual media of our times. I have no doubt that this development augurs well for the future.

Film Awards

An important aspect of our policy which I mentioned earlier is to assist in the integrated development of the two visual disciplines—film and television—which have their distinct characteristics and can yet enrich each other. As a continuing incentive for improvement in the art and craft of cinema, Government have instituted a comprehensive scheme for awards.

Awards have come to occupy a very important place in the country and over the years these have contributed to the powerful resurgence of regional cinema as well as the national cinema. With the 21st National Film Awards Ceremony held on October 4 last, an important programme of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting entered the third decade. The scheme is a major effort of the Government to attract, year after year, national attention to the best in Indian cinema. Beginning as a modest scheme, its scope has been gradually expanding, based on our experience as well as the appreciation of the needs of the Indian film industry. While the Government naturally takes pride and pleasure in the success of the scheme, a great deal of the credit goes to the Indian film-maker and the film industry as a whole, consisting of Directors, Producers, Artistses and Technicians, who have collectively enriched the form and texture of the Indian film, thereby making the National Awards an institution of considerable cultural importance.

Responding largely to the observations made in several quarters that uniformity and consistency of judgement values was an important factor to be fostered, Government decided to dispense with the Regional Juries and instead established a National Jury. It is important to remember, however, that while doing so, both the linguistic diversity and variegated nature of professional specialisation cognate to the discipline of cinema as an art form and as a vital cultural input into our milieu, was reflected in the composition of the Jury. As in the past, Government gave complete freedom to the National Jury to evolve its own procedure for viewing, evaluating and finally judging films.

It is my earnest hope that the spirit behind the setting up of the National Jury would help create an entirely new intellectual environment in which Indian cinema can flourish and continue to be a source of support to creative innovation in different branches of cinematography.

It is imperative that this national perspective also becomes a national goal. The Union Government will continue to solicit the participation of the State Governments in a comprehensive programme aimed at the regeneration of the Indian cinema through mobilisation of intellectual and material resources.

The New Frontiers

We can ill-afford to evade the basic issue of free and sustained opportunity being provided to the best in our national cinema. Unless the best in the regions finds nationwide circulation, the total impact of the Awards would remain limited. It is very important that the State Governments join hands with us to actively promote the free circulation of these meritorious films through dubbing and subtitling so as to overcome the language barriers. Needless to say, if all streams were to merge into a powerful creative surge, Indian cinema would generate a massive impact on the masses, helping strengthen national cohesion both at the emotional and the intellectual planes.

Last year India made 448 feature films and over a thousand documentaries—a very large output indeed. Out of these, the Awards have recognised the greatness and sensitivity of several films which depict the colourful spectrum of our national cinema.

These films are not only marked by artistic excellence and dramatic vigour, but almost all of them have succeeded in achieving important social objectives. While technical excellence is necessary for the growth of the Indian cinema, even as the evolution of technology is in other areas, in cinema, however, it is the intellectual content, the emotional and the spiritual matrix which are of the utmost significance. The short films too have performed a similar role of reacting to our times.

It will be the Government's endeavour to further amplify the scope of the Awards Scheme and also to take suitable essential measures to facilitate the country-wide circulation of these films which win national recognition.

The National Film Corporation would soon start functioning. A Film Council supported by a Film Fund may also soon appear on the scene. Steps are also in hand to help improve the economic viability of the film industry by making a determined effort to increase exports.

For all these initiatives, we need the cooperation of the Indian film industry which shares our common concern for the development but also as a major social tool and cultural input.

The Rationale of Censoring

I am not in favour of nationalising cinemas or even nationalising the film industry. The creative sphere, to my mind, can yield better results. We can create situations, we can create conditions, we can create opportunities for those who have the capacity to create, to function better and create better films. We should act not only positively for financial intervention, we must be nagatively very assertive through the film censor to see that the adventurist trend gets discouraged....We will not tolerate vulgarity, we will not tolerate perversion, we will not tolerate violence in films. There is a section among the film makers who are strongly protesting against this. However, these trends have to be discouraged, whatever the motive, whatever the profit they may or may not earn out of it. We cannot let them play with the future of this nation. We cannot let them decide what type of new society they would like to shape simply because they can make money. I know it might hurt some but I think this

hurt in the wider interest is called for, and we have to do it. That is why we have even banned certain films. The new instructions to the Censorship Board are that merely using the scissor is not enough because film makers, unfortunately some of them, have thought that if they want to make 3,000 ft. of bad film, they must make 6,000 ft. so that even if 3,000 ft. is censored, they are left with 3,000 ft. So the policy directive is that a film which is bad should be denied the certificate. So merely cutting a few feet does not make any difference. That was why in 1972-73 eight such films were banned. I think we will have to maintain this trend so that those who are erring again and again should be able to correct themselves.

The main method for improving films is that society as a whole and the government as such must decide to make substantial investment in film. Social values cannot be made to change merely by wishing for it. For changing social values through a medium, investment is needed, and the investment should be made by us. Not only should we build more cinema halls but also produce better films, more and more specialised films for children and the young. All this needs investment. I think the stage has come when the country should apply its mind to whether we can or we cannot at least part with 50 per cent of the entertainment tax to see that better cinemas are produced. Unhealthy finance and healthy films cannot coexist.

Unfortunately, we have treated films as a Kamadhenu cow. We have only tried to get entertainment tax out of it. We have not tried to feed back money into it. We have made a small experiment with the Film Finance Corporation. The intervention of the Film Finance Corporation, the new waves of films and the emergence of the regional cinema, have had a salutary effect directly and indirectly. Fortunately, since the coming in of the Corporation and also because of the influence of directors like Satyajit Ray and others on film making, a new school, a minority cinema, has been built. This minority cinema to a great extent has contributed to the change in the attitude of the people. Without investment, the medium of cinema cannot be used to advantage, and disadvantages can be considerable. We must decide to invest in the cinema industry as such and only then can we possibly create what we may choose to call the Indian cinema. □

Financing Films

With 72 per cent interest on working capital, money becomes not merely a means but a value in itself to the Indian commercial film producer. What the Film Finance Corporation, whose meagre capital hardly equals the budget of a single Hindi colour movie, can do in the circumstance is to encourage quality films, which may, by and by enrich the traditional cinema.

B. K. Karanjia

THE way our film industry is financed is so bizarre, so unbusinesslike of an enterprise that calls itself an industry, that any discussion on film financing needs to be prefaced by Ripley's famous slogan: "Believe it or not"!

The producer's account-books don't tell even half the story. Payments to extras, travelling allowances, location expenses, etc., are grossly inflated before being entered. On the other hand, payments to stars, music directors and others are as grossly deflated. Padded budgets complete the vicious circle started by black, (that is, under-the-table) payments. What producers' books don't tell is, believe it or not, more interesting not only to the income-tax authorities—obviously — but to those who would probe the current mode of film financing.

You may not believe it but it's true—the film producer gets his finance at rates as high as 16 to 72 per cent per year. Of course, interest is not paid directly at this rate, being confined to the legitimate 12 per cent. But a "royalty" is charged of not less than 10 per cent on the amount loaned. Very often the loan is for a short period of three or six months and the "royalty" has to be repeated each time the loan is renewed. The producer's borrowings are mainly through *hundis*. The actual amount paid against such *hundis* is generally the net amount after deducting the amount of interest.

What is also unbelievable, but nevertheless true, is that the working capital available to the second or the third biggest film industry in the world is almost totally loaned capital whether from distributors against the sale of distributing rights in various territories or from professional financiers. A general recession in trade, a slight setback to the industry, and the resources available are drastically reduced. A crisis like the one last year, and the industry grinds to a halt.

I referred to black payments and padded budgets forming a vicious circle. Considering their wide ramifications, it would be more appropriate to call it a vicious spiral. For black draws black. The black deals in the industry attract more and more black money to it. The process began in the war years when there was a surfeit of black money floating around. This not only colours the mode of payment to artistes, music directors and others, it colours the mentality of film makers also.

It is this get-rich-quick mentality that by enthroning the formula as king has affected the quality of our commercial cinema. Money, instead of being a means, has become a value, and is blatantly publicised as a selling-point in film advertising. This is how film financing touches the pockets of ordinary cinegoers who pay hard-earned money to patronise the only means of entertainment available to them.

No sooner were our banks nationalised than producers felt that here was the instant solution for all their financial worries. One or two, the more impatient among them, even sent telegrams to the Prime Minister urging that banks should forthwith be prevailed upon to advance finance

Shri Karanjia is Editor, *Filmfare*, Bombay.

to films as in several western countries. But they overlooked the condition precedent to banks entering films in a big way, which does not exist in India. No doubt banks in America have been known to finance independent film producers, but in all such cases bank advances are covered by collateral security offered by these producers. In some cases banks have been known to scrutinise the other "properties" of the producer, including his rights in stories and contracts with artistes.

If therefore our film makers are really serious about attracting banks and insurance companies to finance them, they have to form combines which can provide the necessary security. If they own personal properties like buildings, hotels, etc., or studios and cinema equipment, they must be prepared to offer these as collateral. There is of course no doubt that if banks and insurance companies begin financing films even in a small way, the present stranglehold on film makers would be loosened. Terms and conditions of credit would have to be radically revised. And in course of time the black deals which shake the industry's economic foundations would become unnecessary by being unprofitable.

Unfortunately film financing is victim of the same confused thinking which delays remedial action in the case of the industry's myriad other problems also. Another symptom of this confused thinking is the cry being raised that the Film Finance Corporation set up by the Government of India should finance the production of the so-called commercial films. This ignores not only the Corporation's meagre quantum of investment compared to the film industry's own investment, but also the objective with which the Corporation was founded. The total capital of the Corporation is almost the same as the budget of a single big colour movie of the sort that are being turned out regularly these days. To put it in another way, the total investment made by the Corporation every year comes to less than 1 per cent of the total investment of the film industry in a year.

Nevertheless, the Film Finance Corporation has a useful and indeed vital function to perform. Its objective is clearly stated in the Memorandum of Association, which is to help the making of films of good quality with a view to raising the general standard of films produced. Its objective is therefore promotional. It seeks to fulfil this by encouraging subjects which have something new and enriching to offer, and by providing finance to young and talented film makers who would not otherwise obtain it from conventional sources. The field it taps—of the modest, low-budget, often black-and-white, different if not off-beat film—is largely virgin.

It is only such low-budget films that can fall within the investment capacity of a modest organisation like the Corporation. Not only that, the investment being comparatively small, many more film makers can be financed as is now happening in the country. This is essential as new film trends can only be set, and these trends can grow into a movement only when many competent directors are given the opportunity to make films in their individual styles. In all the cinematically advanced countries, the promotional cinema co-exists with the traditional cinema. In fact, film makers who ride the crest of the new wave are known to have been absorbed into the traditional cinema to the considerable enrichment of the latter. Film financing therefore has to provide channels for both the traditional and the promotional, with a view to he overall resurgence of the Indian Cinema. □

Output of feature films

INDIA leads the world in the production of feature films. In 1973, 448 feature films were produced. The number of feature films produced in various languages and certified for public exhibition for selected year—since 1947 is shown below :—

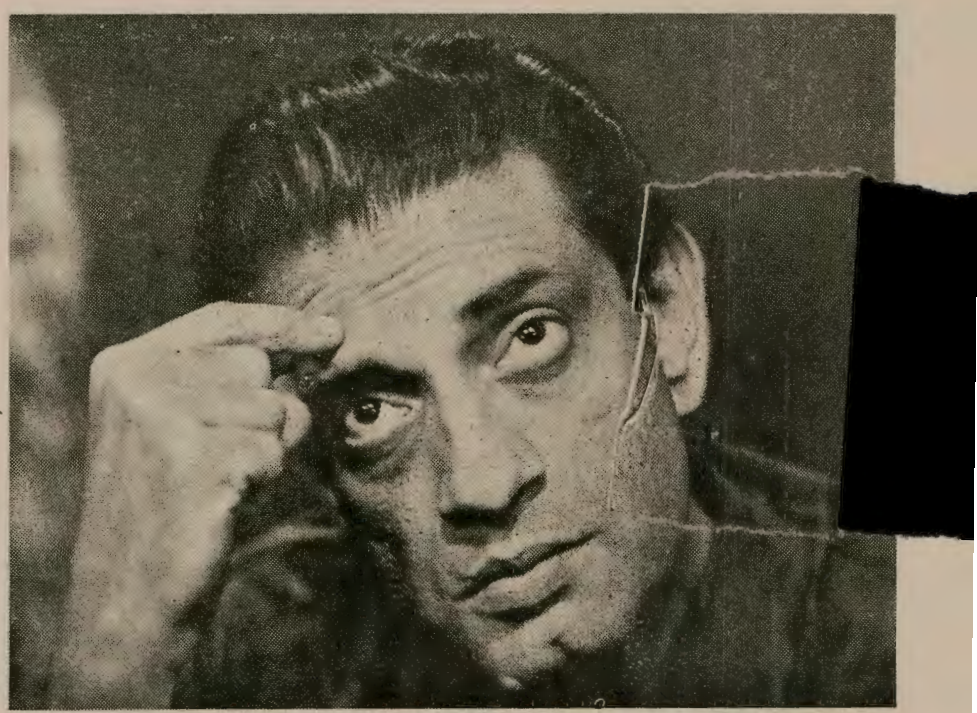
Language	1947	1951	1961	1970	1971	1972	1973
Assamese ...	—	—	2	3	5	7	8
Bengali ...	38	38	36	33	30	25	35
English ...	—	—	—	1	1	3	1
Gujarati ...	11	6	7	5	3	4	5
Hindi* ...	186	100	109	104†	121††	134‡	141
Kannada ...	5	2	12	38	33	20	32
Konkani ...	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Malayalam ...	—	7	11	43	52	47	60
Marathi ...	6	16	15	19	23	13	14
Oriya ...	—	—	2	—	1	1	2
Punjabi ...	—	4	5	2	2	3	5
Sindhi ...	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
Tamil ...	29	26	49	76	73	77	66
Telugu ...	6	30	55	71	85	73	74
Tulu ...	—	—	—	—	2	2	4
TOTAL ...	281	229	303	396	433	414**	448

* Includes Urdu, Rajasthani and Hindustani films. ** The total includes one film in Coorgi, two in Manipuri and one in Thai language. † Includes one Hindi film with sub-titles in French. †† Includes one Bhojpuri, 14 Hindustani, one Maithili, one Chhatisgarhi and four Urdu films. ‡ Seven of these films were in Hindustani.

In our country, at least, films have been made with virtually no contribution from the director, or at least, nothing of a positive nature.

THE DELICATE BALANCING OF ART AND COMMERCE IN Film Making

Satyajit Ray

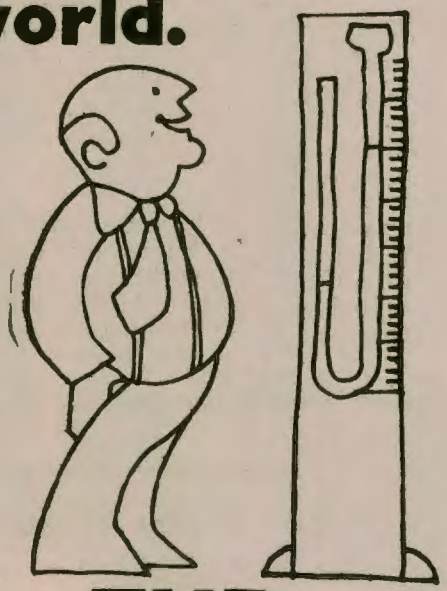


I HAVE a strong feeling that there is something incongruous about my addressing film students about to receive their diplomas. You see, not only did I never receive the kind of education that you have, but I had for long years looked upon film schools with scepticism. This scepticism was there even before I came into films, and it was strengthened through my experience of working with people who, like myself, had never been to a film school.

When my friend Girish Karnad asked me to come and talk to the students at the Convocation, I agreed mainly out of a sense of guilt. I had refused on several occasions in the past, and felt that the time had come to make up for my intrasigence. So I agreed to come. And then I realised that I had to say something nice about schools. I tried to recall what it was that had left such a wholesome impression on me the first time, and the only time, I had been at Poona some five or six days ago. I threw my mind back and found the answer. It was the freshness of the scene. For the first time in my life I had been confronted with the spectacle of young boys and girls wholly wrapped up in the pursuit of films, talking about them, taking them to pieces, reading and thinking and arguing about them, perhaps even dreaming about them. I found an optimism here, and an enthusiasm unsullied by the rude pressures of a ruthless industry. This was heartening, and I realised that this could only happen in a film school. (*Contd.*)

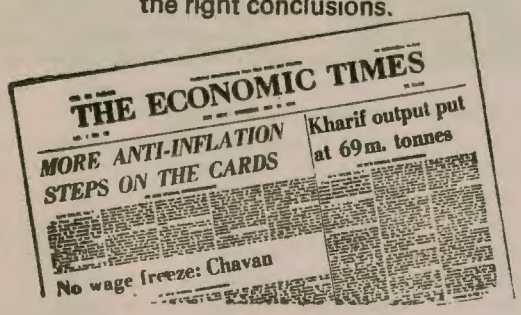
The text of the address delivered on the 12th Convocation of the Film and Television Institute of India at Poona on 2 Oct. 1974.

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES
MORE ANTI-INFLATION STEPS ON THE CARDS
Kharif output put at 69m. tonnes
No wage freeze: Chavan

MT-BC-3509A

The scene that I was normally accustomed to was the one that I encountered in a film studio. Over there the people had a different kind of education. Some had learnt by dint of sheer application, and had worked their way up from the bottom, others had learnt from long association with established professionals. In the latter case, it was education which often had to be extracted rather than received as a matter of course. One had actually heard of professional cameramen who so jealously guarded their secrets that their assistants had a hard time finding out what camera stops were being used from shot to shot. But at least the cameramen had some secrets to guard. And we all know that the men who handle the microphone, or build the sets and furnish them with props, can do so only because they know the use of certain tools, and are thus in a position to pass on their knowledge to others, while experienced professional actors can, to some extent, be said to share their knowledge with the less experienced ones when they are thrown together in the same scene. But what about the director, the man who is supposed to be at the helm of affairs? Does he have any useful secrets to hide? What kind of education does he have? Or does he have to have any education at all?

I know this is going to shock you—especially those of you who are poised on the edge of directorial career—but I know this for a fact that in our country at least, films have been made with virtually no contribution from the director, or at least, nothing of a positive nature. He does nothing because he knows nothing. How is this possible, you may ask? The answer is simple. The self-styled director begins by taking advantage of the fact that of various kinds of contributions made to a film by the various kinds of people engaged in it, the contribution of the director is the least palpable, the hardest to put one's finger on. We can actually see and judge the work of actors, of cameramen, of art directors; the elements on the sound track we can judge by ear; the writer's work we can judge from the lines the actors speak, and from the way the story moves along lines indicated in the screenplay. Now, all these contributions can be influenced by a strong director and shaped by him so that the film acquires the hallmark of his personality. To what extent he does this remains a closed book to all except those directly involved in the making of the film. But our self-styled director has neither the ability nor the desire to influence anything or anybody. He is only concerned with earning his bread, and the moment the shooting is over, he washes his hands off the film and leaves the rest to the editor. One can assume that being clever, he had engaged the kind of editor that will serve his purpose best—the kind that has specialised in bringing order into chaos. Doubtless he has also been clever enough to engage good assistants to take care of the continuity, to tick off the shots, and perhaps even to save him the bother of shouting 'Action'.

At this point you may well ask: Why should the backer put his faith in such an ignoramus? The answer to that is: he doesn't. He puts his faith in other things: in the stars, primarily, but also in the songs, and sometimes perhaps even in the story. And what is even more alarming—and must cause real despair in serious artists—is that a film made in the circumstances I have described, by a man in utter ignorance of all that you have assiduously learned for your diplomas—can actually have a popular success, can even earn the praise of so-called critics, and—the final irony—may even go on to win a national award.

I wish I could say that the Institute holds the promise of changing this state of affairs. But it doesn't. What it does hold is the promise of a parallel cinema—signs of which are already in evidence. This will be the cinema of

young film-makers who know their jobs, who love the medium for its own sake, who are able to resist the temptations of big money and quick success, who have some thing to say about their own country and their own generation—something that arises out of a feelings of being rooted here, and who—however much they may have absorbed their Bressons and Godards and Antonionis, are yet aware that they have to communicate not with Frenchmen or Italians, but with their own countrymen.

I have no doubt that many amongst you are thinking along the same lines as I am, or have already been told the same things by your teachers. Let me however tell you a few things now from my own experience of 20 years, things which might help to fill some gaps in your knowledge. I could just as well have said Education instead of Experience, for the two go hand in hand, and keep going, and growing, for as long as one keeps working.

My own film education started in my schooldays in the classrooms of the public cinemas. It was later augmented by the reading of film books and still later by the actual business of making films. The public cinemas showed what were known as commercial films. They were films in the English language; some British, mostly American. Interspersed between them were an occasional Indian or French or Soviet film. For me, in those days, the term commercial held no overtones of stigma. It only helped to define an economic axiom: since a film cost a great deal of money to make, it had to be seen by a great number of people for the money to be recovered.

most of you, is made with the sole purpose of being consumed. As long as it stays in the cans, a film is dead matter. It comes to life and serves its purpose only in the theatre, in the presence of the public.

This public, then, has to be taken into account—even by you with your diplomas, and your dreams of a personal cinema, a radical cinema, a political cinema or what have you. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the desire to make films solely for one's own pleasures or for the pleasures of a small coterie. But in the set-up that you are likely to find yourselves in, it can be done only by throwing economics out of the window. Those of you who won't be bothered with economics and are set upon a personal cinema, had better start praying for generous sponsors or, more realistically, for facilities for substandard filmmaking. No matter how you make your film, if you are truly gifted, you will sooner or later create your own market. If not, and if you still want to stay in business, then the only rules you would be obliged to follow would be the rules of compromise.

But, for most of you, your field of operation would be, if not within the main industry, at least in its periphery. The parallel cinema too will have to find its own market and its own audience. In these circumstances you could afford to have your head in the clouds only if you had your feet planted firmly in the ground. This sounds like an impossible feat, but isn't. The history of cinema is full of instances of artists realising the need to communicate to a large audience, and not losing their integrity in the process. It can be done only if you temper your creative urge with a little caution and a bit of shrewdness. If this sounds unworthy of an artist

A bad film is one which fails to achieve its objective. A film is made with the sole purpose of being consumed. It comes to life and serves its purpose only in the theatre, in the presence of the public.

Some of these commercial films were good, some were bad. The bad ones were lessons on what not to do, and were just as useful as the good ones. I had my own definition of a bad film; it was a film which failed to achieve its objective. It follows that a good film was one which succeeded. These definitions covered the full spectrum of films, from the most frivolous to the most solemn. I did not look for a work of art every time I went to the cinema. In fact, I doubt if I could have learnt very much if I had seen nothing but masterpieces. Being largely the product of that mysterious thing called inspiration, a great work of art itself remains mysterious, and resists analysis beyond a certain point. Such films are more edifying than educative. The real education comes from films with strong clear lines and not too many hidden depths. In other words, the work of competent professionals.

Apart from their lessons in technique, these films often revealed a delicate balancing of art and commerce which was most instructive. When the balancing was at fault, and the film failed, the blame was usually laid at the door of the director. The practice of blaming the public for failing to rise to the level of a film was not in-vogue in those days, because the film-maker was supposed to have taken the public into account. One can draw an analogy with cooking here and say that when a large number of people having a meal find a certain dish unpalatable, the cook is in no position to blame them for failing to rise to the level of his concoction. Like a meal, a film, at least the kind of film that will be the concern of

let me tell you that even Orson Wellse was not above it in his choice of subject for his iconoclastic first film. In fact, my own choice of *Pather Panchali* was made in the hope that the public's interest in the film of a famous classic would outweigh its distrust of a new director.

The idea, you see, is to get them into the theatre. The rest is up to the film. Remember that the public itself is a species capable of change and evolution through pressure of circumstances. It is true that till now a very large section of it—in its taste and its power of judgement—seems not to have reached the stage of homo sapiens yet, but you need not concern yourself with it. There is the other species, the more advanced species, much smaller in number, who have left their trees and shed their tails and are out on their two feet on a hunt. You can give them the meat they are looking for.

Let me tell you in warning that with all your own learning and all the advice that others can give you, your task will not be easy. No school can teach you how to avoid the traps and pitfalls that strew a film maker's path—more so in our country than anywhere else. Those of you who have made your diploma films must have encountered some of them already. Multiply them a thousandfold, and you have some idea of what you'll be up against as a professional film maker.

What I have learned from experience is never to lose your calm in the face of them, and to keep pushing your convictions to the very end. Who knows, you may yet win out. It has happened before. There's no reason why it shouldn't happen again. □

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The Dilemma of the Producer

Firoze Rangoonwalla

It may sound paradoxical; but the world's biggest film industry is also the most unplanned industry in the world. The Indian film, both as an art and a trade, has grown up haphazardly, on its own, without proper nursing, parental care or a planned childhood and adolescence. That is why, after seventy-five years it has still not gained adulthood and often behaves like a wayward adolescent.

PLANNING has not been in the system of Indian cinema, in any of its sectors, whether production, distribution, exhibition or the rest. Partly, this is also made inevitable by the nature of cinema and the set-up in which it operates. People in films have, sort of, resigned themselves to the futility of planning and the results it might bring.

The fundamental reason is the uncertainty or speculation that is inherent in the box-office or the earning response of every film that gets ready for release in the market. For any other commodity, the demand and sales potential can be reasonably gauged and intensified. But the film defies all this economic strategy and has to depend finally on the fickle favours of a large, heterogeneous audience. By some magic the people come and by some other equally vague process they do not come to the movies.

So no entrepreneur feels more insecure about the return of his investment than the film-maker. The definition of financial success or failure has also to be extricated from the false coating of glamour and ballyhoo about box-office, which usually conceal the truth, about a film. The success of a film has a direct relation to its cost structure. A film which covers its budget and leaves a margin should be considered a success, even if it runs only for one or two weeks in every centre, whereas a film which cannot cover its costs remains a failure, ("flop" being the more dreaded word), even if it might have scored a silver jubilee, whether genuine or dragged.

It is the low-budget cinema, mainly in the form of regional, artistic, off-beat films, now going under the lable of 'new wave' or 'new cinema' which can reduce risks to the minimum and have some modicum of planning in its budgeting,exploitation and returns. But unfortunately, even here, we find the same elements of chance-taking and uncertainty, partly because the language market or the audience potential is small and partly because they are not planned with a target audience in mind, nor accompanied by intelligent and inexpensive publicity to bring them to the notice of a bigger audience.

Even the Government, in its relation to films is guilty of the same lack of planning. We have the concrete examples of several Film Finance Corporation (F.F.C.) films, which are produced but not released—not even at the art theatre where shows are sponsored by the F.F.C. itself. If modest but fixed exhibition arrangements at small halls (which can be found in every town or city) are made in advance, if screening on rental are held through film societies all over India, if TV rights and non-traditional foreign markets are tapped, these low-budget films—at least those which are interesting and communicative—can become paying propositions and bring back money for more such films instead of remaining bad debts.

But there seems to be little planning in creating an audience or exploring the available market, with the result that the "new cinema" largely remains in the columns of journals and magazines. If this is so with the small film, with most things well in control, we can easily imagine the unplanned mess in the big, star-studded, costly, colour productions, where budgets and schedules are bound to go out of gear, due to factors which are at times uncontrollable. And then, there is no limit on the number of people, who can turn mushroom producers..one sphere in which "family planning" is needed the most.

From where should planning therefore start and to which areas should it particularly apply? For this, one has to begin at the beginning, right at the time the film is conceived. Having selected the story and the production set-ups, the film maker must be absolutely clear in his mind about the form and framework. In fact, it should all be put down on paper, with data, diagrams and designs.

It is a false notion that such paperwork is against art or creativity. We must remember that India's most eminent director Satyajit Ray does exactly this. In fact, it helps to cut down so much of cost and drud-

Shri Rangoonwalla is a well-known film critic.

gery later, that it helps the film maker to think, concentrate and create. The shooting script itself is the item which is most in need of planning. With such a minutely worked out script, the director can work quickly and confidently.

It lessens the costly shooting time and removes unwieldy or excessive taking of shots. All the shots falling within a particular lighting set-up can be finished instead of wasting time over lighting up different portions of the locale again and again. Even worse is the complete re-building of sets or re-visits to outdoor locations, which some producers have to do just because the scenes or shots were not prepared earlier, sufficient dates of the free-lancing artistes had not been taken and so on.

A planned script also helps in the tightest possible budgeting because the number of locales, the property requirements, the shooting schedules, the call-sheets of the artistes and the unit can all be known in advance. A clever producer can also run the entire production on business lines from his office, without of course interfering in the creative work of writing and directing.

Apart from production, there has to be planning in the obtaining of finance, the closing of distribution and exhibition arrangements in the different circuits, the apt handling of publicity and so on. Nowhere is the uncertain nature of cinema more evident than in the financing. That is why black, hoarded and speculative money has made deep inroads in the financing of films, especially in Bombay, with the consequent dirty demands on contents, quality and standards. Moreover, the borrowing is mostly at usurious rates of interest.

The Hindi film has now become some sort of a game, of combining formulas, which the maker either wins or loses, without any via media. The system of even the regular trade financing is such that distributors, who forward instalments for production work against the screening rights of their territory, virtually become the film makers behind the scenes. If their requirements are not added in the film, perhaps the film may not be made at all and the maker would face the problem of survival itself. We are familiar with the fate of hundreds of stranded pictures. The exhibition side, too, especially in the big centres, has been so controlled and monopolised through a chain or group system that the genuine producer is just helpless.

There have been recommendations about institutional finance but it cannot come in a big, regular flow, even if the producers plan and set right their methods of working. This is because none can plan or predict the box-office response of any film. The remedy for this is to use institutional finance for setting up modest theatres and distribution agencies, which ensure the release of films, even for small runs, in all the centres all over the country and use modes of publicity which do not eat up a major part of the cost of releasing a film. Only after doing this can public money be put in large-scale production activity.

A lot of "setting right", business has been tried on the organisational level, which alone can lend the shape of an industry or rather of three separate industries, to production, distribution and exhibition. But it has to be noted that such organised efforts for control or self-regulation have consistently failed and fierce individualism as well as cut-throat competition continue to prevail in every sphere. A sense of joint loyalty to the medium, collective responsibility and fraternity among the different sections just does not exist.

Several associations have been set up over the years and those which survive are relegated to the insignificant position of handling routine chores like raw film permit or title registration, when they should be taking policy decisions and steering the destiny of the particular sector, in relation to the Government, the press, the other sectors and the audience. Moreover, there are more than one or two organisations in almost every section, thus showing up the lack of unity and planning. The failure of the so-called film Federation of India over the years is the biggest failure of organisational planning in Indian cinema, where obedience to leadership is conspicuous by its absence.

Where the industry has failed, the Government now wants to step, in, with good intentions of bringing method and planning through the National Film Corporation, the Film Council etc., as a part of the new comprehensive film policy. But this has all the elements of a war or at least a tug-of-war between the public and private sectors. If the new policy can put the Indian Cinema on its feet at least and make it perform its vital social and artistic functions, it would reverse the entire history of the industry and perform a miracle for which we have been waiting for six decades.

But then, one can only hope and pray for the best. □

PHALKE AND THE EARLY DAYS

Within months of the brothers Louis and Auguste Lumiere unveiling their *cinematographe* in Paris on December 28, 1895, they despatched their agents to important foreign countries including England and America to hold cnematographe shows. On July 7, 1896, a special show was held for the Tsar in Moscow. The same day another Lumiere expedition began public shows in Bombay. The programme included items such as Arrival of a Train, The Sea Bath and A Demolition. Thus, Indian audiences saw a projected motion picture in the same year as British, American and Russian audiences.

Harishchandra Batvadekar of Maharashtra was deeply impressed by the cinematographe. He imported a camera from London and began filming events such as a 'wrestling match in the Hanging Gardens of Bombay'. Processing of these films was done in London.

From cities the cinema tents in India spread to small towns, and then penetrated the villages. A few permanent cinema houses also came up in the cities. They exhibited films from Britain, Europe and America, with France heading the list. During the 1900s, several film-makers filmed stories from the Bible. One such, life of Christ, was shown in Bombay in 1911. D.G. Phalke who saw this was impressed to such an extent that the event changed the course of his life.

Phalke was born in a priestly family in Maharashtra in 1870. Interested in painting, play-acting and magic, he had studied in a Bombay art school, and had learnt printing technology in Germany. When Phalke saw LIFE OF CHRIST on the screen, he visualized LIFE of KRISHNA as a film and decided to produce it himself. His priestly lineage, his passion for the arts and his technical virtuosity as a printer combined to shape him as a film-maker. Realizing LIFE OF KRISHNA to be a difficult project, he set out to produce RAJA HARISHCHANDRA, the story of a king who was wedded to truth This first Indian feature film, released early in 1913 was a triumph for Phalke. It was made under difficult conditions—one of them being the non-availability of women to act in the film.

Although Indian theatre had flourished centuries ago at the time of Kalidasa, in recent centuries the performing arts had come to be the profession of certain castes: women who appeared on the stage, acting or dancing, were looked upon as persons of ill fame. This meant that no decent woman would appear in Phalke's film. Phalke ultimately had to feature a young man of slender figure as Queen Taramati in RAJA HARISHCHANDRA

—S. Krishnaswamy
Author, Producer and Director

Plus & Minus

Amita Malik

AT THE TIME of writing, India is still the largest film producing country in the world. It is way ahead of those prolific countries, Japan, Italy and the U.S.A. India is also one of the largest exporters of films to Asian and African countries. Some years ago, a survey revealed that in terms of capital invested the film industry was the second lai gest industry in India and, in terms of labour employed, the fifth largest. These figures might have changed since, and would be open to scrutiny considering the unconcealed income and other economic facts of the film industry are by now notorious. But at least these tentative statistics indicate the dimensions of what is now the largest medium of mass entertainment in India.

Indian stars are now household words not only at home but also abroad. Entire cinemas in foreign countries, and not necessarily with large Indian populations, show only Indian films. In Cairo, Teheran, Beirut, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and in several cities of Africa, Indian films and Indian film music are seen, heard and enjoyed by millions and have built up a fund of goodwill towards India. A listener to All India Radio in Japan wrote in to AIR to say that he could not go to sleep unless he heard an Indian film song as a nightly lullaby. The final, if dubious compliment paid to Indian films is that they are part of a large international smuggling racket and the prodigious demand for them not being satisfi ed through official channels, recourse is taken to illegal means to get them through to their fans.

With all this in view, it is easy to see that the very dimensions of the Indian cinema can give rise to both good and bad things.

Let us take the bad things first, so that we balance them with the good later.

The most obvious weakness—and this is an artistic and social one- of Indian films is their blatantly commercial character, their box office cliches the star system which sends its finances lop-sided, and the chaotic plots which include everything from songs and dances which hold up the action, to absurd coincidences, far-fetched melodrama and unreal characters, which range from cabaret dancers of a type which do not exist in India, to gangsters and heroes a la James Bond.

But it must be remembered that for the majority of the people, the cinema is escapist entertainment from their everyday cares and worries. Some of the elements, such as songs, dances, comic episodes, are after all, in the ancient Indian tradition of Sanskrit drama, except that these elements were used with taste and refinement in their time and have been debased in the popular Bombay and Madras films of today. These popular films for the masses carry on the equally ancient Indian tradition of the fight between Good and Evil but do so with a degree of crudity which can be distasteful. But, in extenuation, it must be said that contemporary Indian films, however silly and far-fetched, are mostly harmless in effect. The violence is tomato ketchup spilling over, the fights are childish. The Bombay film really killed no one. And compared with the sex and violence in films from the West, is comparatively harmless.

Secondly, the mass produced films for the masses are more than balanced by the dichotomous character of the contemporary cinema which, in a way, follows the Indian pattern since films started. Films from the regions, in the regional languages, made on smaller budgets and for more discriminating audiences, have carried on with seriousness of purpose, with modern writers providing better stories and have sustained certain basic values in acting and direction which have provided a parallel form of more serious entertainment. They co-exist with escapist films and retain their minority audiences.

Thus, the films from Bengal, notably those of Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Tapan Sinha and Mrinal Sen, and many younger directors now coming up, films from Karnatak, such as those by Girish Karnad, films in Malayalam, which have carried off national awards two years running, earlier and recent films by Ramu Kariat, have maintained a certain Indian-ness in character and style which have made them very popular with regional audiences and quite often of interest outside India.

At the same time, young, new, experimental film-makers, although sometimes perhaps a shade derivative have made films which have broken away from tradition. Mani Kaul, Shyam Benegal, Basu, Chatterjee, Shahani Kumar, have made films which have experimented with technique as well as theme and created critical interest as well as controversy, which is a healthy sign. Some of them are products of The Film Institute in Poona, some have made films on loans from the Film Finance Corporation, both Government organizations but with a good deal of autonomv.

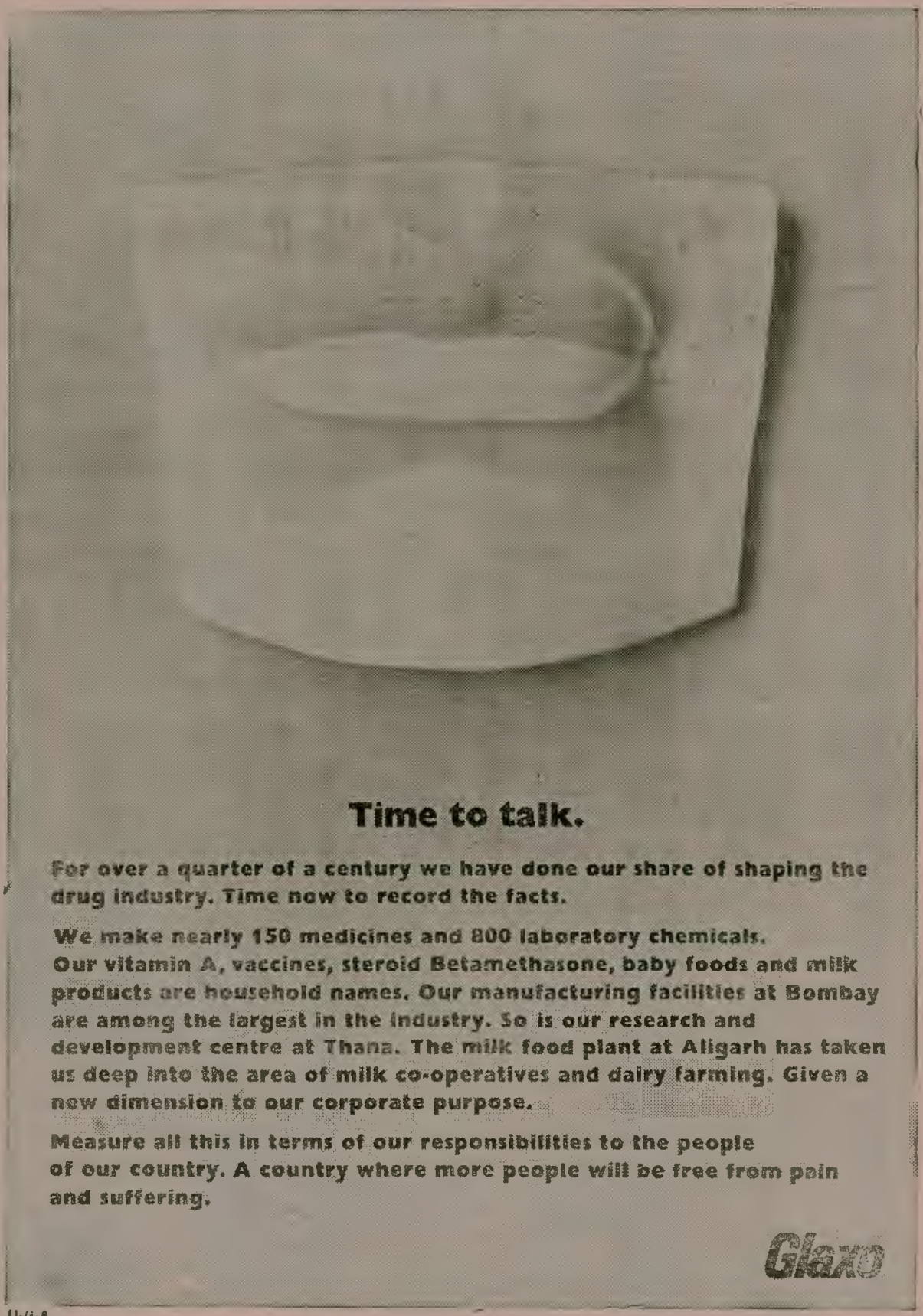
However, for this writer, perhaps the most significant film made in recent years is *Garam Hava* by M. S. Sathyu. It is completely different in that it has boldly but with subtle detail tackled the problem of Muslims at the time of partition. The human tragedy of a family divided includes a touching last performance by Balraj Sahni, another performance of great delicacy by Geeta, a Hindu girl playing a Muslim girl with subtle nuances of astonishing insight. M. S. Sathyu, a Brahmin from Mysore, proves by his direction that he has introduced that long-needed element in Indian films—social commitment of the most detached variety which is not the contradiction in terms that it seems to be.

All this goes to show that there is much that is right with Indian films, and it outweighs what is wrong here and there.

Above all, one must pay tribute to the film technicians of this country who, often without modern equipment, have yet kept pace with international developments and evolved astyle of their own, which is universal and yet Indian.

Finally, India is one of the few countries in the world which makes such steady use of the short film for education, both at the adult as well as the educational level. Indian documentaries have often been criticised for their verbose commentaries and over-cautiousness of approach. But we have also made experimental films which have won international awards and at home, created a sense of one-ness between different parts of the country. This is surely a plus mark and a healthy sign that the Indian cinema is not merely quantitative. It has quality as well. □

Shrimati Malik is the film critic of *the Statesman*, New Delhi, and Indian correspondent of the British Quarterly the *Sight and Sound*, London.


Time to talk.
For over a quarter of a century we have done our share of shaping the drug industry. Time now to record the facts.
We make nearly 150 medicines and 800 laboratory chemicals. Our vitamin A, vaccines, steroid Betamethasone, baby foods and milk products are household names. Our manufacturing facilities at Bombay are among the largest in the industry. So is our research and development centre at Thana. The milk food plant at Aligarh has taken us deep into the area of milk co-operatives and dairy farming. Given a new dimension to our corporate purpose.
Measure all this in terms of our responsibilities to the people of our country. A country where more people will be free from pain and suffering.
GlaxO

The Super Princes

The Star System has survived many onslaughts, including flops and "stars" often dictate outrageous terms

Ajit B. Merchant

THE princely order in India is dead and gone but a new set of super-princes (and princesses!) has taken over and their extravagance and fabulous living might make even royalty blush.

These super-princes are the film stars occupying the top ranks of our cinema business, often miscalled 'industry'. In more than one sense, they dominate and virtually rule the commercial cinema in India.

The star system of the Indian film world is so strong and deep-rooted that it has been able to survive all kinds of onslaughts, crises, raids from the I.T. department and, most shocking of all, flops.

The film business in India is run on an utterly speculative, unbusinesslike basis. It is success-oriented but there is no rule or yardstick to measure that success. To put it in *filmi* parlance, a hit at the box office is the determining factor which can make or mar the future of an artiste, a director or a producer.

The Hit is the thing and everything is geared to the making of a hit much to the detriment of story value, histrionic quality, intelligibility, realism, and such other basic requisites of what is normally considered a good motion picture.

Just as it has come to be said of music directors that they are no composers but only arrangers, likewise, it is true of a large majority of commercial film makers : they are not producers but "proposers".

You take a good story, a cast of talented artistes, a director who understands film grammer a competent Technical crew and the rest of the essentials likely to yield a good, sensible, meaningful, realistic motion picture. And nobody can guarantee when-if at all-you would be able to start it and who (except perhaps the Film Finance Corporation) would provide the finance.

On the other hand, you sign two big stars rating high in the market according to current price and box office potential and organise a "set-'up' attractive enough to tempt distributors and financiers itching to "smell a hit", and you can safely hope to complete the film and deliver the prints in no time. Usually, for one who knows the "ropes", there need bo no worry if it will click or flop because, with clever manipulation of black money, the proposer can easily set aside a handsome packet for himself while the film is in the making.

All this manipulation, malpractices, the wide, wide gap between the earnings of a star and the rest of the unit members (save perhaps the music directors) goes on solely because of the pernicious star system.

To cite a very recent instance, the phenomenal success of Raj Kapoor's "Bobby" has earned over 25 contracts for its young, amateurish and inexperienced hero, Rishi Kapoor, who, had the film not clicked, would have been a one-film hero working only for his father at the R.K. Studios.

Contrast this with the fact that two consecutive flops found Rishi's elder brother Randhir (Dabboo) Kapoor in a temporary lull with half a dozen producers dropping him from their films like a hot potato. The lull, happily for Randhir, was short-lived because, in no time, one of his starrers clicked and he changed his style and began playing to the gallery and has today over a dozen films on hand.

Thanks to the star system, the actor-hero can afford to be perpetually unpunctual in reporting on the sets. He can afford to name or discard the heroine according to his own personal fancy. He can afford to ill-treat the producer, ignore the director, dictate last-minute changes in the script, get his own role tailored to consume the maximum footage and suit his own concept of what a hero should or should not do in a film. He can afford to insist on the producer paying through his nose to build up his (hero's) "image". He can afford to go on signing contracts, upsetting schedules and playing high and mighty to any length He gets away with it all.

Who is responsible for the star system?

The simple answer is, none but the producer.

To quote a confrere who, not long ago analysed the incalculable damage that the star system in India had been causing to the country: "It is a matter of downright national shame that while thousands of engineers, technocrafts, professors, educationists, journalists, literatteurs and scientists on whom rests the responsibility of building a New India, are starved of employment opportunities, a handful of young men and girls, straight from primary schools (sometimes the Poona Film Institute), without experience of stage or theatre, without reading a book on acting or film art, without training, manage to gatecrash into the glamorous world of stardom, yielding a fabulous income of many lakhs of rupees every month."

Once an actor or actress has a hit to his or her credit and tastes instant success and popularity, gaining the appellation of a "star", it takes no time to transform the person into a Frankenstein with an insatiable lust and greed for money, luxury, fame, footage and *chamchagiri*, all of which are the staple food of most top stars.

Talking of producers responsible for creating these "Frankensteins", we must place on record one glowing exception, veteran V. Shantaram, who all through his career of over three decades has consis-

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TO READERS

The Editor regrets that owing to pressure of space our regular features and the Students' Forum had to be held over. They will appear in the following issue.

tently and quite successfully defied the star system and lived not to regret or lament it.

The producers, on their part, have made several attempts at t' e much-trumpeted "self-regulation" ceiling, self-discipline, etc., but rarely if ever has any of them shown the guts, individually or collectively, to tell the stars to behave themselves, to cut down the exorbitant prices they pay or cooperate in bringing about some semblance of order, economic balance or fair distribution of wealth in the trade.

The star system in India has no parallel in any other part of the world. Even in a highly competitive country like the USA, film stars are never allowed to work simultaneously in as many films as the super-princes do in this poor country, pledged to usher in a socialistic pattern of society.

In the USSR, popular People's Artistes (as 'Stars' are called there) are pulled out of the studios after a few films and sent to work on the stage or in ballet or in film academies in order that they don't become too big for their boots.

The sinister and scandalous star system constitutes a major stumbling block in the way of the Indian cinema's qualitative betterment, its development and growth from a mad gamble to a systematic and economically sound industry and, above all, the dire need for abolishing the wide and entirely antisocial gap between what a handful of top stars earn and what goes into the bowls of the average artists or technicians in the film business.

The producers today are better united than they were in the past. The All India Film Producer's Council is a strong body which is presently busy liquidating the various trade unions and the Federation of Western Indian Cine Employees by forming its own pockets called Bureaus. Yet, curiously enough, this strong, united, august body dare not raise a little finger against the stars, the vicious system that keeps the white elephant's among them eating at the very vitals of one of India's largest money-making enterprises, the film "industry".

In an organised industry run on sound economc ines the money invested is ploughed back for further stabilisation, if not expansion. This can be possible in Indian cinema-only when the star system is abolished and the film business is conducted not as a mad gamble in an organised industry. □

DOCUMENTARIES

Mushir Ahmed

TODAY a large number of short films are being made in the country; but let me make a startling statement right in the beginning that hardly any of these should be classified as Documentary. It seems that the era of documentary film is dead and different forms of publicity films have taken its place. In fact, quite a few films made to advertise the efforts, activities and products of commercial setups and organisations in the country are being palmed off as documentary films. Therefore, the title of the article notwithstanding, I shall be talking in terms of short films only.

The largest number of short films excluding, of course, very short advertisement films which fortunately are not at least till today claiming to be documentaries, are being made by the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A majority of these films are produced departmentally by the Division and quite a considerable number are either being sponsored or bought by the Films Division from independent short film makers in the country. Except a few films on culturalsubjects like dance, music, architecture, and some biographical films and the so-called "experimental" films, an overwhelming majority of the films in which Films Division is involved are sponsored films which are actually publicity films. In these films the Division has to cater to the needs and requirements of the sponsoring agencies, accommodating factual and emotional need and demands of the sponsors. Limitations which are a natural result of sponsorship, make it difficult for the Directors and Producers to make really brilliant films. There are problems other than the restrictions placed by sponsorship; but these need not be talked about here.

Sometimes we hear the criticism that the Films Division has the monopoly in the field of short films; but this is not true. First of all there is no restriction on anybody in the country regarding making short films. Secondly, Films Division itself shares from a quarter to a half of its annual production programme with the independent producers. Rates of payment to the independent producers have during the last few years been suitably enhanced and unless an independent producer does not have the sense or, experience of proper production planning, he cannot complain of incurring financial loss in making short films for the Films Division or making a film on his own and then selling it to the Films Division. Although distribution of short films through the cinema houses under the clause of compulsory exhibition is totally managed by the Films Division, theoretically speaking it is possible for any short film maker to exhibit his film in the cinema houses. I have said this to make it clear that as far as encouragement to talent is concerned, there are no restrictions placed by the Government. Actually when the programme of making short films specifically to meet the needs of the Television comes through and when the Films Division's projected scheme to have its production set-ups in the four regions of the country becomes a reality, there will be much greater impetus for the private talent.

Then with what I have observed so far, the situation is not very simplc and rosy. The independent short film makers do have a number of problems to face. The first problem is of finance. For the production of feature films where stakes are high, finance does become available aplenty and therefore several hundreds of feature films are produced every year at a very high cost. For the short film producer it is not so easy, specially if the producer is new in the field. Even when the necessary finance is arranged by the producer, the margin of profit is not high enough. Another problem is that of equipment. Most of the essential cinematographic equipment has to be imported. Import of equipment is a very lengthy and difficult drill even for Government offices and departments. Therefore, there is shortage of equipment in the country. Those who have the equipment take undue advantage of the difficult situation and hire out their precious equipment at a very high rate. Therefore, many independent producers do a hurried job and as a result quite a few of the films thus produced are not of a high

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standard. The equipment being very costly most of the producers do not have the equipment of their own. The third problem which the independent producers face when they plan to make a film on their own i.e. not sponsored or assigned by the Films Division is the uncertainty about its exploitation. Unless a completed film is considered to be fit for exhibition under the compulsory clause, the film has hardly any future. Many private producers come to me to seek my advice on certain subjects. Needless to say I cannot be of much help because any advice from me may be considered as some sort of a commitment. The fourth problem which sometimes arises in the case of some of the films assigned by the Films Division is the delay factor. Sometimes scripts prepared by the producers are so poor that they do need several revisions whereas in some cases final comments and approval from the sponsors are not received promptly. In some cases rough-cuts of films suffer from inadequate and indifferent shooting which necessitates additional shooting whereas in some cases the sponsors have second thoughts and suggest inclusion of additional material in the films and commentaries.

The future of short films of the type, the Films Division releases through cinema houses wholly depends on the continuance of the present policy of the Government regarding compulsory exhibition of short films in the theatrical circuits. Inspite of the fact that quite a few of the short films are technically and artistically of a high standard (they receive both national and international recognition), it is extremely doubtful to visualise cinema houses asking for such films after the compulsion clause is withdrawn. A majority of the films released by the Films Division no doubt, add to the knowledge and information of the viewers, but personally I doubt if these films are the only source of this type of information. Secondly in my opinion we have during the last 25 years almost enhanced ourselves. We have played our hand and played it well; but does it mean that we should continue the game for ever and ever? I am of the opinion that instead of continuing to make the so-called documentary films and releasing them through the cinema houses, we should concentrate more and more on the production of films exclusively for our rural masses and for our class-rooms. We have not done much in this field. These films should be made with the missionary zeal and spirit and not with an eye on getting complimentary reviews in the press and bagging prizes and recognition by making sophisticated films. The film maker should spend considerable time in the villages and get familiar with the villagers problems, needs and aspirations and then give them a helping hand through short, simple films. In a way, the Films Division is already doing a very fine job through its set-up at New Delhi where we make 20 to 30 agricultural films per year. In the field of class-room films we have hardly done anything. This is a virgin land waiting for exploration.

Expansion of Television in the country is bound to result into greater demand for all sorts of films. Demand will be great; but again the fear is that after sometime these films may also become repetitive and monotonous. However, production of TV films may mean fewer problems to the independent producers because the cost of production of such films would be much less.

Before I close I would like to repeat that the future of short films lies in the production of class-room films and films for the rural audiences. We should not endlessly depend on the present system of theatrical release under the compulsory clause. □

CHILDREN'S FILMS

L. Shankar

THE Children's Film Society was established in 1955 with similar aims and objects. It was intended that the Society should produce good quality films so as to provide the children of the country with healthy and wholesome entertainment which may dissuade them from going to commercial films, thus saving them from the pernicious effects of low quality Indian and foreign films.

The aim was holy, the idea laudable, and the Society produced, compiled and adapted as many as 88 films within a span of 19 years, out of which 34 are feature and 54 short films. Despite the problems it has had to face at certain stages, the overall performance has not been discouraging. Many of the films produced by the Society were also dubbed in different regional languages for larger circulation in the country. About a dozen films annexed national or international awards.

Constitution, Membership and Funds

The Children's Film Society is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. It is governed by an Executive Council which consists, on the official side, of a Chairman appointed by the Government of India, one representative of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and one from the Finance Ministry who acts as the Financial Adviser, and not more than 3 non-official members. These non-official members, who according to the Rules of the Society, are drawn from the members of the General Body, are nominated by the Government of India. They are generally persons with knowledge of film or film-making or are eminent in the fields of Education, Art, Child Psychology and Child Welfare. The President of India is the Patron of the Society The Society has had among its chair-. men eminent public figures like Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Shri Gopala Reddy and Mrs. Nandini Satpathy with Shri A. J. Kidwai, Secretary Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as its present Chairman.

The bulk of the Society's funds comes as grant-in-aid from the Government of India. The other important sources of revenue are the yearly subscription from State Governments and Union Territories who become affiliate members of the Society; income from sale of prints on perpetual lease to various Government Departments, Corporations etc. for non-commercial screening through their publicity vans and lastly from commercial exhibition of films.

Pattern of Distribution

A children's feature film is six to seven thousand feet long with a running time of between 60 and 80 minutes. One programme of the Society consists of one feature film and one or two short films, depending on their length so that the total

Shri Shankar was formerly Secretary of the Children's Film Society, New Delhi.

duration may not exceed 90 to 100 minutes.

In Bombay and Delhi which are the Head Office and the Registered Office of the Society respectively, a few auditoriums have been permanently acquired on rentals—the Tarabai Hall at Bombay and Sapru House and Nigam Rangshala at Delhi where children's programmes are regularly screened on Sundays and holidays. For exploitation in the country, the Society has appointed regular distributors for different zones. There is one distributor for Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa; another for U.P. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the third for Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Besides these, the Branch Manager of the Films Division Calcutta looks after distribution in the Eastern States of India and the Branch Manager at Hyderabad arranges exhibition throughout Andhra Pradesh. Releases in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi are looked after by the Society's own office at Delhi. All these refer to commercial releases of programmes in 35 mm for morning shows on Sundays and holidays.

Besides these the Children's Film Society has built up a 16 mm film Library of all its films at Bombay and Delhi which enrolls schools, clubs and welfare organisations. These members are supplied programmes for non-commercial showing on a nominal fee which meets the service expenses and the wear and tear. At present there are about 300 such members.

A special activity of the Society is to arrange a Children's Film Week every year which starts from November 14, the birthday of Prime Minister Nehru. During this week films are shown to children all over the country. The Society through its organised efforts during 1973-74 raised an all-time high of three and a half lakh of rupees from this event alone.

Catch Them Young

The C.F.S. is essentially a non-profit-making body. As such, its revenues are ploughed back into film production and their effective distribution and exhibition throughout the country.

There is no doubt that most of the exhibitors and hall owners display a warmth for children's fare. They accommodate and adjust children's film programmes in their theatres even at short notice. Their enthusiasm, however, wanes when they don't get programmes of new films, the old ones having been beaten thin by repeated releases.

To feed the distributors and exhibitors with fresh and new programmes, it is essential that the Society should augment its production activities. The Study Team, appointed to examine the working of the Children's Film Society and suggest improvements, recommended in 1968, the production of at least 12 programmes every year with adequate provision for dubbing into various languages and making sufficient number of prints both in 35 mm and 16 mm to reach a potential mass audience of children.

It is gratifying to note that a crore of rupees has been provided for the C.F.S. to boost its production activities during the Fifth Plan period. After a period of comparative stagnation, the Society is now gearing up its production machinery. Arrangements have almost been finalised to dub the Satyajit Ray-directed film "Sonar Kella" into Hindi. The Society has also negotiated with the Czech and other Governments to procure dubbing rights of a few of their popular films. This is bound to bring a waft of fresh breeze into the activities of the Children's Film Society. The Society has already produced a Jungle film with Russian collaboration which is now being readied for early release. Another deal is being entered into with the Moscow Studio for production of a second jungle film.

To acquaint the Indian Children with the culture, customs, costumes and the way of life and thinking of children in other countries, an International Retrospective Children's Film Festival was held at Delhi and three other centres—Bombay, Bangalore and Madras—during the current year. Many more such festivals need to be organised and more frequently. While the Producers and Directors from different countries were invited to the Festival, the real 'standard-bearers of the Future' from foreign land, were conspicuous by their absence. There were more adults than children at the shows and one had to be told that it was a children's film festival. It may not be a bad idea to invite batches of children from the participating countries, who can attend the festival and film weeks in different cities of India as delegates and meet their counter-parts in the host country. This will mean a real cultural fusion of highly impressionable minds and will give depth and dimension to international film festivals.

Despite all ado one has to admit that not enough has been done in this direction. In a vast country like India, with its numerous cities, towns and villages, the existence of C.F.S. is not known in many parts, leave alone the frequent screening of its films. The situation cannot improve unless a children's film movement is created to sweep across the whole of India. The movement can emanate and get impetus only from two things:

Children's Film Movement

1. A regular turnover of feature films of better genre. At present there is a dearth of meaningful and amusing feature films of quality for children. Ways and means have to be evolved and sources in the film industry have to be tapped to step up production.

2. Dependent upon the first and equally important are the arrangements to ensure that these films get the widest screening so that they are seen and enjoyed by children not only in cities and suburban areas but also in the remote villages. The film must reach children in the villages, our exhibition drive has to be rural-biased. An efficient infrastructure needs to be set up in all the states for this work. This can be achieved with the active cooperation of the States. At present, hardly two-thirds of the States are members of the Society. The C.F.S. has, therefore, to enlist them as members. create interest in them and involve them as participants in the Society's projects, so that proper and adequate machinery is set in motion, for exhibition of its films to the rural children all over the country. After all it is the children of the States for whose entertainment and benefit the films are being produced. Unless this strategy is perfected and children know that they have their own films ready on hand, they cannot be prevented from being exposed to commercial stuff when it would be difficult to wean them away from the corrupting influence of adult films.

The yardstick, therefore, for the success of the Children's Film Society is the building up of an effective Children's Film Movement in the country with regular refuelling in terms of new feature films to add momentum to the movement.

The task is not gigantic. It only needs devoted workers with honesty and personal dedication to the cause of children and their future well-being. □

Interview

The Distributor Is The Real Villain

—RAJENDRA SINGH BEDI

RAJENDRA Singh Bedi, a recipient of the Padmashri award, noted screen play writer with many screen plays to his credit, and the producer of 'Dastak' which won national awards on four counts, believes that the film maker has a social responsibility. Therefore, when asked whether Indian films reflect the national scene and social behaviour, he said that our films are not true to either. "I have a poor opinion about our films of the present day. This was not the case some 30 years ago, when there were great film companies like New Theatres, Prabhat, Bombay Talkies and East India Films which produced a number of good films. Many of them had a social and religious slant also. The audience also was different from what it is now. But the most important point is that the film makers in those days believed in producing healthy entertainment.

But with the coming of the 2nd World War and lot of money accompanying it, there came a sea change in the film world. A new class of sharks came into existence in the form of distributors. They started financihg film production solely with the object of making money. An era of musicals started. As the distributors got a stranglehold of the industry, the box office became the Frankenstein, making the story, direction, contents and in fact everything secondary to it in importance.

Then came the films from the South, which assumed the mental age of the audience as twelve. Naturally, these films had no connection with reality and only fantasies and all that came with it was produced. All through this, the film-maker seems to have forgotten his responsibility to the society."

But some film makers say that the Indian Cine-audience get what they deserve or want. Do you also think likewise?

R.S.B. I do not believe in this. It is the duty of the film maker not only to entertain the audience but also to educate them. Those who say that they are producing films because the audience wants them to produce that way, are doing great disservice to society.

In fact, now-a-days it is the distributor who sets the tone of the film and the producer and the director and everybody else has to dance to his tune.

Is there no way out of this situation?

R.S.B. : Yes, the Govt. can do a lot in this respect. There is already a scheme of the govt to set up 100 art theatres in various parts of the country where it will be possible for the producers to exhibit their films If this scheme materialises, it will go a long way to promote good films. However, the progress in this regard is very, very slow.

Recently the taxes on films and entertainment have been raised in many States. Would you like to comment ?

R.S.B. : The governmet can well raise taxes on films as on other things. But I strongly feel that a large share of the amount so realised should be utilised for the promotion of the film industry.

But the Govt. have already set up the F.F.C. for this purpose.

R.S.B. : The Film Finance Corporation no doubt has been doing a good job and thanks to FFC, many new and budding film makers have started to produce quality films. My very first venture in production, namely, 'Dastak' was produced with the help of FFC.

But the distributor has still the upper hand in this field. He dictates who of the top ranking artists should be included and the producer, the Director and the story writer have all to subordinate themselves to his wishes. Because of this dominance of the distributor, it is even difficult to exhibit a film without his blessings.

In the circumstances, do you think it desirable to nationalise the film industry ?

R.S.B. : Taking into consideration the experience of the other public sector ventures, I do not think that this industry should be nationalised. I feel that nationalisation will stifle creative talent and give rise to various other ills that go with nationalisation.

What is your opinion about our film magazines ?

R.S.B. : Film magazines have mushroomed today. Many of them publish scandals, gossip etc. Even so, I have a great regard for some of the film journals and I must say that they help in giving publicity to good films. My film 'Dastak' which did not include any of the top ranking artistes, could not have been a success had it not been supported by the film journalists.

Children's Films Should Not Be Didactic

—KAMINI KAUSHAL

There is a strong feeling that though India is one of the biggest producers of films, very little has been done in the field of children's films. Where exactly do you think have we failed?

K.K.: It is true we in India have not been able to produce good children's films. The most important reason for this is that it is not easy to produce such films. To make a film for children, one has to attune oneself to the child's thoughts, attitudes and needs. One must remember that children's films need not be necessarily about children. They should be produced from the child's point of view. Take, for instance, a simple thing like climbing a hill. It will be viewed by the child in a way different from an adult. The child may be thrilled to see it while the adult may see it passively. There is no dearth of material in the country for producing such films. There is plenty of it and the scope is immense. What does not exist is the right approach. One must think like a child to know how he will react to a situation. Very few of the films produced in our country as children's films come up to this expectation. Another



reason for lack of children's films is that there is practically no proper distribution system. There are very few theatres to show children's films. As very little has been done to popularise children's films, there is very little initiative on the part of entrepreneurs to produce them. There is little profit in this business. This is one important reason why we should set in motion a nationwide children's film movement. Who then should do this? Institutions, organisations and associations engaged in the welfare of children should take up this question and strive to build a network of producers and exhibitors. Children not only need to be educated but entertained. This is a special task.

What according to you constiutes a good children's film?

K.K.: As I said earlier, the children's film must project the child's point of view. It need not be merely educative or instructive but principally entertaining and engrossing. The child must feel intensely absorbed in the film. It should respond to what he sees on the screen. The film maker should not try to draw any conclusion or moral like a teacher, but should

leave it to the child to draw his own lessons, his own satisfaction. In short, it should provide for the child wholesome and worthwhile entertainment.

Another thing about a good children's film is, it should encourage children to think, by arousing a sense of awareness and a sense of curiosity. Curiosity is the mother of knowledge.

Don't you think that in our film industry, very little has been done to harness children's talents ?

K.K. : Yes. The reason for this according to me is there is not much scope for children in our films as they are produced today.

Should the production of children's films be nationalised ?

K.K.: I don't think so. In fact, efforts must be made to encourage individual producers by providing finance etc. like what FFC is doing. If the production is nationalised, there is danger of its becoming static and stereotyped.

You have been associated with the Selection Board for candidates to the Film Institute, Poona. Will you give your assessment of the candidates and training given at the Institute ?

K.K.: About the training given there, I must say that it is the most scientific and methodical. The Institute provides basic grounding necessary for a film career. It is no wonder therefore that many a student has been successful in the film world after passing out. We of the earlier generation did not get any such training but we used to act mostly on the strength of our own talents. We were not taught why one should act in a particular way. But the students coming out of the Institute are given scientific training in acting in all kinds of sequences. Of course, one cannot expect every trainee to come out with flying colours. There are some mediocre students as well who join the Institute and naturally they are not able to make much headway. But on the whole, I must say that the Institute has definitely been helpful in building up the career of a number of talented boys and girls.

ART IS HARMONY

A PERSON without art is like a beast. But how will you define art? Art is "skill in work". The Yoga of the third chapter of the Gita is perfect art. And this is also true about the activities generally known as art. Any activity in which the masses cannot participate is not art, but a kind of self-indulgence, whether it concerns the voice or clothes or stone. Large numbers singing Ramdhun in unison is art, which ought to be cultivated. Many temples have art, and their art is something which can be appreciated by the masses. The daily worship and readings from holy books which take place in temples, if kept within measure and done with genuine faith, are best forms of art. Thus, there is art wherever harmony prevails as regards the time, the place and the occasion. I do not like films. I have never gone to a cinema.

—Gandhiji

The Producer Is Under Restrictions—*SHATRUGHAN SINHA*

WHEN I MET Shri Shatrughan Sinha on the sets of the "Khan Dost", at R.K. Studios, he was quite informal and replied to my questions without any reservations. Shri Sinha is playing the role of a criminal in the film and we talked on the set itself.

Being the product of the Film Institute, I first asked him about his opinion regarding the Institute and the training given there. Shri Sinha replied "the training given at the Institute and the results achieved so far are really fantastic. Many trainees from that Institute have acquired for themselves a place of pride in the film world in a very short time. The training has instilled in me a sort of confidence because of which I am able to face even stalwarts in the field though I am comparatively a new entrant. If there are a few who might not have lived up to the reputation of the Institute, the Institute is not to be blamed. The training given there is quite scientific and systematic. However, this cannot be said about the selection of the candidates for training. It appears that in some cases the selectors are ruled more by heart than by the brain and therefore, an impression is created that the selection, in some cases, is made because of influence rather than the talent of the candidates concerned."

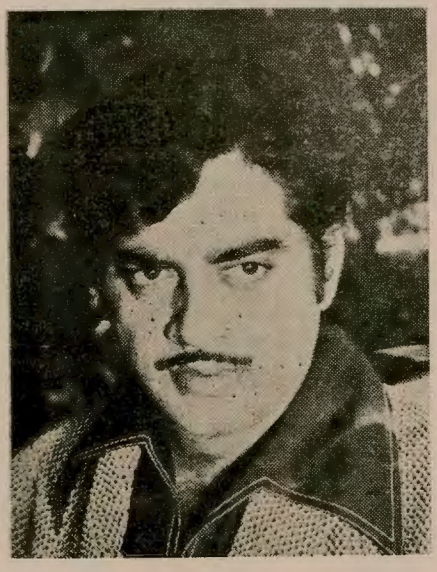
—Avinash Godbole

What was the secret of your success as a villain in the face of other established stars of the day, when you made appearance on the screen?

S.S.: In fact, I no more play that type of roles, yet some people try to locate me in that make-up though I am no more in it. In fact, I have played hero's roles in some of the recent films. As for me, I do not classify different roles into villain or a hero. For me, it is a character, the personality of which I have to project and I could succeed in a short time because of my individuality and style in doing that. I did not try to imitate anybody nor did I do overacting or underacting. I simply tried to project the character as it was expected to be.

What is your opinion about Indian films? Do they reflect Indian life as it is ? What according to you is the major contribution of the films to the society and don't you agree that films being a powerful medium of mass communication should be more educative than entertaining ?

S.S.: If you mean Hindi films when you refer to Indian films, I must say that they have helped a lot in propagating Hindi, the national language throughout the country. About the reality in films and their educative value, it is just not possible for a film maker to project them due to various restrictions imposed by the censors. In the circumstances, how can a film maker produce films to educate the public against the menace of bribe, smuggling etc. This



is just an example. For instance, we, in our daily life, hear stories about policemen and government officials taking bribes and doing so many other bad things. We find incidence of violence in and around us. Do you think that these things will be allowed to be shown on the screen ? Will the Ministry of I&B allow a film showing a police officer, a government official, a doctor and engineer taking bribe? There is one other point also. Everyone has his problems and worries in life. Most people do not get what they aspire for and as they love to see their dreams and expectations coming true at least on the screen, They want to see others at least achieving things which they could not. As for restrictions on showing realities in films, I had talked to your Deputy Minister Shri Dharamvir Sinha, and asked him to do something. Will he do it?

Now about film magazines. Private lives of leading film stars projected through these magazines have often been their image-destroyers. Do you think that film journalism as it exists today, reflects the true state of affairs?

S.S.: I do not think that the scandals and the gossip in the film magazines will harm the popularity of any star if he continues to give his best performance in whatever film he acts. I, for one, am not at all afraid of such stories. However, I am also a human being and I have feelings of love, hatred etc., like everyone else. Naturally I would like to spare my parents, friends and relatives the torture of facing a scandalous story about me.

About film journalism, I must say that barring a few exceptions, they are just rags. They are nothing but scavengers who thrive on dirt and create dirt where there is none. I accuse the white, that is the clean press of surrendering to the disgraceful, sensation mongering yellow press. By doing so, it has damaged its own image.

It is A Tough Life

—JAYA BHADURI

Do you think that the training given at Poona needs any modification ?

J.B.: I do not think. In fact, I have not given thought to it.

You have gone a long way since "Guddi" was produced. Do you think that your proven talent for creative acting has invariably given full opportunity to bloom by the directors of other films in which you have acted ?

J.B. : Yes. The directors by and large have been very nice to me and they have given me full scope to show my ability in acting.

Have marriage and motherhood enriched your professional career ?

J.B.: I don't know. I must however, say that motherhood has made me more home loving. I don't think it has affected my professional career in any way. At least not till now.

Would you like your child to choose a film career ?

J.B.: No. But in fact it is for her to decide. I would not like to force my views in that case.

But what will be your advice to her, if it is asked for ?

J.B. : If I have to give decision, I personaly would not like my child to choose a film career.

Having chosen a film career for yourself, why don't you like your child to go that way ?

J.B.: I chose this career because I had a liking for this line. Besides, I like hard work. Working in films is not an easy job, as people outside think it to be. One has to put in lot of hard work. One has to sacrifice a lot, and actually, the results you get are not commensurate with the efforts you have put in. Besides, working in film also makes your life irregular. I chose this line not for any glamour. Even though people might be thinking our life to be glamourous, it is really quite strernuous. When one is acting in a film, it is hanging on one's mind even if one is not on the sets. Taking all these things into consideration, I said I woudn't like my child to choose a film career.

You are one of the proud products of the Film Institute of Poona. Would you please tell us how far the professional training has helped in your career as an actress ?

J.B.: The training at the Institute is absolutely perfect and has certainly helped me in making what I am now. Without a good grooming at the Institute, it would have been difficult for me, rather it is difficult for anybody, to make headway in the film world in a short time.

R. S. Bedi, Kamini Kaushal, Shatrughan Sinha, Jaya Bhaduri, Amitabh Bachchan, and Sunil Dutt were interviewed in Bombay by—

AVINASH R. GODBOLE
Sr. Correspondent, YOJANA

Stars Only Take Their Due

—AMITABH BACHCHAN

You are among the leading stars in the film world with a bright future. Would you care to comment upon the star system fostered by popular Indian film stars ?

A.B.: I do not think there is anything wrong in it. In fact, this system is prevailing not only in India but in the world also. When the audience likes the performance of a particular film star, they want to see him more and more in films. Naturally there is demand for that star from the producers and he is sought after by them.

The popularity of the film star also reflects in the box office collections, and I see nothing wrong if the star, because of whom the film fetches such a good return, also asked a share in the amount.

Generally speaking how have you got on with the directors ? Is there any scope for your creative talent in a commercial film ?

A.B.: There has been no difficulty with me in that respects, I have generally got on very well with almost all my directors. Wise director generally knows the capabilities of the actor and he is amenable to the suggestions made by him. I have been allowed by my directors to express myself the way in which I thought fit. Of course, the production of a film is not just a tomfoolery. It is a serious business· And considering this fact, I must admit that it is director's prerogative to make suggestions to the actor in regard to acting in a particular sequence.

What is your opinion about film magazines and the gossiping that comes with it ? You must have read Shri Shatrughan Sinha's article in the Illustrated Weekly. Do you agree with it ?

A.B.: I am generally in agreement with what Shatru has recently said in that article. The readers also know how much value they should give to what appears in those magazines. It is time now that the film magazines realize that mere gossiping is not going to be enough.

QUOTATION BOX

This dirty yellow press has almost changed the attitude of the people towards the press. Even in the near past, the press was a symbol of authenticity. Our elders would quote the press to make a point. But today, by and large, people just refuse to take the press seriously. And it is all the more tragic because the Fourth Estate is doing nothing about it

Journalism is no longer a matter of ethics—it has become a business

....In the public eye, we are not our individual selves but we are the characters with whom the audience is in love! They never allow us to put off this mask....They are in love with the "image" of a star, and not with the star himself! And that is why we try to keep our "image" intact! This image of a star is the vehicle of a film's success.

One of these days, I am going to put a sign on my door that yellow journalists are not allowed because they are quite capable of destroying the morale of my dogs!

—Shatrughan Sinha

The Chicago festival (film festival) seeks to exhibit films that were not made simply to attract an audience, but to deserve an audience.

—Bob Polumbo

Love, it has been written, is not rational, Neither are film festivals. Especally those in the United States.

—John Stirn

It is memory that involves the actor personally, so that deep rooted emotional experiences begin to respond. His instrument awakens and he becomes capable of the kind of living on the stage which is essentially re-living.

—Lee Strasberg

They (Group Theatre Actors in New York) felt that in the absence of a national art repertory theatre, professional actors needed a place where they could work together between jobs or during long runs. Such a workshop, they agreed, would permit performers to develop as actors and allow creative theatre work.

—Jack Matcha

Unless he should happen to be his own producer, a filmmaker need not embroil himself with the sordid business of trying to sell his own product.

It is hard to believe that the major foreign producers would earmark their more prestigious productions for India (for Film Festivals), when as a potential market India has so little to offer.

—Satyajit Ray

If commercial cinema does not merit consideration for awards, I do not see why we should enter films for the National Awards.

—V. Shantaram

After all, commercials must be recognised by the Govt, because they were made not so much for awards as for the people.

—U Visweswar Roy
President,
Film Producers' Guild of South India

I have an enormous amount of talent but I deliberately waste it.

—Richard Burton

Art Films Need Art Theatres

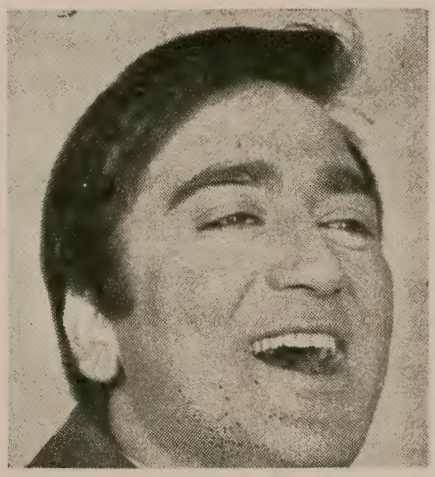
—*SUNIL DUTT*

Looking back on your spectacular successes and failures, what message have you for the venturesome producer who wants to combine quality with commercial success?

S.D.: I believe in the philosophy of 'Bhagwat Geeta'. One must keep on doing his work to the best of ones' efforts and should not bother about the results. In carrying out a thing of one's conviction, one should not spare oneself. This has been my guiding principle throughout. One must try to give of his best in whatever things he takes up in hand. I never got elated on my successes nor do I get disheartened over my failures.

Though your film "Yaaden" which was one of the best experimental films was acclaimed by the film critics, it did not prove a box office hit. What reasons would you attribute to its failure as a commercial proposition?

S.D.: It is true that my film "Yaaden" did not prove a box office success though I got kudos from the film critics. But it was not unexpected. Experimental film or art films have never been box office hits, the world over. They are apprecia, ted by the chosen few. Those are the films



for the elite and not for the masses. Besides, as in other fields, the pioneer in film line also has to suffer. If I am right, even in the case of Shri Satyajit Ray, his earlier films were not a success. After 'Pather Panchali', his films became popular. Of course a quality film does get an award and to that extent, it is a matter of satisfaction to the film maker but they do not always prove successful at the box office.

Is there any future for experimental films in India?

S.D. : Yes. No doubt to produce such films is a big venture. As I said, such films do not attract large crowds and therefore, it becomes difficult to exhibit those in the present day theatres whose rentals are very high. It is difficult to find a distributor to take them. If, however, there are theatres where the rental will be nominal, it will certainly encourage production of such films.

But there is already a proposal to set up 100 art theatres in the country.

S.D. : It is to be seen when it materialises.

There is also a question of finance these days. Even an ordinary film costs not less than 10 to 12 lakhs of rupees and if there is no possibility of recovering that money, nobody would venture in this field.

But doesn't FFC help production of such films?

S.D.: Yes. But that finance is not enough. They advance to the tune of Rs 2 to 2.5 lakhs. This amount is totally inadequate these days to produce even films in regional languages. Therefore, as I said, if there is a network of art theatres and provision for finance, there is definitely a future for experimental films in the country

Ideals Do'nt Stand On Clay Feet

M. G. RAMACHANDRAN

INTERVIEWED BY SHRI POORNAM VISWANATHAN

SHRI M. G. Ramachandran, popularly known as 'MGR' among the Tamil knowing people, has been a matinee idol for long. A well preserved, soft spoken artiste, MGR has become something of a living legend. His heroic roles in countless Tamil movies in which he invariably appears as the defender of justice and the poor has earned for him the title of Puratchi Nadigar *(a revolutionary artist). This silver screen image built over a period of two decades and supported by his munificience in the cause of the poor has also enabled him to enter Tamil Nadu's political life, making him at once a much admired and controversial figure.*

The artiste has an important role in effecting social changes. Are the film artistes able to achieve this ideal through the Tamil pictures as they are produced today ?

M.G.R. : The fact that artistes like me have come up in society amply proves that the ideal is being achieved. As an artiste I don righteous roles, thinking, professing and doing only righteous things. The words which I speak through these characters do have an impact on the cine-goer. He respects the thoughts contained in these words. That is why I have been able to produce a deep impression on his mind as an artiste with conviction.

Shouldn't artistes refuse to take up roles in any film which does not lift up society ?

M.G.R. : Yes ; but only when they are also guaranteed a subsistence like other workers.

The artiste must first of all have the proper means to live. Idealism can come only later. It cannot be the duty of the artiste alone to be preoccupied with the social purpose. The workers who build or operate a factory without being conscious of any social purpose and with the full knowledge that it is going to be owned by only one individual or by a small-group, do get their wages. Government employees implicitly implement the orders issued by Ministers even if these orders go against their conscience or against the interests of the society and they too get their wages. Why should the artiste alone suffer in poverty while fighting for an ideal? He can fight for social uplift only when his minimum needs are also guaranteed. He must also be given benefits according to his experience; he is also entitiled to retirement benefits. The opportunity to express himself with full freedom can be given to him after all this is guaranteed; only then can he dedicate himself to a social cause. In the present state of insecurity, an artiste considers any film engagement as manna from heaven.



At a recent meeting of writers, a strong section insisted that real writers should not concentrate on material benefits. Does this not apply to artistes ?

M.G.R. : Well, I insist that an artiste can talk about ideals only after he has firmly found his feet, not before that. In the first picture where I was introduced as the hero, my character was one who could achieve anything through magical powers. The hero thus conveyed a wrong message which went against the interests of society. If I had, with a high social ideal, refused to do that role, I would not then have been introduced as a hero to the cine-goers. I would not do any such role now. But at that time my only concern was my very existence. Unless you are accepted as a great artiste by the people, all the talk you do about social and national ideals will never stick in their minds.

Films should positively reflect and stress the unique cultural values of our country and in particular Tamil Nadu. Any comments ?

M.G.R. : There cannot be two views on this. But nobody has so far interpreted

the culture of our country in a clearcut way. What I say may surprise many; but, after careful study they will thank me for this view. Till some years back, any person known to use a Nirodh-like device was condemned as one without character. Now Nirodh is acclaimed as the saviour of our future society and is publicised as such by Government. This proves that our cultural values have been changing according to social needs. It is therefore absolutely necessary for those interested in social and cultural progress to define our cultural values through clearly drawn lines and limits.

In spite of the enormous growth in the number of cine-goers in Tamil Nadu, there is a view that there has been no corresponding improvement in art appreciation. Can you say that artistes are playing their role faithfully in this regard ?

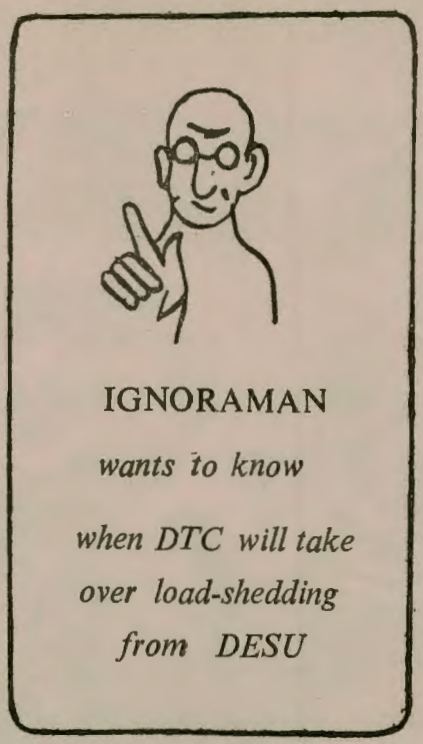
M.G.R. : In one of the early Tamil films there was a kissing scene on the lines of English films. It was well appreciated by the people. There was a near riot on one occasion when a lady who was to appear nude on the stage did not ultimately appear so. That was one type of art appreciation. Later people started frowning on intimate scenes in films; and such scenes were automatically dropped from films. Now we have all sorts of free scenes in the name of 'New Wave'. Tamil film-goers have once appreciated films without any intimate scene at all. The question that naturally arises is whether the present trend indicates any deterioration in art appreciation and, if so, what exactly is needed to improve the position. The standard of art appreciation changes periodically according to changes in civilisation. It is the duty of the social leaders to see that the Tamil culture is not contaminated by foreign culture.

How is it that of late most of the Tamil films produced here have failed ?

M.G.R.: Certain views and rules have got to be stressed in films for social change and for the amelioration of the people's sufferings But when film makers attempt to show off by propounding ununderstandable theories and confusing the people, their films fail. When the film makers try to display themselves as apart from the people or as wiser than the people, their films fail. When the film makers are bothered only about the number of films they are able to make, they fail. When at a given stage the people do not get what they want through films, the producers meet with failure. Our films will succeed only when the producers feel the pulse of the people properly and deliver the goods. They must locate the real reasons for failures when actually the number of cinema lovers has been steadily mounting in Tamil Nadu.

How is it that the star system still persists in Madras while Bombay has succeeded in introducing new faces?

M.G.R.: A star is one who has been accepted as such by the people. Why



should he or she leave the field at All. A new face is no longer a new face, but becomes a star, when he or she is acclaimed as a great artiste and encouraged as such. Bombay has certainly introduced some new faces. But how many of them have succeeded in becoming really popular? In how many films has Rishi Kapur of 'Bobby' fame been booked? The moment the new faces become stars, a new star system is born. A successful artiste, like a successful author or a successful journal, can go on as long as his success lasts. To try to put an end to star system forcibly is to deprive the society of the good services of successful artistes You cannot force a singer to stop his music after his successful debut. Stars cannot last longer than their success. It will therefore be better if attempts are made to introduce and encourage more and more competent men who can bring into the film field new artistic skills and techniques. If the monopolists of the film world are not prepared to do this, Government must come forward to undertake this task. It is a subject which deserves deep study and discussion.

To what extent would you like to have Government's voice in the film industry?

M.G.R.: Government should not interfere, but should only help the industry. Persons holding diametrically opposite views on social, cultural, religious and political values may all have real artistic taste. It is not easy for the Government to decide which particular taste needs to be promoted and which not. If the Government can decide on the steps to encourage the art forms for the genuine benefit of the nation, such a Government can certainly take over the film industry. But the present state of affairs is that each State has its own way of thinking, its own procedure on the basis of election results, its own way of bolstering up its incompetence. Rationalisation of the film industry can happen only under a totally different condition.

What are your views about the present method of film censorship?

M.G.R.: The present position is that the method of censorship varies from place to place, from picture to picture. This can only be attributed to the fact that the rules and regulations governing censorship are vague and ambiguous. Any sequence may be cut or retained according to the mental state of the censors at the time of screening; this has been the experience of many producers in Tamil Nadu for a number of years. A scene permitted in a Malayalam film will be cut in a Tamil film. Reason: the Censors for the former are different from those for the latter. The producer has therefore to make his film on the basis of the likes and dislikes of the Censors at a given time. The rules and regulations must be correct and sure and must reflect an interest in the welfare of the people. Those who revel in meaningless criticism and those who want to promote party politics should be kept out of Censor Boards. Competent directors, artistes, writers and producers should be taken into them

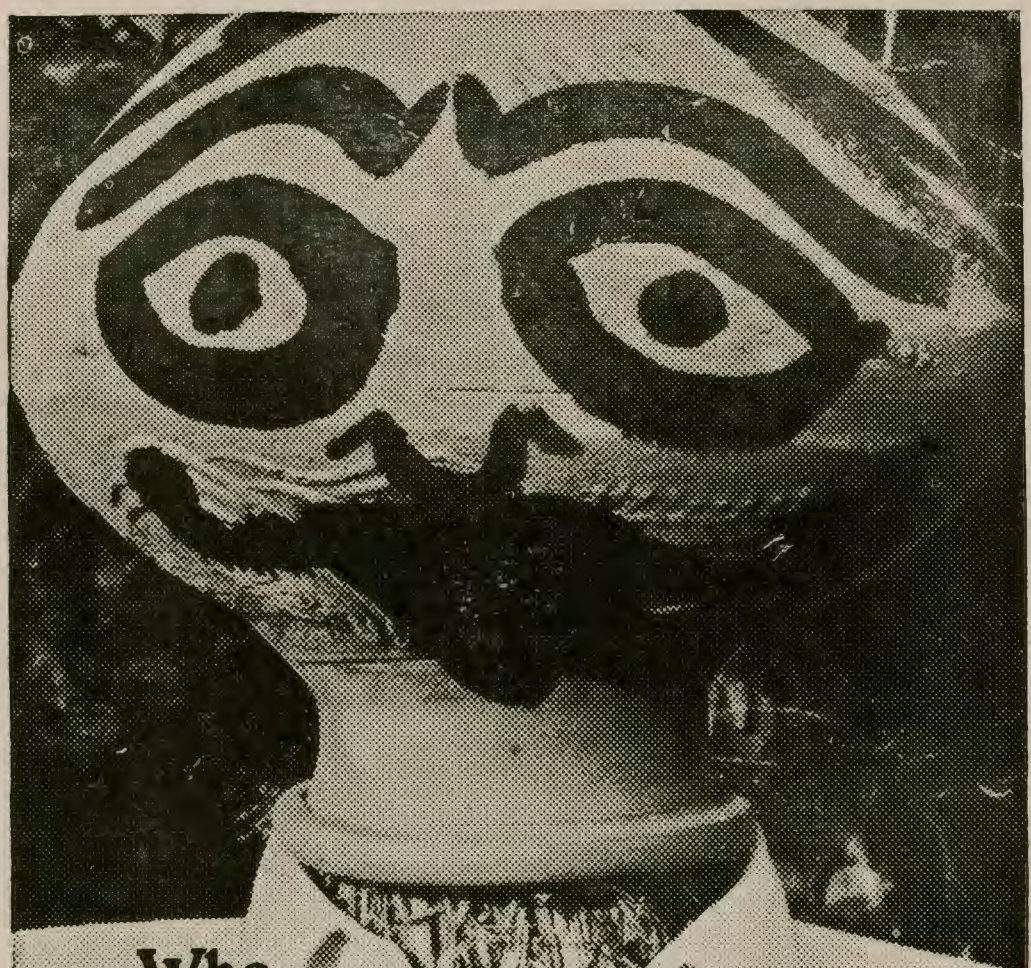
Are you happy about the method by which artistes and films are selected for national and regional awards?

M.G.R.: Even in the matter of filtering films for regional awards, there is said to be interference and domination from certain representatives of the film industry itself. That is why there are allegations about popular films being kept out of the run. In the first place, the regional selection committees should be composed only of competent writers, artistes, directors, producers etc. These bodies must elect members for the National Selection Committee. Secondly, all the regional language films must be viewed by all the members of the respective regional selection committees. The members should never be permitted to divide the entries among themselves and view only those which they choose to; this practice will only limit the scope of selection. All the films selected by the regional bodies should be viewed by all the members of the national body. The people must be mature enough to accept any selections for awards thus arrived at. Regional and national awards have been instituted with a laudable objective. It is not proper to damage the objective by exaggerating any shortcomings which we normally come across in the initial stages. □

Growth of Cinema Houses

There has been a steady growth of exhibition facilities for showing films in the country. The estimated number of seats in the cinemas (permanent and touring) at the end of 1972-73 was 49,27,000 and about 62 lakh persons witness cinema every day. The following toble gives the number of cinemas since 1956.

Cinemas	1956	1960-61	1965-66	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73
Permanent	2,827	3,579	3,889	4,296	4,482	4,590	4,787	5,139
Touring	980	1,241	1,740	2,435	2,505	2,711	2,801	2,659
Total	3,807	4,820	5,629	6,731	6,987	7,301	7,588	7,798



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FILM CENSORING

A. K. Sen

IN A DEMOCRATIC country such as ours, the freedom to choose is of the essence. In every enlightened society the exercise of this freedom is both a privilege and a responsibility and where it fails to fulfil the higher purposes of cohesion and progress the need to restrain its operation arises. This is true of all times and countries.

Censorship in films is an emotionally charged subject because carried out properly, it has a complementary but also an apparently contradictory function. In the first place, by its very nature censorship has a restrictive and negative role to play; on the other hand, equally, it is through "enlightened censorship" that the very freedoms which we seek to preserve, can in fact be preserved.

It is therefore necessary to examine in what relationship films should stand to society (and vice versa) before we can define the role of the censor.

It is a widely acknowledged fact that films do have a far-reaching impact on society. One has only to recall the use made of this particular mass medium admittedly in a grotesque form by the Nazis in pre-Second World War Germany. They not only prevented the realities of the situation from emerging but by a careful play on people's emotions they succeeded in establishing the pseudo-reality of the abhorrent fascist system to which that State was wedded. An example in its exaggerated form has deliberately been cited here to illustrate the power of this particular medium.

Switching to the Indian cinema of today, which reaches a far-flung audience from Kashmir to Kanyakumari—an audience practising different creeds, speaking different languages and living in different climates, it would only be wise to ask of Indian films as a whole—"Quo Vadis?" What is their purpose and what effect do they have on the widely varying and varied audience both old and young?

If one agrees with the premise that the movie can and does influence society, we might ask if the film does reflect society? Generalisation may be difficult, but taking Hindi films as an example since they command the widest audience, it has to be admitted that by and large the answer is in the negative. There are of course shining exceptions like "Hindustan Ki Kasam' or Koshish' or 'Do Boond Pani' or '27 Down', as also those of, for instance, Satyajit Ray's, but ironically these films have not been known to run for long and they nearly flopped as "box office" attractions. Ray's "Pather Panchali", to take an example, which showed life in our villages in the 1920's, won laurels for this country when exhibited abroad. A wider audience abroad than the one at home seemed to appreciate it better. Equally, his "Sheemabaddha"—"Company Ltd.," —was recently running to capacity houses abroad, but how many Indians have seen it in India outside Calcutta? What attempt has been made to add sub-titles or dubbing so that a wider audience in this country can see it? The answer, alas, is in the negative.

Our people are "conditioned" to appreciate films of James Bondian fantasy containing drama, tragedy, comedy, slapstick .. all rolled into one, in a three hour celluloid dreamworld. The answer to this criticism is that nothing succeeds like success and that a successful film is the one people like to see and pay for! Admittedly, the film industry is a business, and the profit motive cannot be ignored but even big business cannot ignore social obligations which are at least as important as profits.

Thus we have a peculiar situation fraught with danger, in which the screen can and does influence society and yet for its part can or does subordinate social purpose to profits. In actual practice, what it succeeds in reflecting is largely a dreamworld —a form of escapism and we are content to sit "back and say well this is what people want" Well, do they? Do we really know what the people want or is it that finding nothing better, they tend to accept and even appreciate what alone is available?

There appears at the moment to be a "great divide" between film makers and censors, whereas in reality they should both have a common objective. It is heartening that censorship is now being put on a sounder footing, charged with mutual responsibility, together with film producers of reflecting life and at the same time ensuring maximum possible entertainment. The Cinematograph (Second Amendment) Bill, 1974, holds out a promise that if properly implemented, the conflicting interests of the producers and censors will be considerably reconciled. This

Shri Sen was formerly Regional Officer, Films Censor Board, Calcutta, and Director General, All India Radio, New Delhi.

FILM APPRECIATION IS FILM CULTURE

What is film appreciation? Although the answer seems obvious, it is well to reiterate that film appreciation is not mere knowledge of film history and trends: basically it is film culture. And like all culture, the end-product is, or should be, something more than the sum-total of what goes into the study. No culture is ever finally achieved after a course of studies; it is a continuing process of understanding and of the development of sensitivity. What then is the special element in film culture? I think it lies in the understanding of the similarities and differences between the cinema and the other arts, in approaching nearer and nearer to the essence of the medium of film expression. Of course it entails knowledge of film history, achievements, trends and technical developments as the means of developing one's appreciation of the medium. But without general culture, film culture is impossible; and film appreciation can be taught successfully only to those who have some innate sensitivity developed through a general cultural level. In this, film appreciation is very different from the appreciation, or the practice of, say, music.

The story, probably apocryphal, is told of the late Ustad Fayyaz Khan, that one day during the early years of World War II, he interrupted his singing of Darbadi Kanada to ask one of his pupils, "I hear there is a war on; who is fighting whom?" "The Germans and the English," replied the pupil. "They were fighting in 1914", said the 'Master' "and they are still carrying on—that's a long time to fight." Having made this extraordinary pronouncement, the Ustad resumed his singing. Would Fayyaz Khan have been a better musician if he had read the newspaper every morning? I do not know.

It is impossible, I should think, to practise great film-making in such splendid isolation. Perhaps because the film can never be pure abstraction like music, because it expresses itself through realistic forms, and is related to all the other arts, it cannot be practised without awareness of reality; nor can it be appreciated in isolation.

—Chidenanda Dasgupta

PRESIDENT'S TRIBUTE TO INDIAN CINEMA

Giving away the Twenty-first National Awards for Films for the year 1973, the President, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, paid tributes to the motion picture medium in this country for its contribution to the evolution of the national language, for raising the political consciousness of the nation during the freedom struggle and for creating a new form of music.

"The cinema has contributed to the evolution of a commonly understood lingua franca without any formal attempt at doing so. It has created a form of music which has not only imbibed the fundamentals of our folk and classical music but also reacted to the influences from friendly lands 'he said'.

Paying tributes to the pioneers of film industry and other performing arts, he added: "One does recall with admiration the achieve ments of film-makers who could achieve these results within the political constraints of foreign rule."

After independence, Shri Ahmed went on to say, this challenge had assumed still greater magnitude. The leaders of the film industry who controlled this powerful medium of public education had a great social responsibility.

The President expressed his satisfaction that in recent years there was a marked qualitative improvement in films. Film-makers had again come forward to assume responsibility and while subserving the entertainment objectives that this commercial medium put forward, the ultimate goal of social action was not being lost sight of.

Making a reference to the regional cinema, the President observed: India, being a multi-lingual country, has several streams of cultural heritage which together form a gigantic mainstream of Indian ethos and culture. We will have, however, to ensure that beautiful creations in the regional languages are provided an opportunity for nation-wide circulation."

would call for effective channels of communication between the film director/producer and the censor so that the former's style is not cramped and the latter acts with understanding and is not too overcautious in giving precensorship advice.

The censors will therefore have a positive and creative role to play instead of merely a negative one. People of integrity and imagination should be able to fulfil this function in its ever-widening dimension. In distinguishing between 'art' and 'licence' they will constantly have to apply a 'measuring rod' to determine whether a film projects things in a beautiful, sensible way. A film conveying a sublime message can be bad, a sex film can be technically very good. What does this signify? Since the film medium is of immense social importance, the 'measuring rod' would have to take into account the impact of films on the youth which forms so large a part of the audience. We must neither be afraid to portray life, nor must life be portrayed through fear. In this context, the existing rules governing certification as 'Universal' and 'Adult' films need to be vigorously enforced which unfortunately is not being done at the moment. This same 'measuring rod' should be a constant apparatus for the censors and perhaps three areas where it may be applied —amongst others—might serve as illustrations. First, the censors will have to be acutely conscious of the effect of films on delinquent minds and their capacity to influence crime, brutality, etc. This does not mean that violence and crime which exist in life should not be reflected in the cinema, but the perpetration of crime does not have to be portrayed in all its suggestive details. Secondly, while reality should be portrayed it must not be done in a manner which will heighten feelings of insecurity and frustration which exist in all societies and particularly in a society where audience reaction is not too discriminating. To use a well worn cliche, the requirements of a developing country like India make complex demands on the film producer and director. We are still at the stage of having to promote social and aesthetic values appropriate to the historical process of development we are now passing through. Film appreciation is not merely art appreciation. It is that and far more. Nor can films be treated as opiates for people who might be frustrated and unhappy. In India we deal with an audience who are highly sensitive to visual images and whose educational and social backgrounds show a high degree of variance. These are realities which should guide the film-director no less than the censors. Thirdly—and this is an equally important consideration— our films which go out of the country should do credit to the values and the heritage we cherish. The highest common factor and not the lowest common denominator should be the aim. Thirdly, when a film goes abroad, it should be possible to ensure that what is going out is worthy of the country.

Films can indeed be a source for new ideas, points of view, attitude to life and society, habits of mind, standards of taste, conduct, morale, culture for children, adolescents and the illiterate. In so crucial a communication medium as films we are fortunate that Shri Gujral is highly sensitive to the needs of this industry which is of far-reaching importance to the nation. It is for the host of professional men engaged in film production to enrich this creative art form with a high social purpose and aesthetic value.

Rather than imitate films from abroad to produce in the process an exotic hybrid, the screen should be made to mirror life in India in a sensitive manner. The attempts of a nation still experiencing the pain and thrill of change and endowed with a heritage which is rich in its diversity, must get reflected in the films we produce. We should not forget that they are primarily meant for an audience whose tomorrows are more precious than their todays, and for whom the cinema is the most inexpensive form of entertainment. Films are a unique communication medium capable of permeating all sections of our society and censorship cannot be isolated from our basic objectives as a developing nation nor from the national ethos which conditions every major cultural activity of our people. Experimentation and emulation do have their place in the dynamic art of film making for, both by tradition and temperament we are open to ideas wherever they may come from. Our larger commitment to the philosophy of growth through democracy and socialism helps impart to the professional film producer a profound sense of freedom, far from encroaching on it. Censorship will lose all the suspicion and terror attributed to it if film promoters and directors have themselves a built in sense of censorship values. Viewed from this national angle there can be no real dichotomy between the censor and the film-maker. In sum, the film must be a total effort in which the promoter, director, the actors and the censors are all equally involved.

The Sad Plight of Retired Artistes

How Mahila Silpi Mahal Came into Being

THE PLIGHT of the film artistes after the end of their career is a very serious matter indeed. Artistes differ in their calibre, degree of their success, foresight and practical sense.

Even the matinee-idols—who today roll in wealth may have to face the dark hour of despair when they leave the screen or the stage for the simple reason that they were improvident during the high noon of their careers. Their lavish style of living leaves very little to meet the demands of a retired life when all that is left to them are sweet recollections of a past that will never return. Those who are prudent to think of the future are also cautious and reserve a part of their savings to meet such an eventuality.

But what about those who are left with nothing but poverty and distress? This reminds me of a past incident in my life. I was returning home from the studio. A thin, rickety hand with an extremely fair-complexion—was stretched before me just as I was getting into my car. I turned back and saw a woman—standing silently with a veiled face and unwilling to reveal her identity. Later I came to know that she was a renowned artiste in her days of youth.

A similar incident was narrated to me by an actor of fame. It makes a sad story. A woman resembling a beggar came to meet him with face covered, while he was in the studio. She refused to reveal her identity to anyone except him. He was startled when the woman unveiled her face. She was no other than the same dignified lady of the past who had provided him the opportunity to enter the cinema.

These incidents moved me deeply. Amidst my countless preoccupations, I could not throw out of my mind the sad picture that this one-time artiste evoked in me. It brought home to me the truth of Girish Chandra's famous lines "*Deho pat sone nat sokoli harai*" (An actor loses everything with the end of his physical beauty).



Kanan Devi

But what should we do if we do not want this to happen to our artistes? I thought if it would not be nice if all the female stars of the stage and screen joined their hands to form an institution of their own—and raise a building for the distressed artistes with the money earned by their own labours i.e. by staging dramas on an all-female-cast basis?

My idea was greeted with overwhelming support from my contemporary artistes like Malina, Saraju, Sunanda, Chandra, Renuka and others. Everyone agreed that if this could be done, it would be the first of its kind to be attempted in India. If we failed, there would remain at least a lofty dream which others in the film-industry would some day take up and transform it into a reality.

Thus it was that our **Mahila-Silpi Mahal** came into being. As we had no venue of our own—the sitting of the organisation took place at the residence of each artiste by turn. Finally we had a permanent place of meeting at the dance academy of Nrittya-Bharati at a nominal rent for which Mr. and Mrs. Prolhand Das deserve our gratitude. Besides, encouragement came from many of our countrymen.

The result of our first show was beyond expectation. Gradually the popularity of our Mahila-Silpi-Mahal rose to such a height that apart from our annual show in the metropolitan city we had to respond to the call from the suburbs. The contribution of the gentlemen of the press in this connection can hardly be over-estimated. In this way we have been able to collect the required money for purchasing a house for the distressed artistes on whom fortune does not smile now.

It is tremendously gratifying that we now have a house of our own and that too without the help of the Government ! This is so because of generous help given by many renowned artistes among whom are Md. Sagiruddin, Ustd. Keramatulla and Sangeetalankar Sunanda Patnaik who presented a show of classical music in aid of Mahila Silpi-Mahal without seeking any remuneration. We have also received donations from Pt. Ravi Shankar, Sunanda Patnaik, Suchitra Sen and others.

Sincerity of feeling and honesty of purpose can overcome many barriers. This is now my experience. Top-ranking artistes like Malina Saraju, Manju, the late Anuva, Namita and Sadhana are broad-minded because they are real artistes. Malina, Saraju, and Manju have the ability to direct and their worth in this field is beyond question.

The funds of Mahila-Silpi-Mahal fell short after the purchase of the house. And many among the members compensated for it by making personal contribution according to their means. A touching contribution came from a girl—who earns money by acting in the *Jatra* or theatre. It was a mere fifty rupees but given with humility.

I do not believe that an artiste will be fully exhausted of her talents by age. When they cease to be performing artistes they can enrich the industry in many other ways. It is at this stage that the Government and the members of the film-industry can do something. It is their duty to draw out the best from the artistes and give them the feeling that they are still useful to society. □

FOR ART ONLY

Art is not representation, but a revelation. It never reproduces, but it interprets

Purnendu Pattrea

ALTHOUGH millions everyday see films", Danish Director Bjarne Henning-Jensen once remarked, "it is an odd fact that a film director is the most unwanted man on earth." I would like to add, "off-beat" to qualify the 'film director'. Although millions everyday see films, although thousands of films are produced or released every year, it is an odd fact that an off-beat film maker is the most unwanted man in the film industry.

All producers are running madly after those who run after stars, story, music and murder, melodrama, sex and violence and potpourri of all that is crude, farcical and banal. And nobody runs after a new talent who is after the exploration of deeper truth and inner poetry of life in which he lives.

Majority of the people like the cinema merely as a source of entertainment. Very few consider it as an art. When a film wants to alert or disturb us on moral or social grounds or seeks to break the traditional structure of story-telling, there is not the same enthusiastic response. A new director seeks to liberate the film from its old-fashioned rules of construction. He tries to project his own mind, his own personality, his own experience and vocabulary into his creation, so that it would look personal like a painting or poetry. There is basic conflict between the commercial producer and experimental director, money and art and between a subjective mind and an objective goal. Why? The answer is simple. And it was given long ago by the same director, referred to in the beginning.

"The fact is that the friendship between film-maker and film-seller can be measured by the length of the line outside the movie-house. But the life of a film, the long or short life, can that also be measured or determined in the same way? I don't think so. Lack of immediate 'box-office' seldom killed a good film, but sometimes a good director."

Thank God, amidst this crisis and tension and despair, a new and good director is always born, grows and he creates his art ignoring the so-called demand of the majority audience. A new and imaginative director belongs usually to minority. He is bound to. I am proud to belong to this minority, after having produced three films: *Swapne Niye* (on Dreams) 1965 *Strir Patra* (Letter from the Wife), 1970 and *Chenra Tamsuk* (Broken Tie) 1974. Each film was made independently of the commercial set-up and completely outside the film factory. Each was made ignoring the conventional attitude towards the audience and conventional formula towards the treatment.

Each was made strictly within a very limited budget so that we have recurringly experienced too many set-backs during production period. Each time I have invariably faced the same criticism from the audience 'Where is the story?' But my critics were very much sympathetic. They remarked, 'You have lost the story in artiness'.

Art has enabled and inspired us to look at things not from its surface but from beneath the surface, into its full depth, where a new meaning, a new light is waiting to electrify our sensibility.

Art, from which we have learned that art is not representation, but a revelation never reproduces. It interprets.

The genius of Ranoir once declared, the history of art is full of development in the midst of worst tyrannies." Worst is worst. And development is always a development

HOW THE CINEMA CAME

IN 1833 an apparatus called the Zoetrope, or wheel of life, was invented or described by an English mathematician, W.G. Horner, and gave to pictures an appearance of vivid movement. It consisted of a hollow cylinder with a number of slots cut round its upper part, and round its lower part inside was arranged a series of drawn pictures showing successive stages in the movements of a galloping horse, a walking man, or other moving objects. When the cylinder was rotated, and one peeped through the slots which came in rapid succession as though they were one slot, the horse seemed to be galloping, or the man walking.

The zoetrope was soon improved upon, and was succeeded by a number of later and better appliances like praxinoscope; but it should be remembered that the old zoetrope was really the parent of the modern cinema, the same principle, the illusion of motion, being used in both instruments.

A great advance was made in 1872 when the idea of adapting photography to the zoetrope was first thought of. In that year Edward Muybridge, a native of Kingston-upon-Thames living in San Francisco, conceived a novel way of obtaining a series of snapshot photographs of a galloping horse. He arranged 24 cameras side by side along a track, and on the opposite side of the track he erected a high fence painted white, while across the track at intervals he stretched 24 threads, each of which was connected with a spring holding in position the shutter of a camera. A horse was then set galloping along the track, and as it passed each thread, it snapped it, opening the shutter, and taking a photograph of itself.

The result was a series of 24 instantaneous photographs more or less in silhouette, showing successive movements of a horse galloping.

But before the moving photograph could become a practical proposition the film had to be invented. Several attempts were made to devise a suitable film, but it was not until 1884 that the first real photographic film was invented by George Eastman of Kodak fame. Next thing needed was a camera that would take a series of pictures on a film. This was pateneted by william Friese-Greene, a native of Bristol, in 1889. Another cinema man of this time to whom great credit is due is Louis Aime Angustin Le Prince, a Frenchman who had settled in Leeds. In 1886 he invented a multiple lens camera for taking moving pictures and after further experiments he produced a single lens camera with which he photographed scenes on Leeds Bridge in 1888.

The first really satisfactory projector was invented by Robert W. Paul, an Englishman in 1895. From that time to this the story of the Cinema has been one of constant progress and improvement.

Taken from
Children's Encyclopaedia

Regional Cinema

S. D. Shirode

THE FIRST INDIAN film to win recognition abroad was a regional film—Sant Tukaram in Marathi —at the Venice International Film Festival in 1937. The first film to win the President's Gold Medal in 1953 was a regional film ('Shyamchi Aii'—Marathi). And the first film which placed India on the world map of cinema was again not a Hindi but a Bengali film—'Pather Panchali' made by Satyajit Ray. Even the latest (1973) National Awards bear testimony to the general superiority of the regional cinema. The first place in these Awards has been won by a Malayalam film ('Nirmalyam') and the second honour has gone to a Kannada film ('Kaadu'). This is significant when we consider that in 1973 over 30 per cent of the total films censored were Hindi films. As against 136 Hindi films in 1973, there were 60 Malayalam films made in that year, and only 32 in Kannada. Time and again, the regional cinema has displayed a certain integaity and authenticity, while Hindi films, by and large, have become an essay in rootlessness. In a vain effort to possess universal appeal throughout the country, Hindi films have tended to divorce themselves of the total Indian reality.

By remaining faithful to the realities of a particular region, a film in any language (even in Hindi) has a greater chance of possessing artistic merit than otherwise. The Indian films in regional languages made at low cost have succeeded in possessing high merits because of their essential closeness to the people. Thus, today films in Bengali and Malayalam are more authentic representatives of the Indian cinema than the general run of Hindi films.

Regional films have always had to struggle hard to retain their identity. They have to face an unfair competition from Hindi films—with colour, stars, gorgeous sets, eyefilling-though often atrocious—dance and a general 'loudness'. Even in the limited market available to regional films, exhibitors often prefer to screen big Hindi bonanzas than modest, black and white regional films. It is not exactly true to say that regional films do not turn out to be 'box-office hits'. It would be truer to say that regional films do not get proper exhibition outlets to reach the masses and prove their worth. Once the scheme for establishing a network of art-cinemas all over the country gets under way, regional films as also good and realistic Hindi films are expected to have a better market—which can also be extended if regional films are dubbed in Hindi.

The Film Finance Corporation (FFC) has encouraged production of artistic films—in Hindi and regional languages—based on rich, human interest stories and inspired by life as it is lived. Perhaps many do not know that in the last 14 years the FFC has financed 205 regional language films as against 266 Hindi films. Almost the entire film-industry at least in Orissa received an impetus mainly through FFC-loans, in 1963, 1967 and 1969. FFC has financed such notable regional films as Satyajit Ray's 'Charulata' and 'Nayak' (both Bengali), Mrinal Sen's 'Padatik' (Bengali), V. Shantaram's 'Iye Marathichiye Nagari' (Marathi), Satyadev Dubey's 'Shantata Court Chalu Aahe' (Marathi), Kantilal Rathod's 'Kanku' (Gujarati), Adoor Gopalakrishnan's 'Swayamvaram' (Malayalam), Chidananda Dasgupta's 'Bilet Pherat' (Bengali), and S.S. Rao's 'Dikkatra Parvathi' (based on Rajaji's story and which won the best Tamil film award in National Awards, 1973).

While judging the merits of a proposal, FFC attaches greater importance to the potential merits of the film than to the language of the film. It has been found that in relation to projects for Hindi films, the projects for regional films have been found to possess a greater potentiality for good films. After all, for a good film, the language of the cinema is more significant than the language of the spoken words. And yet, it cannot be denied that in our country, regional cinema has special, practical problems which demand special solutions within its resources. FFC is doing what it can to alleviate the problems of not only the producers of regional films as such but of the film-makers who want to make artistic films in the language of their choice—be it Hindi or a regional language. So far, regional films have succeeded in being pace-setters for the Indian Cinema, rooted as they are in the life of the people. □

Shri Shirode is Techical Adviser, Films Finance Corporation, Bombay.

The Malayalam Film

Rosscote Krishna Pillai

PRESIDENT'S Gold Medel for the best feature film three times in a decade. Twice Presidential awards for the second best feature film. Twice awards for the best film on national integration and once for the best film with a social purpose. Twice Urvashi Awards for the best actress (for the same person), and once, Bharat Award for the best actor. National awards for the best Director, Screenplay Writer, Lyric Composer, Cameraman, and Playback Singer (again twice for the same person). This enviable record in winning national awards for films has brought a sense of pride to Keralites and the Malayalam film world in particular.

Chemmeen, *Swayamvaram* and *Nirmalyam* are a far cry from the over 580 films so far made in Malayalam. The three Gold Medal winners remain a class apart along with the best among those made in the country in other languages. The fact that the President's Gold Medal was annexed thrice by Malayalam films is no mere accident. It does signify certain laudable trends in Malayalam film-making. It should not, however, be taken as typifying the aesthetic brilliance or cinematic superiority of the generality of Malayalam films which continue to be plagued by the entertainment mania of the average Indian filmmaker and are vulgar admixtures of cheap fun and frolic: hackneyed 'triangular' love situations and contrived tragi-comic sequences, swashbuckling heroes, tearjerking heroines and heinous villains capable of the worst kind of chicanery and deceit, song and dance at every inconceivably ridiculous and in-

Shri Pillai is Senior Correspandent, *Yojana* Trivandrum.

appropriate moments, appearance of Gods and Goddesses on the flimsiest excuse and long-drawn out, cinconsequantia droll and buffoonery in the name of humour and comedy that produce reverberating guffaws from funseekers.

Nevertheless it will be unfair to say that Malayalam films in general are escapist or fantasy-ridden like the run of Tamil or Hindi films. Film-makers in Kerala have for long had an inbuilt tradition of social ethos. In catering to the exacting and discriminating demands of the overpoliticalised Keralites, the Malayalam film-makers have provided a wide range of thematic appeal. The topics dealt with have varied from family feuds to statewide political upheavals. Within this broad spectrum have appeared films on unemployment and untouchability, bribery, bootlegging and blackmarketing, charlatanism and plagiarism, mental retardation and aberration, prohibition and family planning and political and social reform and regeneration of all shades. And for essaying on this wide canvas of topics, well-known novelists have been drawn into the net. Lending their enormous popularity they have themselves turned into script-writers to refashion their magnum *opuses* on celluloid, of course not always with success. However, the pitiable experience has been that films with insistent social fervour seldom make the grade and those with a lot of absurdities and banalities and those which titillate the religious and traditional sensibilities of a passing age hit the jackpot.

One does not, however, need a sixth sense to say that Malayalam film has come of age. It has, however, course, not yet arrived. It has been and is still growing.

The Malayalam film industry has a past going back to over 46 years. The first Malayalam film, *Vigata Kumaran*, a silentmovie, came out in 1928, about fifteen years after the release of the first Indian feature film *Raja Harishchandra*. The maker was Mr. J. C. Daniel, a Tamil Christian from South Travancore, who sold all his properties for the purpose and produced the film based on his own story in a temporary ramshackle studio set up by him in Trivandrum. *Vigata Kumaran* was screened in all the major towns in Kerala but Mr. Daniel lost heavily and left film-making for ever to train himself as a dentist. Now in his seventies, he is still languishing at Agastheswaram near Kanyakumari. His studio disappeared soon after the first and only film was made in it.

In all other places in the country including Delhi, Malayalees have to wait for Sunday morning shows — that too, few and far between for their films. If this be the case in the normal course, it is a still more sorrowful tale of suicidal competition between the producers during festive occasions of Onam, Vishu, Deepavali, and Christmas when they complete their productions with frenzied energy and borrowed money and vie with one another to get the few better-type theatres to reap the maximum of a limited harvest. In the process the producers with very limited means come a cropper. A producer of two jubilee hits recently demoaned. 'Persons like me are caught in cobwebs not knowing how to get back the money invested.'

The limited extent of show business for Malayalam films, and the shortage of good theatres are not the only problems that deter the would-be investor and gnaw the established producers. The 'star system' and the paucity of good directors, song composers, playback musicians, cameramen and the technicians do bedevil the Malayalam film industry though not as agonisingly or irremediably as the Hindi or the Tamil. Two or three actors and as many actresses portrayed the heroes and heroines in the sixty and odd Malayalam pictures made last year. This year is no different. A producer, who has an eye on the box-office, would spare no pains and wait for any length of time to get Prem-Nazir, the ever-green matinee idol, and Adoor Bhasi, the unexcelled and inimitable comedian and character-actor, who have both appeared in over 300 films so far. In the process, both these actors are overworked and are certainly not turning out their best in every film. Their remuneration has gone up and with that the cost of production too. Nevertheless both these actors are booked till the end of 1975. New faces do appear occasionally but seldom come to the fore. In direction, less than half a dozen, K. S. Sethumadhavan, Sasi Kumar, P. Bhaskaran, A. B. Raj, and M. Krishnan Nair have been much sought after and have virtually monopolished the field. In other branches of film technique too, there does not exist a surfeit of talents.

Above everything else, Malayalam film industry's greatest handicap is that it is constrained to grow on non-Kerala soil. Out of over 580 Malayalam films made so far, only over 100 came from Kerala studios. Most of them were produced in Madras and a few in Mysore. Now there are only three studios in Kerala: Udaya in Alleppey, Merry land in Trivandrum and Ajanta in Alwaye. The first two are owned by producers who make three to four films every year. The third is a cooperative organised by a one-time film actor and has been an invalid from the beginning. Three more studios, all in Trivandrum, are on the anvil: *Sunil* owned by K. S. Antony, an award-winning director and *Uma* owned by *Chitralekha*, a cooperative organised by the producers of *Swayamvaram*, the foundation stone of which was laid on September 15 by Mr. I.K. Gujral, Minister for Information & Broadcasting. A public sector studio to be set-up by the Government of Kerala has taken shape only on paper.

The sordid fact remains that the growth of studios in Kerala has been tardy. Malayalam film is still largely an exotic product. The larger number of artistes, technicians and extras live in Madras. The lion's share of over Rs 200 lakh invested in Malayalam films is spent outside Kerala. Had there been production facilities within the State, it would have provided employment for at least 6000-8000 persons. As it is, this growing industrial sector does feast the eyes of the millions of unemployed in Kerala but halp very little in finding work for even a hundred of them.

The dismal failure of the first two films made in Kerala acted as a shocking disenchantment to many prospective producers and the State had to wait for another five years, for the first Malayalam Talkie *Balan* which was screened in January 1938. Malayalam film industry moved like the proverbial tortoise in the thirties. In the fourties, only four films were made. Among them was *Nirmala* produced for the first time by a Malayalee, P.J. Cherian and which had songs by Gyanpith Award Winner Mahakavi G. Sankara Kurup. Nirmala lacked the Box Office appeal and, sure enough, was a financial flasco. The pace and tempo of the industry's growth quickened in the '50s, with a total of 70 films for the decade, which is the average number of Malayalam films produced now every year.

Two-thirds of Malayalam films made every year flounder at the Box Office. Some of them break even but wait for years for the overflow from the theatres. Only six out of 65 films made in 1973 were financial successes. Most of the award winners have had to rest onl

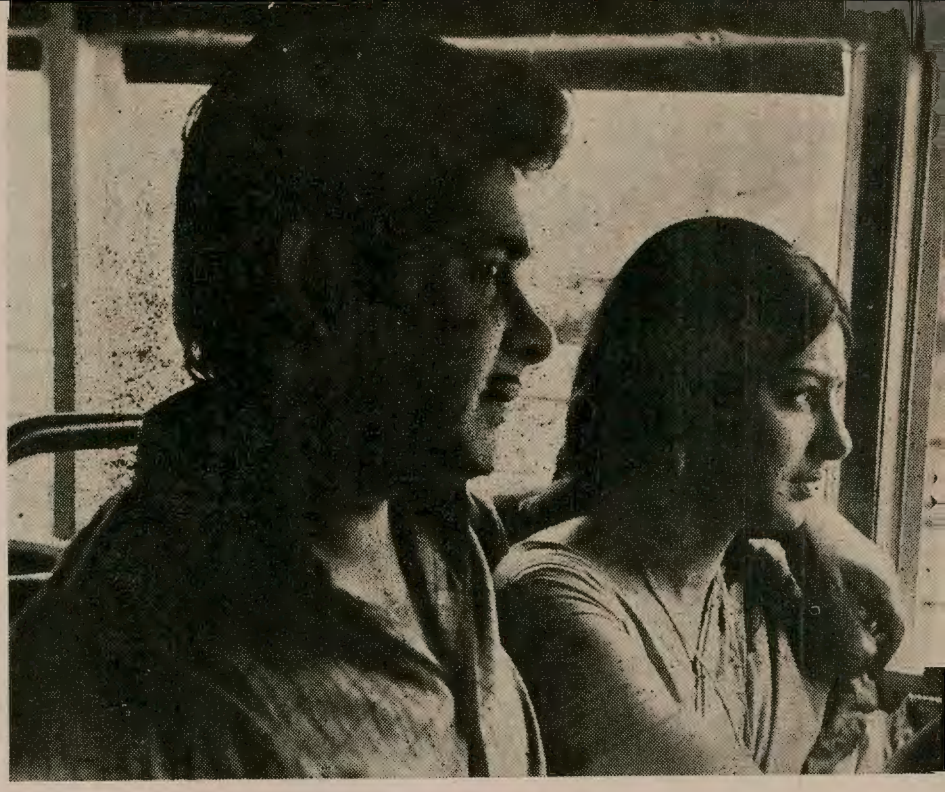
on their laurels. Among the significant exceptions were *Neelakuyil*, the story of a Harijan girl, which won the President's certificate for the second best feature film in 1954 (the first regional film to win this honour), *Tulabharam*, a commentary on the dispensation of justice in the country, which won the same honour in 1963, and *Chem meen*, which was released only after it won the gold medal.

If, in spite of not-too-enticing financial returns, over Rs 200 lakh is invested every year in the Malayalam film industry, it is not only because of the alleged eagerness of the smugglers reported to be among the investors to turn their black money into 'white', but also because of the craze of the numerous neo-rich Malayalee investors, who rush into film production, to get quick returns on their money.

It would not be true to say that it was only love of money and romance that motivated every Malayalam film producer. A few have, of course, made a deliberate foray into Malayalam film production for the sheer love of it or for the purposive use of the medium for creating social awareness: like P. Ramadas, who at 20, was perhaps the world's youngest Producer-director and who in 1955, driven by idealistic fervour, sold his all and made *Newspaper Boy* in Mayalalam, a neorealistic forerunner of *Pather Panchali*, P. Bhaskaran, a well-known poet and Ramu Kariat, a committed progressivist, whose debut was the award winning Neelakuyil; Adoor Gopalakrishnan, a pioneering-youngster from the Poona Film Institute, dedicated to aesthetics and refinement in film-making, whose first attempt, *Swayamvaram* bagged the gold medal in 1972, and M.T. Vasudevan Nair, a topranking Malayalam novelist and successful screenplay writer for over half a dozen films, who proved to be as successful with his pen as with the camera. He proved it by his first directorial gold medal winning venture of *Nirmalyam* in 1973.

Despite the price hike for everything in the country, Malayalam film-making still remains within the middle class investor's reach. The average cost of production was well below Rs two lakh a decade ago; even now it is not more than Rs four and a half lakh Rs and that is another reason for the getrich-quick investor's jaunts to the Malayalam Film World.

While the capital required for a Malayalam film remains fairly low, the possible channels for return on the investment are also few as compared with those for Hindi or Tamil films. The scope for exhibiting Malayalam films during regular show hours is largely limited to the small confines of Kerala with a little over 700 theatres including dilapidated touring tents. Outside Kerala, only one or two theatres in Madras, Bangalore, and Bombay venture to screen Malayalam films during their daily show hours. □



Madhu and Sharada in *'Swayamvaram*

The Bengali Scene

Bhagishwar Jha

EVERY one knows that film industry in Bengal is in bad shape. Harassed by financial crisis, plagued by shortage of screening space and suffering from lack of proper equipment, the film industry in West Bengal has been gasping for breath. Productions are dwindling, the studios and laboratories are closing one after another and technicians have either been starving or are ill-fed. That has been the genesis of this crisis. In this regard Chief Minister, Siddhartha Shankar Ray's suggestions made at the 19th National Film Award Function sometime in July 72 and again this year on 26th January at the First West Bengal State Film Award Function demands utmost attention of the members of the film trade in West Bengal. He categorically declared on both these occasions that film producers and directors in West Bengal would have to make films with an eye on the all Jndia market. He laid emphasis on the fact that Hindi films fetched revenue from all over the country and the same could be ploughed back to support the local industry. To determne the prospect envisaged in the Chief Minister's suggestion an analysis of the problem in historical perspective becomes imperative.

The tendency to view film making as a commodity of trade was first noticeable in Bengal in the beginning of the talkie era i.e. in 1931. The following table which gives the list of pictures (language-wise) produced in the studios of Calcutta helps determine the trend of production through its various phases of development during the first twenty years.

Statistics reveal that 1936 was the peak year of pictue-making in Bengal. And the period between 1935 and 1937 is still considered the

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Year	Bengali	Hindi	South Indian	Misc.	Total
1931	3	6	—	—	9
1932	9	15	3	—	27
1933	9	17	9	—	35
1934	11	21	10	—	42
1935	19	31	26	1	77
1936	19	35	15	2	71
1937	15	19	12	—	46
1938	17	10	5	1	33
1939	15	13	7	—	35
1940	15	11	5	1	32
1941	17	9	1	1	23
1942	18	8	—	—	26
1943	19	9	—	—	28
1944	14	8	—	—	22
1945	8	9	—	—	17
1946	13	7	—	—	20
1947	32	7	—	2	41
1948	37	8	1	1	47
1949	60	17	—	1	78
1950	42	6	—	—	48
	392	266	94	10	762

golden era of picture making in Bengal. There are reasons too. An industry flourishes only when it assumes the capacity to earn from outside its home market. Within these two years, 1935 and 1936, apart from producing pictures for home consumption, the tendency to capture other provincial markets, especially Hindi market was very strong. Out of the total number of 148 full length pictures during the above two years, Bengali films numbered only 38. Of the rest, 66 were in Hindi and 44 in other Indian languages. Obviously this immensely benefited the local industry. The Bengal film industry earned a total revenue from non-Bengali films from markets outside Bengal about five times more than what it earned both from Bengali and non-Bengali films in the home market. Naturally, the tendency to make films for the all-India market greatly helped the industry to progress on all fronts. The period of decadence set in when this trend to produce for the all-India market declined. Though the largest number of pictures (78) ever produced in Bengal was in 1949, this was just the year when the crisis began to develop. The reason was that out of the total of 78 pictures, no less than 60 were in Bengali, with the screening space of Bengali films having shrunk to one-third of what it was in 1936. This affected greatly the financial stability of Bengal's film industry. The years that followed saw a further decline in the industry as more and more Bengali films came to be produced for exhibition in the same shrunken market.

Other points that need to be considered in this context is the fact that apart from the revenue Bengal film industry earned from non-Bengali films produced during the years 1935-39, these films kept our studios busy round the clock. Our artistes and technicians were not only never unemployed but there was always an ever increasing demand for more and more hands. The resultant prosperity to the Bengal film industry helped the studios and laboratories to grow and flourish. Financial prosperity apart, films produced during this period set the tradition of which Bengal is proud today. This also proves the fact that far from affecting the Bengali cinema, the production of non-Bengali films helps its growth. When our studios in Calcutta made allowance to films in other languages, not only Bengali films prospered but also films made in other languages in Bengal became models for film producers elsewhere in the country.

The revival of such a prospect would demand certain technological facilities as conditions precedent; for, films produced in this State for all India exhibition must have technical gloss and production values on par with those made in other centres of the country. The Government's promise to build a color-laboratory in Calcutta, in this case, would call for priority of attention. Although, introduction of many of the modern technical facilities can be made available without much delay if only the Government so desires, the setting up of a color laboratory may take a longer time. In the meantime interim arrangements which made the production of "Mamta" and Raghir" possible should not be much of a problem. It is indeed gratifying that the State Government has been thinking of a scheme on similar lines. A few of the film-makers have also been thinking on these lines.

The future of Bengali cinema hinges on two things; (1) the producers must produce high quality films for the all-India market in order to build adequate resources for the promotion and growth of the local industry; (2) a sustained effort must be made to increase substantially the potential screening space for which there is great scope within the region itself. The prevailing crisis in the industry is directly linked with the problem of expanding the home market in West Bengal. It is common knowledge that a substantial portion of revenue from Bengali films comes from the semi-urban and rural areas. The wider the opportunities for exhibition in these areas, greater would be the revenue. Out of West Bengal's total population of 4,43,12,011, semi-urban and rural areas claim as much as 3,33,45000. According to West Bengal Cinema (Regulation for Public Exhibition) Rules, which provide one cinema for every 25,000 population, semi-urban and rural areas alone have the capacity to accommodate 1,334 cinemas as against the existing total of 673 in the entire State. This conclusively proves that the scope of expansion is largest in these areas. Besides, the task of expansion in these areas would be more easy, more speedy and much more economical than in the big cities. The Government has in its scheme a provision for marketing facility. The Government should direct its immediate attention to evolve means for proper expansion of market in the rural areas. The *ad hoc* committee appointed in 1966 by Shri Prafulla Sen, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, had carried a survey in semi-urban and rural areas with a view to exploring the scope for screening space of Bengali films in these areas. As an immediate measure the Government should evolve ways to give more licences for temporary cinemas, extend the duration of existing temporary cinemas to a minimum period of three years and replace such temporary licences as have run successively for three years by permanent licences. This would inspire confidence in the licencees to develop their business of exhibition.

Another point which touches this problem inside the industry is the lack of harmony between the members of the three sectors of the industry towards each other. Naturally what the industry needs above all is a bridge, a liaison, a legal partnership with those who make the films, those who distribute them and those who show them. □

Decline and Recovery

Subrata Mookerjee

FILM industry in West Bengal has unfortunately not been in good shape almost since independence and this has caused considerable anxiety to successive State Governments. The scope of the film industry in India after independence has gradually widened and this is as it should be. But the Bengali film industry which had a rich tradition beginning from the thirties came to decline gradually during this period. Production of Bengali films dwindled and with the closure of a number of studios and laboratories a large number of tehnicians and artistes were thrown out of employment. Devoid of opportunities of work in the State many talented directors, music directors, actors, actresses and technicians went to Bombay in search of new pastures and quite a number of them have made their mark there. In the meantime, artistes and technicians who stayed in Calcutta suffered from unemployment or underemployment. This is a sad but true story. What is however gratifying is that in spite of this crisis in the film industry in West Bengal in the post-independence era there has been no steep decline in the standard and excellence of films produced. On the other hand, talented and imaginative directors like Satyaji. Ray, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha and Ritwik Ghatak, to name only a few, have won for India laurels for their creative films and today they are reckoned among the leaders in the field of film making.

Many are the reasons which have contributed to the gradual decline of the film industry in West Bengal. The partition of the country deprived Bengal's film industry of a large market in what became East Pakistan. Besides this substantial shrinkage of market, there was an unfair encroachment on the traditional market of the films produced in West Bengal, followed by the winding up of many well-known production units, lack of finance and stiff competition from rapidly growing centres of film production elsewhere in the country. Some of these causes are too well-known to need repetition here. The deteriorating condition of the film industry in West Bengal attracted the attention of the State Government as early as 1962 when a Film Enquiry Committee headed by Justice K.C. Sen was set up to enquire into the condition of the film industry in West Bengal and to make recommendations for its improvement. Though the Report was submitted to Government in 1963, this was not published before 1968 and no action was taken to arrest the decline. Then came a period of political turmoil in the State in the midst of which the united Front regime set up a 43-member State Film Consultative Committee under the chairmanship of Shri B. N. Sircar in response to the growing demand from the sick industry for redress. The report of the State Film Consultative Committee containing their recommendations for improvement of the film industry of the State was also submitted to Government in October 1970, without any action being taken till the present popular Government came to power in 1972.

We had taken both the Reports into consideration and we considered it necessary to come to the aid of our ailing film industry as quickly as possible. Our Chief Minister, Shri Siddhartha Sankar Ray, evinced keen interest in improving the condition of the film industry of the State. We have made a modest beginning in this regard by setting up the Film Development Board under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister, with reputed representatives of the film trade as members. This was one of the most important recommendations of both the Enquiry Committees referred to earlier and we have made it a focal point to solve some of the pressing needs of our film industry. I know that the problems of our film industry are too many and we suffer from the limitation of finances. Yet, instead of looking helpless at the present state of things, we have made a beginning to solve some of its problems and we are receiving the wholehearted cooperation of the film trade.

The West Bengal Film Development Board was formally set up in the latter part of 1972 with the objective of overall improvement in the film industry of West Bengal comprising expansion of exhibition facilities, improvement and modernisation of studios and laboratories, provision of loan for new productions, improvement of the working condition of various categories of workers in the industry and expansion of marketing facilities of Bengali films. For the first time in the history of West Bengal, we have instituted a cash awards scheme for feature films produced in the State. There is provision for awarding cash prizes to directors, artistes and technicians of the films produced in West Bengal every year on the pattern of the National Awards for films given by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. This has certainly restored the morale of our film industry to some extent. A sum of Rs 25 lakh which has been set apart by the State Government for the development of the industry in accordance with the programme to be formulated by the Board is indeed inadequate even for meeting the most urgent needs of the industry. While we shall have to explore other avenues for augmenting the funds of the Film Development Board, we have to try to help the film industry with this meagre sum of Rs 25 lakh to begin with. A working group of the Film Development Board which has been set up under my chairmanship with reputed specialists of the film trade as members to go into the question of the immediate needs of the industry has. recommended that this amount of Rs 25 lakh should be allocated to different sectors of the industry as shown below:

Allocation of funds by the West Bengal film Development Board

Film financing	..	Rs 12 lakh
Technical aid to studios and laboratories	..	Rs 9 lakh
Cash awards to quality pictures	..	Rs 1 lakh
Financial assistance to freelance technicians	..	Rs 1 lakh
Marketing facilities	..	Rs 2 lakh

Our programme of activities has at present been modelled on this line, subject, of course, to revision when more funds become available for the purpose. I am happy to say that even this small beginning has infused some confidence in our film industry. The announcement of the programme of work of the Film Development Board has heartened our producers who have come forward to produce films in Bengali and Hindi in West Bengal. We have also received encouraging assurances from Shri I.K. Gujral,

Shri Mookerjee is the Information Minister of West Bengal.

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Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting, in the matter of implementation of our different projects for improvement of the film industry in West Bengal.

We have yet to go a long way in removing the major ills of the film industry and to restore it to its pristine glory. We know that it is not an impossible task. One of the film studios which was closed for about nine months has recently been reopened through our effort with a new Board of Administrators and, as far as my knowledge goes, it has been doing fairly well. To keep our studios running we have got to see that more productions in Bengali and Hindi are launched in West Bengal. At the same time we have to equip our studios with the latest machinery and accessories as some of them have become outdated. Colour film is now in fashion in the country. But we have no colour processing laboratory in West Bengal. We are thinking of setting up one if it promises to be viable. We are also trying to build up film training facilities in Calcutta on the lines of the Poona Film Institute. But more production of films which is needed for relieving the economic distress of our artistes and technicians is invariably linked with more opportunities for release and expanded marketing facilities. These are at present engaging our serious consideration. □

The Tamil Cinema

The Celluloid Fallout in a Vacuum

S. Gopalie

FORTUNATELY or unfortunately artistic assessments are possible only after the events are over. Very rarely do artistic happenings have an impact during the creation itself. It may be there as in the case of theatre or a concert, but the full impact can be assessed only after the artistic explosion. This is true of the films as well. Perhaps a little more applicable to films than to any other modes of artistic creation.

The basic tenet of an artistic creation,be it sculpture, paintings, music, theatre or cinema, is that it should be about the people for whom it is done. It must be taken from the people and it should go back to the people. This is axiomatic. Else, the creation itself suffers defeat and dies. Quite deservedly. Half a decade is a good enough period to assess the celluloid fall out of the Tamils. It should be borne in mind that Tamil Nadu has the largest number of studios in India and most of them very well equipped. From a time when only Tamil and Telugu movies were produced, it has now become a centre where films are taken in different languages. The quantum of Hindi films taken in Madras is always on the increase. What is rather deplorable, with the rise of the number of films taken in different languages, the quality of the Tamil films themselves has declined. It is not totally lost. Given a certain goodwill, and the producers making a change of heart, the position of pride can be retrieved. The ability to learn and the opportunities to learn from others are in plenty, when films are produced in different languages. The Tamils do not make an attempt to learn. Which is the reason why the quality has steeply fallen.

The Tamils have given a place of pride for the performing arts in their classification of Arts into *Iyal*, *Isai* and *Koothu*. While their *Iyal* and *Isai* are still best preserved and are still recognizable, their *Koothu* as expressed in celluloid bears no relationship to the Tamil. While a piece of architecture in Mahabalipuram or the Thanjavur temple can be shown as pieces of artistic manifestations of the Tamil; while a piece of Carnatic Music and Tamizh/Isai can be demonstrated as the proud heritage of the Tamil; what have they got to show in celluloid? It is not as if they do not have any creations in cellubloid. They have many things. But what they have is not about themselves. It is not about others either, whom one can get to know. It is about people in a vaccuum. It is this vacuity that has cut at the very roots of celluloid culture in Tamil Nadu.

This malaise is only of recent origin. It is only in the past eight years that the trend in film making in Tamil Nadu has taken a turn towards suicide. This has been and is mainly because of wrong assessment of what the people want and treating the film as a commodity. When once you consider film as a consumer product you want to produce it as cheap as possible and sell it to your maximum advantage. People also rush to consume what is available cheap, only to regret it later. This is more like a person whipping and lashing himself to quench his thirst for blood! He cannot be lashing himself for ever. And that stage has come now.

In the past eight years, the Tamils have covered the following areas in their attempts at filmic expression: Mythological, historical, pseudo-historical, biographical, adventure drama, and family drama. The last area the Tamils baptize as social. The films that would project the cross-sections of the Tamils and their culture can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Even in mythologicals like Karnan, the script is written for the star performer and not the other way about. Any historical or mythological Tamil film is like seeing a Tamil drama. No care is taken about the details. Neither about the characters portrayed. A smug satisfaction that everything is all right stifles the urge to do things better. Films like "*SARASWATHIYIN SABATHAM*, *THIRUVARUTCHELVAR*, "*ANNAI ABHIRAMI*", "*AADHI PARASAKTHI*" *GANG GOWRI*", *SAKTHI LEELAI* were more in the nature of selling Gods to the common man. The story element in these mythological films is fairly well known to the common man. The producers could have cashed in on this by trying to interpret the characters in modern terms or grappling with the contemporary problems. What they have done is to be true to the oral tradition of these myths and to give the masses a calendar concept of Gods! It is possible that the divne characters were taken from the calendars and etched on

Shri Gopalie is a well-known stage and cine critic.

the screen! There can be quality in films only when the director and the producer have the compulsion to be original and different. With some imagination this could be done. Gods are reduced to miracle performers! Some of the God-coated pictures were a rage; they sold better. The attempt to revive theism, or to infuse belief in God, need not be at the cost of intelligence. The incidents portrayed in these films range from total stupidity to thorough childishness. The goddesses looked sexier than necessary.

The biographical films were no better. "*KARAIKKAL AMMBIYAR*," "*VALLALAR*", "*ARUNAGIRI NATHAR*" and "*ANNAI VELANKANNI*" were biographical in the least. That selectivity is the *sine qua non of* artistic presentation is often forgotten. The choice of incidents is often clumsy and the lack of justification-either direct or indirect—to bring the film at a particular time resulted in their failure. The sense of relatedness of the biographical hero to society was not pointed out. Hence, their disappearance. It is a pity that these films served no purpose.

The lack of quality in Tamil films in the past eight years could be traced to some influences—Foreign and Indian. The spate of Ringo films and their quick success at the box-office prompted some producers to take to producing Ringo-like films. It was never considered whether the "Ringo-substitute" here could be identified by the masses for whom they were intended. It was a mistaken notion that the exploits of Ringo consisted in half-a-dozen trigger pulls, running away on horses, fights in bars and inns. While Ringo and his exploits could be faked, how could the masses accept bars and inns? This point was never considered. Particularly so for a villager when a footman and a count look alike! And the pictures were hotch-potches of several Ringo movies. The James Bond and the Bondish movies have had their celluloid echo. All these meant that the pictures were receding away from the populace. A Tamil Ringo or a Tamil Bond is no representative of the problems of the common man. He is as much a stranger to the common man as the original Ringo and Bond.

When it comes to historical or psuedo historical, they are least so. A cinemascopic failure of *RAJA RAJA CHOZHAN* is a striking example. Merely taking a picture in color and scope without a good script is no guarantee of quality or success. The picture's sole merit rested only on these two facts—scope and color. *POOMPUHAR* is another film which is a travesty of the great classic *SILAPPADHIKARAM*. Even the preliminary and fundamental details like locale were thrown to the winds. If it was intended as a reinterpretation of the classic, it must also be made clear as to why re-interpretation was necessary. The Jain work is made a Hindu melodrama. A total lack of research into the project was the root cause for the film not making its proper impact.

A little while ago mention was made about the influence of Indian films on the Tamil films. Films from Kerala and Bombay made dents in the Tamil market. Several Hindi films and quite a few Malayalam films were made into Tamil. While remaking into Tamil, there was loyalty only to the frames without bothering to know the relevance of the sequences and the background and the characters.

Since Independence, there have been so many changes, industrial, social and economic, but no producer seems to be aware of them. Or if aware, no attempt was made to incorporate them in films. There has been an industrial revolution with great rural exodus, the coming into being of a middle class and a lower middle class and their problems, the slow and sure disintegration of the caste system etc. are all some of the themes that could have been exploited. But the producers closed their eyes to them and kept doing films where the screen was smeared with tears. When it comes to family drama, either it is the self-effacing woman, or the all-sacrificing brother for the sake of his sister. The family as a unit of society and its problems—its own and the ones imposed by the society by its changes, are lost sight of. Even in cases where there was a superficial attempt at capturing truth, it is so crude that the attempt becomes ridiculous. A postman, a taxi driver, a rickshawalla when they are represented, they are more presented. It is monodimensional. All of them are portrayed as honest and have all the good qualities rolled in one. The hero whether he is flashy or not, he should know karate, judo and stick play. One film tries to be different from the other movie only in how the fights are differently organised and shot. When a family is presented, the characters look phoney. Every attempt is made to alienate truth and depth. This is romanticism carried to absurd lengths.

The logic of cinema and the logic of life are ignored. The hero still runs around the heroine. But what is different is the locale. As if it is illogical to make love in one's house or place of occupation, the director takes them to locales! To make love picturesque! often the locales lose their real documentary value by such methods. A total lack of imagination to visualize the film in its own moorings is at the bottom of all this artistic vaccum.

Even in a film that is supposed to represent contemporary families the hero by his acting, costume etc. stands alienated from society. And with him the problems he is supposed to represent and solve. Almost any Tamil film is guilty of this.

A major drawback of the Tamil films is the concept of *navarasa*. This is injudiciously mixed with the 'box-office rasa'. Both are at loggerheads with the real needs of the audience. That every film must have a comic track seems to be the motto of the producers. Whether the film needed the comedian or not, whether it was relevant or irrelevent to the script is no consideration. A comedian and a comedienne must be there. When the film collapses, the irony is, the comedy does not save it.

If the Tamil films fail to make any headway artistically, it is mainly because of a total lack of depth and target audience. The producers and the directors do not make it clear for whom the picture is meant. First the visual element is totally eschewed. Every film is a literal talkie. And every thing is explained. Some directors who are dialogue writers as well go to the extent of making the characters announce their intentions. The box-office formula is often a self-prescribed poison. The directors and producers often defend their crude films by saying 'it is what the audience wants! Who is this audience? Does it give in writing what it wants? The truth is the contrary. The producers have started a chain of events-like the replacement of Bharathanatyam by cabaret or by a birthday party, carnatic music by cacophony-and an inability to bring variety in them brings ruin. Now, in how many taluks and how many villages in Tamil Nadu do you find cabaret to justify this? If films are holding up mirrors to nature, this mirror is already disfigured with images to reflect anything truthfully. The argument that the films are mainly intended for the rural audiences does not hold water. How do the films justify the posh sets even in a social theme? Our villagers are far more intelligent. The films are not es-

capist fare either.

Some directors like Sridhar and K. Balachander tried to be different. But they met with disaster. Sridhar's *AVALUKKU ENRUORE MAK AN* and K. Balachander's *SOLLA-THAN NINAIKKIREN* were very honest attempts. Where is the milieu for such films? A decade ago Jayakanthan came up with *UNNAIPPOL ORUVAN*. Now, Sangitam Srinivasa Rao has come with his *DIKKATRA PARVA-THI*. Two very honest movies. Unless we have a chain of movies like these, it is impossible to think of quality in Tamil movies.

It is often said that politics dominates the Tamil movies. It must be admitted that nowhere in the world would you find such clever propaganda as in Tamil movies. But to assign this as a reason for the lack of artistic qualities is wrong. As far back as Annadurai's *ORE IRAVU*, Karunanidhi's *MANA MAGAL* and *PARASAKTHI*, Annadurai's *VELAIKKARI* and a host of other films in which M.G. Ramachandran starred and Karunanidhi wrote dialogues, politics infiltrated. But it was very subtle and even intelligent. It will be in the songs in puns. Now, after the formation of ADMK the same thing continues. That is not going to damage or add to the artistic qualities of the films. Recently, Kamaraj and his policies are extolled by Shivaji Ganesan in his movies. But that is all only as obiter dicta. The times have gone when good dialogues guaranteed success.

There is a paucity of good artistes. But that exists because of the type of stories. The Tamil novel has taken great strides. The Tamil producers do not want to take advantage of this. So long as they want to cling to formula and their stars, they can never take an artistic picture that is also commercially viable. How is it that the literate public accepts so many avant-garde novels? The directors' contention that the audience wants only sub-standard films is belied by the strides the Tamil novels have taken.

There are problems, and problems that are real. Only the directors and the producers do not dare take them Indulging in outmooded dead themes like caste and superstition meet only with fiasco. *NATHTHAYIL MUTHU* and *THANGA DURAI* are valid examples.

To take the Tamil movies from the deep abyss it has chosen to fall into, requires the efforts of talented and educated band of technicians, writers, artistes and directors. If the producers do not keep their mind open and if they count only on box-office and stars, the Tamil film will die a natural death. If the producers have some faith in our novelists, have faith in our country and in our locales (ours is a beautiful country) and are honestly dedicated to making meaningful films, very soon the Tamil film will have retrieved the lost ground. Tamil films have to take their roots in our soil and in our culture. To ignore the root is suicidal. □

INTERVIEW

Picture From Two Angles

SHRI A.V. MEYYAPPAN, the doyen of South Indian film producers, is a well-known personality in the film field of the country. In the forty odd years of his career as a producer he has discovered that nothing succeeds like success and that success comes only through hard work. One of the most successful producers in India, Shri A. V. M. has not only made several standard films such as Parasakthi, Velaikkari, Ore Iravu, Vaazhkai, Sri Valli, Anda Naal, Penn, Server Sundaram, Major Chandrakanth, Annai, Ramu Uyarnda Manithan etc. in Tamil and Ladki, Bahar, Bhabhi, Bhai Bhai, Chori Chori, Hum Panchi Ek Dal Ke, Main Chup Rahoongi, Main Sunder Hoon, Jaise Ko Taisa etc. in Hindi, but has also brought to the limelight many talented artistes like Sivaji Ganesan, Padmini, Vaijayanthimala, Nagesh etc. He has also produced a number of successful films in Telugu. AVM is not only a leading producer but owns a studio which is one of the best in the country.

Shri K. Balachander is considered to be the most dynamic film director in Tamil Nadu. "To do one better" has always been his motto since the day he came into the field some ten years ago. During this decade he has figured in more than 25 films not only as a sincere and successful director but as a screenwriter of merit. He has rarely given undue attention to the box office requirements and constantly strives to exploit the film medium for projecting themes with a social purpose. Server Sundaram, Major Chandrakanth, Neer Kumizhi, Edir Neechal, Naanal, Punnagai, Iru Kodugal, Thamarai Nenjam, Kaaviya Thalaivi, Vell Vizha, Arangetram, Sollathan Ninaikkieren and Naan Avanillai are only a few titles which have clearly marked him out as an off-beat director and writer.

Our Senior Correspondent in Madras, Shri Poornam Viswanathan, interviewed Shri AVM and Shri KB Separately, but their answers to questions have been presented together as the questions asked were the same.

In recent years most of the Tamil films produced have failed as box-office hits. How do you account for this?

AVM: There are two main reasons. When the few top artistes available are working simultaneously in 20 to 30 pictures, the quality of the films suffers. Secondly, we have a number of new producers in the field making films without any big stake and without an eye on quality. Moreover, ours's is small market, not like that of Hindi and English films. If some good films come out occasionally in spite of these factors, it is wholly due to the competence of the artistes and the directors concerned. I would put the number of such successful films at a mere 10 per cent.

K.B.: This question applies equally to all the regional language films. In the same way as it is difficult to account for the success of certain pictures, it is also difficult to identify the reasons for the failure of others. Nowadays films flop in the market in their dozens. Good pictures fail and successful ones are not aesthetically good: Why this contradictory appreciation from cine-goers it is difficult to say. Perhaps this is because every cine-goer is a paradox—he is moody, intensely engrossed at one time and totally indifferent at another.

Another reason is that the average film-goer is not endowed with adequate knowledge in film-appreciation. Our Press can do a lot in this direction. The Press can eschew scandals and slander and devote its pages to promoting film-appreciation.

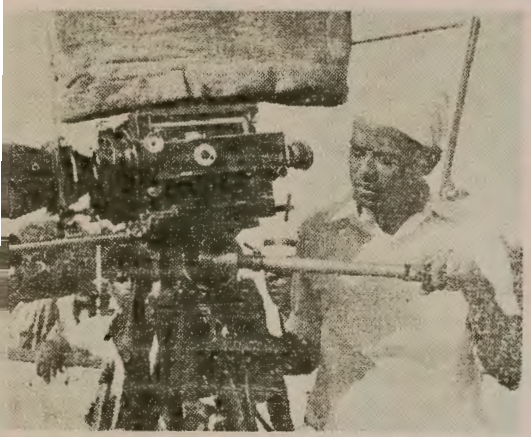
The third reason might be....that we are essentially tradition-bound. Pictures which follow the traditional formula always succeed. Enterprise will sometimes irritate our audiences. In order to keep to a safe track, the Tamil movies choose the beaten track. But as it is only the beaten track, the pictures fail! It is therefore a vicious circle. Who is to bell the cat? Who is in the wrong? Well, these are perennial questions.

Any comments on the star-system? While Bombay is gradually shaking off the system Madras is still in its grip. Why?

AVM: The problems in Madras are peculiar in a way. In Bombay plenty of talent has come into the field from the Film and Television Institute of India, Poona. The artistes who come out of the Institute are ready-made for films. If even 10 per cent of those who come into the films from Poona succeed, it helps to meet the needs

of increasing number of productions. Artistes like Rajesh Khanna, Jaya Bhaduri and Shatrughan Sinha, who are Poona products, have become very popular stars in the Hindi film field. In Tamil Nadu, even the new producers are not willing to try new faces but are keen on booking only the top-most stars; as I have said already, these producers, without much stake, make merry for some time and glide out of the field after doing their bit to perpetuate the star system. As it is, nothing can be done about this.

K.B: Indian film-goers are as unpredictable as the English weather: While they may give a hand to new faces, their fascination for the well established stars far outweights their fancy for the new comers. It must however be admitted that real fresh talent is not forthcoming in Madras as it does in Bombay. To go crazy about film-acting is one thing; to possess the minimum talent is another. We come across quite a few in the first category in Madras. But certain directors go on digging without losing hopes of striking the treasure. If more directors bestow their attention on this aspect, we may have a solution.



K. BALACHANDAR

Not enough efforts are also being made to introduce new faces in Madras. The fault lies in those who refuse to take the risk. Those who, can afford to take the risk, unmindful of the lack of support from the distributors, want to play safe with their eye on profits. For them the trump card is the star. We can only canvass for the encouragement of somebody, but we cannot canvass for the discouragement of some one else.

The main difficulty with us is that we do not have many standard producers. Of course we have momentary money makers who come up and go away with one or two pictures or even without completing a single picture. When such is the case, the star system will go on.

Is the contribution made by the stage to the enrichment of the film field substantial?

AVM: No. Of course there was a time when artistes were recruited into films from the stage. In those days we had a daily theatre run at various centres of Tamil Nadu by such established troupes as Nawab Rajamanikam Company, TKS Brothers, K.M. Ratnam Company, Shakti Nataka Sabha etc., and plenty of stage artistes were available for films. Though the present day stage artistes consider their stage accomplishments as a stepping stone to success in films, not many of them have really proved successful.

KB: The stage can always make a substantial contribution. The little that we have in Tamil cinema in the form of knowledge, talent and craft has come only from the stage. The stage has certainly made a powerful impact on the films, which perhaps explains why most of the Tamil films are stagy ! But whether the Tamil stage itself is improving at all is another matter!

Do you find the efforts being made in Madras to train up artistes and technicians adequate, useful and effective?

AVM: I will straightaway say that the efforts are not even five per cent of what they ought to be. The training institutions do not have enough instructors. Veterans of the stage and the screen must be commissioned as instructors in these institutions.

KB: The efforts now being made are certainly useful, but we will have to wait and see if they prove to be effective. Mere training is not enough, the inner urge and aptitude are quite essential for the success of technicians, as the film-medium is highly creative in character.

There is a complaint that the selection of subjects for Tamil films is basically defective. Who is to blame?

AVM: Good stories can come to the screen only from the stage as their success is already proven. But even good stories may fail for want of proper screen treatment. The producers and the directors are equally to blame for this. Generally the tendency is to make easy money. Nobody wants to devote adequate time for embellishing a story to meet the requirements of the screen.

KB: The directors cannot always be blamed. Only very few direcors have a free hand in film making in Tamil Nadu. Others are bound by so many considerations that they feel compelled to make compromises in the selection of stories or in the delineation thereof. For making a film, the producer fixes up the artistes first and then chooses the artistes according to the requirements of that director; then only can the director be blamed for any failure. Otherwise please exonerate the poor technicians!

What about social purpose in Tamil films?

AVM: No picture has so far been produced in Tamil without a social purpose. But sometimes due to shift in emphasis the social purpose gets dimmed in a maze of other aspects of the film.

KB: While it is laudable to have a social purpose in every film we make, it need not be the *sine qua non* for making a movie. Films can comment on social problems but they need not always offer solutions. How can they, when the Government itself is unable to offer solutions to the several social problems in the country?

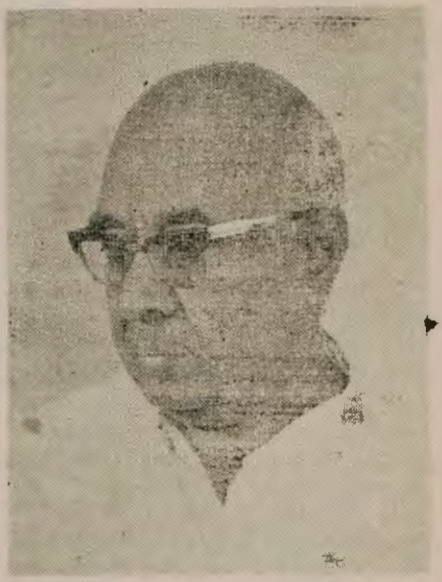
Have you any comments on experimentation in film making?

AVM: Even in experimentation public support is vital. It is the elite which must offer its full support to such efforts but paradoxically it is the elite which fails the experimenting producer.

KB: There cannot be experimentation without encouragement. The first encouragement must come from the producers who are courageous enough to experiment. Government should encourage such efforts through tax exemptions and other privileges. Several pictures of this type have been produced in Tamil Nadu, but not one of them could get tax-exemption. To quote my own experience, I have taken a film on the teachings of Gandhiji, but though the critical acclaim for the picture has been very high, Government has kept silent. My "Arangetram" dealt with family planning; even here Government has not given tax-exemption. Perhaps they do not want to get into precedents! How can we experiment under such conditions?

Though the Tamils have an obsession with films there is a feeling that their art appreciation has deteriorated. Any comments?

AVM: The higher class audiences, who can appreciate good things, do not generally patronize Tamil films. The elite appreciates only foreign films, as it considers it *infra dig* to see Tamil films. The result is that Tamil films are patronised mainly by the middle and lower classes. As



A. V. MEYYAPPAN

the producer is essentially a businessman, he has first to see that he lives to produce further films. The pity is that the producer does not exactly know what the people want, because the public taste is such an uncertain factor.

KB: The art appreciation of every Tamilian is certainly improving. I may be dubbed a hypocrite when I say this. But I insist that though the progress is not as much as we desire, there is improvement all the same. It must, however, be admitted that the other States have overtaken us in this regard.

To what extent would you welcome Government's voice in the film field? How about nationalisation of the industry ?

AVM: I would like Government to use its voice in stipulating some minimum qualifications and financial stabiliy for anybody to become a producer. This may help to improve the quality of films. Another aspect in which I would welcome Central Government's intervention is in the matter of taxes; the Centre must fix a ceiling beyond which the State Govern-

ments cannot impose taxes on the film industry.

As for nationalisation, I am against it in any field. But, if it has to come, then the arrangement should be that private entrepreneurs are also allowed to compete with the nationalised undertakings. Let the private film industry continue; simultaneously let the Government form a corporation of its own to produce quality films so as to improve the standard of public taste. I would suggest that the Film Finance Corporation can be entrusted with the task without binding it in any way in the matter of expenditure and profit and loss.

KB: I would welcome Government's voice so long as it does not interfere with the creative side of film making through combersome rules, red tape and unrealistic attitude. Government can certainly guide and aid film production.

Nationalisation ? If the desire is to help the film industry, why nationalisation at all? We have seen and known how nationalisation is responsible for red tape and inefficiency all through. The film industry is already adequately efficient; where is the need to put an end to its efficiency by nationalising it?

Are you happy about the present method of selection for national and regional film awards?

AVM: No comments.

KB. : Government would be rendering a great service to the film industry by scrapping the awards straightaway, because the selections are not at all fair. If films entered for the awards are not even *seen fully* by the "enlightened" members of the awards-panel, it is better to scrap the very system of awards. A film may not come upto national level, but an artiste, a play-back singer or a technician may show up at any stage in the film to deserve an award. It is, therefore, autocratic on the part of the members of the awards-panel to dismiss a film as underserving without even seeing it fully.

What are your views about the present method of censorship ? Can we eschew censorship altogether?

AVM: Though censorship is absolutely necessary, I feel that we must reach a stage when the producers themselves can form into a body to censor films without any bias. Only then can we proceed to the next stage when censorship itself can be eschewed.

KB : To assume that the letter of the rule is more important than its spirit seems to be the weakness of those who are appointed as Censor Officers. But I am happy about the fact that of late these officers have developed some rational thinking. Even so, I strongly feel that the Censor Officers must be of a very high calibre, who will refuse to be slaves of red tape, who will not shirk responsibility and who can independently take on-the-spot decisions by using their discretion.

Academically speaking, we may eschew censorship as an experiment for a limited period. If we can experiment with prohibition and so many other things, why not with censorship also?

Have you any comments on the working of the Fim Finance Corporation?

AVM: I do not know much about its present working. But some eight or nine years ago when I had an opportunity to deal with the FFC, my experience was very bad. Where encouragement from FFC was in my opinion due and proper, it was not forthcoming.

KB: The FFC is doing a commendable job at least in promoting art films. I feel the FFC itself should take up the distribution of these films.

But let not the people who are operating the FFC decry commercial films or sling mud at the commercial movie-makers who are an effective source of revenue to the Government. I would be pleased if the FFC could also encourage those films which are a happy compromise between art and commercialism, but aesthetically tolerable.

What are the peculiar problems in making Hindi films in Tamil Nadu?

AVM: There is a very important prerequisite: The producer making Hindi films should have a good knowledge of the Hindi language. Without understanding the nuances of the Hindi language, one cannot fully grasp the requirements of the Hindi film field. And it is very necessary to know the requirements, because the competition is now keener than before. It is also good in the national interest for producers to know Hindi. In all other points except this Madras is better placed to produce Hindi films because of better studio facilities and better technical competence.

Black into White *via* Colour by Eastman Colour

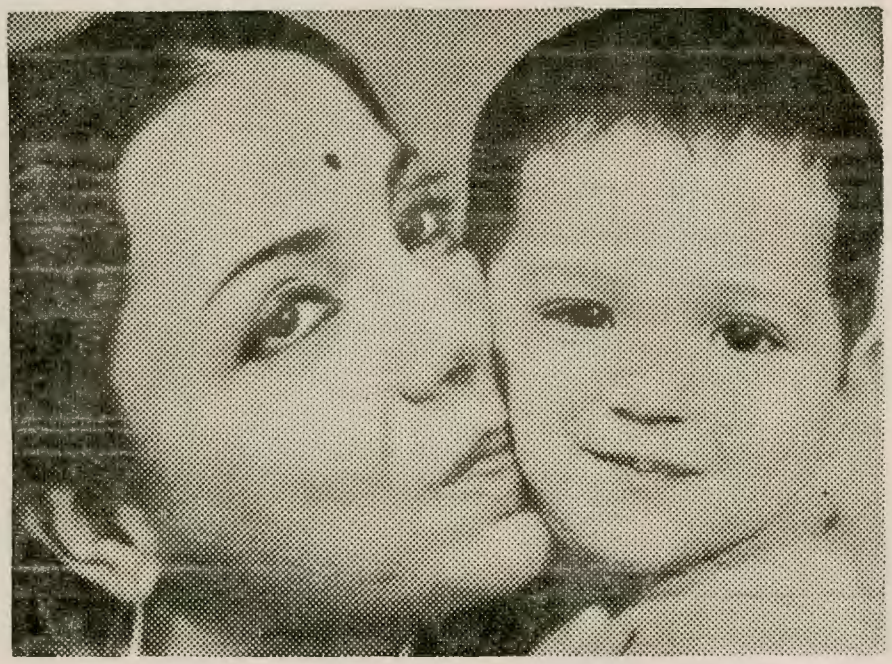
ACCORDING to an estimate of Shri A. M. Tariq, a former chairman of the Indian Motion Picture Export Corporation, India loses about Rs 10 crore a year through the illegal smuggling out of prints of Indian films to the Gulf States and other countries. One operator alone, Pyara Saheb Kesri Rana, now in gaol, had by this means amassed Rs 50 lakh in two London banks. A vegetable exporter by profession, his technique was to hide the reels among boxes of cabbages and potatoes. He had also bribed airlines staff to secrete the reels in the baggages of unwary passengers. Shri Tariq has now sent to the Government of India a list of 40 persons alleged to be dealing in black money in the film industry. He wants a thorough probe into the working of film processing laboratories and into the affairs of film and hotel tycoons.

According to one source, some 30 per cent of the movies produced in Bombay are financed by black money, and the amount invested in the industry as a whole may be as high as Rs 50 crore. For the smuggler and the *mutka* (illegal gambling) operator, film production and distribution, like mechanised fishing, are godsend opportunities to convert black money into white. Empty halls or empty nets are shown full in books and the value of tickets 'sold' or fish 'caught' is systematically shown as legitimate income. Haji Mastan is one of the smugglers known to have started his own distribution outfit for this purpose. At least four cinema houses in Bombay are believed to be controlled by black money operators.

While smugglers prefer 'B' films for their nefarious practices, their impact is felt on the industry as a whole. Under-the-table payments to actors and music directors have gone up from Rs 2 and Rs 10 lakh to Rs 6 and Rs 15 lakh. Smugglers also pay upto Rs 23 lakh per territory for distribution rights. All this bad money drives out the good. Legitimate distributors whose normal business just simply cannot support such fantastic payments go out of business. The black operators' insistence that producers take artistes of their choice results in third-rate stuff being unloaded on the paying public. There is, however, nothing new in all this. The demand that unaccounted funds should not be permitted to enter the industry for its healthy growth was voiced in the report of the Film Inquiry Committee, set up as far back as 1951.

The pox leaves its most gruesome mark on the morale of the nation. Not only do these inane fantasies produced at fantastic cost glorify the cheap and the vulgar, they also hack away at all that is good and moral. In popular entertainment, good always overcome the evil, but not in Bombay's 'B' movies: In *Haath ki Safai*, released in Delhi and elsewhere a good fortnight after the nation-wide swoop on smugglers, the smuggler protagonist goes to gaol without disclosing the place where he has cached away the loot, apparently to enjoy it after his release. The fact that the censors have permitted this to pass their much criticised scissors is a measure of our permissiveness, painstakingly built up over the years by glossies of this very kind. —S. K.

If it warms your heart, it's worth a photograph!

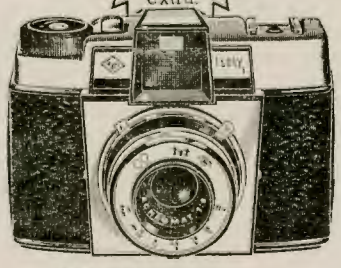


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Bookshelf

Measurement of Gains & Losses

India's Terms of Trade: *1930-68 by Sumitra Chishti, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi, 1974, Pages i-vi, 231, Price not given.*

IN THIS VENTURESOME and painstakingly analytical study of the movement of the terms of trade based on an earlier doctoral thesis, the author has sought to measure its effects on the economic development of India. The definitions of the terms of trade, as an analytical tool, have been mentioned and the reasons for the choice of *net barter terms of trade* (i.e. the ratio between Import and Export prices) for the study has been clearly stated as being due to the availability of the data as against the more demanding and sophisticated approaches of income terms of trade. Thus, out of the seemingly impossible task of distilling order out of the somewhat disarrayed state of our foreign trade data that had gone unnoticed in regard to its need for positive improvements until recently, the author has constructed index numbers using the various recognised formulae *viz.* Passche, Laspeyres and Fischer. The methodology followed by the author for constructing index numbers of unit values of exports and imports, 1930-31 to 1953-54 has been given in the Appendix (pp. 209-331). Here the author has candidly commented on the limitations inherent in the technique of index numbers, particularly those of unit values due to the changing quality of goods and the composition of trade.

The introductory part of the book has been lucidly written and is followed by five chapters dealing with the movement of terms of trade for the periods 1930-31 to 1938-39, 1938-39 to 1948-49, 1948-49 to 1953-54, 1954-55 to 1959-60, 1960-61 to 1967-1968. This kind of segmental treatment was forced on the author for the reasons repeatedly stated by her *viz.* the limitations inherent in the available statistical data, on the one hand and its non-comparability when actually available, on the other. Whatever the merits of the analysis in these chapters, it is somewhat regrettable that the study could not be updated before its publication. The strategic importance of the movement of the terms of trade for the improvement of capital formation through the addition of foreign exchange resources has been briefly mentioned in chapter VI, entitled 'Instability in exports and imports'. However, the study does not proceed beyond listing the salient characteristics that reflect economic development e.g. reduction in the dependence of exports on a few primary products and the increasing importance gained by manufactures and semi-manufactures to the extent of 60 per cent in 1966-67 alone. Here again, it is regrettable that inspite of the availability of published data, the author has made no effort to update the contents.

In her treatment of the 'Effects of the movement of terms of trade, 1930-31, to 1967-68', which forms the substantive part of the thesis, the author has adopted a partial equilibrium approach as a matter of convenience. The inter-acting pattern of balance of trade and terms of trade, the impact of this movement on the revenue of the Government and on public investments, the impact on domestic prices, employment and wages in relation to economic development, are some of the important areas that have received the author's attention. The omission of the treatment of the terms of trade in relation to technological changes is understandable; in any case the subject should merit the labours of a more venturesome team of researchers in the field hereafter. *And let this be mercifully Indian in composition and interdisciplinary in character.*

In a study principally based on the behaviour of net terms of trade overing a few important export commodities whose foreign demand has been both price and income inelastic, it would appear that an aggregative analysis of this type is not particularly helpful since the segmental treatment unaccompanied by organisational and policy changes at least in the bare outlines, would be inadequate to supply substance to the main argument. The study also fails to analyse the influence of international monetary conditions, domestic monetary policy and domestic prices, although some comments are not wanting particularly in respect of the devaluation of the rupee by 57.5 per cent in foreign currency in June, 1966 (pp. 140-142). In a field where the labours of a number of International Agencies are making themselves felt, the present study which is the outcome of the endeavours of a lone researcher using the theoretical approaches governing terms of trade and unravelling their implications to domestic fiscal and financial policies, are anything but praiseworthy.

The author has also pinpointed a number of deficiencies in our statistical data on foreign trade that according to some observers, they are unmistakably the result of willful neglect, flambuoyant political expediency and concoction of figures in the name of export promotion, the petrified outlook of important statistical offices, ill-chosen and input functionaries at port offices denied of opportunities of training and a host of other organisational deficiences that have bedevilled us during certain critical years of our post independence era. The absence of a well prepared bibliography and subject-index in the book requires to be made up in a revised edition.

—B.N. Nair

Family Planning in Mysore

Seminar on Family Planning in Mysore State—*Edited by A.P. Katti; published by Demographic Research Centre, Institute of Economic Research Dharwar; Pages 204.*

THE book comprises a series of papers presented at the Seminar on Family Planning in Mysore State held at Dharwar in 1970. Dr. H.G. Sattur in his inaugural address said that the greatest drawback of the family planning programme is that there is no follow-up system. Men who undergo vasectomy operations or women who opt for insertion of I.U.C.D. or tubectomy operations are forgotten afterwards. The operations, if possible, should be reversible so that at a later stage, if need be, the whole process can be reversed. When operations are performed on a mass scale, there are bound to be some failures. Such unsuccessful cases should be attended to promptly as they provide leverage for effective propaganda against the programme.

Dr. S.V. Raja Rao believes that the loop would be more acceptable if the women are enlightened in advance about the side effects in a few cases. The rate of loop insertions is going

down because of lack of confidence in themselves. Loop is not for limiting the family but only a means to spacing children. Under the post-partum scheme, it is proposed to provide additional staff, an operation theatre and additional beds in hospitals where the rate of deliveries is 3,000 or more per year. People will not accept the family planning programme unless they are explained the economic strains of unwieldly families. Family planning programme should, therefore, be termed as a family welfare programme.

Dr. K.V. Ramachandran and B.B. Yeole in their analysis of family planning programme in Mysore State have attempted to find out whether or not targets fixed for vasectomy, tubectomy and I.U.C.D. insertions are being achieved and which areas are faring better than others.

The authors have collected District-wise data for 1967-68 to establish relationship between vasectomy operations and male literacy and I.U.C.D. insertions and female literacy. A significant and very large negative association is observed between income per head and vasectomy in 1966-67 whereas a significant positive association with tubectomy was visible in 1967-68. Tubectomy rate also has a positive association with urban population in 1967-68. It is, therefore, apparent that there is some interplay of socio-economic and demographic variables on the family planning programme in 1967-68.

Dr. B. Nageswar in his review of family planning programme in Dharwar District states that Hindus and Muslims are availing of the family planning in equal proportion. According to him, the I.U.C.D. is popular among women in the reproductive age-groups, 25 to 34. The proportion of acceptance of loop is also high among women having 6 or more children but with no education.

Dr. A. Padma Rao floated a questionnaire to find out the extent of knowledge about family planning methods in Manipal township. Since the response to her questionnaire was very poor, her findings need not be mentioned.

Mr. P.K. Jain in his paper, has also worked out correlation coefficients between sterilisation rate and the level of literacy. The percentage of correlation coefficients between the rate of I.U.C.D. insertions and female literacy have shown a decreasing trend over the years. It is quite possible that insertion of I.U.C.D. had made a good impact among the literate women initially, but with unpleasant experience over the years, this effect waned. Mr. V.K. Ramachandran has explained in detail the sample registration technique in evaluating family planning programme. There is also a paper on survey of sale of Nirodh through commercial agencies in the villages.

The seminar covered good many topics and the volume will be found useful by those interested in developments in the field of family planning.

—**A.N. Mehra**

THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE

Established in 1964 with the objective of preserving memorable films, the National Film Archive of India has now in its collection about 1,000 films, about one-third of them foreign films. The collection also includes stills, posters and discs. Films winning national awards are also being added to the collection since 1970.

The Archive has exchanged programmes with Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Rumania, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. Some fifty film classics, both Indian and foreign, are available on loan from the Archive, along with related literature. The lending service is available to film societies and film study groups for non-commercial screenings on a nominal service charge.

Important recent acquisitions include Prabhat Talkies' *Admi* (1939) Master Vinayak's *Devta* (1939), New Theatre's *Lagan* (1941), Satyajit Ray's *Mahanagar* (1963), M. S. Subbulakshmi's *Meera* (1945), and Himanshu Rai's *Karma* (1933).

NAGA HISTORY

The Rising Nagas *by Asoso Yonuo, Vivek Publishing House, Delhi, 1970; Pages 440; Rs. 80.*

NAGALAND is situated on the extreme eastern frontier, with a population of 5,15,561 (1971) in an area of 16,488 square milometres (6,366 sq. miles) with its administrative headquarters at Kohima town. It is a long narrow strip of hills running more or less paralled to the south or left bank of the river Brahmaputra. Apart from a few hundred square kilometres of plains in the Dimapur area, the entire State is covered with ranges of hills and mountains varying in heights from 600 to 3,500 metres above sea level. Moreover, the State remained secluded and isolated under an administrative curtain for a long time. These evergreen hills which have been the abode of a hardy but joyful people remained unvisited and unexplored.

Now all this has changed. With the stabilisation of peace in Nagaland its economic growth has been rapid and social development has been remarkable. The people who were formerly known chiefly as warriors and head-hunters, are today making rapid progress in every field of development, especially education.

Shri Yonuo who himself belongs to Nagaland has made an indepth study of his people on the basis of the existing pages of history, legends, documents and through personal interviews with Naga Gaon Burahs and leadership.

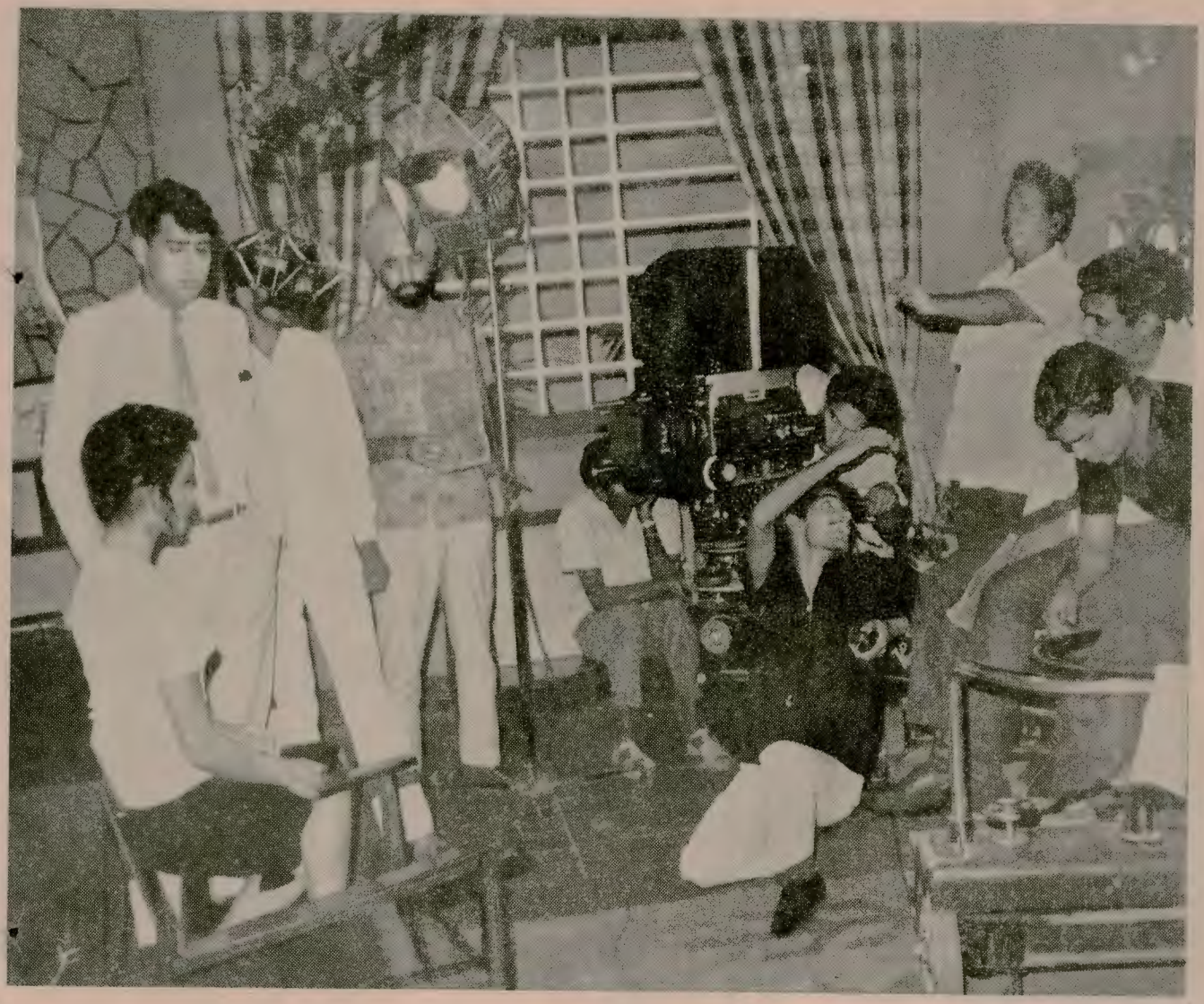
This is perhaps the first publication on a comprehensive historical and political study of Nagaland. Unfolding the early history of the Nagas, their relations with the Assamese, Burmese, Meiteis etc, an attempt has been made by the author to survey all the historical events which brought the Nagas under the Union Jack. Then followed the changes which came with the British rulers and the American Christian Missionaries. The untold story of the background to the revolt against the free India's Government, the role of rebel leaders, and the part played by foreign countries in it have all been dealt with in this work of assiduous scholarship.

The author's first-hand knowledge of his people and his personal interviews with both Naga leaders and representatives of the Government has made this work authoritative and comprehensive.

An air of peace has given an opportunity to the people to change the face of the country through planned development. As the people move forward, fear and suspicion, hatred and spirit of revenge will also disappear. A modern Nagaland is born to love and to unite. Dr. Varrier Elwin said "As Nagaland realises its position in the great country it is so precious a part of it will share in the fulfilment of this ideal".

This well-documented study will be of great value for the students and others who are interested in the study of the history of the States of Indian Union or are keen to undertake similar studies.

—**N N. Chatterjee**



THE FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE

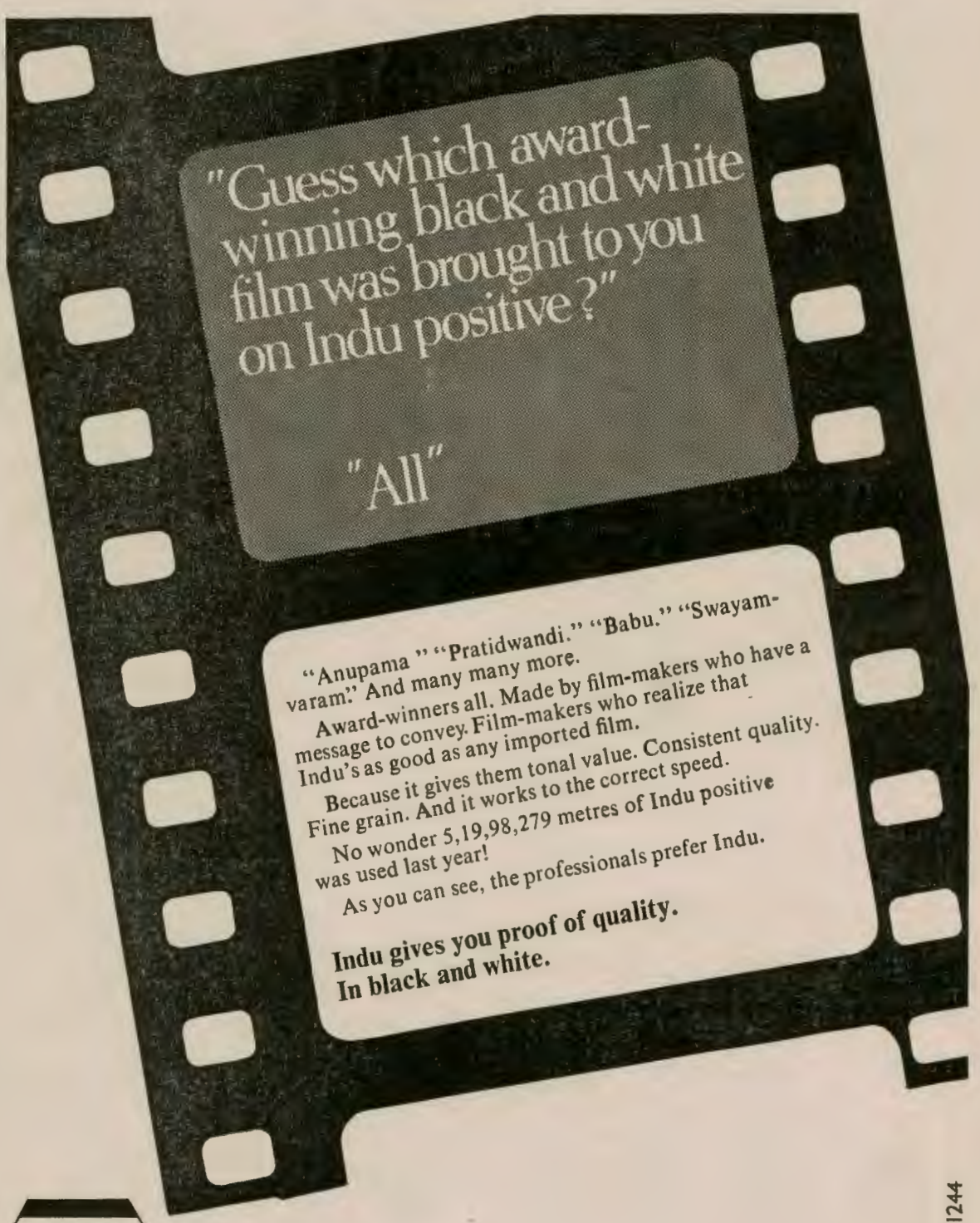
FILM and Television Institute of India (formerly Film Institute of India) was set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting at Poona in 1960 for providing training in the art and craft of film-making. The Institute imparts training in film direction, screen-play writing, motion picture photography sound recording and sound engineering, film editing and film acting. The first four courses are of three years' duration and the last two of two years each. Among the students undergoing training are foreigners.

As part of their training programmes, the students of the Institute produce diploma films, documentary films, song picturisations and advertisement films. Some of the Institute's films are approved by the Films Advisory Board for general release. The Institute runs a small Employment and Guidance Bureau to help its students find suitable jobs. Some of those who have passed out from the Institute have made a name in the film industry.

The television training centre of the Institute was set up at Delhi in August 1971 with assistance given, under a three-year agreement, by the United Nations Development programme (UNDP). It conducts a 24-week course in production and technical operations. A programme research and prototype production unit is being added to the training centre which will, through research and experiment, make it possible to develop formats most suitable for communicating particular categories of messages. The training centre has now been shifted to Poona.



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Printed at The Caxton Press (P.) Ltd., New Delhi-110055, and published by the Director, Publications Division, Patiala House, New Delhi-110001